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EIGHTEENTH CENTURY THEORIES OF CHARACTERIZATION IN PROSE FICTION

by

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Shallow critics...always take for granted...that there must be some precise criterion to distinguish epic poetry from every other species of writing. Literary compositions run into each other, precisely like colours: in their strong tints they are easily distinguished; but are susceptible of so much variety, and of so many different forms, that we never can say where one species ends and another begins.

Henry Home, Lord Kames
Elements of Criticism
1762
INTRODUCTION

The years 1740 to 1760 have been classified, with regard to the criticism of fiction, as a period in which the greatest amount of interest centered on characterization. A study of the critical utterances of the period from 1740 even to the end of the century, as they are to be found in prefaces, periodical reviews, letters, biographies, and incorporated in larger critical works, reveals that characterization was indeed given much consideration by those who concerned themselves in a critical way with prose fiction. Newly emancipated from the necessity of assuming the guise of mere fact, and distinguished somewhat from the earlier improbable romances, the novel was only at this time coming to receive attention as a respectable literary genre deserving critical treatment.

It is a well known fact that early fiction criticism, lacking specific models, criteria, and critical terms of its own, relied at least to some extent upon critical standards currently in vogue for the other genres, specifically drama and the epic. Aside from the obvious convenience of carrying over to the new genre the terms already in use in discussing the long-accepted ones, another motive is to be understood. The realistic novel, in its infancy at the time, stood to gain much needed literary repute and prestige if it could be related to the classical genres in any way, and
both authors and critics were not unaware of this fact. Before considering specifically the question of eighteenth-century theories of characterization in prose fiction, and in so doing relating them to the drama and the epic when such a relation seems justified, it would be well to consider briefly some of the more general statements establishing the connection seen by critics between the classical genres and the new form.

Samuel Richardson made conscious use of the dramatic method and, in his postscript to *Clarissa*, justified the death of his heroine by appealing to the strictures of Addison and Rapin ridiculing strict adherence to the doctrine in poetic justice in tragedy. A writer for the *Critical Review* (XI [1762], 186 ff.), in discussing another epistolary novel, Mrs. Sheridan's *Memoirs of Mrs. Sidney Bidulph*, compared the style with that of Richardson and expressed his preference for "this kind of dramatic writing, where every character speaks in his own person, utters his feelings, and delivers his sentiments warm from the heart." To write such an extended epistolary novel "requires a truly dramatic genius," he continues, and he points out that although the novelist is not confined by the unities of time and place, he nevertheless "labours under other inconveniences, from which the strict dramatist is exempted," specifically, that of sustaining character throughout a number of years and variety of incidents and at the same time avoiding being tedious.

That this comparison with the drama was not an unusual
one may be seen from the frequency with which it recurs, not only in the *Critical Review* but throughout the pages of late eighteenth-century criticism. The reviewer of *The Peregrinations of Jeremiah Grant, Esq.; the West Indian* also in the *Critical Review* (XV [1764], 13), placed that novel, though an inferior specimen, in the tradition of "modern romance" begun by Cervantes, imported into France by Marivaux and Le Sage, and employed with success by Fielding and one or two other English authors (unnamed).

He continues with the following statement:

This kind of romance is a diffused comedy unrestrained by the rules of the drama, comprehending a great variety of incident and character, referring, however, to one principal action and one particular personage, whose fate must interest the reader, and whose importance must not only engage our attention and esteem, but also unite the whole concatenation of scenes and adventures... If the writer has any talent for wit, humour, satire, and description, here he may display it to the best advantage, without being obliged to polish high, or to sow his pearls so thick, as we expect to find them in the epic, the drama, or any other species of poetry.

There is an interesting comparison between this statement in the *Critical Review* and an earlier (1753) discussion of the matter by Smollett in his preface to *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. The verbal similarities are striking when Smollett in the preface describes the novel as:

...a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of an 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
Specifically, Smollett is here concerned with justifying his choice of a vicious rather than a virtuous protagonist. He observes that "almost all the heroes...who have hitherto succeeded on the English stage [that is, in the novel] are characters of transcendent worth," yet he points out that this need not necessarily be the case since "in the drama, which is a more limited field of invention, the chief personage is often the object of our detestation and abhorrence; and we are as well pleased to see the wicked schemes of a Richard blasted, and the perfidy of a Maskwell exposed, as to behold a Bevil happy, and an Edward victorious." That the novelist is justified in following the precedent set by the dramatist in this matter of character portrayal seems, then, a logical argument to Smollett's mind.

Charles Jenner reiterated the thought in his novel, The Placid Man (1770), in which he recommended that the structure of the novel should follow that of the drama, "whereof novels are only a more diffuse species." Thus the difference between drama and fiction, at least to some, was of degree more than of kind. Lord Montebello, although writing late in the century (1776), was on the whole a strict neo-classicist; he nevertheless spoke of Tom Jones as a "legitimate kind" of writing and praised the novel above all for its fable, which, though extremely complex, points in every instance to the catastrophe, "which is so artfully wrought up, and brought about by a change of
fortune so sudden and surprising, that it gives the reader all the pleasure of a well written tragedy or comedy" (Monboddo, Vol. III, 298). Mackenzie in the Lounger (XX [June 18, 1785]) continued the comparison in attempting to strengthen the critical acceptance of the novel.

...but the contempt which it meets from the more respectable class of literary men, it may perhaps be intitled to plead that it does not deserve. Considered in the abstract, as containing an interesting relation of events, illustrative of the manners and characters of mankind, it surely merits a higher station in the world of letters than is generally assigned it. If it has not the dignity, it has at least most of the difficulties of the Epic or the Drama. The conduct of its fable, the support of its characters, the contrivance of its incidents, and its development of the passions, require a degree of invention, judgement, taste, and feeling, not much, if at all, inferior to those higher departments of writing, for the composition of which a very uncommon portion of genius is supposed to be requisite. Those difficulties are at the same time heightened by the circumstance, of this species of writing being of all others the most open to the judgement of the people; because it represents domestic scenes and situations in private life, in the execution of which any man may detect errors, and discover blemishes, while the author has neither the pomp of poetry, nor the decoration of the stage, to cover or conceal them.

(p. 77 in the Collected Numbers)

General statements relating prose fiction to the drama were reinforced by specific comparisons. Especially prevalent are the parallels drawn between Shakespeare and various of the novelists, Fielding in particular. In the section pertaining to literature in Letters Concerning the Present State of England (1772), both Fielding and Richardson are compared with Shakespeare, the former in his knowledge of the human mind (p. 357), and the latter in his delineation
of character (p. 394). Of Fielding in relation to Shakespeare it is stated, "That immortal poet is not greater in the superior walks of tragedy and comedy, than this inimitable writer is in comic romance." Twenty-three years later the comparison was still being made—in 1795 Isaac Disraeli referred to Richardson as "the Shakespeare of the novelists." 4 Courtney Helmoth (1766) vindicated Fielding from the then-frequent charge of being low by the analogy that Shakespeare is never charged with immorality for having drawn an Iago; 5 Warton (1782) bracketed Clementina's madness in Grandison with that of Lear; 6 and the Reverend Thomas Twining (1789), discussing Richardson's Lovelace, found him more "out of nature" and hence more improbable than Shakespeare's Caliban. 7 Other specific statements comparing and contrasting characters in the various genres will be discussed as they relate to theories of characterization at a somewhat later point.

As the comparison between prose fiction and drama continued through the eighteenth century and on into the nineteenth, there may be noted a lessened emphasis on comparison for the sake of vindicating the novel as a genre, paralleling the rising respectability of the novel itself. Henry Paye (1792) endeavored to establish the validity of Aristotle's treatise on poetry by reference not merely to the classics, but to works of fiction, particularly Fielding's, stating that the Oedipus Tyrannus, though a masterpiece of plot building, is in some respects "by no means of equal merit" with Tom Jones. 8 And finally, well into the nineteenth century, John Dunlop in his History of Fiction (1814) ascribed the rise of "fictitious narratives" to the same
causes, in the same period of history, as the other fine arts (Dunlop, Vol. I, 1). Dunlop's theory of the common origin of belles-lettres would of course include the epic as well as the drama, and at this point it would be well to turn from the drama to consider the epic, and the relation seen by the eighteenth century between it and prose fiction.

Fielding, in his preface to Joseph Andrews, evolves his well-known theory of the novel, the "comic romance," as "a comic epic poem in prose," differing from the serious epic in the same way in which comedy differs from tragedy, and directly in line with the tradition of the ancients, particularly Homer, whose works were of course widely studied and praised in the eighteenth century. Monboddo, whose praise of Tom Jones has already been mentioned in connection with the drama, introduced his statements about that work while discussing mock-heroic poetry and took up almost verbatim Fielding's theory of the novel as the comic epic poem in prose.

There is lately sprung up among us a species of narrative poem, representing likewise the characters of common life. It has the same relation to comedy that the epic has to tragedy, and differs from the epic in the same respect that comedy differs from tragedy; that is, in the actions and characters, both of which are much nobler in the epic than in it.

(Monboddo, Vol. III, 134)

Like Monboddo, Beattie in 1779 praised the fables of Tom Jones and Amelia, which he felt would bear the scrutiny of Aristotle and comparison with Homer (Beattie, Essays on Poetry and Music, 102, note).
An extended comparison of the novel and the epic is found in the pamphlet entitled "Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela" (1754), in which the anonymous author begins with the assumption that Homer is the pattern for all narrative writing and proceeds to appraise, and find inferior, Richardson's novels on the basis of the Iliad. Much of this rather insidious criticism is concerned with specific instances in which Richardson's characterization fails to measure up to the Homeric standard. As in the case of the drama, comparisons between novel and epic regarding characterization alone—and there are many—will be discussed at a later point.

Such examples as the preceding will serve to illustrate the general comparisons being made or implied between the novel and the drama and epic. But the aim of this paper will be somewhat more specific: to recreate insofar as possible the basic mid- and late eighteenth century thought regarding characterization in fiction, and in so doing, to note the degree to which this corresponds with theories of characterization in the other genres.
PSYCHOLOGY AND THE THEORY OF CHARACTERIZATION

I.

Often thought of as the typical late seventeenth and eighteenth century variety of literary criticism is that denominated "neoclassical." Such criticism, in line with the original method of Aristotle and recent examples of French critics, and as modified by Dryden, tended to judge the excellence of a piece of literature in terms of certain more or less set concepts. In the case of the epic, such terms as fable, characters, sentiments, diction, unity, and moral became a yardstick by which the work in question was to be measured and its merit ascertained. The influence of the French formalists was marked in this regard, especially that of Le Bossu, whose *Traité du poème épique* was introduced in England in 1682 and whose name appears constantly in English criticism after that time. His was the method of the formal catalogue; he listed in nicely tabulated order the elements to be considered in an epic:

1. La Nature de l'Epôpée, où nous traiteron de la Fable.
2. La Matière, ou de l'Action Épique.
3. La Forme, ou de la Narration.
5. Des Machines, ou de la presence et de l'action des Divinités.
Those critical tags, orderly and logical as they were, became the popular terms of discussion in English criticism in an age in which order and logic were valued highly. Thus Swedenberg in his monograph entitled The Theory of the Epic in England, 1650-1800, after discussing the historical development and progression of epic theory during the years mentioned, devotes over half of his work to a series of chapters relating to "themes" which he found recurrent in English epic criticism: Fable and Action, Moral, Unity, Probable and Marvelous, Machines, Characters, Language and Versification. Lest such a generalisation be construed as implying that the neoclassicists followed slavishly the dictates of artificial rules, Swedenberg hastens to point out that the basic formula settled upon for judging the epic, and the important principles occurring time and again in a variety of writers as the result of this formula, were almost inevitably selected for a logical reason and not solely because they boasted the authority of the ancients.2

At any rate, the use of these general terms or "tags" in evaluating the epic is found almost universally in the critical works of the period. In his Remarks on Prince Arthur (1696), Dennis carefully announced that he had divided his critique of that epic into sections dealing with Fable or Action, under which are discussed unity, morality, and universality, and with Narration, under which he hoped to consider characters and "expression," or language.3 Addison made use of this same critical machinery in his papers on Paradise Lost (1711), devoting a paper each to fable, characters, sentiments, and language, and discussing also such topics as machines, decorum, verisimilitude,
action, and unity. It is of interest to note that in criticizing the ballad "Chevy Chase," which he termed "heroic," Addison judged that work in terms of the epic and divided his critique into three sections dealing with the moral, the hero, and the sentiments (Spectator, LXX [May 21, 1711]). Once again the familiar terms are met with in Pope's preface to his translation of the Iliad (1715). Though ostensibly praising Homer the poet for his powers of invention, in actual practice Pope turns his discussion to invention as manifested in such aspects as fable, characters, speeches, sentiments, and versification.

Addison had applied the prevalent critical tags for the epic in his discussion of the ballad "Chevy Chase"; others were to do so in discussing the novel. As in the case of the epic, the French critics seem to have preceded the English in making this extension. M. Huet's A Treatise of Romances and their Originals, translated into English in 1672, is perhaps the first systematic attempt to trace the history of fiction. Romances are defined as "Fictions of Love-Adventures, writ in Prose with Art, for the delight and Instruction of the Readers," and are not to be confused with epic poems, "which besides that they are in Verse have moreover different essentials, which distinguish them from Romances, though otherwise there is a very great relation." Despite this distinction, which he draws at the outset, M. Huet makes constant use of epic criteria in evaluating the romances he is discussing. He praises Athenagoras' Of True and Perfect Love because it is "invented with wit, conducted with Art, Sententious, and full of excellent moral Precepts,
the events agreeing with verisimilitude, the Episodes
drawn from the subject, the Characters clear and distinct,
Decorum observed exactly all throughout, nothing low,
nothing forced... He distinguished as "regular Romances"
those "which are according to the rules of an Heroick Poem,"
the Greeks having taken the romance in a rude state from
the Orientals and adjusted it "to the rules of the Epopee," as
he himself may be said to have adjusted it in criticizing
it. Writers of French romances in the seventeenth century
generally assumed that any imitation of human life in nar¬
rative form ought to be assimilated as far as possible to
the rules that had been laid down for the epic by Aristotle
and his interpreters, and consequently we are not surprised
to find the same tags employed in discussing both genres.

This same extension of the terms appears somewhat later
in English criticism, arising, apparently independent of
French influence, in Fielding's theory of the comic romance
as the comic epic in prose. Although the comic romance
lacks one of the "constituent parts of an epic poem,
namely metre," yet it may properly be referred to as an
epic since it contains all the other necessary elements:
fable, action, characters, sentiments, and diction (Joseph
Andrews, Preface). Watt finds "unimpressive" this reason
evinced by Fielding for referring his novel to the epic
genre, pointing out that not just Joseph Andrews but any
narrative whatever will in some way contain the enumerated
elements. For our purposes it is sufficient to note that
Fielding, seeking critical justification for his new kind
of writing and finding that justification in the epic
tradition, made use of the current theory and terms regarding the epic as he discussed the novel. In his preface to *Joseph Andrews* Fielding goes on to point out the differences between comic romance and comedy, and once again the differences are presented in the familiar terms: the actions are more extended, a larger circle of incidents is contained, and a greater variety of characters is introduced. The comic romance differs from the serious romance in that its fable and action are light and ridiculous, its characters are of interior rank and inferior manners, and its sentiments and diction tend to the ludicrous. Again, in his preface to the second edition of his sister Sarah's novel, *David Simple*, Fielding reiterates his theory of the comic epic and discusses that work in terms of its fable, characters, sentiments, and diction.

Nor was Fielding alone in his application of the conventional epic tags to the novel. Arthur Murphy in 1762 edited Fielding's works and prefixed to them an "Essay on the Life and Genius of Henry Fielding, Esq." Murphy is on record (Gray's-Inn Journal, XCII [July 20, 1754]) as opposing the rules for the epic which "Bossu and other Critics" have given the world, yet that his rejection of their critical standards was not complete is to be concluded from the way in which his analysis of *Tom Jones* was phrased eight years later.

If we consider *Tom Jones* in the same light in which the ablest critics have examined the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, and the *Paradise Lost*,

namely, with a view to the fable, the manners, the sentiments, and the style, we shall find it standing the test of the severest criticism, and indeed bearing away the envied praise of a complete performance. (Murphy, 29)

Murphy obviously assumes that such an approach is a legitimate one and proceeds to consider each aspect of the novel at greater length.

As with the epic, so, to a lesser extent, with the drama. I have already indicated that it was rather common to consider the early novel as a more diffuse species of the drama, and it is not surprising, therefore, to find the neoclassical critical terms for that genre extended to the novel. In addition to the familiar Aristotelian division—Dennis (1704) proposed to "Examine the Plays of our most celebrated Tragick Poets, in their Fables, Characters, Sentiments, Expressions, Harmony"—such terms as denouement and catastrophe were frequently applied to the novel.

Early fiction criticism as contained in the pages of the Critical Review made frequent use of the accepted terminology for evaluating the epic and drama. As a final example, we may consider several statements appearing in that magazine during its early years. (Underscoring is mine.)

Sophia, by Charlotte Lennox. ...The lesson is instructive, the story interesting, the language chaste, and reflections natural, and the general moral such as we must recommend to the attention of all our female readers. (Vol. XIII [1763], 434-35)
The History of Miss Harriot Watson, by Mrs. Woodsen.

...The narrative is far from being drawling; the characters, though insipid, are, perhaps, more just than those that make a more glowing appearance; all the incidents are decent; the intention of the authoress seems to be virtuous; and if her pencil gives no violent pleasure, it creates no uneasy sensations.

(Vol. XV [1763], 62-63)


...The sentiments are unaffectedly elegant, and its tendency unexceptionably moral. The situations of the parties are interesting and well described, and the characters in general are admirably sustained.

(Vol. XIX [1765], 351)

The Female Adventurers. ...Another, and the same. The same insipidity of characters, the same commonplace distresses, the same improbable and impossible adventures, and the same disregard to nature...we have seen the same events, incidents, and catastrophe...dressed up in fifty various fashions.

(Vol. XX [1765], 384)

This, then, is formal neoclassical criticism carried over to the newly evolving genre. If one searches the pages of this criticism for statements regarding characterization, he will of course find some significant ones, but the majority tend to be perfunctory and at best superficial. Naturally so, for viewed in this light characterization is only one element, and almost never the first element, in a series of aspects demanding equal critical evaluation. But although this general criticism existed throughout much of the eighteenth century, concurrent with it was an increasing interest in the single element of characterization. This interest is in large measure to be explained as an extension into the field of criticism of the general widespread interest in psychology, deriving from the
impact of Locke's philosophy on the thought of the age.

II.

Tuveson has pointed out that the Lockean epistemology was widely understood and accepted by the eighteenth century because it represented a desired compromise between the mechanism of Hobbes and the transcendentalism of the Neo-Platonists, rejecting as it did the doctrine of innate ideas but endowing the mind with the power (dynamic and self-guided, but not internally motivated) to make ideas. He cites several instances in which this new concept of the mind and its working may be seen to have influenced literature directly. If the aim of literature is the imitation of reality, and if man knows, not reality, but his own experience only, then the state of mind, the world as seen by the mind rather than truth per se, becomes of chief importance to the writer of imaginative literature. There follows what Tuveson terms "an absorbing interest in the self—the individual, the unique self," which, in its extreme manifestation, is the essence of the Romantic spirit. But in an age still restrained and orderly in its thinking, this interest in the state of mind, in the psychology of the individual, was from Locke onward beginning to grow. "Character," according to Tuveson, "for and of itself becomes an adequate
theme for the imaginative writer"; also, it may be added, for the literary critic.

If this increased emphasis on psychology and consequently on characterization is to be ascribed to Locke, the influence of his renowned pupil, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, must not be overlooked. Although the views of Locke and Shaftesbury have frequently been considered antithetical, Tuveson points out that there is actually a close connection between Shaftesbury's theory and Locke's epistemology. He views Shaftesbury's contribution—the naturalization of the moral faculty—again as a compromise, between the spiritual idealism of the Cambridge Platonists and the naturalistic psychology of Locke himself. Locke had contended that the third function of the mind is "The perception of the connexion or repugnance, agreement or disagreement, that there is between any of our ideas"—Shaftesbury would extend this to say that the mind can likewise perceive the harmony or repugnance of images of actions and passions.

This idea of the innate moral sense, having the immediacy of sense perception and implying, of course, the natural goodness of man, was to be extremely influential on the thought of the century. Among its notable manifestations was the growth of the so-called cult of sensibility, the gradual emphasis placed on the validity of the personal, immediate responses of the "man of feeling," or, as one critic has expressed it, the "enthusiastic belief in the holiness of the
heart's affections,...trust in feeling as the evaluator of virtue, and...sensitiveness to the delicate and irrational intuitions by which man is prompted.\textsuperscript{13}

As an instance of the far-reaching influence of this concept we may consider a particular reflection of it in literature and criticism somewhat apart from the ones usually considered typical. Shaftesbury had urged that, hearkening to the inner voice and uncorrupted by the ills of modern society, in which the majority of men live "out of all rule and proportion," the individual should strive at all times to live "NATURALLY, and as a MAN."\textsuperscript{14} Paradoxically, however, there was the case, treated by several eighteenth-century authors and critics, of the man who, endowed by nature, perhaps, with an unusually keen sense of virtue, did just this, who lived naturally in an unnatural world. Such a benevolent, in inevitable conflict with the uncongenial and selfish surroundings in which he found himself, was, in at least three separate cases, described as being led first to dissipation, and then to regrets and misanthropy. Shaftesbury himself had regarded misanthropy in an unfavorable light, and had ranked it as one of the "unnatural affections," along with envy, malignity, and inhumanity (\textit{An Inquiry Concerning Virtue}, Bk. II, Part II, Sect. III). But later authors were to adopt a somewhat less condemnatory attitude toward it, since to their way of thinking it seemed to have its rise in
the essentially desirable trait of sensibility itself.

First in point of view of time was Fielding's presentation, in *Tom Jones*, of the misanthropic old gentleman known as the "Man of the Hill." A complete recluse who dresses in an ass's skin, walks abroad only at night, and speaks to no one, the Man of the Hill naturally arouses Tom's curiosity about his strange mode of living; and Tom's request to learn the particulars of the case is answered by the rather lengthy interpolated narrative in which the stranger relates the happenings of his past life. At Oxford he was led by a scheming acquaintance into profligate living and soon ran through his money. After robbing his roommate, he fled to London with his mistress, of whom he was genuinely fond, but she proceeded to betray him to the authorities. Upon his release from prison, he fell in with another Oxford companion, an inveterate gambler, who persuaded him to adopt the profession. At a somewhat later time this friend, having just borrowed one hundred pounds from our narrator, betrayed him to the Jacobites against whom both men were fighting. At this, firmly convinced of the perfidy of all mankind, the Man of the Hill determined to withdraw from society, "and from that day to this my history is little better than a blank" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. VIII, Ch. 14). On further questioning he reveals that he has traveled extensively on the continent, enough to confirm him in his utter disgust with mankind, and to lead him to make a series
of Swiftean pronouncements against which all the re-
monstrances of the good-natured Tom are in vain.

Human nature is everywhere the same, every-
where the object of detestation and scorn.

Man alone, the King of this globe, the last
and greatest work of the Supreme Being, below
the sun—man alone has basely dishonoured his
nature; and by dishonesty, cruelty, ingratitude,
and treachery, hath called his Maker's goodness
in question, by puzzling us to account how a
benevolent Being should form so foolish and
so vile an animal.

Indeed, to say the truth, there is but one
work in His whole creation that doth Him any
dishonour, and with that I have long since
avoided holding any conversation...

(Tom Jones, Bk. VIII, Ch. 15)

To round out this picture of the Man of the Hill
as Fielding presents him there remains only to mention
a significant statement which the old gentleman makes
before beginning his narrative. Tom has indicated that
his host does not seem to have been born to such a life
as he now lives, to which the Man of the Hill replies:

Indeed you judge rightly, in thinking
there is commonly something extraordinary in
the fortunes of those who fly from society;
for however it may seem a paradox, or even a
contradiction, certain it is that great
philanthropy chiefly inclines us to avoid
and detest 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. These are
the vices which true philanthropy abhors,
and which rather than see and converse
with, she avoids society itself.

(Tom Jones, Bk. VIII, Ch. 10)

"Great philanthropy chiefly inclines us to avoid and
detest mankind"—this is the paradox which, as I have
indicated, was one of the outgrowths of the Shaftes-
burian system, and which was to be sounded more than
once in the literature and criticism of the age.

We next encounter it in Smollett's last novel, 
*Humphry Clinker* (1771), in the person of Matthew
Bramble, the humorous Welsh squire who travels through
England and Scotland in search of health, in the company
of an odd family group. Bramble records his impressions
and observations in a series of letters which constitute
approximately forty per cent of the book; and from these
letters, as well as from those in which the nephew Jery
Melford describes his uncle's character and actions,
we receive a fairly complete picture of this humorous
malcontent, who, if his withdrawal from society is not
as complete as that of Fielding's Man of the Hill, is
equally severe in his condemnation of the follies of
mankind. (It must be noted, however, that Smollett's
presentation of Bramble is a sympathetic one—indeed
the author and his character are very close at many
points—whereas Fielding, through Tom Jones, is con-
cerned with pointing up the fallacy of condemning all
mankind on the basis of the misdeeds of some of its
poorer representatives, as the Man of the Hill has
done.)

