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Failed Plots:

Authority and the Social Circle in Eighteenth-Century Fiction

by

Betty A. Schellenberg

A thesis presented to the University of Ottawa in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of English



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Abstract

Theoreticians of the early novel have canonized as realistic those fictions that portray the desirous individual in sustained tension with his or her social environment. Such fictions bring irreconcilable and subversive voices into conflict, and privilege a strongly linear, teleological plot. This critical focus has contributed to the dismissal of a substantial body of eighteenth-century British fiction which adopts alternative structures in order to express different ideological alignments. In particular, a study of pairs of works by authors who may in the first case be relative unknowns, but in the second have become more established and authoritative writers seeking to meet audience expectations while balancing or completing an oeuvre, reveals divergent responses to a climate of philosophical uncertainty, social flux, and changing notions of authorship.

The later work of each pair--Samuel Richardson's sequel to *Pamela*, his *Sir Charles Grandison* following upon *Clarissa*, Henry Fielding's *Amelia* after *Tom Jones*, and Sarah Fielding's sequel, *Volume the Last*, to her *Adventures of David Simple*--reflects its context of successful author, established audience, and preceding text by reinscribing the isolated protagonist within a stable social circle modelled on the intimate conversational group. Thus these works share a use of the circle as formal image at several levels of structure, ranging from metaphors of clockworks and gravitational systems, to "conversation-pieces" as the fundamental units of plot, to an overall impulse towards consensus and cyclical stasis that replaces the momentum supplied by conflict in their predecessor texts.

The social ideal modelled in these mid-century fictions, as well as the

use of the conversational circle as its locus, is not without ample precedent in the period. An attempt to replace newly problematic moral and political modes of authority with social ones, a growing focus upon secular space and time as the most significant dimensions of human experience, and a new interest in language as a commerce of relational signs which needs to be guarded from abuse by egotistical individuals, contribute to a conservative ideal of the sociable man or woman as one who submits the self to the particularized group in a natural and transparent expression of sympathy. Such an expression reaches its perfection in the intimate domestic sphere, where difference can be excluded and issues of authority refigured as acts of consensus. Two examples taken from pre-novelistic genres--William Congreve's *The Double-Dealer* as a comedy self-consciously in search of a new form that will adequately embody the emerging ideal of conversational relations, and John Bunyan's sequel to *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a feminized, communal, and static rewriting of the individual's struggle to win salvation in a hostile world--suggest the preoccupations informing the conservative fictions studied in the thesis.

In *Pamela* Part II Richardson centres a domestic heaven on earth around his morally and socially authoritative heroine and her perfected marriage. Disruptive social energies and their stylistic manifestations are either concentrated or excluded from the text according to the terms of Pamela's discourse. Thus conflicting narratives are revealed to form a congruent whole that reaffirms Pamela's moral rectitude and her social fitness as wife, while recalcitrant characters discover that to be 'naughty' is inevitably to be 'unhappy' through one's resultant self-exclusion from the stable domestic round. *Sir Charles Grandison* represents a more daring experiment in authoritative structure; here Richardson expands the tightly enclosed familial circle outward

to order its social setting and, ultimately, to encompass the reader. By constructing his circle around a socially powerful and morally exemplary male, the author creates a gravitational centre for female desire that circumscribes the expression of that desire within approved bounds while generating endless narrative energy. The ideal social self, then, is expressed in an endless deferral of conversational focus outside of the self.

In Henry Fielding's *Amelia* the optimistic vision of Richardson's final social model is darkened by centring the domestic circle upon a silent and self-effacing heroine and by placing that circle against the backdrop of an all-consuming vortex of self-love, represented by the public structures within which the domestic group is situated. Intersecting with the public anti-circle through the person of the wandering yet devoted husband, the familial circle is made vulnerable to verbal misrepresentation and sexual attack. Although the feminocentric domestic circle ultimately proves attractive enough to fix Booth's conversation, the wilful corruption of the public world precludes any expansion of the circle or its male representative into virtuous public action. Following her construction of the conversational circle as an ideal of social reciprocity in *The Adventures of David Simple*, Sarah Fielding takes *Amelia's* structure of the intimate group under attack to its extreme, pursuing her 'happy family' even into its rural retirement in *Volume the Last*. The economic vulnerability of the circle and the refusal of the rapacious and egotistical social world to acknowledge and imitate its virtue result in a gradual destruction of the community. Finally, the individual is left facing death alone, with the vision of a heavenly social stasis on earth relocated in another world.

Thus the conversational ideal is excluded from realistic fiction as an otherworldly dream, replaced by a portrayal of the human condition as one of

essential solitude and an endless struggle to overcome difference and achieve communion. The last traces of the ideal can be seen in the entirely static conversational impotence of *Tristram Shandy*, in the retreat of *The Vicar of Wakefield* and *A Sentimental Journey* into nostalgia and sentimental fragmentation, in the responsive circle of *Humphry Clinker*, and in the complex interactions of individual and social context in *Camilla* and the novels of Jane Austen. Representative of a conservative attempt to circumscribe the threat of individualism in an authoritative social construct, these fictions of the social circle, while admitting the failure of their prescriptive intent, remain a significant voice in the eighteenth century's discourse of authority.

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INTRODUCTION

The Problem of the Early British Novel

Ian Watt's isolation of "formal realism" as "the lowest common denominator of the novel genre as a whole,"¹ with its focus on the individual and the particular, inescapably bound to the temporal and the exhaustively referential, has been deservedly influential in the establishment of generic boundaries and terms of value in novel theory. Frank Kermode, for example, dismisses fictions which offer consolation rather than what he calls "the hard truth," the truth offered by a relentlessly linear temporality. Certain that he speaks for all readers of the novel, Kermode argues that

it is on change, between remote or imaginary origins and ends, that our interests are fixed. . . . The books which seal off the long perspectives, which sever us from our losses, which represent the world of potency as a world of act, these are the books which, when the drug wears off, go on to the dump with the other empty bottles. Those that continue to interest us move through time to an end, an end we must sense even if we cannot know it; they live in change, until, which is never, as and is are one.²

A social version of Kermode's understanding of the self as a being in process and conflict, and of his concomitant appreciation of novelistic dissonance, of "the word set against the word," as a representation of this state of being,³ is developed by Mikhail M. Bakhtin in his earlier, though more recently translated, *The Dialogic Imagination*. Bakhtin describes the novel as "by its very nature, not canonic," as "plasticity itself," characterized above all by the representation of multiple voices, and hence, conflicting ideologies, as well as by an open-ended temporal mode of becoming and self-creation and by a commitment to the subversion and exposure of false hierarchical structures and their hypoc-

risies.⁴

Like Kermode, Watt and Bakhtin are forced by the limitations of their sociopolitical explanations of the novel genre to acknowledge the existence of oeuvres or subgenres which they cannot subsume within their theoretical categories. Watt, for instance, cannot reconcile the "fundamentally static quality" of Henry Fielding's characters and plots or his "sociable literary form" with "the type of novel which is perhaps most typical of the genre," concluding that "*Tom Jones* is only part novel" and therefore non-canonical; indeed, Watt speaks of "Fielding's departure from the canons of formal realism."⁵ Bakhtin finds similar qualifications necessary in the cases of sentimental and didactic fiction, which he combines into a special category, that of polemical dialogization. Because Bakhtin employs an insistently binary value system, his thought appears ultimately more dependent upon a series of dichotomous structures than upon a comprehensive generic scheme. Thus he opposes his "novel" not only to the epic and the poem, but finally also to the "First Line" novel.⁶

It has become clear to students of the novel that the rise of the middle class and of individualism invoked by Watt, which leads him into difficulty with Fielding's efforts to resolve the plot of *Tom Jones* "without subverting the basis of the social order," and the underlying political metaphor of Bakhtin's dichotomies, which leads him to read a universal plot of the novel as the struggle "to liberate [oneself] from the authority of the other's discourse," are not uniformly helpful in illuminating the fictions of eighteenth-century England. For Brian Corman, Watt represents a "Whig view of literary history," with the result that he traces the rise of only one type of novel and overlooks an alternative "rhetorical tradition, . . . embodied in the masterpieces of Congreve and Fielding." Leopold Damrosch, Jr., has argued that the relationship

between Puritan individualism and the eighteenth-century novel is in fact a vexed and complex one, giving rise not only to a focus on the self as it is revealed through time but also to a preoccupation with fiction-making as the creation of order. More recently, Janet Todd has attempted to restore balance to the kind of "patriarchal literary history, exemplified in Ian Watt's *Rise of the Novel*," which "has largely written women out of its story of eighteenth-century fiction." John Bender has in turn criticized Bakhtin's uniform ideological colouring of heteroglossia as subversion, pointing out the orthodox effect of that heteroglossia's formal containment in the early novel. The genre, in Bender's view, embodies in language a more divided social impulse: "The novel acts out, it represents iconically, the interplay between the unbounded heterogeneity of population in cities (their polyglot assembly of voices) and the bounded unity of their walls, fortified compounds, governmental structures, and systems of communication (their inscription of 'facts,' their insistence on point of view, and their assimilation of authority from approved genres through parody, burlesque, irony)."⁸

In a sense, then, Watt's formal realism and Bakhtin's parodic subversion of absolute forms are best viewed as variations on one canonical theme which repeatedly seeks out an explanatory paradigm for a perceived evolutionary sequence of eighteenth-century English fiction beginning with *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* and moving through *Pamela*, *Clarissa*, and a temporary side-route in *Tom Jones* to its point of arrival in Jane Austen. Nor have all recent writers altered the special status awarded these works as marking the origin of the British novel tradition which flowers in the nineteenth century with Eliot, Dickens, and Hardy. Lennard J. Davis, while criticizing Watt for a vague treatment of cause and effect in discussing the rise of the novel, himself uses

the Foucauldian model of discourse once again to 'explain' Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding in their best-known manifestations; in separating the early British novel by "a profound rupture" from the romance tradition, he can deal only with those works resembling journalistic discourse in their serial recording of events: *Robinson Crusoe*, *Moll Flanders*, *Pamela Part I*, *Clarissa*, and *Tom Jones*.⁹

Terry Castle, on the other hand, adopts Bakhtin's paradigm of the narrative impulse as inherently subversive or carnivalesque; for this reason she elevates into prominence the masquerades of *Pamela Part II*, as an "escape from the tedium of plotlessness and the burdens of [Richardson's] own intractable ideological project," and of *Amelia*, as "a submerged will toward scandal and impertinence," thereby fitting even these recalcitrant fictions into a Watt-cum-Bakhtin critical understanding of the novel. Castle, indeed, both acknowledges the primacy given by her concept of the genre to individual experience and suggests the inapplicability of this emphasis to a significant number of eighteenth-century novels when she concludes that although "subversive desire" is the "charismatic hidden theme in European fiction since the eighteenth century," the masquerade device is only necessary until "the fate of the individual, rather than the representation of a shared public landscape, becomes the overriding subject of realistic writing." By the late eighteenth century, in other words, the masquerade is abandoned because the novel has shed the "crude didacticism" and a "superficial appearance of moral orthodoxy" which have obscured its inherently transgressive themes and "libertarian thought."¹⁰

Castle's admission that the fictional masquerade in fact implies the existence of a generally social and didactic, while vestigial and therefore uninteresting, surface in many eighteenth-century novels, can be juxtaposed against Ronald Paulson's examination of the artistic climate of the period.

Paulson concludes that in some narratives of the 1720s to 1740s "the metaphor of life as a journey, with its emphasis on sequential actions and a lone protagonist, begins to be augmented and radically altered by the metaphor of life as a stage, in which a role-playing protagonist has to interact with other actors; and this change is reflected in the major novels of the following decades." Like Bender, Paulson finds that eighteenth-century fictions go beyond "reductive" narrative formulae in exploring "human freedom in relation to closed social and literary forms." More specifically, he interprets the anti-individualistic, social emphasis of the early novel as both a backward-looking use of typology as its "*modus operandi*" and a forward-looking recognition of the influence of social environment on character.¹¹ Damrosch similarly emphasizes Puritanism's influence upon the eighteenth-century novel as including a paradoxical view of the individual in time: "the meaning of life is embodied in historical events, recounted and understood in temporal narrative sequence, yet the whole purpose of understanding is to break free of temporality and to merge separate events in a universal explanatory pattern."¹²

It is Michael McKeon, in his *Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740*, who most clearly places such opposing impulses within a model of the genre itself, discussing the emergent English novel as expressing "a formal tension between what might be called the individual life and the overarching pattern," characterized by an emphasis upon "'horizontal'" historical truth and "'vertical'" transcendent truth, respectively; this framework leads to the incorporation in the novel of both a "progressive ideology" expressed in "the formal posture of naive empiricism" and a "conservative ideology" expressed as "extreme scepticism." McKeon's study is therefore important in its introduction into the literary history of the novel of a model of varied responses to perceived moral,

political, and social issues. Although in the broad sweep of his survey he must inevitably generalize about Richardson and Fielding, for example, as uniformly representative of progressive and conservative ideologies respectively, he acknowledges that after their initial works the two authors reveal a significant "*rapprochement*."¹³ Thus a helpful redefinition of the novel genre will take into consideration its eighteenth-century manifestations as fictional discourse responding to its environment in a broad range of terms, including the subversive and the reactionary, the prescriptive and the reflective. Such a definition is McKeon's description of the novel as "an early modern cultural instrument designed to confront, on the level of form and content, both intellectual and social crisis simultaneously."¹⁴ In this way, the orthodox and authoritative purposes which have been suggested for the eighteenth-century novel by critics such as Corman, Damrosch, Bender, Paulson, and McKeon can be accommodated together with the emphasis on individualism and a teleology of desire represented by Watt, Kermode, Bakhtin, Davis, and Castle.¹⁵

I am suggesting that a great deal of eighteenth-century British fiction may have received either a somewhat skewed reading or short critical shrift because its conservative and sociable strategies have excluded it from the perceived generic mainstream. At the same time, it is necessary to define a smaller body of works upon which to focus in this study. Students of the period have recently done much to recuperate for readers less-known novels by women, concentrating on the reflection in these works of the untenable position assigned to their authors as both designated upholders of social propriety and threats to traditional authority whose voices therefore need to be carefully circumscribed.¹⁶ Nevertheless, there remains unwritten a literary history of a body of early British fiction that presents itself as neither tentatively nor

subversively, but authoritatively and self-assuredly part of the genre, while emphatically affirming a static, sociable, and therefore essentially unthreatening, notion of the self. Incorporating elements generally recognized as novelistic--a continuity of past and present rather than a rejection or distancing of the past, a firm anchorage to contemporary physical and social realities rather than an allegorizing or abstracting lack of specificity, a multi-voiced, prosaic register rather than a monologic, elevated tone, and characters individually differentiated rather than typically interchangeable--these works do not employ such elements to the ideological ends emphasized by theorists like Watt and Bakhtin. Rather, they serve the conservative purposes of affirming traditional authority structures, while modifying those structures into more egalitarian modes of morality, social relation, and textual interpretation.

This body of conservative texts consists of the later fictions of already-successful authors; in some cases these fictions are overt sequels, in others, acknowledged completions or rewritings of earlier works. All, however, share the context of socially authoritative author, expectant audience, and precedent text.¹⁷ Carol Kay has argued in *Political Constructions: Defoe, Richardson, and Sterne in Relation to Hobbes, Hume, and Burke*, that to view early eighteenth-century England as a post-revolutionary culture is "to perceive social stability not as a given but as a goal, ardently pursued and arduously maintained, by authors as well as by other authorities." Literary recognition of an author is paralleled by a "rise in status and authority of central characters from first novel to second novel."¹⁸ My study, then, will focus upon fictions which have remained in the shadow of earlier works that have been viewed from their first appearance as in some sense radically individualistic and therefore as central to the history of the novel. In these works the writer

inevitably reveals a strong degree of self-consciousness regarding not only his or her own authorial status and relation to a pre-established and known audience, as Kay's model predicts, but also the work's generic position and its relation to the preceding text; in other words, the novel's context is inevitably social and intertextual. Such a work therefore expresses a high degree of responsiveness to its heteroglossic surroundings, both explicitly and formally engaging with the issues of authority and social structure.

I will examine four mid-century texts in detail: Samuel Richardson's *Pamela Part II* and *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, Henry Fielding's *Amelia*, and Sarah Fielding's *David Simple. Volume the Last*. Although other 'rewritings' of the eighteenth century--Daniel Defoe's *Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe*, Frances Sheridan's *Miss Sidney Bidulph Part II*, Laurence Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, Tobias Smollett's *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, and Frances Burney's last two novels, for example--also affirm authoritative social structures, these four have been selected as a coherent group not only because of their proximity, through their predecessors *Pamela*, or *Virtue Rewarded*, *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones*, and *David Simple* respectively, to the assumed canon of the early British novel, but also because of their publication within a condensed time span and a shared literary environment.