In one of Jery's early letters we receive the
basic description of Bramble.

Mr. Bramble's character, which seems to
interest you greatly, opens and improves
upon me every day. His singularities af-
ford a rich mine of entertainment; his
understanding, so far as I can judge, is well cultivated; his observations on life are equally just, pertinent, and uncommon. He affects misanthropy, in order to conceal the sensibility which is tender even to a degree of weakness. This delicacy of feeling, or soreness of the mind, makes him timorous and fearful...

(Humphry Clinker, April 24th)

(Again we note the difference between Bramble’s misanthropy, which is "affected" in order to conceal his sensibility, and that of the Man of the Hill, which, also arising from a "philanthropic" disposition, has nevertheless now become a fixed habit of mind with him.) Another significant statement occurs in Jery’s letter of April 30th, in which he describes the variety of remarkable characters to be met with at Bath, the current stop of Bramble’s party.

Those follies that move my uncle’s spleen excite my laughter. He is as tender as a man without a skin, who cannot bear the slightest touch without flinching.

To these two statements of Jery’s must be added one of Bramble himself in his letter of April 28th.

Hark ye, Lewis, [the Doctor to whom Bramble’s correspondence is directed] my misanthropy increases every day. — The longer I live, I find the folly and the fraud of mankind grow more and more intolerable. — I wish I had not come from Brambleton Hall. After having lived in solitude so long, I cannot bear the hurry and impertinence of the multitude; besides, everything is sophisticated in these crowded places. Snares are laid for our lives in everything we eat or drink; the very air we breathe is loaded with contagion.
whether he is describing Bath or London, Bramble is equally harsh in his pronouncements against mankind. In a letter from Bath dated May 19th he states that "we are all a pack of venal and corrupted rascals; so lost to all sense of honesty, and all tenderness of character, that, in a little time, I am fully persuaded, nothing will be infamous but virtue and public spirit." Ten days later, on the basis of a few days' stay in London, he concludes that "the whole nation seems to be running out of their wits," and states that he and his party "have been at court and 'change, and everywhere; and everywhere we find food for spleen, and subject for ridicule." In this same letter, May 29th, he questions

...whether the world was always as contemptible as it appears to me at present? If the morals of mankind have not contracted an extraordinary degree of depravity within these thirty years, then must I be infected with the common vice of old men, *difficilis, querulus laudator temporis acti*; or, which is more probable, the impetuous pursuits and avocations of youth have formerly hindered me from observing those rotten parts of human nature, which now appear so offensively to my observation.

That these "impetuous pursuits and avocations" of Bramble's youth were not totally unlike those of the Man of the Hill is to be inferred from the establishment of Humphry Clinker as Bramble's natural son, or, as he himself frankly, if somewhat crudely, puts it, "the rogue proves to be a crab of my own planting in the days of hot blood and unrestrained libertinism" (*Humphry Clinker*, October 6th).

But it would not be fair to leave this sketch of
Matthew Bramble without mentioning again that other aspect of his character, the "sensibility" for which his misanthropy is a mask. Of this we learn chiefly through the words of others, but some of our most lasting impressions of Bramble are those in which his benvolent nature is seen in action, as in his secret gift of twenty pounds to relieve a poor widow whose daughter is dying of consumption, and in his compassionate treatment of the unfortunate Humphry throughout the book.

For our third example we move from prose fiction to criticism, to William Richardson's analysis (1774) of the character of the melancholy Jaques, from Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. According to Richardson, Jaques is first of all characterized by his "extreme sensibility"—"He discovers a heart strongly disposed to compassion, and susceptible of the most tender impressions of friendship: for he who can so feelingly deplore the absence of kindness and humanity, must be capable of relishing the delight annexed to their exercise." As is his custom in his sketches of Shakespeare's characters, Richardson poses for himself a problem in character consistency: "How happens it that a temper disposed to beneficence, and addicted to social enjoyment, becomes solitary and morose?" or, more particularly, why does Jaques avoid society and bury himself in the forest? In his opening remarks Richardson also postulates the theory which he then sets about proving with regard to Jaques: "Perhaps,
the excess and luxuriancy of benevolent dispositions, blighted by unkindness or ingratitude, is the cause that, instead of yielding us fruits of complacency and friendship, they shed bitter drops of misanthropy."

And so Richardson shows how Jaques, due to his basic disposition, began his career "strongly prepossessed in favour of mankind," but now the "fairy vision" soon vanished and he found himself "alone and desolate, in the midst of a selfish and deceitful world," his disappointment being unusually keen on account of his original sensibility. This disappointment in turn led him to inveigh against mankind "with a desire to correct their depravity," and to evince a mixture of melancholy and misanthropy in his character. Richardson concludes; "That Jaques, on account of disappointments in friendship, should become reserved and censorious, is agreeable to human nature," but he still questions whether it is "natural that he should abjure pleasure, and consider the world and every enjoyment of sense as frivolous and inexpedient." Richardson asserts that such a course of events is natural, due to the inevitable result of thwarting a "ruling passion," in this instance, Jaques' sensibility, for if the ruling passion is disappointed, all the pleasure which formerly arose from its gratification can no longer exist, and likewise the pleasures which arose from the subordinate principles, blended with the governing one, are appreciably lessened. Finally, Richardson observes that "social and
beneficent affections are in their own nature gay and exhilarating," that "they animate, and even inflame the inferior appetites and expose us to the anarchy of unlawful passions." Hence men are frequently led, as was Jaques, into profligacy and dissipation by the influence of social affections. Afterwards, Richardson theorizes, "the melancholy Jaques would not have moralized so profoundly, had he not been, as we are told in the play, a dissipated and sensual libertine" (William Richardson, 143-64). So once again we have a rather careful analysis of the man of sensibility who, not at home in the uncongenial world in which he finds himself, turns, after a fling at dissipation, to a life of withdrawal and misanthropy.

Richardson follows much this same line of discussion in his analysis (1784) of *Timon of Athens*. Though not a man of sensibility, perhaps, at least the early Timon is possessed of a good temper and a social disposition and "seems altogether humane and affectionate." According to Richardson, Timon's deeds of munificence are the result of his ruling passion, which is a love of distinction, a passion however not incompatible with his "goodness, gentleness, and love of society," but which "may easily be shown to have received its particular bias and direction from original goodness." At any rate, Timon has complete faith in those upon whom he lavishes his wealth, and when one by one they refuse to hear the petitions he makes in his hour of need, the disappointment, coming to a temper "like that of Timon, begets not only resentment at individuals, but
aversion at all mankind." "In such circumstances," Richardson continues, "the violence of resentment will be proportioned to the original sensibility [here the word is used]; and Shakespeare, accordingly, has represented the wrath of Timon as indulging itself in furious invective, till it grows to lasting aversion." Or, as he quotes Shakespeare's Timon, "Therefore be abhor'd/All feasts, societies, and throngs of men!" (William Richardson, 314-36). Thus once again Shakespeare has, according to Richardson, demonstrated "how persons of good temper, and social dispositions, may become misanthropical," and once again it is the nature originally most trusting and benevolent which has become most disillusioned and consequently most disaffected toward mankind.

Finally, we may consider a somewhat later critical work, Richard Payne Knight's *Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste* (1805). In the section which deals with the ridiculous in literature Knight is at one point concerned with establishing with precision the meanings of the terms "good nature" and "good humour." People who are most prone to laughter and are ready to enjoy every kind of pleasantry or ridicule, regardless of at whose expense it may be, are improperly called "good-natured." What they really manifest, according to Knight, is good humour, or "that prompt susceptibility of every kind of social or festive gratification, which a mind void of suffering or sorrow in itself; and incapable, through want of thought or sensibility, of feeling the sufferings or sorrows of others,
over enjoys." On the contrary, those who "chill with grave
looks; or check with moral observations, the mirth, which a
gay circle is deriving from a ludicrous display of... follies
and foibles," and who are consequently often called "morose,
sour, ill-natured fellows," are in reality truly good-natured.
Knight then gives his definition of good nature and its con-
sequences, a definition which is remarkably close to what
Fielding and Smollett had earlier worked out in actual
characterization.

**Good-nature** is that benevolent sensibility of
mind, which disposes us to feel both the happi-
ness and misery of others; and to endeavour to
promote the one, and prevent or mitigate the
other; but, as this is often quite impossible;
and as spectacles of misery are more frequent
and obtrusive than those of bliss; the good-
natured man often finds his imagination so
haunted with unpleasant images; and his memory
so loaded with dismal recollections; that his
whole mind becomes tinged with melancholy;
which frequently shows itself in unseasonable
gravity, and even austerity of countenance
and deportment; and in a gloomy roughness of
behaviour; which is easily mistaken for the
sour morosity of the worst species of malignant
temper.

(Knight, 421-22)

The examples, of interest in themselves from the
standpoint of comparison, should also serve to illustrate
one way in which Shaftesbury's influence was felt in the
literature, both imaginative and critical, of his age.

Locke had pointed out that many associations of ideas
are irrational, that everyone is subject to these irrational
associations, and that madness is consequently only a ques-
tion of degree. Shaftesbury drew a similar distinction in
discussing not madness, but "unsocial behavior." Such
behavior is "maladjustment" (not sin) and arises as the result of a disharmony of the moral perception with the drives to action—that is, the impulse of self-interest, though desirable in its proper degree, overrides the social sense and destroys the necessary balance between the two—and Shaftesbury devotes a large portion of the Inquiry to what Tuveson terms "a catalogue of something like case studies in abnormal psychology." Even more significantly Tuveson points out that "the necessity for sympathetic, imaginative representation of the mind and experience is a vital part of Shaftesbury's philosophy." 15 Here the emphasis on psychology has definitely tended in the direction of aesthetics; Shaftesbury's direct influence on literature is perhaps more marked than that of Locke precisely because his was an essentially aesthetic response.

Also stemming at least in part from the influence of Locke and Shaftesbury was the tendency toward psychological criticism (as well as sympathetic representation) of a single leading character in a literary work. Viewing Hamlet less as a tragedy of action and more as an inward, subjective revelation, Shaftesbury had praised the play as "one continu'd Moral: a Series of deep Reflections, drawn from one Mouth, upon the Subject of one single Accident and Calamity naturally fitted to move Horror and Compassion" (Advice to an Author, Part II, Sect. II). Later in the century there arose in Shakesperian criticism the so-called "psychological school" whose chief representatives, William Richardson, Thomas Whately, and Maurice Morgann, in the course of some thirteen years, wrote and published essays dealing with
characterization alone.

Whately, the earliest of the three in actual composition (1772), but whose work was published posthumously in 1785, wrote an essay comparing Macbeth and Richard III, entitled Remarks on Some of the Characters of Shakespeare. In his introduction to this work Whately justifies his approach over the common method: "...There is, within the colder provinces of judgment and of knowledge, a subject for criticism, more worthy of attention than the common topics of discussion: I mean the distinction and preservation of character" (Whately, 2). To Whately variety and truth of character is the one thing indispensable to both comedy and tragedy, and hence this single element is a worthwhile subject of study for critics.

William Richardson, to whose work I have already referred, published three series of essays (in 1774, 1784, and 1789) dealing with various Shakespearian characters. His purpose was more expressly didactic: we are obligated to study human nature in order to gain a better understanding of, and hence improve, our own. (Richardson follows Shaftesbury in his belief in the innateness of the moral sense, yet Shaftesbury also had urged the importance of improving self-knowledge.) Human nature is most easily studied in the works of one who understood it as Shakespeare did; if we look into the mirror which Shakespeare held up to life, making poetry subservient to philosophy, we can "employ it in tracing the principles of human conduct" (William Richardson, 33). Shaftesbury had also urged the importance of the "Moral Artist's" role in this
regard. Or, as a writer for the *Monthly Review* (LXXI [1788], 54) expressed it, "Shakespeare is the great poet of nature; and by properly analyzing the characters of his incomparable dramas, considerable light may be thrown on the philosophy of the human mind." It remains for the psychological critic, then, to penetrate the minds of Shakespeare's characters and report on what he finds there—this is what Richardson proposed to do in his essays on Macbeth, Lear, Imogen, Hamlet, Jaques, Timon, and Falstaff.

Greatest of the three psychological critics of Shakespeare is Maurice Morgan, whose *Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* (1777), although ostensibly written to vindicate Falstaff's courage, contains, as the author himself admits, "considerations on the whole character of FALSTAFF" (Morgan, Introduction, 4) and much more. So Morgan devotes 185 pages to a sympathetic and timeless analysis of a single character. He bases his claim for Falstaff's courage on a psychological distinction with a decidedly Lockean sound.

...I distinguish between mental Impressions, and the Understanding...there are none of us unconscious of certain feelings or sensations of mind, which do not seem to have passed thro' the Understanding; the effects, I suppose, of some secret influences from without, acting upon a certain mental sense, and producing feelings and passions in just correspondence to the force and variety of those influences on the one hand, and to the quickness of our sensibility on the other.

The point of all this, with regard to literature, and the character of Falstaff in particular, is that "...in Dramatic composition the Impression is the Fact" (Morgan, 4-5).
It is of interest to note that although the character study as such of Shakespeare's personages emerged with the three above-discussed critics, the seeds of what they were to do are found in earlier works. The anonymous essay entitled *Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, Written by Mr. William Shakespeare* (1756) gives a detailed, scene-by-scene analysis of the play and in so doing examines the characters rather closely, giving partial analyses of Laertes, Polonius, and Hamlet in the light of what is "natural," with "natural" seeming to mean true to human nature. And Corby Morris in 1744 published *An Essay towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule. To Which Is Added an Analysis of the Characters of an Humourist, Sir John Falstaff, Sir Roger de Coverly, and Don Quixote.* As the title indicates, character analysis forms an important part of this essay, and Morris is scarcely outdone by the later Morgann in his praise of Old Jack.

This same interest in characterization developed with regard to the novel, with more extended critical discussions on the subject frequently resulting. Mention has been made of the anonymous "Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela," which appeared in 1754. Analyzing the characters of the *Iliad*, the author evolves his "theory" of characterization, the standards of which he then applies to the characters in Richardson's novels, which unfortunately do not measure up to Homer's. Such works as this one, dealing with characterization almost exclusively, are not to be found in any great number, nor is there a "psychological school" of
fiction critics to parallel that in the drama. However, in line with the aesthetic implications of the philosophies of Locke and Shaftesbury, the interest in fiction characterization was definitely a growing one, and even in the pages of the *Critical Review* we find reviewers occasionally discoursing for a page or more on the problems related thereto. It would seem well at this point to turn to a consideration of some of the specific aspects of characterization which received fullest discussion by eighteenth-century critics.

III.

One of the chief standards by which the characters of a literary work were judged was that of consistency, a term which was used throughout the century with somewhat varying meanings. To the strict neoclassicist writing early in the period, consistency was closely related to the concept of decorum, which required that a king, a soldier, a nobleman, think, speak, and act on all occasions according to a pre-conceived notion of the way in which such a character should think, speak, and act. As the century progressed and as the neoclassical emphasis was lessened, psychological verity, that is, accord with what is observable about human nature, came more and more to replace decorum as the basis for the interest in and demand for consistency in characterization. Along with this shift in emphasis may be noted an increased sympathy with a wider variety of character types, in contrast with the oversimplification which had been the frequent
result of the application of the principle of decorum.

The most common critical method was that of describing the character as being of a certain type and possessing certain general traits and propensities; his general bent understood, individual, specific actions were judged consistent or not by the way in which they corresponded with the over-all characterization. More often than not the character was described in terms of a ruling passion (in the case of a serious work) or a humour (in the case of a lighter one). The term "humour" especially, admits of a variety of meanings, and was constantly being defined and re-defined by the eighteenth century. But to the critic John Dennis we are indebted for an early, basic explanation of the term and a distinction between it and passion. According to Dennis,

...that which we call Humour is nothing but a little ridiculous Passion. ¹⁶

'Tis Passion and Humour (which is subordinate Passion), which distinguish Man from Man. ¹⁷

...to every Passion there is a Humour which answers to it, which Humour is nothing but a less degree of that Passion. As for example, Anger is a Passion, Pecuvisness and Moroseness are Humours, Joy when it is great is a Passion, Jollity and Gayety perhaps may be said to be Humours... Humour is subordinate Passion expressed in a particular manner. Fear is a Passion, Timorousness is a Humour. ¹⁸

Dennis tends to use humour in the Jonsonian sense, a quirk differing from a dangerous passion in degree only; a more sympathetic view was soon to emerge, as will be discussed somewhat later. But the close connection between the two is useful in understanding how either could be taken,
depending on the seriousness of the work involved, as a means of explaining the general bent of the character under consideration.

If we leave humour for the moment and focus our attention on its analogue, the ruling passion, we find perhaps the most extended explanation of that term contained in Book II of Pope's *Essay on Man* (1733). According to Pope, man, as early as the moment of his birth, receives his "Master Passion."

So, cast and mingled with his very frame,
The Mind's disease, its RULING PASSION came.  
(*Essay on Man*, II, ll.137-38)

The master passion has nature for its mother and habit for its nurse; useless it is to attempt to reject or combat that which nature has given and against which even reason is ineffectual. The ruling passion of course differs from man to man—herein lies its significance, impelling as it does "sev'ral Men" to "sev'ral ends." Reason does have a function in such a system:

'Tis hers to rectify, not overthrow,  
And treat this passion more as friend than foe.  
(*Essay on Man*, II, ll. 163-64)

A union, then, between reason and passion is possible and is to be desired. As a final aspect of Pope's theory there is the proposition that nature, in giving the passion, gives also the virtue closest allied to the vice.

Reason the bias turns to good from ill,  
And Nero reigns a Titus, if he will.  
(*Essay on Man*, II, ll. 198-99)
Or, as Mack has explained it, "The direction of the character is thus a datum, but what man makes of it, and whether it leads to virtue or vice, depends upon his skill." 19

This theory of the ruling passion seems to underlie Pope's statements regarding characterization found in his earlier (1715) notes to the Iliad. In the introduction Pope speaks of "the principal Quality which constitutes the Main of each Character," and also of the "Under-parts" of the character, saying that in each instance Homer takes care to give to the under-parts a "Tincture of that principal one" (Iliad, Preface, C, verso). Again, Homer is said to have mixed virtues and vices in his chief characters, "making the Fault which most peculiarly attends any good Quality, to reside with it" (Bk. I, 1. 155, note). On this basis Pope characterizes the Homeric heroes.

Hector's "principal Passion, and the Motive of all his Actions" (Bk. III, 1. 53, note) is love of country, and his only blemish is that he fights in an unjust cause; Ajax is everywhere the "stubborn and undaunted warrior" (Bk. XI, 1. 669, note); Priam is characterized by piety toward the gods and indulgence toward his children; Achilles' "prevailing Passion" is anger and his character is implacable. Having done this, Pope is very diligent to point out repeatedly the consistency with which Homer maintains the character of each, using the neoclassical terms "decorum" and "propriety" in this connection. He speaks of Homer's "sustaining" a character, accounts on this basis (the ruling passion) for the "seeming incongruity"
of Homer, and observes the way in which various speeches are "adapted" to the characters who utter them.

As an example we may consider the case of Ajax; without attempting to cite all of Pope's comments regarding this hero, we can understand from a few of them the nature of Pope's discussion.

The appellation of the Bulwark of the Greeks, which Homer almost constantly gives Ajax, is extremely proper to the bulk, strength, and immobility of this heavy hero, who on all occasions is made to stand to the business, and support the brunt.

(Iliad, Bk. VII, l. 226, note)

I think it needless to observe how exactly this speech of Ajax corresponds with his blunt and soldier-like character.

(Bk. VII, l. 272, note)

Ajax 'who way a rough soldier and no orator, is impatient to have the business over...

(Bk. IX, l. 291, note)

The reader will observe how justly the poet maintains this character of Ajax throughout the whole Iliad, who is often silent when he has an opportunity to speak, and when he speaks, 'tis like a soldier, with a martial air, and always with brevity.

(Bk. XI, l. 592, note)

There is not one line but what resembles Ajax; the character of a stubborn but undaunted warrior is perfectly maintained, and must strike the reader at the first view.

(Bk. XI, l. 662, note)

All this of course presupposes that there is a single certain way in which a man who loves his country, or who is angry and implacable, or who is "blunt and soldier-like" will act. Pope from time to time extends his remarks from the particular to the general case, speaking of what is natural or consistent, not for the character type being discussed, but for all men in like
circumstances. Hector reproaches Paris for cowardice, and Pope comments:

That hasty manner of expression without the connection of participles, is extremely natural to a man in anger, who thinks he can never vent himself too soon.

(Iliad, Bk. III, l. 55, note)

Achilles' rage is aroused upon the mention of Agamemnon's name, and we read:

Anger is in nothing more like madness, than that Madmen will talk sensibly enough upon any indifferent matter; but upon the mention of the subject that caused their disorder, they fly out into their usual extravagance.

(Bk. IX, l. 762, note)

Diomed weeps over a trifle, and Pope has this to say:

This must be ascribed to the nature of mankind, who are often transported with trifles; and there are certain unguarded moments in every man's life; so that he who could meet the greatest dangers with intrepidity, may thro anger be betrayed into an indecency.

(Bk. XXIII, l. 464, note)

Pope sums up his feelings about Homer's characters and his method of judging their consistency when he states:

Homer's judgment appears in nothing more exact, than in that propriety with which each character is maintained. But this exactness must be collected by a diligent attention to his Conduct thro the whole; and when the Particulars of each Character are laid together, we shall find them all proceeding from the same Temper and Disposition of the person. If this observation be neglected, the Poet's conduct will lose much of its true beauty and harmony.

(Bk. XI, l. 1, note)
Thus it would seem reasonable to assert that consistency is the primary concern for Pope with regard to characterization, consistency based on the ruling passion idea and in general tending toward a simplification of human nature, each character's actions being explained by a simple statement of one or two basic characteristics, as we have seen.

An interesting footnote in the fifth Miscellany (1711) would seem to indicate that Shaftesbury also held the ruling passion theory and made use of it to account for seeming inconsistencies in Homer's characterization, in much the same way that Pope was to do in far more extended fashion. Shaftesbury speaks of the necessity for "passion" in the hero of an epic or a tragedy; the able writer does not fail "to discover Nature's Propensity" in each of the characters he represents. He cites examples from the Iliad in which the "passion" of a character is used to explain and in fact to atone for all other aspects of his behavior, thus establishing the consistency of the characterization.

...The Passion of an ACHILLES is towards that Glory which is acquir'd by arms and personal Valour. In favour of this Character, we forgive the generous Youth his Excess of Ardor in the Field, and his Resentment when injur'd and provok'd in Council, and by his Allies. The Passion of an ULYSSES is towards that Glory which is acquir'd by Prudence, Wisdom, and Ability in Affairs. 'Tis in favour of this Character that we forgive him his subtle, crafty, and deceitful air: since the Intriguing Spirit, the over-reaching Manner, and Over-refinement of Art and Policy, are as naturally incident to the experienc'd and thorow Politician, as sudden
And so on for Ajax, Nestor, and Agamemnon. Shaftesbury continues his remarks with the typically neoclassical assertion that in each case the poet redresses the "Excesses of every Character," and the passions of the spectator are thereby "corrected and purg'd." That such an explanation tends to classify men into certain set types should be obvious from the way Shaftesbury refers, not to Achilles, Ulysses, and the rest, as individuals, but "an Achilles," "an Ulysses," etc., as types. Characters are to be classified according to their passion; once classified, we judge the consistency of the author's presentation by the way in which the characters conform to our notion of the way in which one motivated by that passion will act.

In yet an earlier work, Mary de la Rivière Manley's preface to *The Secret History of Queen Zarah* (1705), we find a discussion of characterization and especially consistency in terms of the ruling passion, though not so-called. Mrs. Manley is speaking not of the epic but of romances when she asserts the importance of consistency in characterization.

One of the Things an Author ought first of all to take care of, is to keep up to the Characters of the Persons he introduces.

(Manley, A4, verso)

The heroes of romances should be described so as to resemble humanity--
Thus, by considering the characters in romances, the reader sees his own ruling passion set forth. Mrs. Manley also speaks of the "predominant virtues" of the heroes in a romance, and points out that for the sake of consistency the author should not endow them with vices which are antithetical to these virtues.

...if we describe them brave, liberal, and generous, we ought not to attribute to them baseness or cowardice, because that their actions would otherwise holy their character...

(Manley, A5 verso - a recto)

Although her remarks assuredly do not constitute an especially valuable piece of criticism, it is interesting nevertheless to notice the similarity between her statements regarding fiction and those of the same period dealing with the epic.

Numerous other examples relating to the necessity of consistency in characterization might be cited. Blackmore, in his Essays upon Several Subjects (1716), echoes Pope's ideas on consistency, insisting as he does that as characters first enter the action of an epic they should be well
distinguished "by different Inclinations and Habits," and that subsequently "every Person should speak and act, where-ever he is introduc'd, as it is reasonable and proper that a Man of such qualities should do..." Not to observe this rule is "to bely Nature, and impose a Fraud upon the Reader."

For Instance, should a Person in deep Distress, overwhelm'd with Sorrow, transported with Rage, or burning with Revenge, make a long and elegant Discourse full of fine Similes, quaint Turns, and surprising Metaphors, he would offend against the Custom and Rule of Nature, which in all such Circumstances never acts in that manner. 30

The Homeric critic Blackwell, in his Enquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer (1735), praised Homer for his consistency in suit ing even the "stature and aspect" of his heroes to their "temper and disposition" (Blackwell, 319). He follows Shaftesbury in holding that the general bent of a character may be used to explain (or indeed explain away) certain particular actions. Thus he says that we "make allowances" for Achilles' excess of passion against Agamemnon:

...we think of the ill usage he has met with: our eye is turned upon his unbounded courage and superior strength, and we are willing to bear with this haughty spirit.

And again of Agamemnon,

He is in such a piteous plight, that if we were not well assured of his personal bravery, we should take him for a downright coward. (Blackwell, 326)

This second statement is a curious extension of the concept
to the point that we are definitely asked to set aside our feelings about a particular action because of the general tendency as it has been previously described.

Mention has already been made of the anonymous essay which appeared in 1736 entitled Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, Written by Mr. William Shakespeare. In this work the author praises Shakespeare above all for "the constant conformity of each character to itself, from its very setting out in the play, quite to the end," and asserts that no play can please which is unnatural, that is, "wherein the characters act inconsistently with themselves, and in a manner repugnant to our natural ideas." The author backs up his praise of Shakespeare's consistency of characterization with the now-familiar method. Hamlet is described as a prince of great accomplishments, with a disposition both benign and heroic, a virtuous temper, filled with filial piety, brave, and careless of his own life. On the basis of this description his particular actions are then explained. "No wonder" that such an accomplished prince would prefer to spend his time improving himself at Wittenberg, rather than remaining inactive at Elsinore. Hamlet's determination to speak to the ghost, regardless of the consequences, "is entirely suitable to his Heroical Disposition." "His breaking from his Friends with that vehemency of Passion in an Eager-ness of Desire to hear what his Father could say to him, is another Proof of his Filial Tenderness." And finally, his begging Horatio to remain alive and testify to his innocence, "is very suitable to his virtuous Character, and the honest Regard that all Men should have not to be misrepresented to
Posterity" (Remarks on Hamlet, 2-35).

The author of the anonymous "Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela" (1754) discusses the Homeric heroes briefly prior to his consideration of Richardson's characters. His chief concern is with the probability of the characters in question, and he uses the method of Shaftesbury to make his point. Ajax's bodily strength may seem exaggerated, but it is rendered probable by his being represented as slow of intellect and understanding, a combination of qualities which is to be expected. Ulysses is "consistently prudent," erring through over-caution but never through rashness, again as we would expect. Nestor's "extreme old age" reconciles us to his "great garrulity," which would otherwise be inexcusable. Finally, we excuse the ferocity of Achilles, "when we reflect that the generous youth [Shaftesbury's exact phrase] prefers a short life, with fame and reputation, to a length of days, with peace and happiness." All this so that the anonymous writer can show the way in which Homer's characters are "uniformly consistent" and Richardson's are "entirely contradictory to Homer and nature." For example, Lovelace is described as a mixture, necessarily discordant, of Achilles and Ulysses, combining their irreconcilable qualities in a single character. Grandison, intended as an example of universal benevolence, fails to qualify because Richardson has endowed him with characteristics "not so consistent with the principal and most shining virtue," namely, the advantages of foreign travel, education, etc., which generally tend to make a man
urbane, skeptical, and contaminated rather than generous and benevolent as he might have been in a "simple, unimproved state;" ("Critical Remarks on...Pamela," 17-21). So with Grandison we find "several...inconsistencies" not present in Homer's Eumaeus or Fielding's Allworthy, who are consequently truer examples of universal goodness and benevolence. Although the ruling passion theory is never stated, the implication is that Richardson's characterization fails because he does not observe it, but rather combines opposite passions in the same individual.

On into the second half of the century the ruling passion theory was still of importance. It received critical discussion in Lord Kames' *Elements of Criticism* (1762), a work which was in turn to exert a great influence on William Richardson. Kames echoes Shaftesbury in his division of the passions into the classifications social and selfish, and in pointing out the desired balance between the two. The ruling passion Kames describes as "a peculiar propensity [which] comes soon to maturity and subsists forever; which is the case of pride, envy, and malice: objects are never wanting to inflame the propensity into a passion." Signs of the "prevailing passion" gradually appear on the countenance and serve to denote the disposition of the person in question. In the case of drama, the audience is conscious intuitively of a passion from its external expression. With regard to character consistency Kames echoes the accepted neoclassical view of propriety or decorum.

Nothing is more intimately related to a man, than his sentiments, words, and actions; and therefore we require here the strictest conformity. When
we find what we require, we have a lively sense of propriety; when we find the contrary, our sense of impropriety is no less lively. Nothing in epic or dramatic compositions is more disgustful than impropriety of manners."

But Kames never actually connects the idea of consistency with the ruling passion theory as Richardson was to do.

William Richardson showed himself very much of his age in his view of human nature as it evolved in his analysis of Shakespeare's characters. For Richardson, each man's psychology is ultimately to be explained in terms of a ruling passion.

Among the various desires and propensities implanted by nature in the constitution of every individual, some one passion, either by original and superior vigour, or by reiterated indulgence, gains an ascendent in the soul, and subdues every opposing principle; it unites with desires and appetites that are not of an opposite tendency, it bends them to its pleasure, and in their gratification pursues its own.

(William Richardson, 160-61)

The really important thing, from Richardson's point of view, is that the passion which rules a man's actions is in no wise static and unalterable, but rather will lead its possessor to demonstrate varying behavior, depending on the degree to which the passion is indulged, is thwarted, or is repulsed. Nor is the ruling principle in a man's character to be considered the single factor in determining his bent; that is to say, Shakespeare's characterization is far too subtle to allow his characters easily to be categorized according to the humours tradition. In this subtle differentiation, this blending of various elements, often superficially incongruous, in a single character, Shakespeare, according to Richardson, shows his
superior discernment of human nature.

For Richardson, as well as for Pope, both reason and passion, in a balance, are necessary and desirable; but the characters of Shakespeare which Richardson sets himself to analyze do not reflect this desired balance. In most instances, at least, it is the overgrowth of the ruling passion which occasions the downfall of the character, or his desertion, or his misery. The ruling passion, which each of us has, functioning without check either by reason, the moral sense, or opposing passions, gives rise to the disaster.

Not only is the ruling passion the cause of the tragedy, but it also serves to explain the consistency of Shakespeare's characterization, a point which Richardson is extremely diligent in making. The actions of Macbeth are not inconsistent if understood in the light of his ruling passion, ambition. Hamlet is defended on the grounds that his varying behavior is perfectly consistent with the ruling principle which guides his actions, a strong sense of virtue. It is Jaques' extreme sensibility, blighted by the unkindness of the world, which leads to his misanthropy—here again the characterization is consistent if considered in the light of the ruling passion. And so on for each of the other characters about whom he writes. By the time he completes his study, Richardson has justified his claim, made in the introduction, for Shakespeare as the great delineator of human nature, since he has vindicated him from every charge of inconsistency and unnatural characterization, showing in each instance that the character's behavior is to be expected upon a consideration of his particular ruling passion.
Whately also made use of the ruling passion theory, this time in connection with the two characters whom he contrasts, Richard III and Macbeth, in spite of the fact that his main interest is not in the concept of consistency at all. He speaks of Richard's ruling passion as "the lust of power," and contrasts with this Macbeth's essentially different nature, in which ambition is relatively weak and in which "feelings of humanity" are always operative. Richard never deviates from his basic trait throughout his entire career, and Macbeth's actions are equally consistent. Thus the lesser agitation which Macbeth feels in committing his later crimes "is no inconsistency in his character; on the contrary, it confirms the principles upon which it is formed"—that is, he is seeking security and to rid himself of fear. The fortitude which Macbeth shows at his last extremity is agreeable "to the manliness of character to which he had always formed himself." His "natural sensibility of disposition" leads him to avoid fighting with Macduff, conscious as he is of the wrongs he has done him. In his concluding remarks Whately praises Shakespeare for maintaining the characters of Macbeth and Richard not only "distinct," which is his main point, but also "entire." The character of Macbeth is, according to Whately, the more finished of the two, and more careful artistry was required "to express and blend with consistency all of the several properties which are ascribed to him." But, Whately concludes, whatever Shakespeare's occasional faults may be, with regard to characterization "he is not inconsistent" (Whately, 11-91).

With Richardson and Whately we note a definite tendency
to widen the possibilities for characters thought of under the ruling passion concept. Both of these critics emphasize the many elements which Shakespeare combines in a single character, elements which may still be seen as consistent with the ruling passion, but only after a great deal of psychological theorizing has been worked out. This position is recognizably different from that of Pope, Shaftesbury, and other critics of the early part of the century, for whom the number of possibilities was far more restricted.

James Beattie's Essays on Poetry and Music, as they Affect the Mind (1779) is of special interest in that the Scotch critic discusses Homer's epic, Shakespeare's tragedies, and the works of the early novelists, Fielding in particular, within the pages of this single work, frequently making statements about one genre which he then extends to apply to the others. Beattie seems to endorse the ruling passion theory as it relates to literature.

Hence we expect, that every personage introduced in poetry should see things through the medium of his ruling passion, and that his thought and language should be tinctured accordingly.

(Beattie, Essays on Poetry and Music, 49)

In a later work, while discussing the novel, he divides the "Modern Prose Fable," as he calls it, into the allegorical and the poetical. The "poetical" novel is further subdivided into the serious and the comic. Under the "serious" classification he places the works of Samuel Richardson, which he refers to as "poetical," whereas Fielding's works are comic, or "comick Epick poems" (Beattie, "On Fable and Romance," 511, 518). So we may safely conclude that his statement concerning the
necessity of the ruling passion in poetry refers to characterization in the novel as well as the epic and drama. But Beattie's remarks on this aspect of characterization in the novel are not as extended as we might wish, a fact which is understandable when we consider that the ruling passion theory is customarily thought of in connection with serious and not comic works. Since with the exception of Richardson (and of course his numerous followers) the major early novelists were writing essentially humorous works, it seems natural that early critics of prose fiction would discuss characters not in terms of the ruling passion, but of the humour which the character exhibited.

In 1690 Sir William Temple's Miscellanea, the Second Part, was published, containing an essay entitled "Upon Poetry." In this essay is the explanation of a theory regarding "humour" which was to be influential throughout the century ahead. (The volume itself had gone through five editions by 1705.) "Humour," the word, is peculiar to the English language, according to Temple, and so much does England excel in it, that her drama based on humour is superior to that of both the ancients and other moderns. Shakespeare was the first to make use of humour on the stage, and it has "run...freely and... pleasantly over since." "Humour" is used by Temple interchangeably with the word "character"—thus he speaks of the limited number of "characters" introduced on the ancient stage: "a covetous old Man, an amorous young, a witty Wench, a crafty slave, a bragging Soldier." In England the case is
different; Temple feels that there is a greater variety of
humour in English comedy than in that of other nations because
of the greater variety existent in English life. He accounts
for this on the basis of the native plenty of the English
soil (which makes the struggle for existence less fierce), the
unequal nature of the climate (making England "the Region of
Spleen"), the freedom which exists under the English form of
government, and the diversity of views on the matter of
religion (which has led to a wide variety of forms of devo-
tion, and an equal variety of forms of knavery and hypocrisy).

Plenty begets Wantonness and Pride, Wantonness
is apt to invent, and Pride scorns to imitate...
Thus we come to have more Originals, and more that
appear what they are, we have more Humour because
every Man follows his own, and takes a Pleasure,
perhaps a Pride to shew it. (Temple, 357)

It must be noted that for Temple an English "humour" is not a
fixed and unalterable tendency or quirk, but rather is fluc-
tuating and subject to change, thus setting his view somewhat
apart from the usual definition of the term.

Temple speaks of England as abounding in abandoned
libertines; refined "luxurists" (i.e., those addicted to
luxury); extravagant debauchees; conceited gallants; dab-
blers in poetry, politics, philosophy, and chemistry; servants
"far gone" in divinity; "a Keeper deep in the Rosycrucia
Principles, and a Laundress firm in those of Epicurus." He
concludes by lauding the good effect such a diversity of
humours has on the comic stage, whatever the effect may be
"upon our Lives or our Government " (Temple, 356-61). From
the nature of his remarks, and especially from the examples
he cites, we conclude that Temple would not see the second
effect as a particularly happy one, and that he views the
humours as oddities or quirks to be frowned rather than
smiled upon. Such a position was of course the general one of
the early eighteenth century, but it is of interest to note
that long after a more sympathetic view of the humours which
diversify mankind was commonly held, Temple's case for England
as the land of the humours, and the consequent enriching of
her literature, was still being propounded.

Dennis (1701) also made the point that moderns excel the
ancients in comedy, because "Moderns seem to know men better
and to dive into some latent foibles, into some ridiculous
recesses, that were utterly unknown to the Ancients." For
Dennis, as we have noted, a humour is defined as "a little
ridiculous passion," which causes the little disquiets of
the world and is to be exposed by comedy, in the same way that
great passions cause the world's great disorders and are to be
punished by tragedy.

The following year George Farquhar, while urging the
necessity of a modern English comedy conforming to modern
taste rather than to ancient precepts, restated the theory.

As we are a mixture of many nations, so we have
the most unaccountable medley of humours among
us of any people upon earth; these humours produce
variety of follies, some of 'em unknown to former
ages; these new distempers must have new remedies,
which are nothing but new counsels and instruc-
tions [i.e., new comedies].

These three early critics, Temple, Dennis, and Farquhar, seem
to agree that England abounds in characters of humour and that
such characters have an enriching quality in comedy, with Dennis and Farquhar especially urging the instructive role of comedy in correcting the follies which the humours invariably entail.

Henry Gaily in 1725 published his translation of The Moral Characters of Theophrastus, to which he prefixed his own critical essay on the subject of the writing of "Characteristics." Almost every comment he makes on this literary form so popular among the Augustans could be extended to apply to the drama--to comedy--as well; indeed Gaily himself points out that the difference is chiefly one of degree. The characteristic writer describes a character, the dramatist presents him to the eyes of the spectators, but both forms consist of "an Image of one Life; a Representation of one Person." Human nature is the subject with which each deals, and Gaily stresses the importance of a thorough knowledge of mankind for the would-be writer of characters.

The Features of every single Passion must be known; the Relation which that Passion bears to another, must be discovered; and the Harmony and Discord which result from them must be felt.

(Gaily, 31-32)

Gally speaks of a "Master-Passion" which he says must "determine the Character," but he is quick to point out that there are "under parts" to every character which may or may not follow logically from the master passion. That is, a covetous man may be impudent, or he may be modest; an impudent man may be generous, or he may be avaricious. So formulating such combinations is in no wise inconsistent, rather through
these combinations we become aware of the wide variety and beauty of nature. But, Gally continues, "The main Difficulty consists in making the Master-Passion operate so conspicuously throughout the Whole, as that the Reader may, in every step of the Performance, immediately discover it." Here it would seem that Gally is using the master passion (or humour, as he later refers to it) as the basis for a consistent presentation of the character in question, at the same while readily admitting the wide number of varieties possible.

Later on in his essay Gally quotes Temple at length and agrees that England is indeed the land of humours. This being the case, Gally is more than ever amazed that no Englishman has ever attempted a "profess'd Performance in the Characteristic-Way." Although Gally is advocating imitation of the Theophrastan character, he departs from the method of the original, who described types, in his emphasis on the wide diversity possible in human nature. "Each man," he says, "contains a little World within himself, and every Heart is a new World." The movement is definitely toward individuality in literary representation, and along with it, toward a more tolerant attitude with regard to eccentric behavior, which may be inferred from the general tenor of Gally's remarks and above all, from his praise of the Tatler and Spectator sketches, with their "interspers'd Characters of Men and Manners compleatly drawn to the Life" (Gally, 31-99).

Corbyn Morris' *An Essay Towards Fixing the True Standards of Wit, Humour, Raillery, Satire, and ridicule* (1744) presents an extensive discussion of the semantic problems involved in
interpreting the terms "wit" and "humour." His view is
decidedly sympathetic; he defines humour as "any whimsical
Oddity or Foible, appearing in the Temper or Conduct of a
Person in real Life," and a humourist, also called a character,
as "a Person in real Life, obstinately attached to sensible
peculiar Oddities of his own genuine Growth, which appear in
his Temper and Conduct." Morris sees the aim of comedy as
twofold: "to exhibit the whimsical unmischievous Oddities,
Frolics, and Foibles of Persons in real Life, and also to
expose and ridicule their real Follies, Meanness, and Vices."
(He later enlarges upon this distinction in discussing the
comedy of humours as Shakespeare wrote it, and the variety
which Ben Jonson wrote.) It is significant that he lists
them in this order; the first one mentioned is certainly the
one which he prefers and with which he chooses to concern
himself in this essay. It is also significant that the oddi¬
ties and foibles a humourist exhibits are now seen as "whimsi¬
cal" and "unmischievous."

The humourist is further characterized as one who disdains
all ostentation, save of his own freedom; who is superior to
affectation and scorns imitation; who is sincere and has quick
feelings; who expresses his own opinions freely and even per¬
emptorily, at the same time half expecting them to be slighted;
who is proud without knowing or suspecting it; who loves reason
and liberty and scorns to flatter or betray. In fact, he is
"The Guardian of Freedom, and Scourge of such as do wrong... He
flourishes only in a Land of Freedom, and when that ceases
he dies too, the last and noblest Weed of the Soil of Liberty."
(An obvious echo of Temple, whose theory he later summarizes.)
Morris cites several reasons why humour is to be preferred to wit, one of which is that representations of humour frequently exhibit "very generous benevolent Sentiments of Heart; and these, tho' exerted in a particular odd Manner, justly command our Fondness and Love." (Humour which is allied with benevolence and love, which is whimsical and unmischievous, is a far different concept from that of Dennis.) Another reason for our preference for humour over wit is that

Humour, or the Foible of a Character in real Life, is usually insisted upon for some Length of Time. From whence, and from the common Knowledge of the Character, it is universally felt and understood. (Morris, 24)

This statement would seem to imply the sustaining (in literature) of a character described in terms of a humour, although the concept of consistency as such is not stated at this point.

Morris then moves ahead to consider in some detail three humourous characters, Falstaff, Don Quixote, and Sir Roger de Coverley. The choice is of course not without significance, implying as it does a carry-over from drama to prose fiction of this particular concept of characterisation. In the case of Falstaff we find wit and humour combined—"the Groundwork is Humour, or the Representation and Detection of a bragging and vaunting Coward in real Life," but if this were all, Falstaff would soon sink into infamy. Here his "inimitable Wit" comes into play—"For the sake of his Wit you forgive his Cowardice; or rather, are fond of his Cowardice for the Occasions it gives to his Wit." This cowardice, revealed only after much boasting and pretention, is the humour of
Falstaff, and Morris traces the way in which it leads him into "a perpetual Round of Sport and Diversion." (Here again we find the idea of consistency implied but not specifically spelled out.) Morris further remarks that Shakespeare has suited the figure of Falstaff's person to the turn of his mind. The humour of Falstaff is not only embellished by his wit, but is the most jovial and gay one possible. "He is the gay, the witty, the frolicksome, happy, and fat Jack Falstaff, the most delightful Swaggerer in all Nature," whom we cannot help but love, and whose oddities and foibles are such that we would choose in our own companions in real life. Such is the case with Sir Roger de Coverley as well; his foibles result from amiable causes. "Though he is guilty of continual Absurdities, and has little Understanding or real Abilities, you cannot but love and esteem him, for his Honour, Hospitality, and universal Benevolence." Finally, we come to Don Quixote, whose humour, according to Morris, "appears, in the Representation of a Person in real Life, fancying himself to be under the most solemn Obligations to attempt hard Achievements [sic.]; and upon this Whimsy immediately pursuing the most romantic Adventures, with great Gravity, Importance, and Self-sufficiency" (Morris, 12-39). Here again, his foibles all stem from worthy principles and hence delight rather than disgust us, which is of course the big point with Morris.

Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* had preceded Morris' essay by two years. In the famous preface to that novel Fielding discusses the critical theory which lies behind his work, stating that the ridiculous only falls within his province, and that
affectation is the only source of the true ridiculous, affection as it proceeds from vanity or from hypocrisy. Although Fielding does not use the term "humour" in his discussion, he seems in practice remarkably close to Morris' distinction between the aims of comedy: "To exhibit the whimsical unmischievous Oddities, Frolics, and Foibles of Persons in real Life; and also to expose and ridicule their real Follies, Meanness, and Vices" (Morris, 32). Thus the affectionation (whether vanity or hypocrisy) manifested by various of the characters in Joseph Andrews—Lady Booby, Slipslop, Parson Trulliber, the Tow-wows couple—despite the exaggeration with which these characters are presented, would fall into the second classification drawn by Morris (the traditional corrective view of comedy) and would indeed be ridiculous, and fit subjects for ridicule. (Shaftesbury had also advocated the use of ridicule as a test of truth, and had thereby caused a great controversy.) But Fielding's discussion in the preface to Joseph Andrews hardly seems satisfactory in explaining the greatest character in the novel, Parson Adams. Here it would seem that Morris' first distinction is the one actually adopted by Fielding; certainly Parson Adam's oddities, frolics, and foibles are whimsical and unmischievous, and meet Morris' further test of being such as we should choose to find in our own daily companions. With Fielding as with Morris we have, then, two views of the function of comic writing, corresponding to the two chief views regarding humour: ridicule and correction of imitation and affectation, but toleration and sympathy with harmless individual uniqueness.
and eccentricity.

Monboddo, who was a great admirer of Fielding, draws (On the Origin and Progress of Language, 1792) much this same distinction in discussing the characters in *Tom Jones*, although this is not particularly surprising since Monboddo echoes Fielding's theories almost word for word on every occasion possible. Humour he defines as "the imitation of characters ridiculous," and he praises Fielding as being the author of works containing more humour (in this sense) than those of any other writer in any other language. In *Tom Jones* Monboddo finds that "all the characters in it, are characters of humour, that is, of the ridiculous kind, except that of Mr. Allworthy, Jones himself, Sophia, and Blifil, who is a complete villain, and, perhaps, two or three more" (Monboddo, Vol. III, 347). (Fielding had also excepted the truly wicked as being unfit subjects for ridicule.) According to Morris' definition Allworthy would of course be a character of humour; and Professor Hooker has pointed out that even Tom Jones himself may be viewed within the framework of the humourist theory, and that he fits rather closely the outline suggested by Morris of the humourist toward whom we are sympathetic rather than critical.

Fielding discussed the question of character consistency briefly but emphatically in Chapter 1 of Book VIII of *Tom Jones*, though here the humour concept is not mentioned. He speaks of the necessity of presenting a character's actions, not only such as may be within the compass of human agency and which human agents may probably be supposed to do, but such as are likely for that very character to have performed, "For what may be only wonderful and surprising in one man,
may become improbable, or indeed impossible, when related of another." Fielding urges that for a man to act in direct contradiction to the dictates of his nature is, if not impossible, so unlikely as to be unfit for treatment in realistic works of literature. He concludes by citing and condemning a notable contemporary example of the violation of the principle of consistency:

Our modern authors of comedy have fallen almost universally into the error here hinted at; their heroes generally are notorious rogues, and their heroines abandoned jades, during the first four acts; but in the fifth, the former become very worthy gentlemen, and the latter women of virtue and discretion: nor is the writer so kind as to give the least trouble to reconcile or account for this monstrous change and incongruity. There is, indeed, no other reason to be assigned for it, than because the play is drawing to a conclusion; as if it was no less natural in a rogue to repent in the last act of a play, than in the last of his life...

A discussion of the humorous character, though not so called, is to be found in the Rambler, CXXXVIII (July 13, 1751), in which visits to the country, "those regions of negligence and liberty," are recommended to writers in order that they may diversify the characters they represent, "for in the country are original characters chiefly to be found." In cities the "minute discriminations" which distinguish men are almost surely stamped out, due to the pressures of fashion, form, and custom, and the fancy is checked "in its first efforts to break forth into experiments of caprice." But in the country quite the reverse is true; "every man is a separate and independent being...the impulses of nature act unrestrained, and the disposition dares to show itself in its true form, without any disguise of hypocrisy, or
Each person lives to please himself without being concerned about differing from the general practice. "This utter exemption from restraint leaves every anomalous quality to operate in its full extent, and suffers the natural character to diffuse itself to every part of life." Thus Dr. Johnson shows that "the freedom and laxity of a rustic life produces remarkable particularities of conduct or manner." He concludes this paper with a description of Mrs. Busy, a "female character" who is so committed to the life of frugality that, upon the death of her husband, she steals out of the darkened room in which she receives the condolences of her friends, to milk the cows every morning and evening. The implication of the city-loving Dr. Johnson is that the rural "character" may manifest foibles and caprices which are "peculiar" but in no way harmful or disgusting, but that he is likely to follow his natural impulses too far, to the point of neglecting something of great importance, as Mrs. Busy does the non-practical side of her children's education.