These works will be seen to share, as part of their formal engagement with issues of genre, authority, and society, a use of the circle as formal image at several levels of structure. The principal structural unit, and even the principal consciousness in some cases, is that of a social circle functioning on the model of the intimate conversational group central to the discourse and ideals of the period. As a result, the conflict which supplies the most common

force of narrative is replaced by an impulse towards alignment, consensus, and mutual reinforcement, while the normativeness and commonality of human experience are emphasized more than its complexity and uniqueness. These fictions must therefore be recognized as representing notions of protagonist, point of view, plot, unity, and reading alternative to those allowed within the old paradigms of the individual in conflict with authority and the text in conflict with received epistemologies. Indeed, the authoritative nature of individual experience and interpretation is strongly qualified in these works in favour of more vicarious and communal modes of knowing. At the same time, the capacity of the social circle to subsume desire in consensus, upon which its prescriptive and interpretive authority is founded, proves problematic in that no fixed framework for this consensus can be established.¹⁹ Thus the early Richardson centres his circle around an exemplary character who incarnates a purified moral and social tradition and directs its interpretation and application, while his later fictional circle achieves a powerful dynamic of female desire controlled by a male gravitational centre; Henry Fielding, on the other hand, encloses his circle within an exclusively domestic world, while Sarah Fielding allows antagonistic desire to invade her domestic circle, fragmenting it into individual units of consciousness and action.²⁰ Ultimately, the novel of the conversational circle falls victim to the failure of the social model it portrays to provide a widely acceptable authoritative framework that can replace traditional religious, political, and social models. Its ideal is displaced into the nostalgic and unattainable goal of the sentimental wanderer or the future state which the resolutions of the novels of manners promise to the newly married pair.

As a preface to a study of these works, however, several questions must

be dealt with. What impulses or concerns might lead established writers to follow "progressive" fictions (to use McKeon's terms) with "conservative" ones? What meanings can circular and conversational form embody in order to make them the appropriate vehicles for these impulses? In what manifestations can these forms and their meanings be found in eighteenth-century art and discourse? Responding to these questions in turn, I will begin with a brief overview of the Restoration and eighteenth-century intellectual, social, and aesthetic climate and then look at some of the values assigned to conversation and the circle in the discourse formulated within this milieu. Finally, as specific examples from two genres whose forms and preoccupations provided significant resources to the early novel and which therefore are illustrative of both contemporary tensions and aesthetic strategies for portraying and resolving these tensions, I will examine briefly William Congreve's comedy *The Double-Dealer* and John Bunyan's sequel to *The Pilgrim's Progress*.

1. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), 34.
2. Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), 179.
3. Kermode, 179.
4. M[ikhail] M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), 39; see also 3-40 and 162-63.
5. Watt, 269, 285, 280, 288.
6. Bakhtin, 375-76. In fact, although Bakhtin criticizes "comprehensive formula[e]" of the novel genre for their failure "to isolate a single definite, stable characteristic of the novel--without adding a reservation" (8), his own "unnovelistic" novels (327 n.25) and novels of the "First Line," from which heteroglossia and true generic multiplicity are excluded (410), suggest significant reservations (see also 334-35 regarding *Sir Charles Grandison*). While Bakhtin finds Smollett and Sterne helpful to his emphasis upon the parodic and comic, 'Fielding' is for him *Tom Jones* only, and 'Richardson' signifies alternately a precursor to and a sidestream of the novel tradition (in the cases of *Clarissa* and *Grandison*, respectively). Most noticeably, Richardson interests him as the object of novelistic parody, rather than as heteroglossic in itself.
7. Watt, 270; Bakhtin, 348.
8. Brian Corman, "Congreve, Fielding, and the Rise of Some Novels," *British Theatre and the Other Arts, 1660-1800*, ed. Shirley Strum Kenny (Washington: Folger Books, 1984), 258, 268. Leopold Damrosch, Jr., *God's Plot and Man's Stories: Studies in the Fictional Imagination from Milton to Fielding* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985). Janet Todd, *The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing, and Fiction, 1660-1800* (London: Virago, 1989), 2. John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), 61; see also 213, 274 n.27.
9. Lennard J. Davis, *Factual Fictions: The Origins of the British Novel* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1983), 41. Later, in discussing Richardson and Fielding, Davis broadens his definition of factual discourse in the novel to include a serious treatment of contemporary ideological issues, a definition that is admittedly more inclusive, but whose value is somewhat lessened by its generality.

10. Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1986), 152; 199, 343-44.

11. Ronald Paulson, *Popular and Polite Art in the Age of Hogarth and Fielding* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 115, 156. For an earlier version of this argument, more directly related to the family as the social form replacing "the shifting relationships of chance encounters on the road," see "The Pilgrimage and the Family: Structures in the Novels of Fielding and Smollett," in *Tobias Smollett: Bicentennial Essays Presented to Lewis M. Knapp*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and P.-G. Boucé (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), 57-78.

12. Damrosch, 68. Damrosch does not, however, link this tendency in narrative towards the "eternal recurrence" of myth with a similar impulse, on the formal level, towards the portrayal of the individual as part of the group; rather, the "great" eighteenth-century novels, for him, treat the individual as essentially free from or, indeed, radically defined against, society. It is noteworthy, however, that this generalization again applies to the "great" novels, which apparently are *Crusoe*, *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones*, and *Tristram Shandy*, and not, for example, to the eighteenth century's "dominant literary form, for several decades at least," of satire, "whose mission was to ridicule eccentricity and confirm order" (10-17).

13. Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 90, 22, 418.

14. McKeon, 22.

15. Lennard J. Davis, in *Resisting Novels: Ideology and Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1987) and in the conclusion of *Factual Fictions*, recognizes the function of the novel in upholding power structures. Even Kermode acknowledges in passing a pre-Wordsworthian literature "which assumed that it was imitating an order" (167); he appears to find no place in his category of interesting fictions, however, for this "quasi-spatial mode" which is soon to become "as inappropriate to literature as it was becoming to the sciences" (168). A particularly broad statement comes from Hayden White, with his argument that "narrative in general . . . has to do with the topics of law, legality, legitimacy, or, more generally, authority." In fact, narrative is related in White's view to "the impulse to moralize reality, that is, to identify it with the social system that is the source of any morality that we can imagine" ("The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality," *Critical Inquiry* 7 [1980]: 17-18). Thus, while some narratives can be expected to privilege the subversion of authority, others will move towards its reaffirmation. With respect to individual novelists, various critics have argued for the essentially conservative project of most; for more detailed references to the studies of specific texts, see the following chapters. A similar argument for a revised view of eighteenth-century novel reading has been proposed by Patricia Howell Michaelson ("Women in the Reading Circle," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 13 [1989]: 59-69). Unlike Watt, Davis, and McKeon; among others, who visualize the female reader in her closet, experiencing the novel privately, Michaelson posits a more common convention of "reading aloud in the family circle" as a means of "plac[ing] novels behind patriarchal safeguards" (59).

16. See in particular Jane Spencer's *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) and Janet Todd's *The Sign of Angellica*. Nancy K. Miller's *The Heroine's Text*, pursuing a related argument, focuses on three of the 'canonical' novels--*Moll Flanders*, *Pamela*, and *Clarissa*--as male figurations of female desire, therefore underlining the importance of desire as narrative impulse in these fictions as well as the need to contain it within acceptable cultural norms.

17. As a result of this new compositional dynamic the second work is almost inevitably received unfavourably by those readers seeking more of the same, a repetition of the original reading experience. Terry Castle has examined briefly this problem of the sequel as part of her discussion of *Pamela* Part 17 in *Masquerade and Civilization*, 139-40.

18. Carol Kay, *Political Constructions: Defoe, Richardson, and Sterne in Relation to Hobbes, Hume, and Burke* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1988), 23, 8. Thus Davis's view of eighteenth-century authors as deliberately displacing themselves from their fictions in order to avoid claims of authority is more relevant to the earlier works of the pairs I identify (*Factual Fictions*, 11-24). Frederic Bogel's "Johnson and the Role of Authority," in *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature*, ed. Felicity Nussbaun and Laura Brown (London: Methuen, 1987), 189-209, suggests a broader and more generally applicable range of eighteenth-century solutions to the problem of claiming authority as an author, including the solutions of speaking through a textual persona or through a number of fictional voices.

19. I am invoking here Hannah Arendt's interpretation of authority as incompatible with either "external means of coercion" or "persuasion, which presupposes equality and works through a process of argumentation"; the stability of an authoritative framework for social relations "rests neither on common reason nor on the power of the one who commands," depending rather on an acceptance of the framework's (or "hierarchy"'s) "rightness and legitimacy." ("What is Authority," in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* [New York: Viking, 1968], 93.

20. It is interesting to note that Nancy Armstrong, in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), finds in Victorian fiction the first instance of "a shift in moral emphasis from the claims of the individual asserted through female desire to those of the community, which required such desire to submit to rational control" (56). My examination of eighteenth-century subordinations of individual desire to the demands of community will perhaps lead to an understanding of this concern as finding recurrent expression in novel history rather than as a definitive shift.

CHAPTER 1

The Conservative Ideal of the Conversational Circle
in Eighteenth-Century England

Most historians see in Restoration and eighteenth-century England both a progressive breakdown of ideological frameworks and hierarchies of authority and a resultant erosion of confidence in the traditional social structures based upon these frameworks and hierarchies. Critics have in turn identified parallel aesthetic revolutions and conservative reactions to them, generally ranging artists among the two parties along sociopolitical or generic lines. These generalizations can indeed be used in such broad terms to understand an eighteenth-century crisis of moral and social authority and an accompanying shift in literary tastes from satire and formal precision towards sentiment and affective response; at the same time, the unstable complex of intellectual, social, and aesthetic forces can also be used to illuminate, at the more micro-historical level, the individual author's literary career. Thus a general increase in social fragmentation, individualism, and expressive freedom over the period as a whole is often manifested within the scope of an individual's oeuvre by a foray into generic and ideological expansiveness followed by a retreat into formal and thematic conservatism. It is upon the later fictions of such writers that this study is focused.

The Intellectual Climate

At least three related areas of change in the thought of the period are

relevant to the kinds of fiction which are of concern here: these areas are a shifting notion of the significant dimensions of human experience, a questioning of old, and a search for new, bases of political and moral authority, and a consequent interest in modes of knowing, communicating, and interpreting. In regard to the first, J. G. A. Pocock has discussed in detail the implications for English culture of a seventeenth-century shift in concepts of time, from the traditional Christian notion of a succession of particulars significant in their typological or analogical relation to universals, to the radical Protestant and secular emphases on history as a process, either of progress or degeneration. In the political sphere, Robert D. Moynihan describes post-regicide England as divided between a dissenting portrayal of time as the agent of change in an open-ended process of prosperity, and a reactionary portrayal of time as either a passive record of nature's fixed states or a medium of regression and decay.¹ This growing secularization, felt at the levels of both political and personal experience, is matched on the part of Newton's heirs by a new interest in time and space as the dimensions of physical reality. Ivor Leclerc, for example, has traced an increasingly quantitative and absolute perception of space in the discourse of the period.² Indicative of an attempt to separate space and time as precise and mutually exclusive concepts is Lessing's *Laokoon* (1766), which tries to restrict the visual and verbal arts to their respective territories of space and time. An accompanying reliance on spatial and temporal formulations of thought is quickly confirmed by reference to a number of familiar early eighteenth-century texts. *Spectator* No. 1, for example, begins by affirming the need for authorial credentials to support a new text, and then supplies somewhat contradictory ones in the forms of an ancient and precisely situated "Hereditary Estate," a whimsical pilgrimage "to *Grand Cairo*, on purpose to take the Measure

of a Pyramid," and finally a three-dimensional portrait of Mr. Spectator himself as "Looker-on" of the "Game" of life.³ Pope not only employs the common spatial metaphors of maze, chain, and radiating circle in his *Essay on Man*, but also incarnates ideology as space and time in his day-long tour of Timon's grounds and villa in the "Epistle to Burlington." Swift's Gulliver experiences spatially the difficulties of self-knowledge and social relations in imaginary Lilliput and Brobdingnag, while Gay's persona in "Trivia, or the Art of Walking the Streets of London" explores the familiar in the form of a spatio-temporal process.

Readers of the period are thus required to respond sensitively to metaphors of time and space and to their mutually reinforcing or oppositional effects; conflicting views of history and of human experience are made concrete as competing spatio-temporal paradigms. It is no surprise that satire draws upon a model of temporal process as regressive, as the fourth book of Pope's *Dunciad* illustrates, while works portraying spiritual or intellectual growth, such as Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* and *The Pilgrim's Progress*, employ time as the medium of progressive change. A third type of text, however, one which like satire criticizes perceived cultural change while idealistically modelling a self and a society reformed through a return to some kind of authoritative standard, links the achievement of reform with temporal stability and spatial fixity in a kind of secularized echo of the traditional Christian paradigm. Such texts are found throughout the eighteenth century; the period can thus be framed by, at one end, the first *Spectator* paper's secure attachment of spatio-temporal continuity to positive social values in its description of the family estate, "bounded by the same Hedges and Ditches in *William the Conqueror's* Time that it is at present, and . . . delivered down from Father to Son whole and entire, . . . during the

Space of six hundred Years" (1:1-2), and at the other, what Ronald Paulson describes as "Burkean" notions of the self's ideal fixity:

Central is the sense of place which promotes the moral conditions necessary for a stable social order: a sense of continuity in the collective life of man, personal attachment to the past, and a sense of the firmness and gravity of land and society. The self only exists as a part of and in relationship to his society, its social forms, institutions, and past, and the imperatives its welfare makes upon the individual. Personal happiness comes through the fond memories and instinctual ties a society engenders.⁴

According to such conservative and normative paradigms, in other words, the individual is defined above all through temporal and spatial attachments. Particularity is thus a feature not only of a formal realism embodying individualistic principles, but also of a kind of social idealism modelled in more conservative fictions.

Ian Watt's focus upon this heightened sense of the particular and concrete in the early novel has been modified and elaborated by John Bender, who defines realism as "a fine, observationally ordered, materially exhaustive grid of representation that accounts for behavior, in fact constructs it, in terms of sensory experience."⁵ Less frequently remarked upon, however, is the fact that this particularity anchors the self to a continuous physical reality which defines that self historically and socially. As an aesthetic creation, this spatio-temporal self continues to conform and define itself in relation to the patterns set by example and typology, whether through the spiritual autobiography of the seventeenth century, the Hogarthian progress of the 1720s, the novel of mid-century, or the Reynolds portrait of the late eighteenth century. Admittedly, these patterns are increasingly secular and contemporary, rather than religious and classical; nevertheless, the very use of generalization and abstraction as hermeneutical methods suggests that the meanings assigned to

fictional experience are not invariably those of contingency and fragmentation. One of Mr. Spectator's correspondents, for example, dismisses particularity of perspective as a function of either "Incapacity or Prejudice, one of which disables almost every Man who talks to you from representing things as he ought." "The Elucidation of all Fictions" by hearer or reader, therefore, at once requires not "merely . . . being an Eye-Witness," but rather, maintaining a kind of abstracted and critical "Inattention" (4:353-56). An eye-witness experience of reality, in other words, is only valuable as it accords with detached and generalized truth, with a knowledge of things as they "ought" to be represented.