Beattie (1776) followed the opinion expressed by Dr. Johnson that the wide variety of characters which "it has been remarked" are found more in England than in other countries, arises from the essentially rural distribution of the population.

"were the country gentlemen of England to live in towns, or to meet frequently in a common forum, or in any way to form one large society, their peculiarities would disappear, and their behaviour...would become externally uniform, or nearly so, and if they were not conscious of their own independence and privileges, they would not have the courage to think for themselves, but would
probably be imitators of one another, or insipid followers of the fashion... The laughable peculiarities that distinguish Don Quixote, Parson Adams, Sir Roger de Coverley, Squire Western, and many other heroes of the Comic Romance, are such as men could not be supposed to acquire, if they did not live secluded in some degree from the general intercourse of society.

(Beattie, Essays on Poetry and Music, 430-31)

It is rather surprising that such a stern moralist as Beattie finds Squire Western's peculiarities "laughable"; certainly Squire Allworthy would seem more in keeping with the other characters Beattie lists. This section of Beattie's work is entitled "An attempt to account for the superiority of the moderns in Ludicrous Writing." Beattie concludes by stating that in order to examine the topic fully it would be necessary "to give a critical analysis of our most celebrated works in wit and humour, and of the human characters displayed in them; and to inquire, from what external causes the laughable peculiarities [again the term is used] in each character arise" (Beattie, Essays on Poetry and Music, 441), but this he leaves to future critics.

Murphy, discussing the progress of Fielding's career, speaks of a "love of imitation, [which] very soon prevailed in Mr. Fielding's mind." Upon settling in London, the "variety of characters" there abounding of course did not fail to attract his attention. This propensity of his, added to his necessary contacts with eager creditors and dissembling friends, led him early to become "an observer of men and manners," to see the latent sources of human actions, and to trace the incongruous conduct arising from them.
Thus Fielding, according to Murphy, took the ruling passion or humour of a character as the principle in line with which the character's behavior was to be accounted for. But here Murphy has in mind humour in the sense of affectation—Fielding's ridiculous—and he asserts that Fielding was never so happy as when he was developing a character made up of "motley and repugnant properties," and showing a man of "specious pretences" turning out to be just the reverse of what he would appear. In this Murphy compares Fielding with Theophrastus and Molière. As we have seen, such an analysis is of necessity only a partial explanation of Fielding's actual method of characterization and again leaves his major characters, also "humourous," unaccounted for. It might be noted that here Murphy associates undesirable affectations with characters dwelling in cities. In like manner Beattie praised country life for fostering laughable (and therefore harmless) peculiarities which, to his mind, tended to become lost in an urban existence. And even Dr. Johnson mentioned the "disguise of hypocrisy" to which city life gives rise.

In the same year, 1762, the Critical Review carried a comparatively lengthy review of Smollett's The Adventures of Sir Launcelot Greaves, which received high praise as affording reassurance that wit and humour had not "taken their flight
with public virtue." Contrary to the majority of modern works, both fiction and drama, this novel, according to the Critical, is amusing and of interest not because of the intricacies of the plot, but because of the characters. The reviewer leaves little doubt that he is discussing characters of humour, speaking as he does of "the ridiculous simplicity of Adams, the absurd vehemence of Western, the boisterous generosity of Bowling, the native humour of Trunnion, and the laughable solemnity of Uncle Toby," all of which are praised for being "characteristical." Each of those characters is complete in itself without reference to the rest of the work; novels in which such characters are to be found furnish "perpetual entertainment," for "an engaging story will bear relating but once; a humourous character will bear viewing repeatedly" (Critical Review, Vol. XIII [1762], 427). What better evidence than this piece of criticism could be cited to illustrate the validity of Tuveson's statement regarding the impact of Lockean psychology on literature, that character for and of itself was becoming an adequate theme for the imaginative writer.

As a concluding note we may consider Hazlitt's comments "On the English Novelists," which appeared well into the nineteenth century (1818). Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, and Sterne are the four great English novelists, and, after surveying the merits of each, Hazlitt sets himself the task of explaining why it should happen that they all belong to the same age in history. His conclusion is only a slight modification of Temple's position of more than a century before, which of course preceded the works of the novelists
in question. In despot countries, according to Hazlitt's theory, human nature is so unimportant as to merit neither study nor description. But in England, due to the Protestant ascendancy and the House of Hanover, and especially during the reign of George II,

...a security of person and property, and a freedom of opinion had been established, which made every man feel of some consequence to himself, and appear an object of some curiosity to his neighbours: our manners became more domesticated; there was a general spirit of sturdiness and independence, which made our English character more truly English than perhaps at any other period—that is, more tenacious of its own opinions and purposes...Each individual had a certain ground-plot of his own to cultivate his particular humours in, and let them shoot out at pleasure, and a most plentiful crop they have produced accordingly. The reign of George II was, in a word, the age of hobby-horses, but, since that period, things have taken a different turn.28

The age of hobby-horses, or of humours, was also the age of the greatest English novelists, and Hazlitt suggests that not coincidence, but a causal relationship, was involved. From the above remarks it will be noted that the concept of a character's being consistently presented in terms of his humour is more often implied than stated directly, contrary to the case of consistency when described in relation to the ruling passion theory. However, the implication would definitely seem to be present that an author, having established the humour of his character, is to be praised for maintaining the presentation of that character consistent with the original description. As Dennis expressed it, "Humour if it be true and good must always maintain and preserve [Characters]...."29
IV.

If eighteenth-century critics were concerned to see consistency of characterization maintained once a character had been described as being of a certain type, they were also concerned that the work in question—be it epic, drama, or novel—contain a wide diversity of characters, each carefully distinguished from all the others. Especially deserving praise was the author who achieved this diversity among characters superficially alike. Here again may be noted the emphasis on individuality and on the wide number of possibilities inherent in human nature, an emphasis which, as has been suggested, grew increasingly from the time of Locke onward.

As early as 1705 Mrs. Manley praised writers of modern romances for excelling the ancients in lifelike characterization, due to their "extraordinary penetration" of the "labyrinth" of human passions. She distinguished between the great author and the ordinary one, who is content to describe men in general as covetous, courageous, or ambitious, "without entering into the Particulars and without specifying the Character of their Covetousness, Valour or Ambition..." The ordinary author fails to perceive "nice distinctions" in the passions, or to comprehend that passions are different in all men. On the contrary,

...the Genius of the Author marvellously appears when he Nicely discovers those Differences, and exposes to the Reader's Sight those almost unperceivable Jealousies which escape the Sight of most Authors, because they have not an exact
Motion of the Turnings and Motions of Humane Understanding; and they know nothing but the gross Passions, from whence they make but general Descriptions.

(Manley, a, recto and verso)

This note sounded early in the century by Mrs. Manley—the difference between general and particular characterization, between a general trait such as courage and its varying manifestations—was to be echoed many times in the works of far more important critics.

Shaftesbury, in his Advice to an Author, at one point discusses the relative merit of an author's writing in the first person, or losing his own identity through accurate characterization of imaginary personages. The latter is vastly to be preferred, but is also far more difficult, since it is not enough "that the Persons introduc'd speak pertinent and good Sense, at every turn. It must be seen from what Bottom they speak; from what Principle, what Stock or Fund of Knowledge they draw; and what Kind or Species of Understanding they possess." For, Shaftesbury continues, each person's "understanding" may be distinguished by its characteristic note, "since Nature has characteriz'd Temper and Minds as peculiarly as Faces. And for an Artist who draws naturally, 'tis not enough to shew us merely Faces which may be call'd Men's: Every Face Must be a certain Man's" (Shaftesbury, Advice to an Author, Part I, Sect. III).

Pope is even more explicit, praising both Homer and Shakespeare for this aspect of their characterization. In his preface to the Iliad he lauds Homer for having drawn more characters, with a more visible and striking variety,
than any other writer. Continuing the comparison which Shaftesbury had made, Pope asserts that no painter could have distinguished his characters by their features more completely than Homer has by their manners. He concludes with a somewhat lengthy example:

The single quality of Courage is wonderfully diversified in the several characters of the Iliad. That of Achilles is furious and intractable; that of Diomedes forward, yet listening to Advice and subject to Command; we see in Ajax an heavy and self-considering Valour, in Hector an active and vigilant one. The courage of Agamemnon is inspired by Love of Empire and Ambition, that of Menelaus mix'd with Softness and Tenderness for his people: we find in Idomenes a plain direct soldier, in Sarpedon a gallant and generous one.

(Iliad, Preface, 0, recto and verso)

According to Pope, then, Homer, to use Mrs. Manley's phrase, "entered into the particulars" with regard to characterization. Not being content with gross passions only, he carefully distinguished the appearance of a single one in various of his heroes, hence one of the chief reasons for his superiority to ordinary writers.

Ten years later, in the preface to his edition of the works of Shakespeare, Pope praised Shakespeare's characterization in similar terms. Every one of Shakespeare's characters is as much an individual as those in life itself, and it is equally impossible to find two alike. Furthermore, "such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will upon comparison be found remarkably distinct."30 (This is, of course, the exact thesis from which Whately was to write his essay some fifty years later.) Not only the creation of character, but the preservation of it,
is to be praised in Shakespeare. Had the speeches in the various plays been printed without the names of the persons who speak them, the speaker might every time have been correctly guessed. (Homer's skill in this regard had also been remarked on by Pope:

This speech, if we consider the occasion of it, could be made by no person but Nestor.

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(Iliad, Bk. IV, 1. 145, note)

Homer is in nothing more excellent than in that Distinction of Characters which he maintains thro' his whole Poem: What Andromache here says, can be spoken properly by none but Andromache; There is nothing general in her Sorrows, nothing that can be transfer'd to another Character...

(Bk. XXII, 1. 600, note)

Blackwell, in his Inquiry into the Life and Writings of Homer (1735), reveals himself a disciple of Shaftesbury, praising the Homeric heroes for having lived simply and naturally, speaking and acting "without other Restraint than their own native Apprehensions of good and evil..." (Blackwell, 55). He concludes that Homer—and his heroes—were primarily products of their environment, and that the climate, manners, language, and religion of the times conspired to make Homer the father of poetry. Although the chief aim of his work is to consider these alleged reasons for Homer's greatness as a poet, Blackwell devotes some time investigating the question of characterization. In fact, he asserts that it is character portrayal which affords us the greatest pleasure in reading the Iliad. Blackwell notes with approval Homer's use of contrast between characters:
the ancien Hestor, mild, and calm, and talkative, [is] opposed to the young fiery Thessalian, the intractable Achilles: The too indulgent Priam stands by the prudent Polydamas, and the wise Antenor: The Hardiness of the noble Hector, and Debauchery of the luxurious Paris, serve but to illustrate one another...

(Blackwell, 303)

He continues by remarking that it has already been noticed "that the Characters of his Heroes, tho' of the same kind, and excelling in one and the same thing, are yet all diversified, and marked with some Peculiarities that distinguish them, and make a Separation." In a manner obviously reminiscent of Pope, Blackwell cites and illustrates the example of bravery.

...both Achilles and Ajax, Diomedes and Hector, Ulysses and Merion are all brave; but it is in a different manner. Achilles is fierce and impetuous, Ajax steady and firm, Diomodes gallant and open, Ulysses cautious and bold; and both Agamemnon and Hector are marked with that princely Courage which becomes the Generals of two great Nations.

(Blackwell, 304)

Although Blackwell uses even this point to prove his thesis that "Truth and Nature" alone could first have formed, and later described "those Differences, so real and yet so delicate," his emphasis on diversity of characterization serves as another example of the importance of this concept for the age.

Pemberton, in his Observations on Poetry (1733), remarks that characters in epic or dramatic works may be either general or particular. By general characters he implies "the different cast of mind owing to difference of country, of age, sex, birth, and fortune," whereas character in
particular denotes "sentiment and general manners diversified according to the different temper and passions of each individual." It is in the latter that "divine invention" shows itself most clearly; "to this general manners and sentiment are only the outline." Here it is that Homer's pre-eminence is most conspicuous:

But in this intimate knowledge of the human mind, and this discernment, how the general passions operate in each particular temper, Homer stands unrivalled. Where this faculty is wanting, however the poet aims at varying his characters, they all take a tincture from himself.31

That the concept was readily transferred from the epic and drama to the novel is to be seen from its appearance—in theory and practice—in Fielding's novels, and later in the works of several critics of prose fiction. In Tom Jones (Bk. X, Ch. 1) Fielding takes occasion to warn the undiscerning critic against forming erroneous judgments on several topics, one of which is the apparent similarity which exists of necessity between characters of the same occupation (as "the landlady who appears in the seventh book and her in the ninth") or characters motivated by the same vice or folly. Certain characteristics must certainly exist in common between similar characters; "to be able to preserve these characteristics, and at the same time to diversify their operations" is one mark of the good writer, and is appreciated only by the discerning reader. Or, as Fielding illustrates the point, "Every person, for instance, can distinguish between Sir Epicure Mammon and Sir Popling Flutter; but to note the difference between Sir Popling Flutter and Sir Courtly Nice requires a more exquisite judgment." He concludes this passage with a
condemnation of modern theater-goers, saying that, if their knowledge of Latin were sufficient to enable them to read Virgil, they would no doubt condemn any dramatic representation of an amorous widow as a servile imitation of Sidon, so imperfect is their discernment of the subtleties of characterization, and so completely do they fail to "enter into the particulars."

Murphy later praised Fielding for the wide variety of characters contained in a single work, Tom Jones. "Still observing the grand essential rule of unity in the design, I believe no author has introduced a greater diversity of characters, or displayed them more fully, or in more various attitudes." He notes that Thwackum and Square "are excellently opposed to each other." In general the examples which he cites are chosen from the main characters of the novel, and he does not elaborate the idea of diversity in his discussion of them; rather, precision and truth to life seem to be Murphy's actual criteria for judging characterization. His concluding statement is somewhat more to the point:

In short, all the characters down to Partridge, and even to a maid or an hostler at an inn, are drawn with truth and humour; and indeed they abound so much, and are so often brought forward in a dramatic manner, that every thing may be said to be here in action; every thing has manners; Originally, Aristotle's statement about the Homeric heroes. Pope had quoted it in his introductory remarks about Homer's characterization, and the very manners which belong to it in human life. They look, they act, they speak to our imaginations, just as they appear to us in the world. The sentiments which the utter are peculiarly annexed to their habits, passions, and ideas; which is what poetical propriety requires...

(Murphy, 30)
Fielding's later novel, *Amelia*, was judged by Murphy as inferior to *Tom Jones*; in it the characters "have not those touches of singularity, those specific differences, which are so beautifully marked in our author's former works..." (Murphy, 32).

Thomas Whately has been mentioned several times as one of the first critics to concern himself almost exclusively with a minute analysis of Shakespeare's characters. Whately's projected work was left unfinished, only his "Remarks" on Macbeth and Richard III having been completed at the time of his death in 1772. His initial assertion is that "every play of Shakespeare abounds with instances of his excellence in distinguishing characters." This is contrasted with the method of the generality of dramatic writers, who fail to observe that "a villain differs not more from a saint, than he does in some particulars from another as bad as himself: and the same degrees of anger, excited by the same occasions, break forth in as many several shapes, as there are various tempers." (Whately, 6). That Shakespeare is superior in this regard Whately illustrates by examining the contrasts between Macbeth and Richard, who "agree so much in situation, and... differ so much in disposition..."

Both are soldiers, both usurpers; both attain the throne by the same means, by treason and murder; and both lose it too in the same manner, in battle against the person claiming it as lawful heir. Perfidy, violence, and tyranny are common to both; and those only, their obvious qualities, would have been attributed indiscriminately to both by an ordinary dramatic writer. But Shakespeare...has ascribed opposite principles and motives to the same designs and actions, and various effect to
the operation of the same events upon different tempers. Richard and Macbeth, as represented by him, agree in nothing but their fortunes.

Once again, then, with that early, we find the concept of the great writer distinguished by his ability to see more than the "obvious qualities."

Two Homeric critics of the late eighteenth century echoed earlier remarks on the subject of diversity among characters. Wood, in his *Essay upon the Original Genius and Writings of Homer* (1775), was writing to show how exactly Homer had described the lands of the Greeks and Trojans, and how exactly he had represented the characters of the men of both nations. In connection with the latter he gives a somewhat detailed discussion of the manners of the heroic age, concluding that,

> If this short sketch of Heroic life be just, it allows me to conclude with the highest compliment to the powers and extent of Homer's original genius: for I may venture to say, that from the greatest uniformity of simple manners that ever fell to the share of any Poet, he drew the greatest variety of distinct characters that has ever been produced by the same hand.

It must be noted that with Wood, as with the earlier Blackwell, such comments on characterization are necessarily subservient to the primary interest and bias of the writer.

Beattie, in his discussion "Of Poetical Characters," is once more reminiscent of Pope in his remarks on the diversity of Homer's characters. Each character, according to Beattie, is "perfectly distinct in itself, and different from all the rest; insomuch that, before we come to the end of the Iliad, we are as well acquainted with his heroes, as with the faces
and temper of our most familiar friends" (Beattie, Essays on Poetry and Music, 83). Not so in the inferior Aeneid, where the subordinate heroes are all the same, and "we have no clear knowledge of any one of them. Achates is faithful, and Gyas is brave, and Cioanthus is brave; and this is all we can say of the matter." But among the Homeric heroes, although similar characters are to be found, as is the case in any society, "we never mistake one for another." Beattie continues by demonstrating the differences between the wisdom and eloquence which are leading traits in both Nestor and Ulysses, and concludes with an example much like that of Pope:

Homer's heroes are all valiant; yet each displays a modification of valour peculiar to himself. One is valiant from principle, another from constitution; one is rash, another cautious; one is impetuous and headstrong, another impetuous, but tractable; one is cruel, another merciful; one is insolent and ostentatious, another gentle and unassuming; one is vain of his person, another of his strength, and a third of his family. It would be tedious to give a complete enumeration.

(Beattie, Essays on Poetry and Music, 84-85)

It has already been noted that another Scotch critic, Monboddo, was outspoken in his praise of Fielding. With regard to characterization, Monboddo distinguishes Tom Jones as having "more of character in it than any work, ancient or modern, that I know." Fielding's masterpiece "has more personages brought into the story than any thing of the poetic kind I have ever seen...all those personages have characters peculiar to them, in so much, that there is not even an host or an hostess upon the road, hardly a servant, who is not distinguished in that way; in short, I never saw any thing
that was so much animated, and, as I may say, all alive with characters and manners, as the history of Tom Jones" (Monboddo, Vol. III, 134-35). Monboddo, a classicist, is certainly not far from the classical criterion here; Fielding's hostesses and servants merely take the place of the Homeric heroes in numerous similar statements.

Perhaps it was in the nature of Fielding's works more than those of the other early novelists that such comments be made about his characterization. Richardson, for one, was to come in for higher praise in connection with other aspects of character delineation, as we shall see. However, at least one critic noted briefly the skill with which Richardson diversified the characters in Clarissa. John Dunlop, in his History of Fiction (1814), asserted that the chief merit of Richardson lies in his delineation of character. Clarissa he praised as "the model of female excellence"; Lovelace he condemned as "an outrage on verisimilitude." Aside from Clarissa, Dunlop found "something similar" in the rest of the Harlowe family, but at the same time "something peculiar to each individual" which set him apart from all the rest (Dunlop, Vol. II, 571).

On the basis of the examples considered it seems reasonable to assert that entering into "the particulars" which diversify manking, that establishing this "something peculiar" in each character, was an important element with regard to characterization in the minds of critics of imaginative literature throughout the eighteenth century.
V.

Not only was the result—the actual precision of the characterization as achieved in the work—of interest to eighteenth-century critics, but also the process whereby this result was obtained. Thus an author who excelled in character portrayal, in whatever genre, was almost invariably lauded for his **knowledge of human nature**, a knowledge which it was believed enabled him to see deeper into the motives, interests, and passions of his fellow men than would the ordinary superficial observer. Statements to this effect are so numerous as to become routine to the modern reader, but are of value in pointing up the importance of the concept for the age.

Though there was general agreement among critics of literature about the importance of an author's possessing this knowledge of human nature, there were different opinions as to how such a knowledge was best obtained. At least three methods were recommended, separately or in combination: introspection, that is, gaining knowledge of one's self, and then moving outward; reading, thereby familiarizing one's self with what has already been observed about human nature; and finally, observing as wide a variety of people in real life as possible. In addition to these three, some authors were said to possess an intuitive knowledge of human nature. Perhaps an investigation of various statements made by critics in this regard will serve to make clear each of these positions.

Dennis (1701) seemed to combine aspects of all of them in advocating three necessary steps for the aspiring writer of comedy. He must possess 1) learning, 2) a knowledge of the world and of mankind, and 3) leisure and serenity. He
explained the second requirement by saying that since comedy is "drawing after the life," and is supposed to copy the age, how should the writer of comedy hope to succeed "without knowing the persons." The third requirement stipulates that the comic writer must be "undisturbed by tormenting passions" so that he can be free to "transform himself into his several Characters" and "make their Passions, their Interests, and their Concern his own."33

In his Advice to an Author, Shaftesbury stressed the importance of introspection in gaining the necessary understanding of "the natural Strength and Powers, as well as the Weaknesses of a human Mind."

He who deals in Characters, must of necessity know his own; or he will know nothing. And he who would give the world a profitable Entertainment of this sort, should be sure to profit, first, by himself. 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 Goods within ourselves, and surveying our domestick Fund. A little of this Home-Practice will serve to make great Discoveries.

(Shaftesbury, Advice to an Author, Part I, Sect. II)

Throughout this work Shaftesbury recommends the method of introspection, of soliloquy and self-examination, to the would-be author, urging him to acquire a "speculative habit" which would above all enable him to know himself. And, as we see from the above passage, such self-knowledge will then enable him to portray imaginative characters with greater accuracy.

Pope praised Shakespeare for his intuitive knowledge of human nature. Shakespeare's was a peculiar talent, "something
between penetration and felicity," which enabled him to hit upon "that particular point on which...the force of each motive depends."

This is perfectly amazing, from a man of no education or experience in those great and public scenes of life which are usually the subjects of his thoughts, so that he seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through human nature at one glance, and to be the only author that gives ground for a very new opinion, that the philosopher and even the man of the world, may be born, as well as the poet.

Writing in the same year, 1726, was Henry Gally, who, in discussing characteristic writing, pointed out that "Human Nature, in its various Forms and Affections, is the Subject; and he who would attempt a Work of this Kind, with some assurance of Success, must not only study other Men; he has a more difficult Task to perform; he must study himself." Such knowledge is indeed the essence of philosophy, according to Gally, and is an inestimable treasure. A superficial knowledge of human nature will not do; the writer of characters "must be a Master of the Science; and be able to lead a Reader, knowingly, thro' that Labyrinth of the Passions, which fill the Heart of Man, and make him either a noble or a despicable Creature." Nor is this an easy task—"Many have studied these Things, but few have thoroughly understood them. The Labour is vast; 'tis almost infinite; and yet without a knowledge of these Things, 'twill be impossible ever to draw a character...to the Life" (Gally, 29-32). And Gally re-iterates his original assertion that a perfect knowledge of human nature is obtained not by studying others or ourselves
alone, but by studying both.

Jean-Baptiste de Boyer, Marquis d'Argens, in one of the so-called Jewish Letters later translated into English, while recommending Grebillon's novel, Égaremens du Coeur et de l'Esprit, urges that genius, wit, and learning do not suffice to enable an author to draw "Pictures...to the Life." Rather, "without an Acquaintance with the World, and a perfect Knowledge of Mankind, 'tis impossible to attain to this Point... The only Qualification to paint Manners and Customs, is a long Experience; and a Man must have examin'd the various Characters very closely, to be able to describe them to a Nicety."35 He expands this last statement by pointing out the absurdity of a hack writer's pretending to give a just delineation of a prince, a courtier, or a fine lady, whose acquaintance the writer has made only by being dashed with mud by their carriages. Thus according to the Marquis d'Argens a knowledge of men in all walks of life, and of all social classes, is part of the necessary equipment of the novelist.

This work is of special interest in that it antedates (1744) Fielding's parallel comments on the same subject. In the introductory chapter of Book IX of Tom Jones, entitled "Of those who lawfully may, and of those who may not, write such histories as this," Fielding discusses the importance to the novelist of genius and of learning, only to conclude that these without "conversation" avail almost nothing. "However exquisitely human nature may have been described by writers, the true practical system can be learnt only in the world," that is, by actual observation and conversation. And this
conversation must be with all ranks and degrees of men, continues Fielding, since knowledge of low life will not instruct an author in high life, and vice versa. In Chapter 1 of Book XIV, "An essay to prove that an author will write the better for having some knowledge of the subject on which he writes," Fielding elaborates this last point, saying that the reason many English authors have failed in attempting to describe the manners of high life is that they know nothing about it. Again he asserts that imitation will not do. "The picture must be after Nature herself. A true knowledge of the world is gained only by conversation, and manners of every rank must be seen in order to be known." Since such knowledge of high society is difficult for most men to obtain, it is fortunate, says Fielding, that this knowledge of high life "is no very great resource to a writer whose province is comedy, or that kind of novels which, like this I am writing, is of the comic class."