At the same time as the physical and contingent dimensions of existence are becoming at once more prominent and more problematic, the shared bases of political, moral, and social authority are becoming increasingly uncertain. It is generally accepted that the instability of the English monarchy and of traditional political structures in the seventeenth century contributed to a diminished sense of the inevitability of a particular hierarchy of political authority.⁶ Similarly, ongoing repercussions of Protestant individualism undermined confidence in Judeo-Christian moral law as embodied by a particular church hierarchy. Hannah Arendt has pointed out, indeed, that for the members of a society a loss of consensus over authority within that society "means to be confronted anew, without the religious trust in a sacred beginning and without the protection of traditional and therefore self-evident standards of behavior, by the elementary problems of human living-together."⁷ One Restoration reaction to this legacy of uncertainty is an attempt, associated with Shaftesbury as its chief spokesman, to revive in the ideal of the gentleman traditional aristocratic notions of value which associate external attributes such as title, family, land, and manners, with essential virtue and honour.⁸

Such a revival would presumably bring with it a renewed acknowledgment of an hierarchical structure of social authority. Nevertheless, an increasingly significant commercial economic base and an accompanying social mobility which afford freer access to the trappings of the aristocracy exert a simultaneous pressure towards the dissolution of this traditional ideology of authority. Thus, as both Pocock and McKeon have carefully explained, political, religious, and economic changes result in an eighteenth-century sense of shifting ground undermining the foundations of authority, a sense which forces a number of authors, as authority figures, to attempt the elaboration of alternatives to the traditional social constructs.⁹

One such alternative is that of sympathy and benevolence, a pair of values which is usually seen to arise out of Shaftesbury's argument for virtue as good taste and which is appropriated by the middling classes for the sake of its attractive combination of conservative aristocratic origins and egalitarian ideological implications. For writers like Addison and Steele, these values provide an ethic for their self-conscious and self-justifying urban audience,¹⁰ while avoiding the more individualistic extreme of pietism's claim that the inner spirit is answerable solely to the law of God. The latter paradigm of authority, already portrayed in Bunyan's *Grace Abounding* (1666) and *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), for example, is more forcefully posited as a rule of life for all in William Law's influential *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* (1729). This work is striking in its repeated claim that to have "a right knowledge of ourselves" is to see ourselves as beings that are neither irrevocably set within time and space, nor united in the institutions of church and nation, but "pure spirits," "spiritual and rational in nature." A *Tale of a Tub's* satire of madness as the ultimate individualism, as the departure of

political, philosophical, and religious man from "the common Forms" and "the Pattern of Human Learning" in a misguided attempt to "form Parties after his particular Notions," reminds the reader of the eighteenth-century fear of radical Protestantism as part of a dangerous swing from traditional and external mechanisms of authority to the opposite extreme of an entirely private, individually constructed concept of authority.¹¹ The perceived dangers of such an entirely internalized guide to moral and political behaviour, as fearsome as those of an overtly self-interested model like Mandeville's, can be seen as encouraging the popularity of the concepts of sympathy and benevolence as affective bases for a new kind of social authority which would fill the vacuum left by intellectual and historical difficulties with traditional authority structures.¹²

Thus a naively empirical view of human nature and a sceptical regard for the instrumentality of social constraints (to use McKeon's terms once more) can be seen as converging in the period in a construct of the self as an essentially social being.¹³ While this self affirms the social status quo, its motive for doing so is not one of conviction about that status quo's basis in an absolute moral law, but rather, one of a commitment to affective ideals such as those of loyalty, family feeling, and shared experience. Thus the traditional dogmas of subordination of the individual to the group, of continuity over rupture, and of submission to external authority can be maintained as a deliberate expression of the newly-conscious and legitimized self. The fictional family history recorded in Defoe's *The Family Instructor* exemplifies this complex attempt to adapt old structures to new views of the self and its motives of action. Although the previously permissive father is presented by Defoe as admirable and justified in his reformed attempt to command obedience ("But I will take care

that you shall not help it [being confined on Sundays] while you call me father, for I will not bear the title without the authority"), his son's report of the comment conveys both a disdain for such outmoded arguments ("he has not spared abundance of threatenings, and other positive testimonies of his patriarchal authority") and a sense of uncertainty about the outcome of this conflict over authority ("a new family government is to be erected, I don't know of what kind"). The son suffers the inevitable wages of his sinful rebellion, but his sister is awarded the more cheerful fate, despite estrangement from her father, of a tender husband whose patience and refusal to restrain her ("for I can allow of no submissions and subjections between you and me, but those of love") eventually woo her to repentance.¹⁴

Such ideal constructs of the socially conservative, yet uncoerced and freely aligned self result in other ambiguous portrayals of the basis of social relations in the popular discourse of the period. For Richard Steele in the 1710 *Christian Hero*, social bonds are the product of innate human traits:

The Eternal God, in whom we Live, and Move, and have our Being, has Impress'd upon us all one Nature, which as an Emanation from him, who is Universal Life, presses us by Natural Society to a close Union with each other; . . . from this Foundation in nature is kindled that noble Spark of Coelestial Fire, we call Charity or Compassion, which opens our Bosoms, and extends our Arms to Embrace all Mankind.¹⁵

In the later *Spectator*, however, the same author describes sociable men as belonging to a separate and superior breed, presumably so born, but identified less by a celestial spark of feeling than by the limits of a particular social role, located "between" that of the man of public entertainments and that of the man of business. These ideal men, according to Steele, are

such as have not Spirits too Active to be happy and well pleased in a private Condition, nor Complexions too warm to make them neglect the Duties and Relations of Life.

Of these sort of Men consist the worthier Part of Mankind; of these are all good Fathers, generous Brothers, sincere Friends, and faithful Subjects These are the Men formed for Society, and those little Communities which we express by the Word Neighbourhoods. (1:210)

Interestingly, these men have the gift of turning spatial and temporal instability into stasis: "You see in their Countenances they are at home, and in quiet Possession of the present Instant, as it passes, without desiring to Quickening it by gratifying any Passion, or prosecuting any new Design" (210). For the eighteenth-century woman even more than for these leisured gentlemen, as Nussbaum points out,¹⁶ the social roles defined by the patriarchal family and by class set the boundaries within which her self is defined, and beyond the limits of which even sympathy or other 'natural' social impulses cannot extend. Although John Mullan has argued that this tension between innate sympathy and role definition as the true basis of social relations is a chronological one (illustrated by the shift from sympathy as a free and powerful socializing force in Hume's *Treatise of Human Nature* [1739] to his later *Enquiries* [1748 and 1751], in which sympathy is subordinated to controlling self-discipline, reason, and a system of social order), it appears that, for English culture as a whole, the two models of social authority are best seen as co-existent at any point in the first half of the century.¹⁷

The reworking of political and moral hierarchies of authority into a social network made cohesive by both traditionally assigned roles and the new doctrine of sympathy finds a contemporary parallel in shifting views of language. The above-mentioned epistemological revolution which focuses attention on experiential time and space and the processes of perception includes in its sweep, through Hobbes and Locke in particular, a new understanding of language, not as a series of signs in a fixed correspondence to

absolute meanings, but as a relational system, in which components acquire meaning by association with other components and by the consensus of their users. Words are used as signs, says Locke, "not by any natural connexion, that there is between particular articulate Sounds and certain *Ideas*, . . . but by a voluntary Imposition, whereby such a Word is made arbitrarily the Mark of such an *Idea*."¹⁸ Thus the metaphor of commerce becomes ideal for the description of language as an exchange of signs predicated upon their agreed values. Both naming and accounting are empirical forms of reckoning, Hobbes explains; "*Subject to names*, is whatsoever can enter into or be considered in an account, and be added one to another to make a sum, or subtracted one from another and leave a remainder."¹⁹ Indeed, 'commerce' is for this culture more than a metaphor taken from trade: it as frequently refers generally to "Intercourse in the affairs of life; dealings" of any kind, as it does more specifically to an exchange of "the products of nature or art" (*OED*). 'Conversation,' although distinct from "Business," according to *The Spectator* No. 468 (4:154), shares intimately and almost interchangeably with 'commerce' this sense of an exchange of signs invested with a value according to usage. This intimate connection between the two terms is used in *The Spectator*, in particular, to model and idealize what Pocock calls "a civic morality of investment and exchange," in which "the commercial" and "the Christian" ethics are identified with one another and in which the sociable qualities of mutual confidence and agreement are valued above the more arbitrary and idiosyncratic ones of imagination and fantasy. Such parallel concepts of money and conversation as forms of shared property based on credit or mutual trust have an impact, as Pocock points out, on concepts of the self: "Once property was seen to have a symbolic value, . . . the foundations of personality themselves appeared imaginary or at best

consensual: the individual could exist, even in his own sight, only at the fluctuating value imposed upon him by his fellows."²⁰

The notion of words as counters is nevertheless received in the eighteenth century more as a threat to be resisted for its associations with moral relativity and degeneracy than as a discovery of language's potential for "wider application and greater flexibility," as theorists such as Mikhail Bakhtin have hailed it in retrospect.²¹ *Spectator* No. 103, for example, quoting from Tillotson's 1694 sermon on sincerity, describes complimenting as an inflationary phenomenon as a result of which a man from the past would need a dictionary in order "to know the true intrinsick Value of the Phrase in Fashion, and wou'd hardly at first believe at what a low Rate the highest Strains and Expressions of Kindness imaginable do commonly pass in current Payment." This "hollow kind of Conversation" is morally reprehensible even if all participants take into account "the current Value" of the compliments, because men's words as signs at this point are not only as valueless as "meer Cyphers," but also act as "hardly any Signification of their Thoughts"; conversation is therefore but "driving a Trade of Dissimulation" (1:430-31). Commerce which perverts or is detached from truth can be no more healthy for a conversing society than for partners in trade.²² From Thomas Hobbes' 1651 warning that "words are wise men's counters, they do but reckon by them; but they are the money of fools, that value them by the authority of an Aristotle, a Cicero, or a Thomas, or any other doctor whatsoever, if but a man" to Hannah More's 1799 discussion of "the moral benefits of accuracy in language," cautioning against obscurity of meaning which threatens "the veracity of conversation" and hence the integrity of participants, the period is preoccupied with the implication that words as arbitrary signs, dependent for their meaning both upon individual perception and upon

consensus, can be employed for the purposes of moral obscurity and personal gain as much as for mutual benefit.²³

Contemporary Ideals of the Social Self

Reflective of shifting notions of experience, authority and communication in eighteenth-century England are tensions about the individual's place in society. These tensions are most apparent in contemporary conflicts between aristocratic and bourgeois values, between public and private modes of living, and between 'manners' and 'morals' as the foundation of social behaviour; the period's uneasy resolution of such conflicts is illustrated with particular clarity in the increasing complexity of the expectations placed upon women and in the centrality of an idealistic conversational model of social interaction.

I have described Shaftesbury's concept of virtue as an aristocratic notion of social relations in its argument that socially desirable morals, as much as good manners, can be understood as a cultivated taste. Although, according to Shaftesbury, the notion of conscience "may do wonders" for the "vulgar," "the liberal, polished, and refined part of mankind" is more appropriately appealed to on the principle "'that what is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable; what is harmonious and proportionable is true; and what is at once both beautiful and true is, of consequence, agreeable and good.'" This equation of the beautiful and the true, of the aesthetic and the moral, and most broadly, of physical and spiritual systems of value, not only posits an identity of moral content and its behavioural manifestations, thereby implying that the form guarantees the content, but also suggests that only the refined--in other words, the aristocratic elite--can be trusted to possess the taste needed to recognize

the good. Such taste is to be employed in the service of a humanistic ideal of public life, devoted to "the love of friends in general and of one's country," and most fully embodied in the life of the "courtier," whose taste "for public good" is inherited from "those old English patriots who were wont to curb the licentiousness of our court, arraign its flatterers, and purge away those poisons from the ear of princes."²⁴

The *Spectator* papers document an ambivalence, typical of the period, between these public and aesthetic terms for social behaviour and the private and essential terms associated with the social values of the middling class.²⁵ I have already noted that for Steele the ideal gentleman is defined not only by an innate social sense, but also by his contentment with assigned social roles. While a link between these two notions of the self is found in Shaftesbury's doctrine of innate virtue as a guarantee of social fitness, this partially revised understanding of human sociability results in a contradictory notion of manners that in part replaces a rhetoric of artifice with a rhetoric of nature and yet retains for that rhetoric a normative and self-conscious flavour. A Spectatorial discussion of the ideal companion neatly captures this attempt to combine nature and nurture models of social behaviour:

the true Art of being agreeable in Company, (but there can be no such thing as Art in it,) is to appear well pleased with those you are engaged with, and rather to seem well entertained, than to bring Entertainment to others. A Man thus disposed is not indeed what we ordinarily call a good Companion, but essentially is such, and in all the Parts of his Conversation has something friendly in his Behaviour, which conciliates Men's Minds more than the highest Sallies of Wit or Starts of Humour can possibly do. (3:449-50)

To possess "Art" while avowing that it is tainted by "no such thing as Art," "to appear" and "to seem" while expressing what one is "disposed" to or "essentially is"--the requisites of good manners are carefully delineated in the same breath

as the necessity for their prescription is denied. Ultimately, although the didactic message asserts a simple dichotomy of value between moral and immoral essences ("If your Concern for pleasing others arises from innate Benevolence, it never fails of Success; if from a Vanity to excell, its Disappointment is no less certain"--2:591), the very form of the statement suggests that the resultant mannered surfaces are identical, and that only the individual actor can determine his or her own motivation.²⁶

Thus the twin strains of Chesterfield's "beau monde"--the fashionable and the distinguished who are the teachers of good breeding and polite knowledge --and of Pomfret's little society of "two Friends"--who are not "busy Medlers with Intrigues of State," yet are "Loyal, and Pious, Friends to Caesar, true/ As dying Martyrs, to their Maker too"--can be seen to form a kind of aristocratic-and-public yet genteel-and-private hybrid of the ideal social self.²⁷ The life story of Frances Burney, for example, with its court and club aspect represented in her official post and her membership in the Johnson circle, and its retired aspect in her retreat to Camilla Cottage with husband and son, illustrates how fully the models have become matters of an upper- or middling-class individual's unique context and choice of the social role to be played at any given point in life. Thus Burney's 1796 dedication of *Camilla* to Queen Charlotte conspicuously yokes together "Goodness" and "Greatness," "public manifestation" and "obscure Individual," "exaltation of Rank" and "the inhabitant of a retired cottage" in a joint effort "to speed the progress of Morality."²⁸ This hybrid ideal of the self's role in society not only seeks a balance between the above-discussed notions of role-player and sincerely expressive individual, but also creates an enclosed fictional space, in the concept of the intimate social group, between the extremes of the public world and isolated

reclusion.²⁹

It is appropriate that the dedication I have cited should be addressed by a woman to another woman, for it is by means of the role of the domestic woman, Nancy Armstrong argues, that political and social hierarchies give way in eighteenth-century England to a private, contractual, gendered model of the household as the fundamental social unit, with the figure of a wife, mother, and household manager at its focal point.³⁰ We glimpse the real and metaphorical significance of this pivotal role in Hannah More's description of a woman's practice of household economy as "the exercise of a sound judgment exerted in the comprehensive outline of order, of arrangement, of distribution; of regulations by which alone well-governed societies, great and small, subsist."³¹ To rephrase Paulson's description, quoted above, of the self which "only exists as a part of and in relationship to his society" and to "its social forms, institutions, and past, and the imperatives its welfare makes upon the individual," a woman's identity in the period is defined in relation to the welfare of her society and the family as society's fundamental institution. She stands at the ideal median point between the excesses of public ambition and private withdrawal. In addition, the new focus upon this central female figure is not only shared by the upper and middling classes, but also straddles the ideological gap between the hierarchical marriage of a traditional patriarchal system and the more egalitarian relationship of complementary partners.³²

To speak of a mediating position is not, however, to speak of a theoretical or practical coherence of social roles, either for women specifically or for individuals in general. *The Spectator*, for example, is perfectly capable of describing marriage as a "Patriarchal Sovereignty" at one moment (4:273) and a husband's duty as "a regular and uniform Endeavour to make [him]self valuable,

both as a Friend and Lover, to one whom [he has] chosen to be the Companion of [his] Life" at the next (4:371).³³ The most helpful generalization which can be made for the purposes of this study is that the intimate familial circle serves as a fruitful locus for the period's analyses of social interaction--in part, indeed, because of the high, yet contradictory, expectations attached to family life. Further, the individual, in particular the woman, portrayed in this setting becomes the focus of tensions between a notion of the self as described comprehensively by its codified alignments and one of the self as fashioned for a private, affectively defined sphere. In short, the complex of values associated with the intimate group (and with the woman within that group) suggests that group's suitability for portrayals of the delicate position of the self in society.

If the select circle of family and friends provides the preferred framework, its modes of interaction are privileged in a new model of conversation that represents the ideal for social intercourse in the eighteenth century.³⁴ The development of this new ideal can be linked to the intellectual phenomena discussed above: to the location of experience in concrete temporal and spatial dimensions, to the founding of authority upon social bonds, and to the emphasis on language as a system of consensus. Indeed, as Pocock has noted, the earlier humanist preference for conversation, inherited by Shaftesbury and his contemporaries, is "ineradicably social" in its implication that truth is a system of exchange "between particular men, located at particular moments in time," because "the universal [is] immanent in participation in the web of life and language."³⁵ With a new uneasiness over the possibility of gaining access to a commonly acknowledged universal, however, comes a shift in emphasis from debate to consensus, from 'masculine' reason to 'feminine' discretion.³⁶

The frequency and broad applications of the word 'conversation' in the period's discourse are in themselves an indication of the perceived significance of verbal exchange; the term in its most narrow sense is employed as a metonym for social interaction as a whole. Several examples must suffice here.³⁷ The *Pilgrim's Progress*, in its well-known Talkative episode, describes in that character an abnormal divergence between speech and other action, to the extreme that "Religion hath no place in his heart, or house, or conversation; all he hath lieth in his tongue, and his Religion is to make a noise therewith."³⁸ Robinson Crusoe compares heavenly and earthly modes of conversation, finding that "conversing mutually with [his] own Thoughts, and . . . even with God himself by Ejaculations" makes up for his "regret [at] the want of Conversation" on his island.³⁹ Focusing on manners rather than morals, *Spectator* No. 24 devotes itself to the vexing problem of "a great Number of insignificant People who are by no Means fit for the better sort of Conversation, and yet have an impertinent Ambition of appearing with those to whom they are not welcome" (1:100-01). Conversation here, it develops, includes informal gatherings of men at a tavern, as well as the exchange of bows in the Park and of visits at home.⁴⁰ In this now obsolete sense of "consorting or having dealings with others; living together; commerce, intercourse, society, intimacy" (*OED*), conversation is at once the inescapable social element of existence and a means of establishing and maintaining one's social status; it is therefore organized and regulated by both moral laws and the forms of politeness. When the moral obligation of charitable conversation with one's fellow-beings comes into conflict with the social obligations of avoiding undesirable company while retaining one's delicacy, a character such as "Mary Tuesday," in *The Spectator* No. 24, can only resolve the problem by avoiding conversation altogether, first of all through writing:

I take this Way to acquaint you with what common Rules and Forms would never permit me to tell you otherwise; to wit, that you and I, tho' Equals in Quality and Fortune, are by no Means suitable Companions. You are, 'tis true, very pretty, can dance, and make a very good Figure in a publick Assembly; but alas, Madam, you must go no further; Distance and Silence are your best Recommendations I do not say this that I would by any Means lose your Acquaintance; but I would keep it up with the Strictest Forms of good Breeding. Let us pay Visits, but never see one another (1:103)

Through such careful acts of exclusion, conversation can be refined into a secular reflection of "the Life of Angels," pure in its morals and delicate in its manners, whereas the presence of a corrupt mind within a social circle makes its conversation resemble rather "that of Daemons" (1:422).

Thus advice about the conduct of conversation generally carries, along with specific directives about forms, an ideological and moral charge; good conversation is set in opposition to antisocial uses of language, whether self-indulgent or aggressively confrontational. Thus Chesterfield's famous advice that "not to seem to perceive the little weaknesses, and the idle but innocent affectations of the company, but even to flatter them, in a certain manner, is not only very allowable, but, in truth, a sort of polite duty" expresses a high degree of sensitivity to "every groupe of company" as a small, unique empire, with its own sovereigns, of whose laws, alliances, and dialect the individual must inform himself, and to whom "Prudence bids [him] make [his] court" with "a cheerful submission." "Of all things," his son is told, "banish the egotism out of your conversation"; to convert a conversation into a monologue is "in some degree a fraud; conversation-stock being a joint and common property."⁴¹ Though Chesterfield's metaphor changes from a political to an economic one, the fundamental principle he sets forth, that of submission of the individual to the group, does not. Delarivier Manley earlier suggests not only that this

principle of submission is inherent in conversation's motive of communication, but also that a sincere manner takes precedence over a self-gratifying precision; thus she writes in her preface to *Queen Zarah* (1705) that "Fine Expressions and Elegant Turns agree little to the Stile of Conversation, whose Principal Ornament consists in the Plainness, Simplicity, Free and Sincere Air, which is much to be preferr'd before a great Exactness; . . . for 'tis not Natural for a Man to entertain himself, for we only speak that we may communicate our Thoughts to others."⁴²

William Congreve, in that most submissive of forms, the dedication, addresses to the Earl of Montague some Restoration commonplaces about the corollary educational benefits of conversation, in this case, to himself in his hoped-for rise above "the Prostituted Name of Poet [which] promiscuously levels all that bear it":

If it has hapned in any part of this Comedy [*The Way of the World*], that I have gain'd a Turn of Stile, or Expression more Correct, or at least more Corrigible than in those which I have formerly written, I must, with equal Pride and Gratitude, ascribe it to the Honour of your Lordship's admitting me into your Conversation, and that of a Society where every-body else was so well worthy of you, in your Retirement last Summer from the Town.⁴³

While this statement suggests the value assigned to conversation as a means to knowledge of socially correct behaviour and style, other writers of the period attribute to conversation a much broader range of educational benefits, in opposition to both the more abstracted mode of book learning and the more directly, but also more dangerously, experiential modes of travel and physical labour. This preference is repeatedly affirmed from such diverse ideological and social perspectives as those represented by Chesterfield, for whom conversation is the means to "the true knowledge of the world; and the world is a

country which nobody ever yet knew by description; one must travel through it one's self to be acquainted with it," and by Edward Young, for whom conversation is the currency which tests the products of reason, since "Thought in the mine, may come forth gold, or dross;/ When coin'd in words, we know its real worth." Indeed, "Speech" is rather disconcertingly compared by Young to "th' alternate push/ Of waves conflicting, [which] breaks the learned scum,/ And defecates the student's standing pool."⁴⁴

In other words, just as eighteenth-century writers resist the individualistic implications of linguistic relativity, so they eschew both solitary study and idiosyncratic experience, portraying conversation as the school of a necessary restraint placed by the social group upon the individual will. In positive terms, as the Spectatorial comparison to the life of angels suggests, and as Herbert J. Davis has noted,⁴⁵ the community of conversation is an attempt to realize in the conversational circle the ideal heavenly community of the Authorized Version's "our conversation is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). In either case, a community of shared values, expressed by a commonly ratified language as its form of exchange, functions at once to include and to exclude, filtering the uncomfortable and the unacceptable from experience and modifying the idiosyncratic and the egotistical through its shared premises.

Although the fundamental metaphor of conversation as commerce, as an exchange of verbal currency based upon a consensus of value, remains a constant throughout the period, a range of other, sometimes contradictory metaphors reflects a shift in the predominant model of conversational exchange from a 'masculine'--public, intellectual, superficial, witty, and aggressive--one to a 'feminine'--private, affective, internalized, discreet, and accommodating--one.⁴⁶ These metaphors again reflect the tension between the moral and social

ideals of natural sincerity and of cultivated manners discussed above. Conversation in Young's *Night Thoughts* involves a particularly intriguing mix of aggressive swordplay and motherly nurture in such passages as:

What numbers, sheath'd in erudition lie,
Plung'd to the hilts in venerable tomes,
And rusted in; who might have borne an edge,
And play'd a sprightly beam, if born to speech;
If born blest heirs of half their mother's tongue!⁴⁷

Although conflict imagery dominates here, and conversation as heir is decidedly masculine, language itself is a blessing associated with the feminine.

Young's aggressive metaphors for conversation are shared by Chesterfield and Boswell's Johnson, whereas *The Spectator* and Hannah More represent critical reactions and posit alternatives. From his description of "the two important arts of speaking, and pleasing" as "the wings upon which [one] must soar above other people" and without which one "will only crawl with the dull mass of mankind," to his characterization of ceremonial forms as "the outworks of manners and decency, which would be too often broken in upon, if it were not for that defence, which keeps the enemy at a proper distance," to his confidence that "the most trifling, frivolous subjects will still give a man of parts an opportunity of showing them," Chesterfield's metaphors support his generalizations about social interaction as a jostling for advantage in which aristocratic privilege is claimed by right but must continually be reclaimed by means of forms which will pass public scrutiny.⁴⁸ For the Johnson portrayed by Boswell, conversation, while it may have moved into a more private and less cosmopolitan setting, carries if anything a more overt connotation of the test of skill, the verbal duel requiring pointed presentation as much as convincing intellectual content. Boswell's *Life of Johnson* is organized around exchanges in which most speeches are merely summarized, but in which Johnson invariably either makes a

definitive final statement--"JOHNSON. (sternly,) 'Sir, I was not interrupting the gentleman. I was only giving him a signal of my attention. Sir, you are impertinent.' Goldsmith made no reply"--or is described as doing so: "Johnson put them right, and enjoyed his victory with great glee."⁴⁸

The *Spectator*, on the other hand, has grave reservations about the "indecent License" which may characterize conversation in travelling coaches, assemblies, or other public settings conducive to the arbitrary formation of groups. Similarly, the masculine social enclaves of the clubs and coffeehouses expose an individual with any degree of delicacy to the painful intrusions of raillery, dishonesty, or excessive familiarity.⁵⁰ In paper No. 68, a second, apparently contradictory, conversational law emerges:

Conversation is never so much streightened and confined as in numerous Assemblies. When a Multitude meet together upon any Subject of Discourse, their Debates are taken up chiefly with Forms and general Positions; In Proportion, as Conversation gets into Clubs and Knots of Friends, it descends into Particulars, and grows more free and communicative: But the most open, instructive, and unreserved Discourse, is that which passes between two Persons who are familiar and intimate Friends. (1:289)

Simply stated, the size of a group is inversely proportional to the quality of its conversation because formal features determine the range and freedom of conversation's content, its essence.⁵¹ Thus both a lack of formal control over content and an excess of form limiting that content characterize public and socially mixed conversation. Thirdly, I have indicated that for *The Spectator*, to be agreeable and conciliatory is preferable to "the highest Sallies of Wit or Starts of Humour" (3:450); the ideal conversational role, in fact, is "the Part of Moderator" (2:275).

Not surprisingly, then, the gentleman will find his greatest conversational happiness in his own home, in the company of his wife, for in the ideal

marriage, "The Wife grows Wise by the Discourses of the Husband, and the Husband good-humour'd by the Conversations of the Wife. . . . Their Virtues are blended in their Children, and diffuse through the whole Family a perpetual Spirit of Benevolence, Complacency, and Satisfaction" (2:11). This model of conversation as an intimate, mutual and informal exchange of satisfactions is valued for a transparent sincerity which can be achieved only within its stable and affective confines. Indeed, according to *The Spectator*, "when such an inflexible Integrity is a little softened and qualified by the Rules of Conversation and Good-breeding, there is not a more shining Virtue in the whole Catalogue of Social Duties. A Man however ought to take great Care not to polish himself out of his Veracity, nor to refine his Behaviour to the Prejudice of his Virtue" (4:503). This ideal social self, whose natural sympathy is sincerely expressed in, and therefore need only be "a little softened and qualified by," traditional social roles, is therefore dependent upon a context of intimacy for the maintenance of its precarious balance.

By the end of the century, Hannah More's discussion of conversation in her treatise on female education includes a frontal attack on the old metaphors:

But conversation must not be considered as a stage for the display of our talents, so much as a field for the exercise and improvement of our virtues; as a means for promoting the glory of our Creator, and the good and happiness of our fellow-creatures. Well-bred and intelligent Christians are not, when they join in society, to consider themselves as entering the lists like intellectual prize-fighters, in order to exhibit their own vigour and dexterity, to discomfit their adversary, and to bear away the palm of victory. Truth and not triumph should be the invariable object. (3:224-25)

The conflict invoked in this discussion is that between a desire for the gratification of vain and aggressive desires on the one hand and a "disposition to bring forward to notice any talent in others" in order to "improve by them"

(225-26) on the other. Submission to one's social duties to God and to others, rather than preoccupation with a theatrical display of intellectual or role-playing gifts, marks the ideal social self, the 'well-bred and intelligent Christian.' For a woman's conversation in particular, nothing is more threatening to its ideal "discreet modesty" and "sober-mindedness" than wit; a valuable feminine skill, in fact, is that of promoting conversation through "the silence of sparkling intelligence."⁵²

More's *The Bas Bleu. or, Conversation* and David Hume's "Of Essay Writing" can be used together to summarize the eighteenth-century model of conversational commerce. For More, the ideal moderator of the conversational group is a woman, Mrs. Vesey; through this "enchantress," the artificially formal circle

Of routs, not social but gregarious:
Where high heroic self-denial
Sustains her self-inflicted trial

has been replaced by a more naturalistic "liberated ground" of "gentler scenes . . . ,/ Where Conversation holds her seat." Through the image of metamorphosis, in which members of the group become

The very things which nature meant;
Nor strive, by art and affectation,
To cross their genuine destination,

the potent myth of a natural basis for social forms is again evoked. Further, the free exchange facilitated by this social hour, spent around a tea table presided over by a woman, is still describable by the old image of commerce:

But 'tis thy commerce, Conversation,
Must give it [intellectual ore] use by circulation;
That noblest commerce of mankind,
Whose precious merchandise is Mind!

Conversation's social ends are set forth by More in the neatly traditional and didactic form of a hierarchy, with practical, useful knowledge at its base, taste and formation of the mind following, then wit, all subordinate to virtue,

the ultimate goal of conversation. What holds this hierarchy together? A careful balance, again, of intellectual sensibility's "kindling sympathies" which communicate like sparks, without any need for "dry discussion," between those "souls electrical alike," and the implicitly feminine "attention," that "Mute angel" which charms, soothes, and flatters into virtue.⁵³

Like More's poem, Hume's mid-century essay awards women the role of "the sovereigns of the empire of conversation" because of their support of this balance of intellect and sensibility; like the author himself, women recognize the fact that sociable beings must possess both "sound understandings and delicate affections." While again supporting the claim that this combination is a natural one, that "these characters . . . we shall always find inseparable," Hume acknowledges the need to create and further such an ideal by bringing together the "learned" and the "conversable," both of whom already belong to the same select group of "the elegant part of mankind, who are not immersed in mere animal life." Conversation has the advantage of "bring[ing] mankind together in society, where every one displays his thoughts in observations in the best manner he is able, and mutually gives and receives information, as well as pleasure." Thought and manner, delight and instruction thus combine to make conversation necessary even to the learned, whose language without it becomes "barbarous" and "unintelligible." Also of interest to my focus on prose fiction are Hume's suggestions that a sociable literary mode-- "such Essays as those with which I endeavour to entertain the public"--is the embodiment of "this age"'s newly formed "league between the learned and conversable worlds." Like the writers of the works I will examine, Hume appoints himself to an authoritative role with respect to his readers; he is an "ambassador from the dominions of learning to those of conversation," whose

"constant duty" it is "to promote a good correspondence betwixt these two estates." It is thus upon "the conversable world," the social circle, that the poet, the educator, and the philosopher of the eighteenth century have focused their energies in the hope of establishing a model of authoritative discourse to contain individual idiosyncrasies and desires. Or, as Leland E. Warren has suggested, "in writing against isolation, these writers remind us that we are inevitably isolated; and in forcing their readers away from private fantasy, they foster a public fantasy of social communion."⁵⁴

Society, Art and the Novel

How do artistic expressions of the eighteenth century manifest this increasingly secular, privately oriented, and 'conversable' culture, in which, as J. Paul Hunter has said of the year 1740, "the fragmentation was far advanced," while "invocations of a *consensus gentium* still abounded and a fear of individualism was strident and often shrill"?⁵⁵ Like society as a whole, the visual and verbal arts seek out and experiment with new forms and materials, employing the classical tradition, for example, not simply as the assumed source of structure and content, but as a legacy to be parodied, selected from, opposed by an alternative, or dismantled, all with varying degrees of respect, nostalgia, and accuracy. The portrayal of ordered reality is still assumed as an end of art, but the order must now be created from posited principles and not simply reflected. Jean H. Hagstrum speaks of an eighteenth-century aesthetic "revolution" which "subjectifie[s] artistic aims and forms and transfer[s] value from the finely-shaped work--from the well-wrought urn--to the reader's emotional responses." Ronald Paulson similarly observes a series of shifts from external

and normative syntax as the basis of meaning in art to a search for meaning as expressive and interactive, from symmetry to irregularity as valued forms, and from sequential, allusive structures to more spatially and morally schematized, hence more quickly perceptible ones.⁵⁶

In the process, the relation of artist and audience is being redefined. Increasingly dependent financially upon sales of their works, artists must appeal to their audiences as never before, and the appeal must involve eliciting affective response. Painter and poet nevertheless share an unchanged sense of educative responsibility to their audiences which belies later oppositions between the aesthetic and the educative.⁵⁷ Frances Burney's statement of this responsibility to the public morality has already been cited; further illustration is provided by the fact that both Hogarth and Reynolds, while differing widely in their work between the methods of caricature and of heroic portraiture and between the aesthetic priorities of form and expression, similarly justify their art in terms of its improving effect upon an audience. While Hogarth avoids linking beauty with morality in his aesthetic theory, his engravings consistently enclose the visually pleasing within morally interpretive frameworks. For Reynolds in turn, "the wish of the genuine painter must be," not "to amuse mankind with the minute neatness of his imitations," but "to improve them by the grandeur of his ideas."⁵⁸ To speak of early fictions as either realistic or didactic, therefore, is to invoke a distinction which is meaningless for the period; the portrayal of particularized experience in descriptive terms is perceived as compatible with prescriptive ends.