Here again, then, we find a critical concept originally set forth with regard to the classical genres being transferred to prose fiction as it developed in the eighteenth century. On into the second half of the century writers were continually being praised for their knowledge of human nature, both in brief and in extended statements. Coventry, in the 1751 edition of Pompey the Little, asserted that "the characters of a novel principally determine its merit," and lauded Fielding as "the great master of Human Nature." 35 Kames, in his Elements of Criticism (1762), referred to Shakespeare as having "more knowledge of human nature than any of
our philosophers," and urged that "in order to represent the various attitudes of the mind," a writer ought to be "intimi-
dately acquainted with emotions and characters...A general
notion of the passions, in their grosser differences of strong
and weak, elevated and humble, severe and gay, is far from
being sufficient..."37 The author of Letters Concerning the
Present State of England (1772) coupled Shakespeare and
Fielding as having, of all men, seen deepest into the human
mind. In 1776 Samuel Jackson Pratt, the pseudonymous Court-
ney Melmoth, acclaimed Fielding as "indisputably the most ad-
mirable" of the English novel writers because he is "the most
natural...Whether humorous or serious, all his characters are
taken from life; and so correct, that we instantly feel the
resemblance...we are charmed by every stroke, because it is a
faithful transcript from the volume of Human Nature."38
Whately contended that Shakespeare, of all dramatic writers,
had the most deep and extensive knowledge of the human
heart. William Richardson of course based his whole series of essays
on the characters of Shakespeare on the assumption that
Shakespeare is "the great poet of Human Nature." According
to Richardson, such a poet is "peculiarly favourd by nature,
and intimately acquainted with the constitution of the human
mind, not by a long train of metaphysical deductions, but,
as it wore, by immediate intuition..." (William Richardson, 1).
(Not so with ordinary men, who desire to study human nature in
an attempt to improve their own, but find the task too dif-
cult. They are admonished to "borrow assistance from the
poets, and especially from Shakespeare," (William Richardson,
3] since by observing his masterful representations of human
nature a useful lesson is to be learned in this regard.)

Homer was not forgotten, Wood in 1775 praising him for having given "the most correct history of the human passions and affections, that have ever yet been exhibited under one view." According to Wood, Homer's achievement was due to the fact that he investigated "the various springs of action, not as they are fancied in the Closet, transcribed from speculative systems, and copied from books, but as they were seen exerted in real life." Observation, then, is Wood's primary explanation of Homer's successful representation of human nature; however, he later modifies this somewhat by saying that Homer took "his passions and sentiments from experience of the operations of the human mind in others, compared with, and corrected by, his own feelings."

Beattie asserted that, contrary to Horace, a knowledge of moral philosophy is not enough to enable one to assign the "suitable qualities and duties to each poetical personage." Rather to this must be added "an extensive knowledge of mankind" (Beattie, Essays on Poetry and Music, 64-65). Both Richardson and Fielding come in for praise on this score. According to Beattie, Richardson's "characters are well drawn, and distinctly marked; and he delineates the operation of the passions with a picturesque accuracy, which discovers great knowledge of human nature." But the highest praise goes to Fielding who, he says, possessed "more knowledge of mankind, than any other person of modern times, Shakespeare excepted" (Beattie, "On Fable and Romance," 568-72).

Warton (1782) supported the claim of English writers to an equal knowledge of human nature with the French, who were
supposed to have excelled in penetrating the secret recesses of the human heart. According to Warton, Bacon in his essays, Hobbes and Hume in their treatises, Richardson in Clarissa, and Fielding in Tom Jones, all showed "a profound knowledge of man." 41

Moore, in his View of the Commencement and Progress of Romance (1797), speaks of Richardson as having described the operation of the passions "with a truth and minuteness that evinces a great knowledge of human nature" (Moore, lxxxvii). In a similar work, The History of Fiction (1814), John Dunlop states that Fielding is distinguished for his delineation of country squires and Smollett for his naval characters, "showing how necessary experience and intercourse with the world are to a painter of manners" (Dunlop, Vol. II, 575).

Finally, Hazlitt's discussion of the English novelists in his Lectures on the Comic Writers (1819) may be considered. Fielding receives highest praise; Hazlitt finds his novels most remarkable for the "profound knowledge of human nature" contained therein. As a painter of real life Fielding was the equal of Hogarth; as an observer of human nature he was little inferior to Shakespeare. Again and again Hazlitt comments on Fielding's "extreme subtlety of observation on the springs of human conduct in ordinary characters," and contrasts him in this regard with Smollett, who viewed his characters from the outside only and excelled as a caricaturist, while Fielding was "the exact painter and profound metaphysician." Richardson is also contrasted with Fielding; his is the "truth of reflection" as opposed to Fielding's "truth of nature." The none-too-explicit term "truth of
reflection" seems to imply an artificial, consciously literary quality in Richardson's characterization; indeed Hazlitt speaks of the "artificial reality" found in his novels, compared with which he prefers Fielding's "masterly pictures of the characters of men as he saw them existing." 42

But with Hazlitt we are well into the nineteenth century, and the tide was perhaps beginning to turn in a direction away from Richardson. If Hazlitt preferred Fielding on the basis of his more profound knowledge of human nature, earlier critics had preferred Richardson for the same reason. Among contemporary critics Fielding, the comic writer, was more frequently praised for the diversity of his characters and for his portrayal of manners, rather than for his knowledge of human nature. The difference was expressed by Murphy in 1763:

...the strong specific qualities of his [Fielding's] personages he sets forth with a few masterly strokes, but the nicer and more subtle workings of the mind he is not so anxious to investigate; when the passions are agitated, he can give us their conflicts, and their various transitions, but he does not always point out the secret cause that sets them in motion... Fielding was more attached to the manners than to the heart...

(Murphy, 51)

Boswell quotes Johnson several times in this connection. Johnson was of course extremely partisan in his praise of Richardson at the expense of Fielding. Clarissa he spoke of as "the first book in the world for the knowledge of the human heart," 43 and he claimed to find "more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's, than in all Tom Jones." 44 He, too, distinguished characters of manners from those which result from deeper probing:
...there is all the difference in the world between characters of nature and characters of manners; and there is the difference between the characters of Fielding and those of Richardson. Characters of manners are very entertaining; but they are to be understood, by a more superficial observer, than characters of nature, where a man must dive into the recesses of the human heart.  

And in yet another statement comparing the two, Johnson said that the author of Clarissa "had picked the kernel of life... while Fielding was contented with the husk," that "there was as great a difference between them as between a man who knew how a watch was made, and a man who could tell the hour by looking on the dial-plate."  

Perhaps the safest conclusion we may draw from those last, contemporary statements is the same one suggested earlier in explaining why Fielding received much more praise for the diversity among his characters than did Richardson. It is in the nature of a serious, and in the case of Clarissa, a tragic work, to probe more deeply into the motives and passions of the characters involved, and in that of a comic work--Fielding's novels--to remain on the level of manners, achieving characterization by quicker and lighter strokes.

VI.

At the beginning of this chapter on psychology and the theory of characterization, the importance of the philosophical concepts of Locke and Shaftesbury was indicated. In concluding it seems fitting to consider yet one more aspect of the general emphasis on individualism (Locke) and the theory
of artistic creation (Shaftesbury) which directly or indirectly had its impact on literary characterization and the criticism pertaining thereto.

The terms "invention," "genius," "creative genius," and finally "original genius" were of course in frequent use among eighteenth-century critics, with the expected diversity in shades of meaning. The chronology of these words and their importance in the history of literary criticism has been studied rather closely by Logan Pearsall Smith, who points out that the adjective "original"—implying, by extension from painting, the distinction between an original work and a copy—first occurred in literary criticism around the middle of the seventeenth century and soon became a current term, especially when used in reference to Shakespeare. An "Original," then, was one who copied Nature; other artists copied other works of art—such seems to be the meaning of the word as used by Davenant, Dryden, and Pope. Or, as Smith expresses it, "The great original poets, like Homer and Shakespeare, were those who had most directly imitated Nature, and given the richest... renderings of what they found." Concurrently Smith finds the term "invention" used—by Dryden, Temple, Johnson, etc.—as a name for "that finding in Nature of something new to copy which was called originality." But gradually critics became aware that the term "invention" was not quite an adequate description for all aspects of poetry, which was after all something more than an imitation and an adornment of nature. Specifically, the imitation of nature theory broke down when the attempt was made to discuss characters like Caliban, in
connection with whom Dryden first used the word "create":

"Shakespeare seems thus to have created a person which was not in Nature, a boldness which, at first sight, would appear intolerable." Prior to Dryden's use of the word in this sense (1679) it had appeared only sporadically, but after him it occurred in Temple, Addison, Shaftesbury, and later critics. As this notion of "creation" and of the artist as a "creator" became current, there sprang into use a group of other terms which were needed for an adequate expression of the concept. Among these was the adjective "creative" which, first appearing in the seventeenth century (1678), became, by the time we reach the third quarter of the eighteenth century, a common adjective in literary criticism, used by Thomson, the Eartons, Duff, and numerous others. It occurred in connection with the word "imagination," or "fancy," the imagination having by this time begun to be reinstated as the faculty to which poetry was addressed, and by which it was produced. Smith continues:

But if poetry was the product of the imagination, if the imagination was "creative," and "originality" was the mark of its "creations," then a word was needed to describe this special kind of poetic imagination, and the poet who possessed it. Fortunately for the critics of the time there was a word already current which was found capable of absorbing into itself these new conceptions. This was the word Genius...28

The history of the word "genius," deriving, as it does, meaning from two Latin words, is extremely complex, and the shades of meaning are often so subtle as to make accurate distinction between them difficult. As early as 1634, however, the Latinate sense of "ingenium," or genius as a person's natural bent or disposition, seems to have led to the notion that this
prompting or guiding genius was in itself a kind of inspiration (with the traditional poetic definition of inspiration as "infusion into the mind by a superior power"), although this extension in meaning belongs chiefly to the eighteenth century. This inborn and, as it were, inspired element in the conception of genius was in turn emphasized by the distinction drawn—specifically with reference to Shakespeare—between writers whose talent or genius was the product of study and imitation, and those who were indebted to their natural endowments alone. By the middle of the eighteenth century a number of essays, "reflections," and "observations" were beginning to be published on the subject of "genius" and "original genius"; those relevant to this discussion will be cited in the proper chronological order.

These terms assume importance in this study of theories of characterization in that the way in which an author's creative role was regarded by the critic would naturally influence in some degree the way he viewed that author's characters. In general, the developing view of the role of the author may be considered as a part of the whole movement from classicism to romanticism, from an emphasis on correctness and the "rules" of composition, often based on the models of the ancients and applicable to all authors, to a stress on individual freedom from the restraints of tradition, artistic creeds, and established forms. The whole subject is a complicated one and beyond the scope of this paper, except for a brief indication of its relation to critical theories regarding characterization.

Shaftesbury's philosophy concerning the role of the artist
is an important early expression of a doctrine which was to
grow in importance as the century progressed. In *The Moral-
ists* Shaftesbury draws an analogy between God's relation to
nature and the artist's to his creation; the artist is akin
to God, but works on a lower plane. Both nature and art are
therefore to be viewed as products of a creative energy which
gives them being. Dissatisfied with the attempt of Hobbes
and Locke to explain the nature of poetry, Shaftesbury laid
great stress on this idea that artistic invention is not a
mechanical process of association, but is the bringing into
being of a created whole.

But for the man, who truly and in a just sense
deserves the Name of Poet, and who as a real
Master, or Architect in the kind, can describe
both Men and Manners, and give to an Action
its Just Body and Proportions; he will be found,
if I mistake not, a very different Creature.
Such a Poet is indeed a second Maker; a just
PROMETHEUS, under JOVE. Like that Sovereign
Artist or universal plastick Nature, he forms
a Whole, coherent and proportion'd in it-self,
with due Subjection and Subordinacy of constitu-
ent Parts.

(Shaftesbury, *Advice to an Author*, Part I, Sect. III)

Along with his theory of the poet as a creator is his in-
sistence that poetry, while being neither a literal copying nor
a generalized imitation of nature, is nevertheless concerned
with particulars. His highest praise is awarded those authors
whose characters may be in a sense said to be "real people."
He expresses this idea rather fully in another often-quoted
passage from his *Advice to an Author*.

Homer describes no Quality or Virtues; censures
no Manners; makes no Encomiums, nor gives Charac-
ters himself, but brings his Actors still in view.
'Tis they who show themselves. 'Tis they who
speak in such a manner, as distinguishes 'em in all things from all others, and makes 'em ever like themselves. Their different Compositions and Allays so justly made, and equally carry’d on, thro’ every particle of the Action, give more Instruction than all the Comments or Glosses in the world. The Poet, instead of giving himself those dictating and masterly Airs of Wisdom, makes hardly any figure at all, and is scarce discoverable in his Poem. This is being truly a Master.

(Shaftesbury, Advice to an Author, Part I, Sect. III)

After such an achievement as that of Homer’s, the step to tragedy (and to comedy as well) was easily made and followed as a logical extension of what Homer had already done, according to Shaftesbury. In all genres the great poet, then, is one who achieves precision of characterization and whose characters themselves, rather than their creator, are in view throughout the work, an idea which, as we shall see, was to receive further expression later in the century. Indeed, Dennis had already suggested just such a concept when he wrote, at the very beginning of the century, that "The business of a Comick Poet is to shew his Characters and not himself, to make ev’ry one of them speak and act, as such a person in such circumstances would probably act and speak." 49

Also in Advice to an Author, Shaftesbury concerns himself with the problem of genius, which, in true neoclassical fashion, he urges cannot alone make the poet, who, if he feels led into this field, must, as in any other, come properly equipped.

The Horse alone can never make the Horseman; nor Limbs the wrestler or the Dancer. No more can a Genius alone make a Poet; or Good Parts a Writer, in any considerable kind. The Skill and Grace of Writing is founded, as our wise Poet tells us, in Knowledge and Good Sense...those Particular Rules of Art, which Philosophy alone exhibits.

(Shaftesbury, Advice to an Author, Part I, Sect. III)
And it is with this problem of the training and discipline of the author, rather than with the question of genius, that Shaftesbury concerns himself chiefly in this work.

Pope devotes a large portion of the preface to his translation of the Iliad to praising Homer on the basis of his "Invention," which "remains yet unrival'd." Although Pope nowhere explains his definition of the term, by his use of an occasional synonym we may safely conclude that he had in mind something close to imagination, or as he once calls it, "warmth of fancy." Invention is seen by Pope as the very foundation of poetry, and that which "in different degrees distinguishes all great Genius's." Invention is antithetical to judgment in the sense that nature and art are opposites:

Whatever Praises may be given to Works of Judgment, there is not even a single Beauty in them but is owing to Invention: As in the most regular Gardens, however Art may carry the greatest Appearance, there is not a Plant or Flower but is the Gift of Nature....

Our Author's Work is a wild Paradise, where if we cannot see all the Beauties so distinctly as in an order'd Garden, it is only because the Number of them is infinitely greater.

(Iliad, Preface, B, verso)

In the preface Pope endeavors to show to what a superlative degree Homer's invention operates in all the "constituent Parts of his Work," discussing in this connection the neoclassical divisions, Fable, Characters, Sentiments, Versification, etc. In connection with the topic "Speeches," Pope makes what is for our purposes a rather significant statement. "We oftener think of the Author himself when we read Virgil, than when we are engag'd in Homer: All which are the Effects of a colder Invention, that interests us less in the Action
describ'd: Homer makes us Hearers, and Virgil leaves us
Readers" (Iliad, Preface, C2, recto and verso). And, pages
later, he concludes with the statement that "Homer was the
greater Genius, Virgil the better Artist" (Ibid, D, verso).
Thus Pope would seem to say that invention determines genius,
and, with regard to characterization, manifests itself in the
degree to which the characters stand alone without calling
their creator to mind.

Ten years later Pope wrote a preface, similar in plan
but abbreviated in length, to his edition of Shakespeare, in
which the English poet is cited even above Homer as an example
of what Pope terms an "original," that is, one who draws his
art directly from the "fountains of Nature."

Though at the enthusiastic beginnings of these prefaces
Homer is praised for his invention and Shakespeare for being
an original, Pope is enough of a neoclassicist to point out
in some detail the many flaws as well as the beauties which
these qualities gave rise to in the respective authors, so
that his praise is certainly greatly qualified in each case
by the time he concludes his remarks.

Fielding, in the first chapter of Book IX of Tom Jones,
furnishes a list of qualifications which he deems necessary
for the writer of prose fiction. The first item listed is
"genius," which he elsewhere refers to as a "gift of heaven,"
and which he defines as "those powers of the mind, which are capable of penetrating into all things within our reach and knowledge, and of distinguishing their essential differences."

These "powers of the mind" are subdivided into "invention" and "judgment," invention which, according to Fielding, has been wrongly defined as a creative faculty, when it really means "no more (and so the word signifies) than discovery, or finding out...a quick and sagacious penetration into the true essence of all the objects of our contemplations." Such a faculty has judgment as its necessary concomitant rather than its antithesis, contrary to the opinion of "some few men of wit" and "all the dull fellows in the world." But Fielding, while listing genius in this sense as his first qualification, goes on to discuss learning and conversation as necessary items. It was not until ten years later, with the publication of Young's *Conjectures on Original Composition*, that we find the sovereignty of genius unquestionably asserted, and this by a surviving Augustan seventy-six years of age.

Young draws a series of antitheses, between unrestricted expression of one's own creative impulse and imitation of models; between natural, inborn powers and acquired learning; between reliance upon one's individual self and subservience to authority or conventional standards, in each instance urging the worth of the former at the expense of the latter. It has been pointed out that Young's concept of human nature owes much to the humours or ruling passion tradition. He asserts that nature "brings us into the world all Originals: No two faces, no two minds, are just alike; but all bear nature's evident mark of separation on them." Yet born
originals, we die copies, due to the effect of "that meddling ape Imitation." Young declares that it is high time that men restore in themselves a confidence in their own genius and abandon their abject prostration before tradition and the works of the learned. Original genius, innate, spontaneous, is that "god within," which "can set us right in Compositions without the rules of the learned; as conscience sets us right in life, without the laws of the land: This, singly, can make us good, as men; that, singly, as writers, can, sometimes, make us great."51 (It is almost as if Shaftesbury's theory of the innateness of the moral sense were transferred from the realm of ethics to that of artistic, specifically literary, creation.)

Shakespeare of course comes in for much praise as the great English "original," Shakespeare who stands as the equal, not the son, of the ancients, who for all his lack of erudition was master of the two essential books, the book of nature, and that of men. And, as for other volumes, "who knows whether Shakespeare might not have thought less, if he had read more?"52 An interesting statement with regard to Shakespeare's power of characterization is made by Young in connection with Addison's Cato, which he feels contains far more of art than of nature in it and is "an exquisite piece of statuary."

"...Like Pygmalion, we cannot but fall in love with it, and wish it was alive." Had Shakespeare worked with the same material, he

would have outdone Prometheus, and with his heavenly fire, have given him not only life, but immortality. At his dramas (such is the force
of nature) the poet is out of sight, quite hid behind his Venus, never thought of, till the curtain falls. Art brings our author forward, he stands before his piece; splendidly indeed, but unfortunately; for the writer must be forgotten by his audience, during the representation, if for ages he would be remembered by posterity.

Although, as we have seen, the basis for what Young says is far different from the philosophy which underlay Shaftesbury's remarks, the two are remarkable close in this concept of characterization. Young however pushes his remarks much farther than Shaftesbury had done. For Shaftesbury the true creative artist was "a just PROMETHEUS" but "Under Jove," that is, still necessarily subservient to the discipline of rules, etc.; whereas Young's original genius outdoes Prometheus, giving not only life but immortality (i.e., he has taken over the role of Jove as well and is no longer under anyone or anything).

Another work concerned, though in a somewhat different fashion, with original genius is Wood's Essay on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer (1775). Wood is chiefly concerned with Homer's mimetic powers and praises him on this score: "A review of Homer's scene of action leads naturally to the consideration of the times, when he lived; and the nearer we approach his country and age, the more we find him accurate in his pictures of nature, and that every species of his extensive imitation furnishes the greatest treasure of original truth to be found in any Poet, ancient or modern." For Wood, truth and nature become synonymous terms, and accuracy, even to the last detail, is a sign of excellence. After discussing at length Homer's geography, history, religion,
mythology, customs, and manners—for which he prepared himself by actually travelling in the areas about which Homer wrote—Wood concludes with "the highest compliment to the powers and extent of Homer's original genius," yet it is in line with his philosophy when he asserts that Homer had no supernatural gifts, but was merely a close observer.

Of much more importance in connection with characterization is Morgan's essay on Falstaff (1777), which has already received mention in other connections. Morgan frequently leaves his professed subject to discuss broader aspects of Shakespeare's genius, as in the lengthy footnote near the middle of the essay in which he discourses on Shakespeare's method of character portrayal. Morgan asserts that

...it was not enough for Shakespeare to have formed his characters with the most perfect truth and coherence; it was further necessary that he should possess a wonderful facility of compressing, as it were, his own spirit into these images, and of giving alternate animation to the forms. This was not to be done from without; he must have felt every varied situation, and have spoken thro' the organ he had formed. Such an intuitive comprehension of things and such a facility, must unite to produce a Shakespeare.

(Morgan, 61)

This "intuitive comprehension of things" seems close to Fielding's definition of "invention." But for Morgan it is only a springboard for his big theory and his justification for the reasoning he employs in his defense of Falstaff.

The reader will not now be surprised if I affirm that those characters in Shakespeare, which are seen only in part, are yet capable of being unfolded and understood in the whole; every part
being in fact relative, and inferring all the rest. This produces a wonderful effect; it seems to carry us beyond the poet to nature itself, and gives an integrity and truth to facts and character, which they could not otherwise obtain. And this is in reality that art in Shakespeare, which being withdrawn from our notice, we more emphatically call nature. A felt propriety and truth from causes unseen, I take to be the highest point of poetic composition. If the characters of Shakespeare are thus whole, and as it were original, while those of almost all other writers are mere imitation, it may be fit to consider them rather as Historic than Dramatic beings; and, when occasion requires, to account for their conduct from the whole of character, from general principles, from latent motives, and from policies not avowed. (Morgann, 61-62)

Here, certainly, the character has become a living personality, an "Historic rather than Dramatic being," and it is as such that Morgann discusses Falstaff. And here the author is necessarily viewed as an original, creative genius, a true Prometheus.

Homer and Shakespeare, rather than the novelists, were generally singled out for praise in this connection, and only occasional statements are to be found relating to prose fiction. But the concept of the author as an original creator, bringing into being real characters who were entities in themselves and about whose former lives speculation could be made, was definitely in the air, and perhaps colored the remarks of many fiction critics who did not consciously profess the theory. Early in the century Mrs. Manley had urged the importance of keeping the characters of a work of fiction, rather than the author, in view—"...'tis not by Extravagant Expressions, nor Repeated Praises, that the Reader's Esteem is acquired to the Character of the Heroe's, their Actions ought to plead for them; 'tis by that they are made known,
and describe themselves..." (Manley, a2, verso). The author of *Letters Concerning the Present State of England* (1772), in his "Catalogue of the most celebrated writers of the present age, with remarks on their works," establishes Shakespeare as without doubt the greater genius but praises Fielding's characters in words similar to those Pope had used in his *Preface to Shakespeare*. "His [Fielding's] characters are not only true to nature, they are nature itself; portrayed in colours, whose brilliancy almost dazzles the eye without ever offending the most scrupulous judge" (*Letters Concerning the Present State of England*, 357-58). Richardson is also praised for his delineation of character; Shakespeare's excellency lay in his character drawing, but that of Richardson is equally "original," a significant use of the word. Finally, Reverend Martin Sherlock in his *Letters on Several Subjects* (1781), discussed the word "genius," which he defined as "another word for Invention."

Create any thing new, that creation is a work of genius. The only faculty necessary to create is imagination. To produce an elegant, great, or useful creation, this imagination must be directed by judgment. Genius then is the union of a sound judgment and a superior imagination. Originality is its infallible criterion.

Mentioned in this regard are both Shakespeare and Richardson, who were "superior to other mortals by stronger judgments and superior imaginations." Sherlock goes on to assert that "the greatest effort of genius that perhaps was ever made, was forming the plan of Clarissa Harlowe. The second was executing that plan. Here then was genius, upon its most elevated and most extensive scale." But as we shall see, Sherlock's interest was chiefly in the moral value of Richardson's novel rather than in the creative process involved or the characters which resulted.
Earlier in this paper the importance of Locke’s influence in focusing the attention of the age on the psychology of the individual character was noted. But contrary to the impression perhaps left by the foregoing remarks, it was not chiefly a disinterested desire for scientific accuracy which led to the emphasis on consistency of characterization or on diversity among characters, or which lay behind many of the statements regarding individual characters. Rather the new interest in psychology more often than not served merely to enhance the already firmly established ethical tendency of the art and criticism of the period. Certainly if any age ever did so, the eighteenth century took seriously the Horatian dictum that the aim of the poet should be to combine pleasure with instruction. In the most imaginative of literature the two aims, pleasure and instruction, went hand-in-hand, and only toward the end of the century was the first elevated to an equal, or occasionally, a superior position with relation to the latter. Thus statements concerning the necessity of a character’s being consistent, lifelike, and psychologically believable were more than likely written from the viewpoint that the character must be all this in order to convey the desired moral lesson. In an age of "reason" only a "reasonable" character will be able to instruct. Only rarely, and then very
late in the period, does psychological verity of itself become an accepted end of characterization.

This was, then, the great age of ethical literature and criticism; a moral purpose was almost invariably intended not only by expressly Christian writers but by Deists such as Shaftesbury as well. Indeed, it was Shaftesbury who enunciated what may be termed the basic thought of the age with regard to the function of literature when he set forth his theory of art as a lure to virtue, more effective than philosophy because more palatable. For Shaftesbury, morals were best taught by means of pleasantry and fable. "Tis real Humanity and Kindness to hide strong Truths from Tender Eyes. And to do this by a pleasant Amusement is easier and civiller, than by a harsh Denial, or remarkable Reserve" (Shaftesbury, On the Freedom of wit and Humour, Part I, sect. II). Not only did Shaftesbury have a keen realization that preaching as such is often not readily accepted, but he further disliked it for its own sake, having nothing but scorn for the pedant-philosopher with his mouth full of maxims pertaining to an ideal which he failed to embody in his own life. And so he took pains to cite examples of the way in which moral truths and admonitions had been conveyed in pleasant forms. Among those mentioned were the teachings of Christ, who often couched his "Morals and prudential Rules" under "pleasant Images," and whose miracles themselves "carry with them a certain festivity, alacrity, and good humour" (Shaftesbury, Miscellaneous Reflections, II, Ch. III). "The first MORALS which were ever deliver'd in the World," Shaftesbury points out, "were in Parables, Tales, or Fables. And the latter and most consummate
Distributors of Morals, in the very politest times, were great Tale-Tellers, and Retainers to honest Aesop" (Shaftesbury, Miscellaneous Reflections, IV, Ch. I).

Tiffany cites a significant remark in this connection from a letter written by Shaftesbury to Pierre Costé in 1712, at the time when he was embarking upon the treatises of the Second Characters. Shaftesbury asks for criticism of his draft of The Judgment of Hercules in order "to judge whether or no it would be worth my while to turn my thoughts (as I am tempted) towards the further study of design and plastic art, both after the ancient and modern foundations, being able (as I myself) to instil by this means some further thoughts of virtue and honesty and the love of liberty and mankind, after a way wholly new and unthought of; at least after a way very entertaining and pleasant to myself, and with the only sort of application or study which my weak health and exceedingly low state allow me..." But, he continues, "I should be sorry to throw away time in such little works or compositions, when at the bottom I found they would not (by my pen at least) be rendered so entertaining to the polite sort as to serve instead of an agreeable vehicle for the moral potion, which by itself is become mere physic and loathsome to mankind, so as to require a little sweetening to help it down." In the light of such a concern as that expressed above we can readily understand Shaftesbury's definition of the true poet as a moral artist, and his oft-quoted assertion that "the Arts and Virtues are mutually Friends: and...the Science of Virtuoso's, and that of Virtue it-self, become, in a manner, one and the
same" (Shaftesbury, Advice to an Author, Part III, Sect. III).

It must again be stressed that this position of Shaftesbury's was, far from being unique, the one commonly held by eighteenth-century writers and critics alike. However much a critic might discourse on the necessity of accurate and consistent characterization or might praise a given author for his achievement in this regard, behind his statements was almost invariably the assumption, expressed or implied, that a literary character must act in such a fashion as to seem real and to be believable, to the end that he might convey the intended lesson. That such was the case may be seen from a brief consideration of statements expressed by critics already discussed in the earlier connections. That is, the present statements will have to do with the author's ethical view of art and of characterization, rather than with psychology, the significance lying in the fact that the two were made by the same writer, often exist side by side, and are always to be regarded as complementary rather than antithetical.

Dennis, in The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry (1704), defined poetry as "an Art, by which a Poet excites Passion... in order to satisfy and improve, to delight and reform the Mind, and so to make Mankind happier and better: from which it appears that Poetry has two Ends, a subordinate, and a final one; the subordinate one is Pleasure, and the final one is Instruction." He goes on to assert that the way poetry instructs is by reforming manners, and that therefore nothing constitutes true poetry "which is against Religion, or which runs counter to moral Virtue, or to the true Politicks, and to the Liberty of Mankind." Poetry, according to Dennis,
achieves its final aim, the reforming the minds of men, by exciting passion. Even moral philosophers must move men before they can expect to instruct or reform them, and here poetry has the advantage over philosophy, since it is able to move more powerfully. "For whereas Philosophy pretends to correct human Passions by human Reason, that is, things that are strong and ungovernable, by something that is feeble and weak; Poetry by the force of the Passion, instructs and reforms the Reason; which is the Design of the true Religion, as we have shewn in another place." For Dennis both tragedy and comedy are seen as means of "instruction by example," as he had said earlier (1701) in The Advancement and Reformation of Modern Poetry, the former being more instructive because it moves more deeply.

Farquhar's Discourse Upon Comedy (1702) proposes to inquire into the "first Invention" and the "honest Intentions" of the art of comedy without reference to a single quotation from Aristotle, and ultimately hits upon Aesop as the "first and original Author" to write in the genre. From the time of Aesop, through the tales of the Old Testament and the parables of the New, "by ancient Practice, and modern Example, by the Authority of Pagans, Jews, and Christians, the World is furnish'd with this so sure, so pleasant, and expedient an Art, of schooling Mankind into better Manners." It is precisely in this tradition that Farquhar regards modern comedy, which he defines as a "well-fram'd Tale handsomely told, as an agreeable Vehicle for Counsel or Reproof." Therefore English comedy exists "for the Use and Instruction of an English Audience," and any rules which it follows must be designed with this in mind.
Mrs. Manley's preface to *The Secret History of Queen Zarah* (1705), although urging that the writer of "history" should at all times maintain a disinterestedness when it comes to assessing the blame or praise which his heroes deserve, and should refrain from inserting into his work moral reflections, maxims, and sentences which are "more proper in Discourses for Instruction than in Historical Novels" (Manley, a4, verso), nevertheless concludes with the proposition that "the chief end of History is to instruct and inspire into Men the Love of Vertue, and Abhorrence of Vice, by the Examples propos'd to them; therefore the Conclusion of a Story ought to have some Tract of Morality which may engage Virtue; those People who have a more refin'd Vertue are not always the most Happy; but yet their Misfortunes excite their Readers Pity, and affects them; although Vice be not always punish'd, yet 'tis described with Reasons which shew its Deformity, and make it enough known to be worthy of nothing but Chastisements" (Manley, a5, recto and verso).

Shaftesbury's basic position has already been discussed, but there remains to be mentioned one aspect of it which was at once widely popular and greatly protested, that is, the notion that ridicule may be used as a test of truth. Such a position may be seen as a logical outgrowth of his view of human nature in general and specifically his regarding of evil as essentially ridiculous and nonsensical. Since the temper of the eighteenth-century mind was to such a great degree satirical—satire being the instrument of truth against the sins of the age—Shaftesbury's theory was welcomed as a philosophical justification of what was already being done.
Yet Shaftesbury had not stopped with the suggestion that ridicule corrects merely those vices which are universally accepted as being such, but had advocated exposing religious enthusiasm and superstition itself to the test. It was on this score that his doctrine was vigorously opposed, despite his repeated assertions that "nothing is ridiculous except what is deform'd," that "one may defy the world to turn real Bravery or Generosity into Ridicule," and that "a Man must be soundly ridiculous, who, with all the Wit imaginable, would go about to ridicule Wisdom, or laugh at Honesty, or Good Manners" (Shaftesbury, On the Freedom of Wit and Humour, Part IV, Sect. I). Shaftesbury's belief that ridicule could lay bare evils that masquerade as virtues and falsehoods that pose as truths was actually only a vigorous statement and a logical extension of the general eighteenth-century view of satire, of comedy, and, from the time of Fielding on, of one type of prose fiction as well. Fielding was no doubt influenced by the Characteristics and attempted to express Shaftesbury's theory in fictional form, as we shall presently see.

Much has been said of Pope's numerous comments on characterization in his notes to the Iliad (1715). Yet Pope's discussions of Homer's characters must always be understood in the light of his over-all view of the poem, and this view was ethical above all else. In commenting on Book III, line 53, Pope asserts that "the chief Moral of Homer was to expose the ill effects of Discord," and he misses no occasion in which Homer's insistence on this "moral" may be demonstrated. Thus in discussing Book V, line 1, he speaks of the elevated character
of Achilles as illustrating "the principal Design of his whole Poem; which is to shew, that the greatest Personal Qualities and Forces are of no Effect when Union is wanting among the chief Rulers, and that nothing can avail till they are reconciled so as to act in Concert." Again and again this point is made, and what is true on the general level of the entire poem is also true with regard to individual incidents, which Pope also sees as illustrative of specific "morals." Of the quarrel in Book I, Pope says that "nothing is finer than the moral exhibited to us...of the blindness and partiality of mankind to their own faults" (Iliad, Bk. I, l. 213, note). The words and actions of Paris in Book III (and elsewhere) illustrate the "moral" that "a brave Mind however blinded with Passion is sensible of Remorse as soon as the injur'd Object presents itself; and Paris never behaves himself ill in War, but when his Spirits are depress'd by the Consciousness of an Injustice" (Iliad, Bk. III, l. 37, note). When Diomed decides to take Ulysses with him to make overtures to Achilles, Pope concludes that "No doubt but the poet by causing Diomed to make this choice, intended to insinuate that Valour ought always to be temper'd with wisdom; to the end that what is design'd with Prudence, may be executed with Resolution" (Iliad, Bk. X, l. 238, note). And in the notes to Book XVI, Pope praises

"Homer's indirect and oblique manner of introducing moral Sentences and Instructions. These agreeably break in upon his Reader even in Descriptions and poetical Parts, where one naturally expects only"
Painting and Amusement. We have Virtue put upon us by Surprise, and are pleas'd to find a thing where we should never have look'd to meet with it.  

*(Iliad, Bk. XVI, l. 466, note)*

Finally, in his comments on Book XXIV, Pope speaks of Homer's procedure throughout the *Iliad* as having answered "to the true end of Poetry, which is to please and instruct" *(Iliad, Bk. XXIV, l. 377, note)*. And the reader is cautioned to remember which of these two ends is most important:

I think it necessary to take notice to the Reader, that nothing is more admirable than the Conduct of Homer throughout his whole poem in respect to Morality...

If the reader does not observe the Morality of the *Iliad*, he loses half, and the nobler part of its Beauty; he reads it as a common Romance, and mistakes the chief Aim of it, which is to instruct.

*(Iliad, Bk. XIV, l. 519, note)*

In his *Critical Essay on Characteristic-Writing* (1725), Gally, as we have noted, stressed the importance of the prospective author's possessing a precise knowledge of human nature. Having this knowledge he will then be able to "turn Men inside outwards, and expose them to the Eyes of the world, as they really are, and not as they wou'd fain appear to be." By the help of this knowledge the intelligent writer will be able to afford his reader "the most agreeable, most instructive Entertainment that can possibly be desir'd; transport him, with the greatest Ease imaginable, from the Solitude of his Chamber to Places of the greatest Concourse; there to see and learn the Virtues of Men; there to see and shun their Vices, without any danger of being corrupted by the Contagion of a real Commerce" (Gally, 32-33).
The Marquis d'Argens, writing to a friend to praise certain novels current in 1744, urged that such romances should not be considered as written only for amusement, "For every Book that has not the Useful as well as the Agreeable, does not merit the Esteem of good Judges. The Heart ought to be instructed at the same time as the Mind is amused; and this is the Quality with which the greatest Men have render'd their Writings famous." Those authors who please without instructing, will not please long, but will live to see their books grow mouldy in the Bookseller's shop. However, when properly written, "their Writings wou'd probably be as useful in forming the Manners as Comedy...A covetous Man will therein find himself painted in such natural Colours; a Coquette will therein see her Picture so resembling her, that their Reflection upon reading the Character will be more useful to them than the long-winded Exhortations of a Fryer, who makes himself hoarse with Exclamation, and often tires out the Patience of his Hearer."5

A somewhat different, and essentially far-sighted note was sounded in the same year by Corbyn Morris, who seemed to be moving well in advance of most of his contemporaries. In his essay on wit and humour he discussed the relative merits of the comedies of Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, dwelling particularly on the humourous characters which the two dramatists created. He distinguished between those of Jonson, which he finds "of a satirical, and deceitful, or of a peevish, or despicable species: In all of which there is something very justly to be hated or despised," and those of Shakespeare,
which exhibit "whimsical unmischievous Oddities, Frolics, and Foibles..." As he later states it, "Johnson in his COMIC Scenes has expos'd and ridicul'd Folly and Vice; Shakespear has usher'd in Joy, Frolic, and Happiness." Although Morris admits that the method of the former "has the Merit of being more instructive," he acknowledges that the latter "is more pleasurable to the Audience," and the rest of his remarks clearly indicate that his own preference is for "Joy, Frolic; and Happiness" (Morris, 30-33).

If we turn from the critics of drama, epic, and early romances, to the authors and critics of the newly developing prose fiction, we find many of the same assumptions and similar statements being made. Fielding in the classic preface to *Joseph Andrews* went on record as adhering to the traditional view of the corrective function of comedy, and, in the present instance, of the comic epic in prose, or, as we would term it, the novel. The Ridiculous, of which affectation is the source, is to be the realm of his work, which he describes as primarily aimed at exhibiting and censuring vice and folly. In practice Fielding seems to have gone far beyond his expressed theory, and the reading of any of his novels suggests to the modern reader what Fielding himself would perhaps have denied, that comic intention at times overshadowed serious moral purpose. Yet it is no doubt significant that even such a pioneer as Fielding felt the need to establish for his literary efforts the sound moral justification expected by his age.

Samuel Richardson, of course, was even more expressedly and consistently didactic in his aim, just as he was serious rather
than comic in his approach, Pope is quoted as having said that *Pamela* would do more good than many volumes of sermons, and, in his preface to the later *Clarissa*, Richardson clearly set forth his purpose in writing that novel, which he urged was not to be perused as a piece "designed only to divert and amuse."

What will be found to be more particularly aimed at in the following work is—to warn the inconsiderate and thoughtless of the one sex, against the base arts and designs of sanguine contrivers of the other—to caution parents against the undue exercise of their natural authority over their children in the great article of marriage—to warn children against proferring 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—but above all, to investigate the highest and most important doctrines not only of morality, but of Christianity, by showing them thrown into action in the conduct of the worthy characters; while the unworthy, who set those doctrines at defiance, are condignly, and, as may be said, consequentially punished.

(Here we note the use of distinctly unpsychological terms to describe characters; the terms "worthy" and "unworthy," especially with regard to Richardson's characterization in this novel, were to recur frequently in critical discussions of the work, as we shall see.)

As if this opening statement were not enough, Richardson later added a postscript to the novel, in which he attempted to justify the tragic course of the action, and thereby took occasion to reiterate the "great end" he had in view. He explains that he has lived to see skepticism and impiety openly avowed and the great Christian doctrines themselves brought into question. And thus he had hoped that "in an
age given up to diversion and entertainment, he could steal in...and investigate the great doctrines of Christianity under the fashionable guise of an amusement..."

Early critics of the novel seem to have understood the function of the new genre in much the same terms as Fielding and Richardson had set it forth. In 1751 Dr. John Hill, himself an aspiring novelist, praised Fielding's novel on this score. "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 a Propensity for."6 Dr. Johnson of course followed up his famous pronouncement in the Rambler (XCVII, [Feb. 19, 1751]) that Richardson had "taught the passions to move at the command of virtue," with many other statements praising Richardson as a profound moralist, while disparaging Fielding, if Dr. Burney's account is to be accepted, because of "his loose life, and the prof- ligacy of almost all his male characters."7 The anonymous pamphleteer whose "Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa, and Pamela" appeared in 1754, while in general concerned with detracting from Richardson's work, nevertheless asserts, perhaps somewhat tongue-in-cheek, that the Iliad and Clarissa stand above all other literary compositions as great inculcators of morals. "The morals of the first are of the utmost importance in public life, and those of the last in private life" ("Critical Remarks on...Pamela," 14). In enumerating just what these morals are, the author follows Pope's
Periodical reviewers soon took up the cry, a writer for the *Critical Review* asserting, while discussing *The Mother, or the Happy Distress*, that the "one great aim of novel-writers ought to be, to inculcate sentiments of virtue and honour, and to inspire an abhorrence of vice and immorality" (*Critical Review*, VII [1759], 409). Another novel, *The Happy Orphans*, is commended because in it the virtuous characters provoke imitation and the vicious produce contempt. This novel was written, according to the reviewer, "to mingle the profitable with the pleasant," and he expresses his fervent hope that more writers will write their works with such an aim, since in these degenerate times many readers "never think higher than romances and novels enable them to do" (*Critical Review*, VII [1759], 174). Rousseau's moral in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* is seen as "more masterly and instructive" than that of *Clarissa*, on which the French novel is modeled, since in it we see the one who has fallen rise again to virtue (*Critical Review*, XII [1761], 203-11). This emphasis on the portrayal of practical virtues continued to be important in the pages of the *Critical*. The *Discovery: or Memoirs of Miss Marianne Middleton*, by Mrs. Woodsing, is praised because one or two of its characters are "modern and well drawn," due to the fact that "their virtues are practicable in real life, and by persons in moderate circumstances; a method which we recommend to all novel-writers" (*Critical Review*, XVII [1764], 398). But by Volume XVIII,
published in the same year, the problem causing so much concern earlier seems to have resolved itself in the eyes of the reviewer in the harmless mediocrity of all current novels.

Discussing Maria; the genuine Memoirs of an admired Lady of rank and fortune, and some of her friends, he stated:

There is so great a sameness in all our modern novels, that one single criticism may serve for all: they who have time to spare may innocently, and perhaps usefully, employ it in their perusal. The charge of corrupting the morals and inflaming the passions, which has formerly been objected against works of this kind, seems now no longer to subsist. A modern romance may now with safety be put into the hands of the youthful reader; and tho' perhaps it may not allure the imagination, yet will it tend to reform the heart...

(Critical Review, XVIII [1764], 313)

Presumably this reforming of the heart constituted a sufficient raison d'être for the novel.

Turning to the psychological critics of Shakespeare, we find two of them, William Richardson and Whately, again deeply concerned with what seems to us to be an unsatisfactory aspect of their work (and, by extension, of Shakespeare's), namely, what were to be the ethical results of their studies. Whately is less insistent on this point, and confines his remarks to the concluding sentences in his preface, throughout which he has praised the accuracy of Shakespeare's characterization, a subject which he feels to be worthy of extended critical discussion. But there are to be practical results, as well, from such a study of Shakespeare's characters, for, "every several character furnishing a variety of remarks, the mind, by attending to them, acquires a turn to such observations; than which nothing is more agreeable or more
useful in forming the judgment, whether on real characters in
life, or dramatic representations of them. To give the mind
this turn is the design of the following pages" (Whatley, 8).
Thus, according to Whatley, a detailed analysis of certain of
Shakespeare's characters will enable a person to "judge" (im-
plying, I take it, an ethical standard) not only other dramatic
characters, but those in real life as well.

Having made this point, Whatley does not insist on it undu-
duly, and his comparisons between Macbeth and Richard III give
evidence that the critical problem, even without its ethical
implications, was of great interest to him. This is not the
case, however, with William Richardson, the Scotch moralist
for whom psychology, ethics, and literary criticism were in-
separable and a part of the same process. Richardson was in
turn influenced by the work of another Scotch critic and
moralist, Lord Kames' Elements of Criticism (1762). Kames
had urged that "by proper discipline, every person may acquire
a settled habit of virtue," and he included in his list of
appropriate disciplinary acts, the reading of "histories of
generous and disinterested actions, and frequent meditation
upon them." Richardson also urged that an individual's moral
sense, although innate, may be improved as one gains a better
understanding of his own nature. "The formation of our charac-
ters depends considerably upon ourselves; for we may improve,
or vitiate, every principle we receive from nature" (William
Richardson, 68). Thus we are almost obligated to study human
nature, and yet how is this task to be accomplished when so
many obstacles are in the way? Richardson echoes Reid in
pointing out the difficulties—passions, both in ourselves
and in others, "are excited independent of our volition, and arise or subside without our desire or concurrence" (William Richardson, 12).

Here is where Shakespeare enters the picture, his dramatic characters taking the place of the "histories of generous and disinterested actions" which Kames had recommended. In the tradition of Shaftesbury, Richardson treats Shakespeare as the consciously moral artist, and admonishes earnest readers to come to the school of Shakespeare, since he will give them, as he has given many others, a useful lesson. Shakespeare understood and delineated human nature better than any other has done—as opposed to Corneille's description of the passions, Shakespeare actually imitated them, an observation already made at some length by Kames. Therefore, we can look into the mirror which Shakespeare held up to life, and making poetry subservient to philosophy we can "employ it in tracing the principles of human conduct" (William Richardson, 33). It remains for the psychological critic, then, to penetrate the minds of Shakespeare's characters and report on what he finds there. Thus Richardson speaks of "analyzing the mind of Hamlet," etc.

Burke applauded Richardson's "plan of moral criticism," and Richardson himself felt that he demonstrated in his essays the way in which the moralist can become a critic and the two sciences of ethics and criticism are intimately and naturally connected. Thus his essays, although significant in their concern with the minds of the characters, point backward instead of forward in the purpose for which they were written, a purpose which the moralizing Richardson never allows the
reader to forget.

Wood, writing on the Original Genius and Writings of Homer (1775), moves in a direction away from Richardson. He in fact praises Homer for his "free and impartial examination of things," and rejoices that Homer was not diverted by any hypothesis from such a free analysis. This is not to assert that Homer had no plan of instruction, "for to deny that he had any would be highly unreasonable," and Wood is quick to point out that his morality and religion will bear a scrupulous test. But Wood begs the reader to consider "that it was Homer's object to please as well as to instruct. And though he does not neglect the latter, I must own he seems to have the first principally in view."

The significance of this last statement as an indication of the direction in which critical thought was tending will be recognized most readily by comparing it with Pope's comments on the same point, made some fifty years earlier. Pope, it will be remembered, maintained that the chief aim of the Iliad was to instruct and that the morality of the poem constituted the nobler part of its beauty.

But, especially in the case of prose fiction—perhaps due to the widespread and ever-increasing popularity of the new genre—critics continued to be concerned about the ethical tendency of any work in question. Again and again the warning is sounded that the central purpose of the novel— to instruct—must never be lost sight of. The advertisement to The History of Charles Wentworth, Esq. (1770) pointed out the danger inherent in those novels which tended primarily
Novels that merely entertain, merit no encouragement, because they divert the mind from more useful objects; to make them a vehicle of instruction under the mask of amusement [the familiar Shaftesburian position] it is necessary that they be not too interesting: wherever curiosity is greatly excited the mind becomes impatient to know the final event, and every moral or instructive reflection that may be interposed, suspends the gratification of its curiosity, and is on that account either read with disgust, or entirely past over.¹¹

Joseph Priestly, in his Course of Lectures on Oratory and Criticism (1777), touches on another aspect of the problem. Having discussed at some length the powerful influence over human feelings which the writer of works of fiction possesses, Priestly urges

...the importance of a discreet use of fiction, and works of imagination, for the cultivation of the human heart. The heart is instructed chiefly by its own feelings. It is of consequence, therefore, how they are directed, and it cannot be a matter of indifference what tales and novels are put into the hands of children and youth. When once persons are of an age to form ideas of such descriptions, and feel the sensations resulting from them, reading a romance is nearly the same thing as their seeing so much of the world, and of mankind. Whatever, therefore, we should think improper for them to see, it is improper for them to read or hear; for they have like sensations, and retain similar impressions from both.¹²

Inherent in such a warning is, of course, praise for the skill of the writers of fiction who are able to infuse their works with a reality which makes reading them equivalent to "seeing so much of the world, and of mankind."

James Beattie began his essay "On Fable and Romance" (1783) with a statement which is, at least in part, reminiscent
It is owing, no doubt, to the weakness of human nature, that fable should ever have been found a necessary, or a convenient, vehicle for truth. But we must take human nature as it is; and if a rude multitude cannot readily comprehend a moral or political doctrine, which they need to be instructed in, it may be as allowable, to illustrate that doctrine by a fable, as it is for a physician to strengthen a weak stomach with cordials, in order to prepare it for the business of digestion.