Of particular interest to our discussion is the parallel appearance of a new conversational model in the genres of portraiture, the periodical essay, and the comic drama.⁵⁹ Historians of painting define a new subgenre, the conversa-

tion piece or conversation painting, associated with the rise of the burgher class in northern Europe, apparently introduced into England by Dutch painters in the seventeenth century, and at the height of its popularity in eighteenth-century England. The typical English conversation piece is a small-scale painting of a family group, in a detailed domestic setting, which indicates, through stylized placement and gestures, the nature of the relationships between members of the group.⁶⁰ For patrons, the genre is attractive in its portrayal of the kind of refined, leisured intimacy idealized in *The Spectator*.⁶¹ For the artist, Paulson's discussion of the subgenre suggests, it provides an appropriate locus for the treatment of eighteenth-century tensions which are becoming familiar in this discussion: between iconography and individual expression, between role-playing and intimacy, between the ancestral and the contemporary, between order and disorder, between safe enclosure and imprisonment. Moreover, the genre can be opposed in its focus to the Hogarthian progress's treatment of an isolated individual passing through a disordered world, just as novels of the period vary between an individualistic journey structure and the domestic plot. Thus the popular forms of the progress and the conversation piece reflect in visual art of the period the general interest in spatio-temporal conventions as an index of the relationship between an individual and his or her environment.⁶²

The happy combination of emblematic and dramatic modes in the conversation painting explains, perhaps, the transfer of the concept to prose sketches of domestic groups featuring typified characters and their interactions. In *Spectator* No. 424, for example, a letter on behalf of readers retiring to the country asks for "a Lesson of Good-humour, a Family-Piece" to help overcome the discord which inevitably arises "when our Conversation is confin'd"; the letter then provides its own 'family-piece' describing a house-party of intimate

friends whose fear of "a certain Satiety" in each other's company has led to the establishment of an infirmary for the ill-humoured in their residence (3:591). A later *Spectator* again uses the limited rural "Circle of Neighbours" as its reason for proposing a club of hunters and drinkers, a "green Conversation-Piece" based upon a shared value for broken bones, whose members, "for their own private, as also the publick Emolument, should exclude, and be excluded all other Society" (4:177-79). Light-hearted and caricatured, the conversational grouping thus enters eighteenth-century literature as a means of exploring the phenomenon of the exclusive social circle and the shared cluster of values, tastes, and behaviours which bond it together.

More generally, my argument to this point has suggested the profound influence exerted by the turn-of-the-century periodical essay on the novel of the conversational circle. First, *The Spectator* and *The Tatler* are primarily interested in the isolation, evaluation, and systematization of social behaviours and configurations, thereby making of those behaviours and configurations a valid subject of discourse. The wide readership of such journals suggests the authority of the social vision they represent; one need only refer to Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison* to be convinced of that authority as it is felt by at least one contemporary reader. More significant to novelistic structure than the authorizing of certain forms of social interaction, perhaps, is these periodicals' modelling of those interactions; as Ketcham argues, *The Spectator* phenomenon is that of "a social structure being created out of a literary structure."⁶³ From the fiction of a club as source of the essays, to the encouragement of reader participation because "it is an impertinent and unreasonable Fault in Conversation, for one Man to take up all the Discourse" (4:4), to the treatment of topics such as gossip, a conversational group is

demonstrated to be the most authentic source of subject matter, the most authoritative voice in which to convey it, and the fullest illustration of its complex truth. This mediation of theme through the conversational circle can be linked with, in the novels of my study, an inclusivity of genre, a reliance on an essay-like combination of fictional realization and authorial commentary, and an experimentation with the use of multiple characters to illustrate a range of concerns and points of view.

The changing fortunes of comic dialogue in Restoration and eighteenth-century drama also parallel the social issues which preoccupy the early novel. The Restoration comedy of manners portrays in its brilliant dialogue and its interest in the themes of wit and gossip a priority of language over action and of relationship over self-exploration. While these emphases remain central to comedy throughout the period, changes in stylistic ideals reflect a new value for expansion and sincerity in preference to precision and successful gamesmanship--reflect, in other words, the privileging of morals over manners, of the self as essentially sociable being over the self as competitor, of conversation over debate. Even in the 1777 *School for Scandal*'s supposed reaction to sentimental comedy with a return to Restoration wit, the central conflict is that between Mr. Surface's superficial propriety and his brother Charles's sincere, if extravagant, generosity, with the latter fully rewarded by both audience sympathy and the play's outcome. As my discussion of Congreve's *The Double-Dealer* will make clear, the egotistical intriguer is firmly and successfully ejected from the eighteenth-century dramatic circle with a kind of confidence in the authority of the social group to define and purge its own evil that is also found in conservative fictions.⁶⁴

As Bakhtin has argued, characters in novels represent ideological

positions; hence it is to be expected that the issues and ideals summarized above are embodied in the individuals and groups portrayed by the early British novel. Similarly, one can assume that each fiction's configuration of 'ideologues' will determine the work's position in relation to concerns of the day; in Bakhtin's terms, "the internal politics of style (how the elements are put together) is determined by its external politics (its relationship to alien discourse)."⁶⁵ Paulson's study of the effects of incorporating satire into the eighteenth-century novel illustrates this point: transforming the satirist into a fictional character controls and renders ambivalent the threat of his or her satire to the social order as a whole by making it relative and idiosyncratic.⁶⁶ Further, a fiction's politics will reflect its location within the author's canon and within the generic scheme of the time, as well as the circumstances of its composition and publication. Thus it is reductive to say, for example, that the frequent appearance of socially mobile characters in the eighteenth-century novel makes the genre a uniform expression of bourgeois class aspirations, or that Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* labels its author as thoroughly committed to a critique of the gentry. Rather, such clear political thrusts in some novels give way in others to a response to audience desires for fictions representing "the Way of Life which plain Men may pursue, to fill up the Spaces of Time with Satisfaction." Indeed, in the view of this correspondent of Mr. Spectator, portrayals of "the Relations and Affinities among Men, which render their Conversation with each other so grateful, that the highest Talents give but an impotent Pleasure in Comparison with them," as well as of "domestick Life, filled with its natural Gratifications, (instead of the necessary Vexations which are generally insisted upon in the Writings of the Witty) will be a very good Office to Society" (2:269). As Stephen Cox points out, this

conviction that the true self is a sociable one and expresses itself in acts of sympathy and sensibility is manifested in the application to literature of these values as aesthetic standards.⁶⁷

A number of the period's theorists of style call similarly for a representation of the conversational ideal in the language of print. Johnson's description of Addison's prose, for example, appears concerned above all with establishing "the model of the middle style" as "on grave subjects not formal, on light occasions not groveling; pure without scrupulosity, and exact without apparent elaboration; always equable, and always easy, without glowing words or pointed sentences an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious," Although Berger has detected a note of faint praise in Johnson's characterization of Addison's middle style as "descend[ing] too much to the language of conversation," Johnson himself attributes the cause of this descent to Addison's "apparently . . . principal endeavour to avoid all harshness and severity of diction," thereby indicating his own sensitivity to a literature which self-consciously avoids conflict.⁶⁸ Elaborately figured rhetoric is viewed with suspicion as the stylistic equivalent of mere 'manners'; here again, unless it prove possible "to establish among us a Taste of polite Writing," Mr. Spectator warns (1:245), inflated literary language threatens to form a closed circuit of signs that have lost their representational value and are therefore become 'meer Cyphers.' Swift's definition of style as "Proper Words in proper Places"⁶⁹ provides perhaps the most succinct expression of an eighteenth-century conversational ideal of language: the references to propriety and place demand the consideration of both a linguistic context of other words and a social context of the speaker and his or her particularized setting.

One can predict, therefore, that admired and successful authors of fiction

in the eighteenth century will be highly conscious of the ideological implications of a new work's form and content and of their responsibility to the audiences created by previously published work. This consciousness will be but reinforced by the need to establish an authoritative voice on a work-by-work basis in a genre which is still significantly indeterminate.⁷⁰ While this awareness might manifest itself in a deliberate audacity at the one extreme, in Sterne, a near-paralysis of explanatory notation at the other, in Richardson, and an ingenious range of narrative role-playing and critical apparatus in between, the period's notion of art as a social relation makes a recognition of audience and of the writer's responsibility to that audience inevitable. The fact that the works in this study invariably grant a central place to the discussion and modelling of careful reading and correct interpretation underlines this awareness. In Bakhtin's phrase, the text "cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word it anticipates;" in Sterne's more facetious terms,

Writing, when properly managed, (as you may be sure I think mine is) is but a different name for conversation: As no one, who knows what he is about in good company, would venture to talk all;--so no author, who understands the just boundaries of decorum and good breeding, would presume to think all: The truest respect which you can pay to the reader's understanding, is to halve this matter amicably, and leave him something to imagine, in his turn, as well as yourself.⁷¹

The well-known eighteenth-century suspicion of the romance genre almost demands that the fiction writer clarify his or her didactic aims; it also encourages a tendency to borrow materials and structural devices from more acceptable sources such as the conversation painting, the periodical essay, and the drama.⁷² Although the influence of the spiritual autobiography, journalistic discourse, and the familiar letter, as well as the romance, has been thoroughly

discussed in studies of the mainstream novel tradition, attention to these more broadly social and overtly didactic influences has been limited.⁷³ I have indicated why such modes of representation should be taken into account in a study of conservative fictions; I will now conclude with a brief discussion of the conservative implications of circular form in the eighteenth-century in general, and in prose fiction in particular.

Circular Form and Social Values

Georges Poulet begins his discussion of *The Metamorphoses of the Circle* with the comment that "the form of the circle is the most constant of those forms thanks to which we are able to figure for ourselves the place, either mental or real, in which we find ourselves, and to locate within it, what surrounds us, or that with which we surround ourselves."⁷⁴ With this statement Poulet at once affirms the role played by spatial forms in the conceptualizing activity of the mind and identifies a recurrent use of the circle, as a particular form, to express ideas of place, of the self in relation to its context. Recent arguments have reminded readers of "the implicit geometry of narrative"; its multi-dimensional possibilities have, indeed, been assumed by most theorists who have not emphasized its temporal linearity exclusively.⁷⁵ An overview of circular forms as they are used in prose fiction of the Restoration and eighteenth century will reveal that these reminders are particularly appropriate to the period. As I have noted above, the post-Newtonian generations of writers are particularly sensitive to the creation of spatial dimensions, whether through narrative processes or through descriptions, in the interaction of reader and text. When writers of this period, therefore, choose

centripetal, static, and symmetrical narrative structures rather than linear, teleological, asymmetrical patterns, their choices must be seen to bear ideological weight.

Poulet warns that the ideological referent of a form changes with its cultural context, while Gaston Bachelard cautions that in interpreting spatial images "reduction is easy, commonplace."⁷⁸ Thus one is vulnerable to accusations of anachronistic or wishful thinking in reading certain well-known historical associations of the circle and circular motion, such as the sphere as image of perfection and of the soul, or cyclical motion as associated with nature and fertility, into the texts in question here. At the same time, the relevance of even these ancient paradigms becomes more evident when their generality is made specific to early eighteenth-century thought: when eternity is seen as an atemporal circle, when the conscious self is understood as the centre of a circle of perception and activity, and when hierarchical and traditional forms of authority are portrayed as naturally repetitive from one generation to the next. It comes as no surprise, then, to find circular form embodying in the eighteenth century the anti-individualistic notions of time, authority, the self, social structure, and language which have been discussed above. With respect to time, the circle suggests stability and the continuity of recurrence. A circular model of authority allows for the self-perpetuating activity of inclusion and exclusion; the group is held together either by the gravitational pull of its central authority figure or by the equilibrium between the individuals who make up its circumference. Thus the self is firmly situated with respect to, and is defined by, its relationships to other points in the circle, and at the same time, the social structure of the intimate circle begs the now-problematic issue of social hierarchy by substituting for it an ostensibly more

egalitarian relation between self and other while retaining the traditional value of group before self. Finally, language by a circular model is seen as a consensual system of signs, rather than an arbitrary correspondence subject to individualistic idiosyncrasies of interpretation.⁷⁷

Several examples from Restoration and eighteenth-century writing other than prose fiction will serve to illustrate these uses of the circle image in support of conservative ideologies.⁷⁸ Like nature's "unchangeable constancy" as it "moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression," the ideal society, Edmund Burke argues in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, recognizes time as a cyclical perpetuity of domestic forms, a natural repetition with variations. As "the people of England well know," he writes, " . . . the idea of inheritance furnishes a sure principle of conservation and a sure principle of transmission, without at all excluding a principle of improvement," by "binding up the constitution of our country with our dearest domestic ties" and "adopting our fundamental laws into the bosom of our family affections."⁷⁹

A desire to conserve and transmit oneself is closely related to an impulse to turn inward and exclude the undesirable. At the turn of the eighteenth century, Swift portrays the self-satisfied individual as a bloated, circumscribed spider, "which by a lazy Contemplation of four Inches round; by an overweening Pride, which feeding and engendering on it self, turns all into Excrement and Venom; producing nothing at last, but Fly-bane and a Cobweb," in contrast to the intellectually picaresque bee, "which, by a universal Range, with long Search, much Study, true Judgment, and Distinction of Things, brings home Honey and Wax."⁸⁰ This negative image notwithstanding, a life of security and self-satisfaction, given a predominantly social rather than intellectual

colouring, becomes for many of Swift's genteel contemporaries an ideal contrasted to a humanistic pursuit of wisdom and knowledge; according to a correspondent of Mr. Spectator, "the very Enquiry after Happiness has something restless in it, which a Man who lives in a Series of temperate Meals, friendly Conversations, and easy Slumbers; gives himself no Trouble about" (2:268-69). No less necessary than an exclusion of intellectual threat is a fortification against social disorder, as we have seen in *The Spectator's* treatment of conversational impertinence. Burke, writing in the shadow of the French Revolution, makes the fortification metaphor overt:

The characteristic essence of property, formed out of the combined principles of its acquisition and conservation, is to be unequal. The great masses [of property], therefore, which excite envy and tempt rapacity must be put out of the possibility of danger. Then they form a natural rampart about the lesser properties in all their gradations. The same quantity of property, which is by the natural course of things divided among many, has not the same operation. Its defensive power is weakened as it is diffused.⁸¹

The individual is by implication placed within a circle of forms and of property that both fixes and protects his or her social role.

A more shrewdly self-conscious use of the image, however, one which makes clear its artificial origin and its socially exclusive intent, is that of Fielding in *The Covent-Garden Journal* No. 37. He speaks of "the Use which these People [of Fashion] have always made of the Word Circle, and the Pretence to be enclosed in a certain Circle, like so many Conjurers, and by such Means to keep the Vulgar at a Distance from them"; examples of such popular usages are "a polite Circle, the Circle of one's Acquaintance, People that live within a certain Circle." Fielding goes on to describe the efforts made by the fashionable to "guard against any Intrusion of those whom they are pleased to call the Vulgar; who are on the other Hand as vigilant to watch, and as active to improve

every Opportunity of invading this Circle, and breaking into it"; he traces the flight of "the Circle of the People of Fascination" before "the Enemy" through a series of neighbourhoods until they were "stopped by the Walls of Hyde-Park."⁸² Writing after the publication of *Amelia*, Fielding here captures the ultimate plight of the circle ideal as it is portrayed in the novels of this study: increasingly unable to maintain its claim to prescriptive power, it becomes a mere fiction of social uniformity, tenable only through the exclusion of what is unlike itself.

These class-bound and ultimately untenable invocations of circular imagery constitute, however, only some manifestations of a received and not-always-conscious ideology. For Pope, it is the "circle mark'd by Heav'n," whether "a Bubble" or "a World," that delineates the proper sphere of each creature as a link in the Chain of Being. For Hannah More, the image of women "describ[ing] a smaller circle" than men allows her to portray both sexes as presiding equally at the centre of a social world, while preserving the subordination of one world to the other in a hierarchy of significance.⁸³ At the same time, Pope's well-known description of the self as a pebble at the centre of circles representing all social categories from "Friend" to the "human race" illustrates a more affective model of social relations as a "system of Benevolence" which operates "in whate'er degree."⁸⁴ Here we see again both the tensions and the multifaceted possibilities inherent in the paradigm of the social circle, in that its function in maintaining distinction through inclusion and exclusion is matched by an insistence that the intimate group be seen from within as a classless and non-competitive entity. The position of centre in such a group is held, according to *The Spectator*, "not only without the Profits which attend such Offices, but also without the Deference and Homage which are usually paid to

them" (1:210).