(Beattie, "On Fable and Romance," 505)

The novel is, then, worthwhile to the extent that it illustrates a doctrine or a moral, and it is on this basis that Beattie writes his history of prose fiction. *Don Quixote*, which every reader admires for its humour, ought also to be considered, says Beattie, "as a most useful performance, that brought about a great revolution in the manners and literature of Europe by banishing dreams of chivalry, and reviving a taste for the simplicity of nature." Turning to English fiction, Beattie carefully divides and subdivides it in a series of classifications. *Robinson Crusoe* comes in for especially high praise since, according to Beattie, it

...must be allowed, by the most rigid moralist, to be one of those novels, which one may read, not only with pleasure, but also with profit. It breathes throughout a spirit of piety and benevolence: it sets in a very striking light...the importance of the mechanic arts, which they, who know not what it is to be without them, are apt to undervalue: it fixes in the mind a lively idea of the horrors of solitude, and, consequently, of the sweets of social life, and of the blessings we derive from conversation, and mutual aid: and it shows, how, by labouring with one's own hands, one may secure independence, and open for one's self many sources of health and amusement. I agree, therefore, with Rousseau, that this is one of the best books that can be put in the hands of children.

(Beattie, "On Fable and Romance," 566-67)
(Rousseau's *Nouvelle Héloïse*, in many senses a Richardsonian novel, had appeared in English translation in 1761 and subsequently enjoyed a great vogue among English readers. Frequent comparisons were made between Richardson and Rousseau, and in general the appearance and popularity of the *Héloïse* served to enhance critical interest in the already existing English novels. Here, of course, it is Rousseau's *Émile* to which Beattie refers.)

The other novelists receive from Beattie much the treatment we would expect. Samuel Richardson is praised above all "for the good tendency of his works," and is described as "a man of unaffected piety, [who] had the improvement of his fellow-creatures very much at heart." On the other hand, Smollett's *Roderick Random* and *Peregrine Pickle* are, to Beattie's mind, "not to be complimented on their morality," since their author "is often exceedingly licentious," and has "profligates, bullies, and misanthropes...among his favourite characters." Objections are also raised to *Fielding*, and several passages in *Joseph Andrews* are mentioned as tending to "offend by their indelicacies." Beattie concludes that "Fielding might be vindicated in regard to all the consurable conduct of Tom Jones, provided he had been less particular in describing it: and, by the same rule, Smollet's (sic.) system of youthful profligacy, as exemplified in some of his libertines, is altogether without excuse." Beattie then ends his discussion with a final warning to his readers that, despite the length of his essay on them, romances are, on the whole, a dangerous recreation, tending "to corrupt the heart, and stimulate the passions," and filling the mind "with extravagant
thoughts, and too often with criminal propensities" (Beattie, "On Fable and Romance," 562-74).

But by the end of the eighteenth century the trend was definitely away from judging prose fiction, or indeed any piece of imaginative literature, on the basis of its instructive value or ethical tendency primarily. The movement away from the didactic in prose fiction was only a part of the general tendency which has been described as the swing from dominant reason to dominant feeling, from classicism to romanticism. Its manifestations were of course many; one aspect of it in fiction was the great popularity late in the century of the Gothic romances. The first work of this species, Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, appeared in 1764, when the vogue of realistic fiction was at its height, and its critical reception was none too kindly. Exceptions were taken to its moral and to its dealing with a barbaric and superstitious age. To be sure, Walpole had paid his deference to the demands of the age for realism by defending the supposed medieval author of the tale on the grounds that if the reader will but allow the possibility of the facts, then "all the actors comport themselves as persons would do in their situation." He speaks of "the piety that reigns throughout, the lessons of virtue that are inculcated, and the rigid purity of the sentiments," as exempting "this work from the censure to which romances are but too liable." Gradually through the years that followed, critical opinion with regard to such romances changed somewhat, in part at least as a result of the various works of a scholarly nature being penned about the middle ages,
which tended to disperse some of the darkness that enveloped feudal times and to give a degree of dignity to Romance.

Contemporary with this movement, the criticism of the main stream of prose-fiction—the Richardson-Fielding-Smollett tradition—also reflected a change in emphasis, from morality to amusement. A brief history of prose fiction was prefixed to John Moore’s edition of the works of Smollett (1797).

Having discussed the major novelists of both France and England, Moore mentions the many imitators which soon arose in numbers so great that the very name "novel" conveyed the idea of a frivolous or pernicious book. But the truth is, says Moore, that the best novels will always be read with delight, since "nothing can be so interesting to men as man" (Moore, Vol. I, xcii). Novels may be seen as serving several purposes. Because they are a representation of life and manners in the countries in which they take place, they are historically interesting—it is to be wished that we had some such works from ancient Greece and Rome. And second, Moore comments that

"This species of writing may also be made subservient to the purposes of instruction; but even those which afford amusement only, provided they contain nothing immoral, are not without utility, and deserve by no means to be spoken of with the contempt which they sometimes are, by their most intimate acquaintance."

(Moore, Vol. I, xciii)

A similar viewpoint was expressed by John Dunlop in his History of Fiction (1814). Dunlop, too, sees several ends which fiction may serve. Since he goes back to consider the Greek romances, he is quick to point out the important role of fiction "in the history of the progress of society." Again, fiction is seen as a "powerful instrument of virtue,"
teaching by example and thereby more likely to improve the mind "than abstract propositions and dry discussions." But, Dunlop continues, even if the utility which is derived from fiction were far less than it is, how much are we indebted to it for pleasure and enjoyment! (Dunlop, Vol. I, 3-4).

There remains but one more position to be outlined, that, also coming at the end of the period, which urged that the moral function of imaginative literature was either extremely secondary or even nonexistent, a position which would of course have been virtually unthinkable during most of the preceding century. William Godwin included in The Enquirer (1797) a chapter entitled "Of Choice in Reading," in which he urged that parents should not forbid certain books to their children. Acknowledging that the great argument for such prohibition is the immoral tendency which such books purportedly have, Godwin carefully distinguishes between the moral ("that ethical sentence to the illustration of which the work may most aptly be applied"), and the tendency ("the actual effect it is calculated to produce upon the reader") of a work. He then dismisses the moral as being a point of very subordinate consideration, and proceeds to discuss the tendency, which may be either moral (that is, it mends the disposition of the heart), or intellectual (increasing the powers of the understanding). Of these two, Godwin finds the latter of the greater importance. "Shakespeare," he maintains, "is a writer by no means anxious about his moral. He seems almost indifferent concerning virtue and vice, and takes up with either as it falls in his way." If we were to judge books
by their moral tendencies, we would do away with thousands of books including much of the world's best literature. In actual practice, according to Godwin, we allow the really great authors, those who raise our ambition, expand our faculties, invigorate our resolutions, and seem to double our existence, "an ample licence." And, after all, he concludes that "the impression we derive from a book, depends much less upon its real contents, than upon the temper of mind and preparation with which we read it."14 Everything depends, then, on the spirit in which books are read, and, according to Godwin, books will be found in a less degree than is commonly imagined to be corruptors of mankind.

Even more emphatic in exploding the heresy of the didactic was Richard Payne Knight, whose views are set forth in his volume entitled Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste (1805). Knight affirms that the only moral good resulting from any of the fine arts, in which category poetry—and by extension, the novel—is included, arises "from their influence in civilizing and softening mankind, by substituting intellectual, to sensual pleasures; and turning the mind from violent and sanguinary, to mild and peaceful pursuits" (Knight, 457). Fiction, in whatever form, is always treated as fiction and considered as a matter of amusement only by those who contemplate it. "No one ever goes to the theatre to learn how he is to act on a particular emergency; or to hear the solution of any general question of casuistical morality, that may have arisen in his mind..." (Knight, 425). If comedy were to be considered as holding out examples for real life, Knight cleverly points out that it would be more immoral in its
tendency than tragedy,

...since the characters and incidents, which it exhibits, are those which occur in the ordinary ranks of civil society, and which it is therefore in everyone's power to imitate. The crimes of King Richard, or Macbeth, are within the reach of the few; but the vices of Charles Surface, and the indiscretions of Tom Jones, are within the reach of every gentleman: nevertheless, I do not believe that such vices, and such indiscretions, would have been less frequent, if those popular instances of them had never been exhibited to the public...

If the conduct of any persons is influenced by the examples exhibited in such fictions, it is that of young ladies in the affairs of love and marriage: but I believe that such influence is much more rare, than severe moralists are inclined to suppose; since there were plenty of elopements, and stolen matches, before comedies, or plays of any kind, were known.

(Knight, 427, 428).

Hogarth is unquestionably the most excellent of all ethical painters, yet Knight feels that it is safe to affirm that there has not been one rake, prostitute, or idle apprentice the less for all his humorous and expressive characters. The reason, as Knight reiterates it, is that men simply do not apply to such sources of information "for directions how to act in the moral or prudential concerns of life" (Knight, 486), but rather for amusement only.

And this same assertion applies to prose fiction as well, as Knight points out in the following passage, in which he goes so far as to show that the ends of poetry and those of morality, far from being the same, are actually antithetical.

In other respects, what has been before said of the moral influence of tragedy and comedy, may with equal propriety be applied to that of novels: for there is the same relation between a comedy
and a novel, as between a tragedy and an epic poem. The end of morality is to restrain and subdue all the irregularities of passion and affection; and to subject the conduct of life to the dominion of abstract reason, and the uniformity of established rule: but the business of poetry, whether tragic or comic, whether epic or dramatic, is to display and even exaggerate those irregularities; and to exhibit the events of life diversified by all the wild varieties of governed affections, or chequered by all the fantastic modes of anomalous and vitiated habits. It is, therefore, utterly impossible for the latter to afford models for the former; and, the instant that it attempts it, it necessarily becomes tame and vapid; and, in short, ceases to be poetry...

Men, however, do not search either epic or dramatic fictions for examples to guide them, either in the moral or prudential conduct of their affairs; and, if there be any that do, they will be more likely to become mad, than wicked; as they will exactly follow the steps of the Knight of la Mancha, who sought for practical examples in the species of poetical fiction then most in fashion.

(Knight, 454-55)

with this statement there can be no doubt that we are in a different age as far as the basic assumptions regarding the purpose of literary creation are concerned.

II.

But, as we have seen, the majority of literary critics writing in the eighteenth century applied standards of an ethical nature to works of literature as a matter of course. With regard to characterization, the most widely discussed question to arise as a direct result was that of whether or not the imaginative personage should be portrayed as a "perfect" individual. The common-sense desire to be realistic coupled with the growing emphasis on psychological accuracy—being true to human nature—caused many critics to argue in
the negative, while for others, the desire to furnish the perfect model for conduct was weighed heavier. Whatever his decision—and the positions within the limits of the two extremes were many—the critic almost invariably discussed this subject at some length, citing specific examples from the work in question. And, as has been seen to be the case with so many other critical concepts, the genre under discussion was relatively unimportant; that is, essentially the same question confronted the critic of epic, drama, or prose fiction.

A striking example of the conflicting views in this regard is the literary quarrel which arose early in the century between John Dennis and Richard Steele in connection with the types of heroes suitable for representation in comedy. As early as 1696 Dennis had spoken out in a general way in favor of the "mixed" character, neither guilty of great crimes nor sovereignly virtuous, but composed, as is the generality of mankind, of both virtues and faults; and, as has previously been mentioned, he held the traditional Restoration view of comedy as a corrective, accomplishing its end through exposing the follies of the various characters to ridicule. Steele, on the other hand, wrote his comedy The Conscious Lovers (1722) as an illustration of his own quite different view, namely, that comedy instructs by setting forth exemplary characters worthy of the emulation rather than the ridicule of the audience. In 1711 Steele denounced the character of Dorimant in Etherege's Sir Fopling Flutter, ridiculed that play for its licentiousness and lack of gentility, and set forth his own ideas of what a fine gentleman should be. In several essays subsequently written he further developed his conception of the fine
gentleman, or the man of honor. Loftis has shown that Steele was at this same time—over a decade before its initial production—planning the comedy which was to present this gentleman in action in the person of Bevil, Jr., whom he endowed with the same qualities of filial obedience, faithfulness and generosity in love, nobility in friendship, and reasonableness in affairs of honor which he recommended time and again in the Tatler, the Spectator, and the Guardian. As Loftis has it, "To Steele the play represented a studied attempt at providing the English stage with a form of comedy which could be an effective stimulant to virtuous action."

All this of course did not go unanswered by Dennis, who, even before Steele's play actually appeared, was objecting to the advance publicity it was receiving in such abundance, and who took occasion in his "Defence of Sir Folpling Flutter" (November 2, 1722—five days before The Conscious Lovers was first acted) to set forth at length his own differing view of comedy.

How little do they know of the Nature of true Comedy, who believe that its proper Business is to set us Patterns for Imitation: For all such Patterns are serious Things, and Laughter is the Life, and the very Soul of Comedy. 'Tis its proper Business to expose Persons to our View, whose views we may shun, and whose Follies we may despise; and by showing us what is done upon the Comic Stage, to show us what ought never to be done upon the Stage of the World.

In a subsequent work published the following year, "Remarks on a Play, Call'd, The Conscious Lovers, a Comedy," Dennis further attacked the whole idea of sentimental comedy, as well as pointing out the many improbabilities to be found in Steele's play, especially the implausibility of Bevil's
continued deference to his father's wishes. For our purposes
it is interesting to note that in the conflict between these
two regarding satirical versus exemplary comedy, the discuss-
ton came, perhaps inevitable, to center around the central
figures in the drama and whether or not they should be "per-
fect."

Much the same question arose in connection with the epic.
Shaftesbury discusses it in a lengthy footnote to his fifth
Miscellany, raising the question as to why Homer, praised
since the time of Aristotle for his ability "to LYE in per-
fection," chose to "draw no single Pattern of the kind, no
perfect Character, in either of his Heroick Pieces." Shaftes-
bury's immediate answer is that such an attempt in a poet
would be preposterous and false, a position which at first
would appear contradictory in a man who believed in and set
forth systems for the perfectability of human nature. But,
as he carefully explains, "'tis not the Possible, but the
Probable and Likely, which must be the Poet's Guide in Man-
ners."

The Perfection of Virtue is from long Art and
Management, Self-controll, and, as it were, Force
on Nature. But the common Auditor or Spectator,
who seeks Pleasure only, and loves to engage his
Passion, by view of other Passion and Emotion,
comprehends little of the Restraints, Allays and
Corrections, which form this new and artificial
Creature. For such indeed is the truly virtuous
Man; whose ART, the ever so natural in it-self,
or justly founded in Reason and Nature, is an
Improvement far beyond the common Stamp, or known
Character of Human Kind. And thus the compleatly
virtuous and perfect Character is unpoeitical and
false.

(Shaftesbury, Miscellaneous Reflections, V, Ch. I, note)

It is rather through viewing the excess of passion in various
characters redressed by the author that our own passions are most effectively corrected and purged, while, "in a Poem, whether Epic or Dramatic, a compleat and perfect Character is the greatest Monster; and of all poetick Fictions not only the least engaging, but the least moral and improving" (Shaftesbury, Miscellaneous Reflections, V, Ch. I, note).

In like manner Pope praised Homer for studying nature rather than perfection in setting forth his characters. He points out the way in which virtues and vices are distributed among the chief heroes "after the manner in which we generally find them," and concludes that "when characters thus mixed are well conducted, tho' they be not morally beautiful quite through, they conduce more to the end, and are still poetically perfect" (Pope, Iliad, bk. I, l. 15, note). And some fifty years later Wood spoke with approbation of Homer's method of depicting characters "so impartially chequered with the good and bad qualities, which enter, in various proportions, into the composition of every character, that he has not left us one compleat pattern of moral beauty or deformity." Wood goes on to point out, as both Shaftesbury and Pope had done, that such a course was actually more effective in influencing the readers than the presentation of exemplary figures, since "it is easier, perhaps wiser...to show us what we may be, than what we ought to be."17

If we turn to prose fiction we find the major novelists themselves setting forth opinions on the subject. Fielding, in Chapter 1 of Book X of Tom Jones, included in the
"Instructions Very Necessary to be Perused by Modern Critics," the admonition not to condemn a character as all bad simply because he is not all good. Earlier (Book VII, Ch. 1) he had explicitly stated his view that a single bad act does not constitute a villain, since the passions may cause a man to perform an action which his own judgment condemns. The man of candor and of true understanding, Fielding urges, will therefore be slow to censure the character himself, however much he condemns his vice or imperfection. In the passage in Book X, readers who delight in models of perfection are referred to the numerous books currently written to their taste, but Fielding himself, having never happened to meet such a person, has avoided introducing any in his novel. He doubts the existence of the man of consummate excellence or villainy,

...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.

Fielding proceeds to assert that it is the mixed character—the good man who nevertheless has some blemishes—who is of the greatest "moral use," since "the foibles and vices of men, in whom there is great mixture of good, become more glaring objects from the virtues which contrast them and show their
defects; 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."

Richardson's preface to Clarissa discusses the principal
characters from this same standpoint, though his conclusions
are somewhat equivocal and not so easily pinpointed. He points
out that Lovelace, though a professed libertine, is yet not an
infidel or a scoffer, and at least manages to preserve decency
in his language. So it would seem that, to Richardson, Love-
lace was to some extent a "mixed" character, one who "dis-
covered wickedness enough to entitle him to general detesta-
tion," yet who was not an utter monster. In like manner
Clarissa, though frankly proposed as "an exemplar to her
sex," is naturally and necessarily shown to have some faults,
although Richardson is none too explicit in spelling out just
what he considered those faults to be. Certainly they are
not many, or great, for Richardson sums up the character of
his heroine by saying that

As far as is consistent with human frailty, and as
far as she could be perfect, considering the people
she had to deal with, and those with whom she was
inseparably connected, she is perfect. To have
been impeccable, must have left nothing for the
Divine Grace and a purified state to do, and car-
rried our idea of her from woman to angel.

The very fact that Richardson proposed Clarissa as an exemplar
to her sex reveals a difference between his view of characteri-
zation and that of Fielding's, a difference not unlike that
between Steele and Dennis which was noted earlier. (This is
of course especially true if we remember Fielding's earlier statements in the preface to *Joseph Andrews*, where he applies the satiric view of comedy directly to prose fiction.)

Typical of the discussion which continued throughout the century concerning the respective merits of Fielding's and Richardson's methods of characterization was an early (June 20, 1749) defense of *Tom Jones* written by Mrs. Elizabeth Carter--herself a professed Richardsonian--to Miss Catherine Talbot. The hero of Fielding's novel she finds "no doubt an imperfect, but not a detestable character, with all that honesty, good-nature, and generosity of temper," and she continues by praising Fielding's realistic character portrayal.

Though nobody can admire Clarissa more than I do; yet with all our partiality, I am afraid, it must be confessed, that Fielding's book is the most natural representation of what passes in the world, and of the bizarrenesses which arise from the mixture of good and bad which makes up the composition of most folk. Richardson has no doubt a very good hand at painting excellence, but there is a strange awkwardness and extravagance in his vicious characters...Being totally ignorant in what manner...wickedness operates upon the human heart, and what checks and restraints it meets with to prevent its ever being perfectly uniform and consistent in any one character, he has drawn such a monster, as I hope never existed in mortal shape, for to the honor of human nature, and the gracious author of it, be it spoken, Clarissa is an infinitely more imitable character, than Lovelace, or the Harlowes. 18

Dr. Johnson, always the staunch Richardsonian, takes up the question of exemplary characters in the *Rambler* paper (IV [March 31, 1750]) entitled "The Comedy of Romance." He explains that he applies this title to works of fiction "such as exhibit life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily happen in the world, and influenced by
passions and qualities which are really to be found in con-
versing with mankind." Such works, according to Johnson,
are written chiefly for the young, the ignorant, and the
idle, to serve as lectures in conduct and introductions into
life, being "of greater use than the solemnities of professed
morality, and conveying the knowledge of vice and virtue
with more efficacy than axioms and definitions." Precisely
because modern works of fiction do dwell on the realistic
rather than on the romantic plane, they have a tremendous
potential influence on the reader and his actions; and there¬
fore the responsibilities of the author are increased accordingly.

And so Johnson draws up his code for the writer of prose
fiction. Rather than describe the world promiscuously and
without discrimination, he must "select objects, and...cull
from the mass of mankind those individuals upon which the
attention ought most to be employed." It is not enough to
say in vindication of a character that it is drawn as it ap¬
ppears, since many characters exist which ought never to be
drawn at all. Johnson disagrees with those who have advanced
the theory (as Shaftesbury and Pope had done) "that certain
virtues have their correspondent faults, and therefore that
to exhibit either apart is to deviate from probability,"
since such a principle supposes men to act from brute impulse
only. Nor does he admire those many writers who, "for the
sake of following nature, so mingle good and bad qualities
in their principal personages, that they are both equally
conspicuous; and as we accompany them through their adventures
with delight, and are led by degrees to interest ourselves in
their favour, we lose the abhorrence of their faults, because
they do not hinder our pleasure, or perhaps regard them with some kindness, for being united with so much merit." Rather Johnson speaks out for a sharp dichotomy between vice and virtue. Vice, when it must be shown, should always disgust, rather than being coupled with gaiety or courage in order to reconcile the reader to it. He vindicates Richardson's portrayal of Lovelace on this score in another work, a vindication with which later critics could not agree. Lovelace Johnson sees as an expansion of Lothario in *The Fair Penitent*; but, in the opinion of Dr. Johnson, the novelist greatly excelled his original in the moral effect achieved. "Lothario," he says in his *Life of Rowe*, "with gaiety which cannot be hated, and bravery which cannot be despised, retains too much of the spectator's kindness. It was in the power of Richardson alone to teach us at once esteem and detestation; to make virtuous resentment overpower all the benevolence which art and elegance and courage naturally excite; and to lose at last the hero in the villain." And, by the same token, Johnson sees no reason why in narratives where historical veracity is unimportant, "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 the highest and purest that humanity can reach, which, 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 can perform." Johnson may be said, then, to represent a similar but more extreme position than that of Richardson with regard to the desirability of the exemplary character; indeed the last-quoted passage would serve
as a rather accurate description of Richardson's Clarissa.

The author of the anonymous pamphlet which appeared in 1754 offering "Critical Remarks" on Richardson's novels, objected to all of Richardson's characters except Clarissa as being "faulty, ridiculous, or unmeaning." He finds nature and propriety to have been strictly observed in the character of Clarissa, whom he admires, yet he cannot help observing that "she is rather too good, at least too methodically so."

Grandison he considers "an inconsistent angel," and Lovelace, "an absolute devil," each falling far short of the standard of Homer, who was able "to contrive and add such circumstances that render all his characters probable, and to blend vices and virtues of a similar quality so together, as to render them all uniformly consistent." Grandison, intended as an example of universal goodness and benevolence, has been endowed by the author with too great a variety of accomplishments—the man who has seen the world and been conversant even in courts and yet who has retained an humane and benevolent disposition, is very rare and consequently poetically improbable. Much to be preferred are the rustic Humorous and the retiring Allworthy, each a more credible example of universal benevolence.

The author of this pamphlet purports to be extremely fearful for the profligacy which the character of Lovelace may provoke. Again Homer is used for purposes of comparison. "Homer, indeed, describes vicious characters, but all their viciousness consists in the natural passions being carried to a blameable excess, he paints no improvement, no refinement,
no elaborate contrivance in villany, this is what you [Richardson] excell in, above all the authors antient or modern, I remember to have read." By showing the sufferings of Achilles and Agamemnon to arise directly from the errors they commit, others are successfully deterred from being guilty of like faults in similar circumstances. Whereas Lovelace, according to the pamphleteer, "determines on the ruin of Clarissa, from motives and passions altogether unnatural, which could subsist no where, but in a heart debauched of itself, initiated in all the mysteries of villany, and regularly educated in an academy of wickedness." Nor is his punishment the necessary and unavoidable consequence of his crimes. By allowing Lovelace to say, "Surely there never can be such another woman," Richardson entirely destroys his moral, since if there could never be another Clarissa, then such a catastrophe is not again to be dreaded, and "there is nothing to deter another Rake from putting in practice the same infamous schemes, upon any other woman he may happen to have in his power" ("Critical Remarks on...Pamela," 18-53).