This exclusivity and equality which are together implied by the circle image are especially evident in ideals of group conversation. While the free exchange of ideas and emotions between participants is much prized, as I have indicated, the drive of this exchange towards the resolution of consensus can only be termed monologic in effect. Correct notions of truth and value, says Shaftesbury, are arrived at only through the exercise of the manly and courageous art of dialogue, which by definition dares to doubt. At the same time, this dialogue is to take place "among the better sort, and as an exercise of the genteeler kind"; its project is to "talk philosophy in . . . a circle of good company." Chesterfield in turn describes each company's wit and secrets as "local" growths which "will not often bear transplanting" outside of the original "circle."⁸⁵

These ahistorical, conformist, consensual, and sociable colourings of the circle accord well with contemporary theory of fiction. The period beginning with *The Spectator's* orderly description of "Methodical Discourse" as having "several Centers . . . [with] a view of all the Lines and Walks that are struck from them" (4:186) closes with Coleridge's 1815 cosmic vision of the "common end of all narrative, nay, of all, Poems" as being "to convert a series into a Whole: to make those events, which in real or imagined History move on in a strait Line, assume to our Understandings a circular motion" in a reflection of "the great Cycle" of eternity.⁸⁶ Situated within this enclosure, Samuel Johnson's well-known *Rambler* No. 4 begins with a characterization of contemporary fictions that assumes a static, rather than an historically particular, view of time and of human experience in time. The popular fictions in question, he says, "exhibit life in its true state, diversified only by accidents that daily

happen in the world." Whereas the fantastic events of heroic romance are the product of idiosyncratic isolation, in which a writer need merely "retire to his closet, let loose his invention, and heat his mind with incredibilities," the new writing, if it is to be authoritative, demands a basis not only in "that learning which is to be gained from books," but also in "that experience which can never be attained by solitary diligence, but must arise from general converse, and accurate observation of the living world." This basis can therefore be subjected to the test of consensus, since "every one knows the original, and can detect any deviation from exactness of resemblance." Further, the writer's purpose is not self-expression or public acclaim, but the fulfillment of a social role; for "the young, the ignorant, and the idle," fiction provides "lectures of conduct, and introductions into life." This didactic intent is best served when the hero of a fiction is on a social standing comparable to the reader's; a romantic account of "virtues and crimes . . . equally beyond his [the reader's] sphere of activity" is therefore less morally authoritative than is the behaviour of "an adventurer . . . leveled with the rest of the world." Like the intimate social group as opposed to the world at large, fiction's "chief advantage . . . over real life" is its capacity to include and exclude, for its "authors are at liberty, tho' not to invent, yet to select objects, and to cull from the mass of mankind, those individuals upon which the attention ought most to be employ'd."⁸⁷ Those socially conservative and anti-individualistic principles, then, which manifest themselves both in the period's frequent use of the circle image and in contemporary aesthetic theory can be expected to find expression in circular forms employed by conservative fictions.

Ira Konigsberg and Maximilian E. Novak have both linked the phenomenon of

the novel's rapid development during this period to its suitability, through the spatializing effects of multiple points of view and subjective portrayals of time, for exploring the relations between perception and reality and between the individual and society.⁸⁸ What, more specifically, might the notion of circular form mean to readers when transcribed from their culture's general conceptual framework and almost unconscious imagery into a fictional world constructed out of language? Although this question must receive a somewhat different answer for each work to be examined in the following study, several generalizations can be established here. Characterization in these novels will modify the mobile and alienated protagonist, either into a static figure who represents a centre of authority for a well-defined social circle, or into a group of characters that share the focus of attention. The conflict which generally gives momentum to the plot of the individual will thus give way to consensus, achieved either in a gathering of all characters into orbit around the centre of authority or in a communal response to shared experience.⁸⁹ When plot is no longer fashioned upon the dualistic framework of a self-society conflict, its overriding drive towards resolution will be replaced by a greater focus on individual units of structure--not actions contributing to a chain of causes and effects, but rather, conversational exchanges, which may be related to one another logically and topically rather than temporally, and which portray the dynamics of teaching and learning, of mutual sympathy, and of reaffirming social authority.⁹⁰ The conversational unit will thus provide the means both of characterizing the individual as a social being and of drawing lines of authority; like the conversation painting which according to Paulson embodies the heraldic shield's stylized indicators of alliance and authority,⁹¹ these units often give the impression of semi-ritualized tableaux or ceremonies. Ending is signalled less

often by the closure of marriage or death than by the achievement of full stability and a self-perpetuating rhythm of life.⁸²

The reader projected by these fictions is not identified with an isolated and misunderstood protagonist as either victim or adventurer; instead, she or he is a member of the novel's inner circle, responding according to the ideal established by that circle to its central authority figure or its shared experiences. To facilitate this identification of reader with text, these novels always create a contemporary and familiar setting. More exclusively even than does the novel of the period in general, they focus on the domestic interior, and in that interior, on the drawing room and breakfast room, the dining table and tea table, rather than the closet or library. Detailed description of inanimate objects is of interest only as these objects are extensions of their owner's self, and action is important primarily as the gesture that accompanies speech. Indeed, the conversational novel's primary counters are spoken words, which, though threatened by potential inflation and fraud in the broad context of the world, are successfully anchored by the intimate group to some mutually acceptable foundation for authority. The notion of language as a fixed and shared currency is of course reflected in the style of these works as well. Characters mirror one another's language, with repetition rather than expansion used to establish clusters of key terms so that their reference becomes unmistakable and inescapable within the enclosed circle. Allusion reaches beyond its frontiers primarily to establish alliances with culturally authoritative texts such as the Bible or *The Spectator* or to pronounce judgment upon the theatre, literature, mores, and fashions of contemporary culture.⁸³

At this point one might be reminded of the settings and styles of Jane Austen's novels, and to some degree also of their characters and plots. In-

deed, *The Pilgrim's Progress* Part II, *Pamela* Part II, *Amelia*, *Sir Charles Grandison*, and *David Simple*. *Volume the Last* could be seen as a kind of literary genealogy for Austen as well as a short-lived subgenre in themselves. While I will deal briefly with the question of the significance of these novels in literary history in the conclusion of this study, my concern at this point is to examine them in terms of their immediate fictional and social contexts. This examination will ultimately suggest a modification of our image of the eighteenth-century novel, from one of social and generic subversion handicapped by formal unself-consciousness until the moment of Jane Austen as "the climax . . . of the eighteenth-century novel,"⁸⁴ to one of a complex range of formal portrayals of reality which includes a socially conservative and reactive mode that is as true to the period as is a radically individualistic and progressive one.

1. J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1975), chs. 10-12; Robert D. Moynihan, "'Dwarfs of Wit and Learning': Problems of Historical Time," in *Probability, Time, and Space in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, ed. Paula R. Backscheider (New York: AMS, 1979), 172, 179. See also Achsah Guibbory, *The Map of Time: Seventeenth-Century English Literature and Ideas of Pattern in History* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986), for a more detailed examination of the seventeenth-century debate over "the pattern or shape of history" (4) and its reflection in writers such as Milton and Dryden. Guibbory sees the progressive view as dominant in the latter part of the century.
2. Ivor Leclerc, "Concepts of Space," in Backscheider, 209-16.
3. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald F. Bond, 5 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 1:1-5. Further citations of *The Spectator* are from this edition and will be indicated by volume and page numbers in parentheses. Michael G. Ketcham treats the spatial and temporal structures of *The Spectator* as an attempt to give imaginative order to an urban, commercial society in his detailed *Transparent Designs: Reading, Performance, and Form in the "Spectator" Papers* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1985).
4. Ronald Paulson, *Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), 155.
5. Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1957), 21-27; John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), 11.
6. See, for example, Pocock, 404-05, and Carol Kay, *Political Constructions: Defoe, Richardson, and Sterne in Relation to Hobbes, Hume, and Burke* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1988), 8, 19-44, regarding seventeenth-century pressures on concepts of political authority.
7. Hannah Arendt, "What Is Authority?", in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking, 1968), 141.
8. See Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, etc.*, 2 vols., ed. John M. Robertson (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1963), 2:256-72; also Robert Markley, *Two-Edg'd Weapons: Style and Ideology in the Comedies of Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 43-54, and Susan Staves, *Players' Sceptres: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1979), 292-307.
9. Pocock, chs. 12-14, and Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 176-212.
10. Markley, "Sentimentality as Performance: Shaftesbury, Sterne, and the Theatrics of Virtue," *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, English Literature*, ed. Felicity Nussbaum and Laura Brown (London: Methuen, 1987), 216. See also John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the*

Eighteenth Century (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 8-12, 18-39, for a detailed study of Hume's adaptation of the Shaftesburean blend of philosophical discourse and politeness into a conversational style of social philosophy directed to readers of a "middle station" (12). Like my study, Mullan's examination of Hume concludes that the latter is ultimately forced to limit the power of sympathy to personal relations, as part of a mid-century process of the marginalization of sentiment (38-43).

11. William Law, *A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life, Adapted to the State and Condition of All Orders of Christians*, 1729 (New York: Thomas N. Stanford, 1856), 250-51; Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub, The Writings of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Robert A. Greenberg and William B. Piper (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 350.

12. Bunyan's own sequel to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the story of Christiana's journey, can be seen as responding to concerns similar to those expressed by Swift, as ch. 2 below indicates.

13. Stephen D. Cox's introduction to *"The Stranger Within Thee:" Concepts of the Self in Late-Eighteenth-Century Literature* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, 1980) discusses in more detail this attraction to sympathy, this ambivalent sense of a "true self" that "wavers on the margin of two worlds," the inner and the social, as inspired in large part by fears of solipsism in combination with a new conviction of the self as the creation of its education and experience--its social environment. This view is, I believe, more flexible and therefore more useful than John Sitter's generalized paradigm of Hume and the early novel moving uniformly towards acceptance of a sociable ideal of the self and of literature, in *Literary Loneliness in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1982), 27-28, 44-49, 73.

14. Daniel Defoe, *The Family Instructor*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Thomas Tegg, 1841; reprint, New York: AMS, 1973), 128, 139, 355.

15. Richard Steele, *The Christian Hero*, ed. Rae Blanchard (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1932; reprint, New York: Octagon, 1977), 77-78.

16. Felicity Nussbaum, "Heteroclitics: The Gender of Character in the Scandalous Memoirs," in Nussbaum and Brown, 149.

17. Mullan's own observation that the later period of sentimentalism is also the period in which benevolence is institutionalized as a means of social regulation (144-45) suggests that in the latter half of the century the two views become more fully separated.

18. John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Niddich (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 405.

19. Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, Or the Matter, Forme and Power of a Commonwealth Ecclesiasticall and Civil*, ed. Michael Oakeshott (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1947), 22.

20. Pocock 440, 455-57, 464.

21. M[ikhail] M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), 369.

22. Ketcham discusses this understanding of "the Commerce of Discourse" in more detail with respect to *The Spectator* (25, 124).

23. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 22; Hannah More, *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, *The Works of Hannah More*, 11 vols. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1853), 3:140-41. See also Ketcham's description of a shifting concept of the language of gesture, observable in *The Spectator*, "away from a correspondence theory of meaning (one sign equals one meaning) toward a theory of interpretation based on the double nature of the sign," in other words, "toward a more complex, more novelistic reading of social performances whereby the meaning of a sign must be read according to its context, and toward a theory of sentiments where the meaning of a sign resides in the observer's responses" (49-50).

24. Shaftesbury, 2:265, 268-69, 36-37, 261-62.

25. Ch. 6 ("Private Experience and the Novel") of Watt's *Rise of the Novel* provides a helpful discussion of the relation between an increased focus on personal relationships and their detailed portrayal in the novel. "By weakening communal and traditional relationships," Watt argues, "it [individualism] fostered not only the kind of private and egocentric mental life we find in Defoe's heroes, but also the later stress on the importance of personal relationships which is so characteristic both of modern society and of the novel -- such relationships may be seen as offering the individual a more conscious and selective pattern of social life to replace the more diffuse, and as it were involuntary, social cohesions which individualism had undermined" (177). Although Watt's broad causal assumptions have been questioned, as I have noted earlier, his identification in the period of "a more conscious and selective pattern of social life" is, if anything, even more true of the novels dealt with in this study than of those treated in his book.

26. Jack Prostko's "'Natural Conversation Set in View': Shaftesbury and Moral Speech," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 23 (1989): 42-61, discusses some of the tensions inherent in turn-of-the-century concepts of the social self. His identification of the principal conflict as existing between a humanistic, gentlemanly view of conversation as a reflection of moral character and a bourgeois notion of proper speech as merely a matter of effective social formulas, however, assigns moral values along class lines in a too-generalized fashion that ignores the kind of synthesis attempted by turn-of-the-century writers. Similarly, Prostko overlooks the fact that the privileging of consensus and agreeableness is not merely a reflection of egotistical social ambition, but rather, a repudiation of the adversarial social model of the debate, as I will show below. Markley's tracing of the fiction that the Hobbesian ideal of transparent, unambiguous language was embodied in the "dispassionate, gentlemanly style" of polite conversation provides a helpful context to this complex construct of nature and artifice (*Two-Edg'd Weapons* 43-47); Ann Bermingham relates the ideal of natural ease to a legitimizing motive which "both affirm[s] social standing and denie[s] such standing its class origins," in *Landscape and*

Ideology: The English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1860 (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1986), 21.

27. Philip, Fourth Earl of Chesterfield, *The Letters of the Earl of Chesterfield to His Son*, ed. Charles Strachey, 2 vols. (London: Methuen, 1901), 1:179; John Pomfret, "The Choice," in *Poems upon Several Occasions*, (London: S. Birt, 1740), 4-5.

28. Frances Burney, *Camilla, Or A Picture of Youth*, ed. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 3. The influence of Burney's father and other male mentors in determining this series of roles, which has been amply documented by critics such as Margaret Anne Doody (*Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* [New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1988]), simply underlines the fact that the socially responsive individual's role-playing, even in response to high expectations, could be various. In a section of his *Origins of the English Novel* entitled "The Destabilization of Social Categories," McKeon provides a useful overview of a complex process whereby the aristocratic "notion of honour as a unity of outward circumstance and inward essence" is subjected to a gradual discrediting throughout the period (131, 133) by the pressures of the replacement of qualitative status criteria by quantitative class criteria.

29. Ketcham, 105-23, and Patricia Meyer Spacks, in *Gossip* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), 148-49, have examined the family and the intimate social group as intermediate structures between the world and the isolated individual in the eighteenth century.

30. Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), 59-95. Watt's earlier chapter on "Love and the Novel" introduces the argument that the themes of courtship and marriage provide a new locus for treating social and moral conflicts, an argument which Armstrong develops in detail, emphasizing the role of conduct literature in the shift. Armstrong's recognition of the domestic model as an alternative, if disguised, power structure is an important one for my study (28-58). Ch. 1 of Jane Spencer's *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986) draws somewhat on Armstrong, but highlights more specifically the divergent public and private statuses of the eighteenth-century woman.

31. More, 3:189-90.

32. See Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), and Jean H. Hagstrum, *Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980) for similar views of marriage ideals in the period as increasingly affective and egalitarian while also lingeringly patriarchal. Examples of discussions of a woman's role taken from opposite ends of the century as well as of the gender divide are *The Spectator*, Nos. 15, 53, 128, 342, 506, and 606, and More's chapter on "The practical use of female knowledge, with a sketch of

the female character and a comparative view of the sexes" in her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (3:ch. 14).

33. Another illustration of the uneasy partnership of hierarchy and equality in marriage models comes from the Richardsonian circle, in the form of Hester Chapone's "Matrimonial Creed," included in *Bluestocking Letters*, ed. R. Brimley Johnson (London: John Lane, 1926), 195-202.

34. Dieter Berger's *Die Konversationskunst in England 1660-1740: Ein Sprechphänomen und seine literarische Gestaltung* (Muenchen: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1978) is the most relevant general study of the art of conversation as a cultural and literary phenomenon in the first eighty years of our period. Because of the period treated, Berger's conversation is primarily a public (in the courts, salons, coffeehouses, and clubs), urban, and masculine concern, with his literary examples taken from thematic treatments of conversation in Restoration drama, *The Spectator*, and Swift. Although he makes little distinction between individual plays, he deals quite thoroughly with the roles played by notions of gender and class in the shifting conversational ideals of the period as a whole. A helpful statement regarding the range of interest groups represented in contemporary discussions of conversation is found on pages 108-09. Herbert J. Davis's *The Augustan Art of Conversation* (Vancouver: Univ. of British Columbia, 1957) and Peter Edward Kornblum's "The Neighborhood of Reason: A Study in Narration and Relationship" (Ph. D. diss., Univ. of California [Berkeley], 1981) establish many of Berger's terms of reference and are similarly focused. My study will rather identify a model of conversation alternative to this public, urban, and masculine one. In his article "Turning Reality Round Together: Guides to Conversation in Eighteenth-Century England," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 8 (1983): 65-87, Leland E. Warren provides a useful, though brief, survey of contemporary writings on conversation, including several of those I deal with here. A number of Warren's observations of the major concerns which gave rise to "the outpouring in England between about 1650 and 1800 of material urging a greater and more conscious use of conversation" (66)--fears of idiosyncratic uses of language, for example--parallel my own. Carey McIntosh's *Common and Courtly Language: The Stylistics of Social Class in Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), while it examines prose style of the period rather than conversation theory, provides some interesting evidence for the appropriation and adaptation of a limited and quasi-technical court vocabulary to the use of a linguistically self-conscious and conservative middling class and its authors. Such linguistic conservatism parallels the kind of hybrid social self which I have been describing.

35. Pocock, 62-64. See also Prostko, 49-53, for a discussion of Shaftesbury's response to the new primacy of agreeableness in conversation.

36. Spacks's *Gossip* begins with an interesting and illuminating parallel to this study. Focusing on Restoration and eighteenth-century portrayals of the gossiping circle as a private and threatening alternative to public and powerful modes of discourse, her discussion points to similar ideological and social forces as those privileging the model of conversation I describe here, while highlighting an aggressive and subversive potential of the private group that is deliberately excluded or reformed in the fictions I consider (1-28). Although

in the novels of this study the conversational circle seeks to shore up, rather than subvert, authority structures, I share with Spacks the recognition that the conversational group wields a real social power.

37. A somewhat euphemistic narrowing of the term, not illustrated here, occurs when 'conversation' exchanges its specific sense of spoken intercourse for that of sexual intercourse, whether conjugal, as in Moll Flanders' "my Husband was so Fuddled when he came to Bed, that he could not remember in the Morning, whether he had had any Conversation with me or no . . ." (Daniel Defoe, *Moll Flanders*, ed. Edward Kelly [New York: W. W. Norton, 1973], 46), or illicit, as in Mr. Wilson's story of finding his mistress "at my chambers in too familiar Conversation with a young Fellow who was drest like an Officer, but was indeed a City Apprentice" (Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Martin C. Battestin [Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1967], 206). This fluidity of meaning highlights the fear of conversational promiscuity underlying the exclusivity recommended in *Spectator* Nos. 24 and 100, cited below.

38. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. James Blanton Wharey, rev. Roger Sharrock (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 78.

39. Daniel Defoe, *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner*, ed. J. Donald Crowley (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 136.

40. For a similar range of uses of the term and complaints about the dangers of finding and maintaining good conversation in the city, see the anonymous *Tricks of the Town*, intro. Ralph Strauss (London: Chapman and Hall, 1927).

41. Chesterfield, 1:288-89, 181, 281.

42. Mary de la Rivière [Delarivier] Manley, Preface, *The Secret History of Queen Zarah and the Zarazians* (1705; reprint, New York: Garland, 1972).

43. William Congreve, *The Complete Plays of William Congreve*, ed. Herbert Davis (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1967), 391-92.

44. Chesterfield, 1:177; Edward Young, "The Complaint; Or, Night Thoughts," in *The Poetical Works of Edward Young*, 2 vols. (London: Bell and Daldy; reprint, Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1970), 1:29-30.

45. Herbert J. Davis, 1.

46. Berger emphasizes this shift in his discussion of *The Spectator's* treatment of the conversation theme (see "Resumee: Die Besonderheiten des gewandelten Konversationsphanomens," in *Die Konversationskunst*, 206-07).

47. Young, 1:29.

48. Chesterfield, 2:3, 218, 143.

49. James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman, corrected J. D. Fleeman (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), 543, 122. This feature of Johnson's conversation as Boswell reports it has been noted by Herbert J. Davis, 8-13, and Spacks, *Gossip*, 96-98.

50. See, for example, Nos. 24, 49, 155, 521.

51. Warren has drawn a somewhat different, but useful, inference from this statement: "What these and all other accounts of ideal conversation share is their basis in openness and equality among the participants. But we notice that openness requires closing out all but a very few" (76).

52. More, 3:224-27, 6:278. At the same time it should be noted that More acknowledges wit's fascination and high worth when carefully restricted and managed (3:226-27). Clearly, if eighteenth-century discourse has been feminised, as Terry Eagleton has argued (*The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982], 13-14), the category of feminine discourse has itself been enlarged to absorb certain elements of 'maleness.' Sparkle has become as appropriate as modesty, intelligence as acceptable as ornament--provided, of course, that these be used to promote the good of the group.

53. More, 5:320-27. An interesting indication of how fully conversation theory had by More's time become associated with the feminine is the chapter of Susan Ferrier's 1818 *Marriage, A Novel*, ed. Herbert Foltinek (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971) satirizing Mrs. Bluemits, who prides herself on the fact that "nothing but conversation [is] spoke in her house" (3:414), and her posturing and pretentiously intellectual female circle, whose attention makes the heroine feel "as if perforated by bullets in all directions" (417). Ignorant arrogance and artifice in conversation are once more the focus of criticism, but women are now particularly susceptible to conversational faults, because of their tendency to overstep proper bounds; the knowledge of Mrs. Douglas, in pointed contrast to that of Mrs. Bluemits, does not "evaporate itself in pedantic discussion or idle declamation, but shew[s] itself in the tenor of a well spent life, and in the graceful discharge of those duties which [belong] to her sex and station" (424). Bunyan's spiritually degenerate Talkative has become the socially deformed Mrs. Bluemits. R. Brimley Johnson's introduction to his edition of *Bluestocking Letters* provides an overview of the Bluestocking movement and its championship of conversational ideals, while Dena Goodman's "Enlightenment Salons": The Convergence of Female and Philosophic Ambitions," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22 (1989): 329-50, examines the parallel influence of women upon the French salon.

54. David Hume, "Of Essay Writing," in *Essays Moral, Political and Literary* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), 568-72; Warren, 85.

55. J. Paul Hunter, "The World as Stage and Closet," in *British Theatre and the Other Arts, 1660-1800*, ed. Shirley Strum Kenny (Washington: Folger, 1984), 279.

56. Hagstrum, 213; Paulson, *Emblem and Expression*. See also Paulson's *Popular and Polite Art in the Age of Hogarth and Fielding* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 153-56, and W. Austin Flanders' *Structures of Experience: History, Society, and Personal Life in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina, 1984), 78-85.

57. John Sitter suggests an exception to this generalization in the withdrawal of the poet from public life. He makes the important qualification, however, that even a feminized and internalized pursuit of the imagination is a pursuit of power, albeit in a sublimated form, and therefore, by implication, an act with social ramifications (133-34).

58. William Hogarth, *The Analysis of Beauty* (London: J. Reeves, 1753; reprint, New York: Garland Publishing, 1973); Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses on Art*, ed. Robert R. Wark (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1975), 42.

59. Barbara R. Hanning, in "Conversation and Musical Style in the Late Eighteenth-Century Parisian Salon," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 22 (1989): 512-28, draws a similar parallel between "fine society's elevation of conversation as an art form" and the new popularity of the musical style *dialogué*, especially in the string quartet (512).

60. See Mario Praz, *Conversation Pieces: A Survey of the Informal Group Portrait in Europe and America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1971), 15-23, 34, 68-71, 128.

61. J. H. Plumb, "Lordly Pleasures," *Horizon* 25 (1973): 77.

62. Paulson, *Emblem and Expression*, 115, 121-36, 44-47. See also Paulson's *Popular and Polite Art*, 44-46, and Bermingham, 14-33. While Paulson's argument is much more complex in his treatment of painting than I have represented it to be here, it is correspondingly more generalized in the parallel he draws to the novel. He describes the shift from pilgrimage to "continuity, causality, and the social web--that is, environment" both as an absolute change in the history of prose fiction and as a continuation of the paradigm of the individual opposed to chaos. In Paulson's view, the family of the eighteenth-century novel has absorbed the world's disorder: "the central fact of the family remains that it is oppressive, prescriptive, or at the very least wildly foolish. It either forces the child to break away or, as in *Tristram Shandy*, it exaggerates the sense of chaos by dramatizing it in the smallest, most ordered and tightly-knit unit of society" (*Emblem* 130). My emphasis, on the other hand, is upon fictions which, during the same period, experiment with alternatives to that of the individual on a pilgrimage, without resorting to a portrayal of the family as emblem of disorder.

63. Ketcham, 5. John Bender bases his argument in *Imagining the Penitentiary* upon a similar link between the development of narrative form in the early eighteenth-century and the subsequent rethinking of the prison as penitentiary.

64. Berger explores the close relationship between aristocratic conversational values, in particular, and Restoration comedy (132-76). He further discusses the shift to sentimental comedy as a near-complete change of genre, reflecting a widely-altered understanding of conversation: "Es geht vielmehr um generelle Unterhaltung, um ein stoerungsfreies, zufriedenstellendes Miteinander-Sprechen, das freilich ebenfalls die Beachtung gewisser Verhaltensregeln erforderte" (177). For variations and qualifications of this common view, see the discussion of Congreve's *The Double-Dealer* in chapter 2 below. Chapter 6 of Spacks's *Gossip* is of interest in its comparison of Restoration and late eighteenth-century comedy's treatments of gossip, including a reading of *The School for Scandal* which comes to conclusions similar to those expressed here. The most complete study of the cultural significance of changing uses of language in Restoration comedy, however, is Laura Brown's *English Dramatic Form, 1660-1760: An Essay in Generic History* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981). Brown associates the decline of the drama and the parallel rise of the novel in eighteenth-century England with the superior flexibility of the new genre as an instrument for portraying the inner moral worth that was becoming the dominant standard for measuring character.

65. Bakhtin, 333, 284.

66. Paulson, *The Fictions of Satire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), 222.

67. Cox, 54-57.

68. Johnson, "Addison," *Lives of the English Poets*, 2 vols., intro. Arthur Waugh, 2 vols. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1952), 1:448-49; Berger 268-69. Refer to Berger's section on "Die konversationale Struktur des Essays" (206-14) and his conclusion, "Zur Problematik des 'Konversationsstils'" (267-303), for a more detailed discussion of the 'conversational style' of the period.

69. Swift, *A Letter to a Young Gentleman, Lately Entered into Holy Orders*, in *Irish Tracts 1720-23 and Sermons*, ed. Herbert Davis and Louis Landa (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963), 65.

70. Leopold Damrosch, Jr. (*God's Plot and Man's Stories: Studies in the Fictional Imagination from Milton to Fielding* [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985]) has similarly argued that "the eighteenth-century novel was very much a novel of ideas. It did not simply illustrate or allude to ideas; it embodied them, tested them, and fought with them" (2).

71. Bakhtin, 280; Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, ed. Ian Campbell Ross (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 87.

72. I am assuming the importance of the romance genre in the development of the English novel, contrary to Lennard J. Davis's thesis (*Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel* [New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1983], 25-41). Perhaps the simplest justification for this assumption is the fact that eighteenth-century writers, by their invariable disclaimers, indicate that they share it. A more thorough treatment of the relationship can be found in Spencer (181-212).

73. The exception here is that of conduct literature, which has been emphasized recently for its relation to the early domestic novel, primarily in Sylvia Kasey Marks's *Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat Conduct Book* (Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1986) and Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987). See also the unpublished dissertation by Barbara Ann Olive, entitled "The Eighteenth-Century Family and Puritan Domestic Literature: A Study of the Origin and Development of Fictional Domestic Themes," Ph.D. diss., Southern Illinois Univ., 1978.

74. Georges Poulet, *The Metamorphoses of the Circle*, trans. Carley Dawson and Elliott Coleman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1966), vii.

75. W. J. T. Mitchell, "Spatial Form in Literature: Toward a General Theory," in *The Language of Images*, ed. Mitchell (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), 287; see also Eric S. Rabkin, "Spatial Form and Plot," in *Spatial Form in Narrative*, ed. Jeffrey R. Smitten and Ann Daghistany (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981), 80. For implicit assumptions of narrative's spatiality see Bakhtin, 84-85, and Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1957), 77. Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth's *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), on the other hand, exemplifies the pitfalls of an insistence upon speaking of narrative only in terms of realism, hence making linear temporality of absolute importance. "Over and over again," she laments, "in even the best criticism spatial metaphors lurk in discussions of viewpoint, interfering even with efforts to discuss narrative continuities" (73). Ermarth's determination to separate time from space forces her, for example, to associate memory with realism alone, since memory involves the recognition of similitude in difference which is necessary to the growth and sense of identity of a realistic character (43-47). Thus she must deny the existence of memory in *Pamela*, because it functions in that text to emphasize either similitude as part of a typological paradigm or the radical dysfunction between past and present selves as part of a conversion paradigm; both are anti-realistic and anti-linear impulses, as she notes elsewhere (95-143).

76. Poulet, vii; Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon, 1972), 219.

77. Ketcham points out that the "verbal universe" of *The Spectator* rests upon assumptions about the integrity of the self and of experience in time; once the self becomes elusive and experience endlessly divergent, as in Boswell, Sterne, and the sentimentalists, the model of a circular dynamic for self and society is replaced by a centrifugal, eccentric, or even randomly associative one (174-79). Feminist critics such as Julia Kristeva ("Women's Time," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7 [1981]: 13-35) and Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex*, trans. and ed. H. M. Parshley [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971], 425-30) associate the linear time concept of historical awareness with a male consciousness, and time in its eternal and repetitive modes with a female one. Each of these dichotomies, of course, sheds light on the eighteenth century as a period of tension between conflicting notions of the self and of historical experience.

78. With respect to a non-discursive use of the circle, Max F. Schulz's essay "The Circuit Walk of the Eighteenth-Century Landscape Garden and the Pilgrim's Circuitous Progress" (*Eighteenth-Century Studies* 15 [1981]: 1-25) argues convincingly that the popularity of circuit walks in the first half of the century expresses a nostalgia for an earlier time of religious authority in this aestheticized and secularized form. Poulet provides other examples of circle imagery in chapters 2 to 4. Since his argument and examples support a broad thesis of the period as a time of great change in theology, philosophy, epistemology, and psychology, reflected in shifting uses of the circle image, he must necessarily exclude in this generalization many of the conservative or reactionary implications of the form, upon which I am focusing here.

79. Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 29-30.

80. Swift, *The Battle of the Books*, in Greenberg and Piper, eds., 383.

81. Burke, 44-45.

82. Henry Fielding, *The Covent-Garden Journal and A Plan of the Universal Register-Office*, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar (Oxford: Clarendon Press [Wesleyan], 1988), 218-19.

83. Pope, *An Essay on Man*, in *Pope: Poetical Works*, ed. Herbert Davis (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966), 243; More, 3:202.

84. Pope, *Essay on Man*, 278.

85. Shaftesbury, 2:3-10; Chesterfield, 1:287. See also Prostko's analysis of Shaftesbury's conversational praxis, as portrayed in his writings, as a lapse into monologue that in fact closes off all possibility of conversation (53-60).

86. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 6 vols., ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), 4:545.

87. Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, ed. W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1969), 3:19-22.

88. Ira Konigsberg, *Narrative Technique in the English Novel: Defoe to Austen* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1985), 1-17; Maximilian E. Novak, "The Extended Moment: Time, Dream, History, and Perspective in Eighteenth-Century Fiction," in Backscheider, 141-55.

89. McKeon identifies at the start of this period a form of circularity in the narrative of disenchantment and retirement, in that it concludes with a reestablishment of a traditional authority structure after a kind of purification through linearity (230-32); without denying this common application of the term "circular" to a plot of reaffirmation, I will deal more narrowly with plots in which the conflict structure itself is radically questioned. The extreme of non-conflictual structure can be identified in the sentimental mode, where, as Markley points out,

Sentimental theatrics verge on idylls of benevolence; precisely because they seek to suppress the contingencies on which their values depend, they have no history, no means of investigating the interstices of character and ideology. They provide only the kind of repetitive tableaux we find presented in both *A Sentimental Journey* and *The Man of Feeling*. ("Sentimentality as Performance," 229).

This extreme, I will argue, marks the demise of the novel of the conversational circle.

90. One might ask if the fictions we are looking at, with their topical, repetitive, non-conflictual characteristics, are finally distinguishable from non-fiction such as *The Spectator*, with its unifying persona and dramatic sketches. Nelson Goodman ("Twisted Tales; or, Story, Study, and Symphony," in *On Narrative*, ed. W. J. T. Mitchell [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981]) provides one helpful dividing line when he argues that although narrative can survive many transformations of temporal order, it is nullified when its topical, expressive, and aesthetic alignments completely supersede its chronology (111-15). I would add to this the indicator that in narrative fiction this relatively coherent chronological dimension is fixed to a character, or characters, not necessarily consistent in modern psychological terms, but at least continuous in terms of name and similar identifying markers.

91. Paulson, *Popular and Polite Art*, 44-46.

92. These generalizations about the novels I am examining in this study parallel a number of David Mickelson's "Types of Spatial Structure in Narrative," in Smitten and Daghistany, 63-78. Mickelson describes the "spatial form novel" as "an alternative to the *Bildungsroman*. It offers a *Bild*, a picture; it portrays someone who has already developed, who is largely past change The progress of the narrative, then, involves uncovering a more or less static picture" (65).