Because of the general tenor of the remarks in this pamphlet, and the rather insidious tone in which the whole is written, we are inclined to disregard the seriousness of many of the author's statements and to doubt his sincere concern with inculcating morality through prose fiction. About other critics, however, there can be little doubt, and discussion of the question continued, more often than not centering about the principals in Clarissa. Lovelace in particular, Jenner, himself a novelist, advocated avoiding the perfect character as not being "the properest to excite emulation."
John and Anna Letitia Aiken, in *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose* (1773) urged that if an author desires us to feel a strong degree of compassion toward a character, he must not represent that character as being "too perfect." The figure of Cato commands esteem but does not excite tenderness, and if any fault is to be found with Richardson’s "masterly performance... it is that the character of Clarissa is so inflexibly right, her passions are under such perfect command, and her prudence is so equal to every occasion, that she seems not to need the sympathy we should bestow upon one of a less elevated character..." Priestly (1777) sounded a warning to all writers to avoid engaging "the attention of their readers too much to vicious characters; since, when once they have, by this means, engaged our interest in their favour, we are very backward to withdraw our good wishes; and the interest we take in the character and schemes of a bad man, cannot but leave upon the mind an impression unfavourable to virtue." As an example Priestly cites "even the prudent and virtuous Mr. Richardson," who has interested the reader so much in the character of Lovelace, that "there are few of his readers who would be displeased with the success of his base designs upon any other woman than Clarissa herself, in whose favour we have been beforehand more strongly interested." By following exactly the opposite line of reasoning from that employed by the author of the anonymous pamphlet, Priestly has thus reached exactly the same conclusion, that the character of Lovelace is detrimental to virtue!

Beattie discussed the question rather fully in two separate works. In his *Essays on Poetry and Music* (1779) he
devotes a full chapter to the discussion "Of Poetical Characters." He seeks to illustrate the point that to conceive of the idea of a good man, and to invent and support a great poetical character, are two very different things, the former being relatively easy for the man well versed in morality, and the latter being "perhaps of all the efforts of human genius the most difficult." According to Beattie, characters of perfect virtue are not the most proper for poetry, which is supposed to imitate human action, but rather "poetical characters, though elevated, should still partake of the passions and frailties of humanity." It is the "mixed" character who is most interesting and instructive—"If it were not for the vices of some principal personages, the Iliad would not be either so interesting or so moral:—the most moving and eventful parts of the Aenid are those that describe the effects of unlawful passion:—the most instructive tragedy in the world, I mean Macbeth, is founded in crimes of dreadful enormity..." Beattie cites numerous examples from the Iliad to illustrate the way in which Homer blended good and evil, virtue and frailty, in the composition of his characters, thereby making them "the more conformable to the real appearances of human nature, and more useful as examples for our improvement." He remarks on the character of Macbeth what he also implies for Achilles and Milton's Satan, that "his good qualities, by drawing us near to him, make us, as it were, eye-witnesses of his crime, and give us a fellow-feeling of his remorse; and, therefore, his example must have a powerful effect in cherishing our love of virtue, and fortifying our minds against criminal impressions: Whereas,
had he wanted those good qualities, we should have kept aloof from his concerns, or viewed them with a superficial attention; in which case his example would have had little more weight, than that of the robber, of whom we know nothing, but that he was tried, condemned, and executed." The character, then, if he is to be either interesting or instructive, must be "mixed," yet the good and the bad must always be easily distinguishable, and herein lies the chief difficulty which the author encounters.

And perhaps the greatest difficulty in the art lies in suitably blending those faults, which the poet finds it expedient to give to any particular hero, with such moral, intellectual, or corporeal accomplishments, as may engage our esteem, pity, or admiration, without weakening our hatred of vice, or love of virtue. 'In most of our novels, and in many of our plays, it happens unluckily, that the hero of the piece is so captivating, as to incline us to be indulgent to every part of his character, the bad as well as the good. But a great master knows how to give the proper direction to human sensibility, and, without any perversion of our faculties, or any confusion of right and wrong, to make the same person the object of very different emotions, of pity and hatred, of admiration and horror. (Beattie, Essays on Poetry and Music, 65-82)

In his later (1783) essay, "On Fable and Romance," Beattie turns to the novel and elaborates the assertion made earlier. Again, it is Richardson, and Lovelace in particular, who receives the fullest treatment. Grandison is objected to as being so perfect as to discourage imitation, and so distant and formal as to forbid all familiarity, and is compared in this respect with Fielding's Allworthy, who "is as good a man as he: but his virtue is purely human; and, having a little of our own weakness in it, and assuming no airs of superiority, invites our acquaintance, and engages our love." In the case of Lovelace, Richardson, "like most other novel-writers," made
a wicked character more agreeable than was necessary, thereby causing his example to be a dangerous one.

I do not think, that an author of a fable, in either prose or verse, should make his bad characters completely bad: for, in the first place, that would not be natural, as the worst of men have generally some good in them: and, secondly, that would hurt his design, by making the tale less captivating; as the history of a person, so very worthless as to have not one good quality, would give disgust or horror, instead of pleasure. But, on the other hand, when a character, like Richardson’s Lovelace, whom the reader ought to abominate for his crimes, is adorned with youth, beauty, eloquence, wit, and every other intellectual and bodily achievement, it is to be feared, that thoughtless young men may be tempted to imitate, even while they disapprove, him. Nor is it a sufficient apology to say, that he is punished in the end. The reader knows, that the story is a fiction, but he knows too, that such talents and qualities, if they were to appear in real life, would be irresistibly enchanting; and he may even fancy, that a character so highly ornamented must have been a favourite of the author. Is there not, then, reason to apprehend, that some readers will be more inclined to admire the gay profligate, than to fear his punishment?—Achilles in Homer, and Macbeth in Shakespeare, are not without great and good qualities, to raise our admiration, and make us take concern in what befals them. But no person is in any danger of being perverted by their example: their conduct being described and directed in such a manner, by the art of the poet, as to show, that it is hateful in itself, and necessarily productive of misery, both to themselves, and to mankind.

(Beattie, "On Fable and Romance," 563-69)

Thus to Beattie at least, the hero is never quite lost in the villain, as Johnson had asserted. Furthermore Beattie objects that Lovelace is allowed to die a death of honor, rather than one of infamy, as he deserved. "Had his crime been represented as the necessary cause of a series of mortifications, leading him gradually down to infamy, ruin, and despair, or producing by probable means an exemplary repentance, the fable would have been more useful in a moral view, and perhaps more interesting" (Beattie, "On Fable and Romance," 569).
Beattie gives the whole question perhaps a fuller treatment than that of any other critic, and his final position is an interesting one. He is in agreement with Fielding in the belief that the character who is all good or bad is not realistic, not "natural," and is therefore psychologically improbable. And probability is necessary, if the character is to be instructive and to convey the desired moral lesson. Exemplary characters—like Grandison—are therefore to be avoided, but faults must always appear for what they are, rather than being coupled with too many admirable qualities, as in the case of Lovelace. Beattie of course merely expands Priestly's doubts on this last point, one to which later critics were also to return.

Much the same point had been made somewhat earlier in the entry concerning Richardson in the New and General Biographical Dictionary (1762). Here Richardson is praised for his "wonderful power over the passions," and his novels are spoken of as having been "universally read," but the observation is also made that, his purpose being to promote virtue and moral perfection, "he was led to describe human nature, rather as he wished her to be, than as she really is; not as she appears in her present depraved state, but as she would appear reformed and purified..." That is, according to his biographer, Richardson has, in his desire to exalt the nature of man, adopted Shaftesbury's system of it, whereas in reality human nature "is more of the mixed kind; hath in it much of good and much of evil, which prevail in different persons according to the temperament and constitution of each..."
It is Fielding then, rather than Richardson, who represented the nature of mankind "the most truly, and the most like itself." Richardson, on the other hand, would tend to mislead those who attempt to "form their judgment of human kind" from his characters and who will consequently find themselves "little qualified for commerce with the world."

After all, it is to be feared, that the writings of this ingenious person have not always had the good effects he intended; but on the contrary, instead of improving a natural, have made many an artificial character: have helped to fashion many a pretty gentleman, who all sentimental, delicate, and refined, has affected to despise his fellow-creatures, as a tribe of low, gross, uncivilized animals, and of a species plainly different, when compared with the finished and transcendant superiority of himself.

The Reverend Martin Sherlock, in his Letters on Several Subjects (1781) chooses to defend Richardson on one of the scores for which others had censured him. According to Sherlock, Richardson's sole object in writing his works was to benefit mankind. He realized "that happiness was to be attained by man, only in proportion as he practiced virtue." Sermons and essays he saw to be ineffectual, since man is composed of passions as well as of the understanding. Mankind, asserts Sherlock, is naturally good; the young man or young woman beginning life therefore wishes to be perfect. But looking around him, where is he to find examples to copy? Obviously, in this world of imperfections there exist no such paragons, but Samuel Richardson in his novels sets forth for us two models of perfection, Clarissa and Sir Charles Grandison. And then men blame him for making creatures such as never
existed, as if this were not his purpose all along!\textsuperscript{25} Sherlock's defense of the use of the exemplary character is close to that of Johnson, and to Richardson's own description of what he was doing with Clarissa.

Although mentioning no specific authors, Mackenzie in the \textit{Lounzer} (AX [June 25, 1785]) also speaks out in favor of the exemplary character. Such a character, admittedly less entertaining to the reader, who finds the delineation of uniform virtue insipid, is nevertheless to be preferred in point of moral tendency to "that character of mingled virtue and vice which is to be found in some of the best of our Novels."

Instances will readily occur to every reader, where the hero of the performance has violated, in one page, the most sacred laws of society, to whom, by the mere turning of the leaf, we are to be reconciled, whom we are to be made to love and admire, for the beauty of some humane, or the brilliancy of some heroic action. It is dangerous thus to bring us into the society of Vice, though introduced or accompanied by Virtue. In the application to ourselves, in which the moral tendency of all imaginary characters must be supposed to consist, this nourishes and supports a very common kind of self-deception, by which men are apt to balance their faults by the consideration of their good qualities; an account which, besides the fallacy of its principle, can scarcely fail to be erroneous, from our natural propensity to state our faults at their lowest, and our good qualities at their highest rate.

(p. 80 in the Collected Numbers)

Two years later Vicesimus Knox, in his \textit{Essays Moral and Literary}, found fault with Smollett, saying that "His Peregrine Pickle has, I am convinced, done much mischief, as all books must do, in which wicked characters are painted in captivating colours"\textsuperscript{26}—the standard objection, usually applied to Lovelace.

Dr. Moore, writing in 1797, found Grandison too formal to
be a favorite with most women, and Richardson's heroines to contain too much prudery to be favorites with the men. But he devotes most of his attention to "the striking and animated character of Lovelace," which he admires as being "supported to the last, with wonderful spirit." Yet he, too, finds Lovelace too attractive in his wickedness, and he rephrases the now-familiar fear that his example will be followed rather than shunned.

Richardson himself was undoubtedly convinced, that all those accomplishments, with the addition of youth, beauty, and the most undaunted intrepidity, would not prevent the profligacy, perfidy, and shocking cruelty of Lovelace from rendering him odious to every reader. In this, perhaps, he was mistaken. The brilliant colours in which Lovelace is painted are too apt to fascinate the imagination, and may have secured him a corner in the hearts even of some young women of character, in spite of his crimes. As for the young men, if none of them had even attempted to imitate the profligacy of Lovelace, but those who possessed his accomplishments, the exhibition of his portrait would do little harm; but there is reason to fear, that some with the first only, and but a slender portion of the second, have sometimes attempted to pass for complete Lovelaces.

(Moore, lxxxix)

Not everyone, however, found Lovelace so attractive.
Richard Payne Knight objects that the bold outlines of his character as presented by Richardson are never filled in.

The all-accomplished and profligate Lovelace is ushered into the novel with so many extraordinary qualities both of mind and person;—such a variety of talents both natural and acquired, that we eagerly look forward to the display of them in his letters; and expect to meet with effusions of genius and flashes of eloquence, equal, in the familiar style, to those which the speeches of Achilles display in the heroic. But our disappointment is equal to our expectation: for we find neither depth, nor elevation of thought; neither energy, nor brilliancy of expression; nor even the easy unaffected fluency
Knight, as we have seen, was not concerned with the morality taught by a work of literature, since he felt that men turned to such works not for instruction but for enjoyment only. It is extreme violence of passion which interests us in a dramatic representation, Knight asserts, and "it is impossible that tragedy should exhibit examples of pure and strict morality, without becoming dull and uninteresting..." Any artist can draw examples of wisdom and virtue, but no spectator can enjoy them, "merely because they are simple, uniform, and unchanging: for, what all spectators, of every degree, both of rank and intellect, enjoy in representations of this kind, is the energy and variety of just and appropriate expression of contending passions, affections, and interests" (Knight, 44).

Finally, as late as 1814 we find John Dunlop discussing Richardson's characters in the familiar terms. He objects to both Grandison and Lovelace, but now not so much on moral grounds as because of their psychological improbability. Lovelace, though not objectionable due to moral tendency, he sees as an outrage on verisimilitude and incompatible with human nature, since "great crimes may be hastily perpetrated where there is no strong motive for their commission, but a long course of premeditated villainy has always some assignable object which cannot be innocently attained." Grandison, on the other hand, is just the opposite, being a representation of the perfect male character, "one who unites every personal..."
advantage and fashionable accomplishment with the strict observance of the articles of morality and religion." As such, he is equally unbelievable, a "faultless Monster" (Dunlop, Vol. II, 572).

In an age which prides itself on an objective criticism of fictional characters in which the moral concepts of "right" and "wrong" and of "good" and "bad" are out of place—though to be sure even the most amoral of modern critics never wholly escapes making such value judgments—the statements discussed in this chapter have a curious and for the most part decidedly antiquated ring. Yet surely it is a tribute to the genius of such a writer as Richardson that the characters he created aroused sufficient interest to provoke such controversy, such heated discussion, and such varying interpretations, on whatever level the questions were being argued.

III.

The question of the desirability of a character's being exemplary was a complex one, since, as the examples cited would tend to illustrate, the possible positions for a critic to take were numerous. But the important fact, as I have indicated earlier, is that a discussion of the problem—whatever conclusion might ultimately be reached—is almost inevitably to be found among the works of anyone who concerned himself with fiction criticism. It is an interesting and telling comment on the age that the ethical criteria for judging characters were advanced alongside of and frequently with precedence over psychological standards. A further point in this quality of
standards concerns the qualifications thought necessary for the aspiring novelist to possess in order to delineate human nature in a believable fashion. Under the broad heading of "psychology" the necessity for the author's possessing a sound understanding of human nature was noted; a parallel may be said to exist in the frequently advanced theory that, with regard to ethics, the author must himself be moral in order to write well, and must possess deep self-knowledge and restraint in addition to his knowledge of human nature in general.

Such a view of course was not a new one, and, as has been the case with every other critical proposition discussed in this paper, it applied equally well to authors in various genres. Shaftesbury, as we have seen, based his entire argument in his Advice to an Author on the importance of self-knowledge, always maintaining that the artist who is "knowing in the inward Form and Structure of his Fellow Creature, will hardly...be found unknowing in Himself." He (the artist) will also possess a harmonious mind, unbeset by knavery, which, to Shaftesbury, is nothing but dissonance and disproportion. In short, he must first be a good man if he is to describe other men well, for "it is impossible that true Judgment and Ingenuity should reside, where Harmony and Honesty have no being." In a footnote to this passage Shaftesbury elaborates the point still further, insisting that this last-stated "maxim" is corroborated by history, as seen through the knowledge we possess of the exemplary personal characters of the ancient poets, orators, philosophers, and historians. He concludes with a quotation from Strabo relating to poets in particular: "...the Poet's art turning principally on Men
and Manners, he has his Virtue and Excellence, _as Poet_,
naturally annex'd to human excellence, and to the Worth and
Dignity of Man. Insomuch that 'tis impossible he shou'd be
a great and worthy Poet, who is not first a worthy and good
Man" (Shaftesbury, _Advice to an Author_, Part I, Sect. III).
Interestingly enough, Pemberton, in his _Observations on Poetry_
(1738), while discussing the qualifications necessary for one
who is to achieve accurate character portrayal, also cites
this passage from Strabo.

Strabo has not only spoke more honourably, but
certainly much more justly of poets, when he goes
so high in their praise, as to presume, that an
excellent poet must necessarily be both a wise
and good man. Indeed it is not to be conceived,
how any writer can escape error in his opinions
concerning men and their actions, unless he is
furnished with exact observations upon them, and
moreover endued with that just balance of temper,
which shall exempt him from any bias, that may
pervert his judgment.

The corollary— that a man who is not wise and good cannot
write well—became even more important with the rise of prose
fiction, due especially to the skeptical view taken toward
that genre by those who feared its moral effects. Logic
often became circular: readers were cautioned against the
works of a certain author because of real or imagined ir-
regularities in that author's personal life, and, on the other
hand, derogatory assumptions regarding the author's personal
life were made on the basis of the content of his novels.
Such biographical facts as were known during and immediately
following the authors' lifetimes were often twisted by detrac-
tors and rivals who stood equally ready to distort fact and
to accept unfavorable anecdotes.
Alexander Carlyle relates how the historian Robertson, seeking out Smollett in London and dining with him, was surprised at the novelist's polished and agreeable manner, having 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 assumption that a man must have lived a very low life, judging from the kind of novels he wrote, was one frequently made in connection with both Smollett, and to an even greater extent, Fielding. The publication of Tom Jones drew from Richardson the comment that Fielding "knows not how to draw a delicate woman—he has not been accustomed to such company—and is too prescribing, too impetuous, too immoral, I will venture to say, to take any other bias than that a perverse and crooked nature has given him; or evil habits, at least, have confirmed in him." Dr. Johnson, as we have seen, disparaged Fielding because of "his loose life, and the profligacy of almost all his male characters"; it is significant that Dr. Burney mentions these two reasons in the same breath, as it were. Again, when Boswell urged Johnson to concede that at least Fielding painted real life, Johnson is said to have replied, "Why, sir, it is... very low life," and to have cited as illustration Richardson's observation to the effect that if he had not known Fielding's lineage he would have imagined him to be "an ostler." Blanchard sums up the position represented by Johnson and by countless others of Fielding's contemporaries: "If the author depicted taverns and jails, it must be, forsooth, because his own mind did not
rise above such places; if he portrayed an honest but impecunious parson, a generous-hearted but distressed wife, it was because his mind did not reach to the heights of grandeur—the assumption was that no man who could write otherwise would descend so 'low.'

In connection with Sterne the controversy raged perhaps most intensely of all. In addition to rivals and personal critics, there was apparently a group of people, Dr. Johnson among them, who sincerely believed that both Sterne and his works were immoral and that their levity and the philosophy they contained tended to dishonor the clergy of which he (Sterne) was a member. The sincerity of Sterne's philanthropy was held up to ridicule when compared with the life he actually led, tales being told of his failure to offer financial assistance to his mother when she was at the point of being imprisoned for debt, etc. Gilbert Wakefield expressed the feelings of many when he exclaimed, "Oh! that the sentiments of benevolence and pity, which adorn Sterne's writings, had been transferred to the embellishment of his life." Vicesimus Knox devoted a whole essay to a consideration of "The Moral Tendency of the Writings of Sterne," and concluded that Sterne, with all his pretensions, had in private life a bad and a hard heart, not hesitating to pronounce him "the grand promoter of adultery, and every species of illicit commerce"—again the existence of a causal relationship is implied. But even in the case of Sterne there were some who were willing to come to his defense. Griffiths, in a very favorable review of the Sentimental Journey in the Monthly
Review, questioned whether it were possible "that a man of gross ideas could ever write in a strain so pure, so refined from the dross of sensuality!" Many times the censure of Sterne arose from a lack of understanding of his works—Tristram Shandy was scarcely regarded as a novel at all, Sterne's unique fusion of humor and pathos was beyond the range of many contemporary critics, and the difficulty of separating the man from the author proved great. Thus a writer in the London Review complained that "there was something so extremely singular and problematical in Mr. Sterne's literary character, that it is very difficult to judge of his character as a man by that of his writings."36

So numerous were the attempts to determine the facts of an author's biography from what he had written that Isaac D'Israeli, in his Essay on the Manners and Genius of the Literary Character (1795) was moved to include a chapter entitled "The Character of Writers not discoverable in their Writings." One of the examples cited regarded Smollett: "Smollett's character is immaculate, yet what a description has he given of one of his heroes with Lord Straddle,"37 and the general attempt was to prove what would seem on the whole to be obvious, that a man does not have to be low or immoral to portray low or immoral characters. This whole question is of course related to characterization only indirectly and has consequently been but briefly mentioned at this point as a concluding illustration of the extreme importance placed on ethical criteria by early fiction critics.
CONCLUSION

In the Monthly Magazine for September, 1797, a letter to the editor, bearing the signature "M. H.," was printed in which the problem of characterization in prose fiction is discussed at some length. Specifically, M. H. refutes Johnson’s position regarding the propriety of representing characters as "perfect models of virtue," urging that truth, even the truth about chequered human nature, does not need to have her "simple and majestic charms" veiled with the robe of falsehood. But the letter, though a distinctly minor critical piece penned by an author to us unknown, is of interest for a variety of reasons.

First of all, it illustrates the original promise of this paper, that "character of and for itself" was during the last half of the eighteenth century an adequate theme for critical discussion, indeed a theme widely and often, as in this case, polemically discussed. Many early critical statements with regard to the novel have been shown to fit into the so-called neoclassical tradition of "general criticism," thereby relating the new genre to the long-established ones, for the purpose of added prestige as well as for convenience. We have traced the way in which the focus on the individual consciousness emerged during the century, stemming in large measure from the widely accepted Lockean psychology. When characterization alone became a fit subject for critical treatment, again there was noticed the way in which critics of prose fiction appropriated
for their own purposes the various criteria already in use with relation to the epic and the drama.

A rough division of these criteria into two categories—the psychological and the ethical—has been attempted. As we have seen, "psychological" discussion of characterization frequently emphasized the importance of maintaining character consistency through a work, and more often than not discussed a given character in terms of his ruling passion, in the case of a serious work, or his humour, in the case of a lighter one. Also of importance to many critics was the concept of a diversity of characters in a single work, and receiving highest praise was the author who could establish and maintain this diversity among characters superficially alike. Finally, the role of the author was often viewed as that of a creator, an original genius, and his characters thereby in a sense became real beings about whose former lives speculation could be made. "Ethical" criticism of prose fiction, on the other hand, centered in a concern with the didactic ends served by the works in question, and in connection with characterization concerned itself primarily with whether or not the characters represented should be perfect, and therefore exemplary, or "mixed," and therefore credible. Certain standards or criteria necessary for the author to possess in order to write well were proposed on either side: psychologically, he must possess a deep and exact knowledge of human nature, and ethically he must himself be a virtuous individual. Whether ethical or psychological, the same sorts of statements continued to be made, with a minimum of obviously necessary changes, about characterization in the novel and characterization in
the other genres. Only as we approach the end of the century—and not always then—does the novel come to have its own critical existence apart from other forms of writing. M. H., in 1797, urged that "the excellence of a novel is of a distinct nature," but recognition of this "distinct nature" had, perhaps naturally, been slow to emerge in the minds of critics.

But most important for an understanding of the eighteenth century critical viewpoint, either in general, or with regard to characterization specifically, is the fusion of the two artificially established categories, ethics and psychology, into a single unified system. The two are almost never thought of separately by critics of the period, but rather each serves to enhance the other. The letter of M. H. again affords an example. Writing at the end of the century when the importance of the didactic was greatly diminished, he argues for "truth and fact" in portraying human nature—a "psychological" emphasis—yet at the same time he urges that characters so presented will thereby embody "a more effectual lesson"—a definite "ethical" concern. He attempts a scientific appraisal of human nature, which he says

...seems to be at an equal distance from the humiliating descriptions of certain ascetic moralists, and the exaggerated eulogisms of enthusiasts. Gradations, almost imperceptible, of light and shade, must mingle in every true portrait of the human mind. Few persons are either wholly or disinterestedly virtuous or vicious...

He maintains that "it is not necessary that we should be able to deduce from a novel, a formal and didactic moral," but rather that "the business of familiar narrative should be to
describe life and manners in real or probable situations, to
delineate the human mind in its endless varieties, to develop
the heart, to paint the passions, to trace the springs of
action, to interest the imagination, exercise the affections,
and awaken the powers of the mind." Yet with no apparent sense
of contradiction he also states his view that, judiciously
conducted, the novel is a "powerful and effective engine of
reform," and that "a good novel ought to be subservient to the
purposes of truth and philosophy: such are the works of
Fielding and Smollett" (Monthly Magazine, Vol. IV, No. XXII
[September, 1797], pp. 180-181 in the Collected Numbers).

In the final analysis we may conclude that, however
outmoded and contradictory much of the eighteenth-century
critical discussion regarding characterization in prose
fiction may seem in the light of present-day standards, the
critics, despite their personal biases in favor of the di-
dactic and their willingness to work with criteria already
established for the other genres, at least recognized and
ranked the masterpieces of the age much as we recognize them
two hundred years later, and considered them worthy of critical
discussions which were sometimes superficial, frequently ex-
tensive, but almost always sincere.
CHAPTER I


2. Ibid., p. 46.


CHAPTER II


24. Ibid.


36. Quoted from Francis Coventry, Pompey the Little, in Blanchard, p. 56.


40. Ibid., p. 294.


45. Ibid., pp. 48-49.


51. Edward Young, Conjectures on Original Composition, pp. 18-20.

52. Ibid., p. 35.

53. Ibid., pp. 40-41.


55. Ibid., p. 180.

56. Martin Sherlock, Letters on Several Subjects, pp. 21-22.
CHAPTER III


5. Ibid., p. 261.


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