93. Again, Ketcham's analysis of the interaction of form and ideological function in the *Spectator* parallels my focus in many ways. For example, the repetition of materials between Mr. Spectator and his readers leads to "a closed cycle of themes. The repetition is thus a succession of stances, like the repeated forms of habitual behaviour. The *Spectator* is a literary model of the forms of habit and thus participates in the constancy and plenitude of everyday things. It is a literary manifestation of the pleasures of the wise man, a figurative garden, and a circle closing in upon itself" (103). Similarly, the development of a vocabulary of words and gestures through these repetitions acts as a means of enclosure, so that "these public signs are marked off as a special region. The symmetries of reading, the symmetry suggested by the balance of 'observing' and 'perusing,' make the *Spectator* a closed world, even with its commerce of words and gestures. While reading the *Spectator* we step out of the unformed world of random experience into a controlled world of play" (25-26). In other words, the aphoristic, repetitive, and conversational form of the periodical constitutes an attempt to shift its discourse into a realm of timeless truths (99). Other studies of eighteenth-century literature which approach

form in a similar way include George P. Landow's *Images of Crisis: Literary Iconology, 1750 to the Present* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), April K. London's "Placing the Female: The Metonymic Garden in Amatory and Pious Narrative, 1700-1740," in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670-1815*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1986), 101-23, Heather Jackson's "The Immoderation of Samuel Johnson," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 59 (1990): 382-98, and W.J.T. Mitchell's "Metamorphoses of the Vortex: Hogarth, Turner, and Blake," in *Articulate Images: The Sister Arts from Hogarth to Tennyson*, ed. Richard Wendorf (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1983), 125-68.

94. Watt, 298.

CHAPTER 2

The Double-Dealer and The Pilgrim's Progress Part II:

The Hero Made Sociable and the Sociable Made Heroic

William Congreve's 1694 play *The Double-Dealer* can be understood as a text at a crossroads, self-consciously searching for metaphors which will successfully embody the emerging ideal of conversational relations. If the Restoration stage can be described as the realm of the scheming, self-interested, and cynical hero, Congreve's play raises the possibility of an alternative social model, one based upon a value for moral transparency, community feeling, and companionship. Although John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) clearly repudiates the spirit of worldly cynicism generally associated with Restoration comedy (in the well-known By-ends episode, for example), its emphasis upon the individual's struggle to attain salvation and eternal rest in despite of a hostile world results in a similar working definition of the hero as set against a conflicting backdrop of society's governing interests.¹ Significantly, the work's 1684 sequel, the story of Christiana, her sons, and an ever-growing community of pilgrims travelling at a markedly more leisurely pace through a correspondingly more friendly world, reflects a shift towards domestic, communal, and socially static values.² A brief examination of Congreve's play and Bunyan's sequel, then, will yield a kind of stereoscopic perspective, from two pre-novelistic genres preoccupied with the relationship between the individual and society, upon the thematic and structural formulations of the social group as intimate conversational circle which inform the conservative eighteenth-century fictions to be studied in subsequent chapters.

The generic inclusiveness of this dual approach is intended to be in itself suggestive. The drama in general and Restoration comedy in particular address the social nature of man; structurally, scenic units and dialogue lend themselves to the representation and working out of lines of authority through a Bakhtinian heteroglossia.³ Similarly, the allegorical mode, whose presence in *The Pilgrim's Progress* and its sequel has been amply documented,⁴ allows for the discursive portrayal of moral truths in terms of mundane realities. Theorists have argued variously for the predominating influence of one or another of these literary modes upon the early novel;⁵ loosely defined notions of prose fiction in the eighteenth century and the generic inclusiveness of the works included in this study together suggest a general tendency of the new genre to appropriate any formal vehicle suitable to the portrayal and prescription of a social model. More specifically, *The Double-Dealer's* juxtaposition of a sociable hero who refuses both plotting and verbal deception to the more traditionally intriguing and witty individualist suggests Fielding's version, in *Amelia*, of the domestic circle as ultimate refuge of the Christian hero from the scheming and egotistical vortex of urban society. Part II of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, in the same way, traces the establishment of an exemplary social circle whose familial base, immutability, and expansiveness prefigure a Richardsonian solution to the ideological and formal issues of hierarchy, conflict, and exclusion. By such a novelistic reading of these two works I do not wish to deny to *The Double-Dealer* and *The Pilgrim's Progress* Part II distinctive generic features as a comic play and a "realistic allegory,"⁶ respectively. Nevertheless, my examination of their texts will focus upon those referential and formal qualities which they hold in common with the later works of fiction I am studying here.⁷

The Double-Dealer and the Search for a Social Model

In *Two-Edg'd Weapons*, his study of style in Etherege, Wycherley, and Congreve, Robert Markley describes the language of Restoration comedy as dialogic, at once embodying and subverting the political and ideological positions of the period. By the 1690s, however, the many voices have been subordinated to one language, a language whose "gentlemanly ease and conversational grace" is associated with the Shaftesburean ideology of "the moral and political prerogatives of birth and quality."⁸ When Congreve defends *The Double-Dealer's* creation of female characters who are "vicious and affected" on the grounds that "It is the business of a comic poet to paint the vices and follies of humankind," Markley notes that "this statement of Jonsonian intent paradoxically defends a subversive art form pressed into the service of a conservative reclamation of linguistic and cultural ideals."⁹ This observation of a subversive form reclaimed might be transposed across generic lines to the rewritings of Richardson, Henry Fielding, and Sarah Fielding with equal applicability; this play, then, should provide some indications of how a social model might be given artistic form in an attempt to supply a centre of authority for a culture and a genre made uneasy by shaky hierarchies and a heteroglossia of individualistic desire.

Indeed, numerous critics have seen Congreve's comedies as transitional or hybrid in form and theme, although they disagree as to whether this characteristic reflects a shift from the Restoration comedy of manners to the eighteenth-century sentimental comedy or an attempt to achieve a new blend of old dramatic forms.¹⁰ Despite Congreve's plea in the prologue that this doubtful offspring be accepted as "truly born of wit" (14), *The Double-Dealer* has often, like the

novels of this study, been seen as a failed experiment in comic form."¹¹ One explanation for critics' difficulties in classifying the play's mode lies, I suggest, in the fact that it teeters between expected treatments of character, plot, structure, setting, and style, and an alternative, less-familiar design, ultimately rejecting the conventional in favour of the unfamiliar.¹² While merely hinting at the outlines of a new social form, *The Double-Dealer* painstakingly portrays the exhaustion and vulnerability to disorder of the old, thereby evoking dissatisfaction and desire on the part of its audience. Underlining this implicit questioning of form is the play's "literary self-consciousness,"¹³ its explicit discussion of role-playing, plotting, stock metaphors, and the morality of wit.

Congreve's defence of "the hero of the play, as they are pleased to call him" (6), points to the play's continued failure to meet the expectation that a Restoration drama must have an identifiable protagonist who is not only the centre of the plot's action but also the initiator and manipulator of that action.¹⁴ Mellefont, of course, is none of these; he must share audience goodwill with Cynthia as one-half of the couple whose marriage is agreed upon from the start, and their actions, together with those of their ally Careless, all arise as blocks and counter-measures to the initiatives of Lady Touchwood and Maskwell. As Edward Burns has suggested,

Comedy is thus evoked from the start as a strategy to head off the possibilities of disaster. 'Plot' is identified as the source of this disaster; 'Imaginations' are equated to 'Devils'. . . . The 'good' characters are forced to try to impose a stasis on the play by blocking the 'bad'; the bad provide its dynamic, an inversion which gives the play its sense of diabolic energies, but which also renders the central pair of lovers . . . so bizarrely numb.¹⁵

Mellefont's refusal to play the role of individualistic plotter is conspicu-

ously opposed to Maskwell's incessant plotting, which thus becomes linked with the social transgressions of the self-created man: the henchman's disguise of false transparency which inspires misplaced trust, and the servant's ungrateful scheme of usurpation. Noting the oft-rehearsed confidence placed in Maskwell by Mellefont and Lord and Lady Touchwood because of the former's obligations to them, Harold Love describes the villain's actions as "a bad dream from the subconscious of the aristocracy."¹⁶

Mellefont, on the other hand, is in Love's view "a man of the world--more justly a man in the world--who would like to make that world a saner and more agreeable place for others as well as for himself";¹⁷ he works within and with the social order as peacemaker and preserver of its values. His most prominent quality is a resolute assumption of the best motives in other characters. He thereby reminds us of Chesterfield's or Mr. Spectator's ideal gentleman who brings out the best in every company and leaves each individual satisfied with himself, whether the false wit Brisk, who Mellefont insists is not the "Pert coxcomb" Careless styles him, but "a good natured coxcomb, . . . [who] has very entertaining follies" (1.1.57-59), or the deceitful Maskwell, who, despite mounting circumstantial evidence, is not allowed to be "the villain [Careless] always thought him" by Mellefont, who "cannot think him false" (5.4.11-12, 20). This assumption of transparency and goodwill in others is the mark of Mellefont's own worth as social man, chosen heir, and future husband. Although Lord Touchwood is temporarily blinded to this worth, he ultimately returns full circle to his original conviction of Mellefont's "principles" and "merit" (3.1.4, 14). Touchwood's confident "I do him fresh wrong to question his forgiveness; for I know him to be all goodness" (5.4.127-28), suggests that while he himself has wavered, Mellefont has remained immovable virtue itself. Devo-

ted to his intended marriage partner, deferential to his uncle, horrified by the thought of the incestuous intrigues attributed falsely to him, Mellefont reflects formally an ideological rejection of self-assertion as a threat to the existing social order.

In an important sense, the near-supplanting of the deserving Mellefont as true heir of his aristocratic uncle figures Congreve's concern, expressed in the Prologue, for the play's acceptance as legitimate comedy, and, beyond this playwright, the concern of each of the authors considered here for the acceptance of a second work which refuses to replicate the first. Sir Flyant and Lord Touchwood, in mistaking for a rival in their own beds the man who is in fact their only hope of legitimate succession, resemble those spectators and readers who mistake the form which most closely reflects, while attempting to revitalize, their cultural ideals. In its embodiment at once of patrilineal descent and of intimate kinship, the play's image of legitimate inheritance straddles the line between traditional and revised modes of authority.

Thus the play's dichotomy of responses to Mellefont's social style, dramatized as Lady Froth's "he is too much a mediocrity, in my mind" and Cynthia's "he does not indeed affect either pertness or formality, for which I like him" (2.1.45-47), sets out the available choices for the audience; the audience's response in turn becomes a judgment of its own taste as either ignorant affectation or subtle discernment of true merit. The placement of Mellefont and Cynthia at the centre of the play's spectrum of characters between the extremes of vain folly and destructive evil¹⁸ is intended to guide the audience in that response. So successful is Mellefont's role-playing as naturally transparent social man that Susan Rosowski, for one, speaks of him as having no public mask and no part in the social reintegration which effects the play's resolution.¹⁹

In fact, such criticism perpetuates the period's fiction that a particular social stance is natural, hence morally positive and politically neutral.

Since Mellefont's primary virtues are social ones, they are revealed not by his clever actions, but by portrayals of relationships. Love for the majority of the play's characters is but an opportunity for self-aggrandizement. In Maskwell's universe, love is clearly a form of Hobbesian self-expression, for it

cancels all the bonds of friendship, and sets men right upon their first foundations.

Duty to kings, piety to parents, gratitude to benefactors, and fidelity to friends, are different and particular ties: but the name of "rival" cuts 'em all asunder, and is a general acquittance--rival is equal, and love like death an universal leveller of mankind. (2.1.386-93)²⁰

This primitive and subversive egalitarianism is a dark echo of the scene's earlier exposure of Lord Froth's egotistical folly; when reprimanded by his wife for kissing a pocket mirror--"nay, my lord, you shan't kiss it so much; I shall grow jealous, I vow now"--he absolves himself to her great satisfaction with, "I saw myself there, and kissed it for your sake" (63-65). Cynthia argues that Mellefont will love her better than Froth can his wife "Because he has not so much reason to be fond of himself" (90). Indeed, in precise opposition to Maskwell, Mellefont proves willing not to sacrifice gratitude and friendship in order to marry for lust and money, but rather to resign his social status for his love, to "steal out of the house this very moment" and marry Cynthia without "fortune, portion, settlements and jointures" (4.1.25-28). At the same time, it is significant that such a romantic and individualistic sacrifice, unheard-of in a pre-Congreve dramatic rake, is rendered unnecessary by the play's comic ending.

As a literary type of the Machiavellian plotter, Maskwell initiates the

main line of action by manipulating Lady Touchwood and Mellefont. Throughout, he recognizes the necessity of keeping the social group fragmented; the plot must be accomplished quickly, for upon Lady Plyant's "first conversing with Mellefont" (1.2.106), or if "my lord should cool, and have an opportunity to talk with [Mellefont] privately" (3.1.128-29), or if "my lord proceed to treat openly of my marriage with Cynthia" (5.1.79-80), all is lost. Mellefont's strategy for holding secret evil at bay, on the other hand, depends entirely upon keeping the group together, as he indicates to Careless from the beginning: "I would have mirth continued this day at any rate; though patience purchase folly, and attention be paid with noise. . . . I would have not room for serious design, for I am jealous of a plot" (1.1.60-62, 67-68). The final exposure of "the strumpet, and the villain" (5.4.134) can only take place after the separate lines of action have been brought together by Cynthia's and Careless's combined overhearings and deductions, and when Cynthia has "[brought] all the company into this gallery" (133); conversely, Maskwell's downfall is felt at least in part as a punishment for his egotistical pride in attempting to play every part as a cast of one.²¹

The near-destruction of Mellefont's hopes in this contest between the plot of fragmentation and intrigue and the anti-plot of group solidarity, however, reveals the insidious link between the unsociable vices of self-love and folly with explicitly subversive fraud and usurpation. Maskwell can assure Lady Touchwood of success in deceiving Lord Touchwood because "your guests are so engaged in their own follies and intrigues, they'll miss neither of you" (3.1.150-51). When Lady Touchwood acknowledges that Maskwell can manipulate her because of the force of her own desire--"nay, thou hast deceived me; but 'tis as I would wish" (5.4.104-5)--she is admitting to the same wilful blindness as

that suffered not only by her brother, Sir Paul Plyant, when he joyfully accepts an illogical argument for his wife's fidelity as "better and more miraculous" than written proof of her infidelity (4.4.88), but also by all those characters whose "happiness in self-content is placed" (3.1.568), while they are being cheated and mocked before their very eyes. Self-love is thus the evil within, not merely a major theme of the play or its chief threat to marriage,²² but a widespread poison, eroding away a society's fortifications against encroaching evil.²³

The experience of deception which is repeated in each of the parallel sequences of action highlights both the range of forms egocentric blindness can take and the failure of the social group to structure another kind of action of conversational exchange and growth. When Lady Touchwood, in the fury of her own disappointment, informs Sir Paul that he is a fool and a cuckold, he insists upon treating her words as a jest; similarly, it is never made clear whether Lord Froth's final "I'm but just awake" and refusal to take hartshorn because he has "some of [his] own" (5.5.30-31) indicates a belated recognition of his cuckoldom or is simply intended to underscore his ignorance. Nevertheless, the possibility for escape from endless and inevitable multiplications of the intrigue plot, at least for Mellefont and Cynthia, is there. Although Maskwell's "if they will not hear the serpent's hiss, they must be stung into experience, and future caution" (5.3.58-59) almost proves true, Mellefont, through the help of his friends, finally escapes Lord Touchwood's hard experience, his status and marriage unscathed enough that his "Good Heavens! How I believed and loved this man!--Take him hence, for he's a disease to my sight" (5.5.69-70) provides an absolute and effective dismissal of the villain. Like a novel which eradicates, rather than resolves, tension through exclusion and

formal stasis, the play's ending asserts a victory which depends on confidence in the Mellefont-Cynthia union as centre of moral authority with a gravitational pull powerful enough to maintain a stable social configuration despite the other characters' eccentric vanity and blindness.

The tension between intrigue and social cohesion is made particularly prominent by *The Double-Dealer's* adoption of the dramatic unity of place. One result of this limited setting is to enclose the action within the domestic frame that so frequently bounds the eighteenth-century novel. Whether the primary dramatic effect is a sense of claustrophobically restricted action or a complication of that action as a labyrinth of intrigue,²⁴ audience attention is focused upon a very select and restricted microcosm in a reduction of the city of Restoration comedy to a single interior. In Peter Holland's words, "No previous Restoration comedy had stayed so firmly in one place, had excluded the outside world so completely";²⁵ among the excluded are servants, acquaintances casually encountered in public places, and, at the play's conclusion, the over-reaching upstart. The kingdom has become the family, its ruler Lord Touchwood (with absolute power to "blow away" Mellefont, the "alone remaining branch of all [their] ancient family" and to "constitute" another to take his place-- 5.1.50-52), its treasons the sins of ingratitude, incest, and adultery, and its only hope for survival the production of a legitimate heir. In this setting the need for an effective working model of social authority to shore up conservative claims to patriarchal continuity becomes particularly apparent; the three husbands of the play are all cuckolds without male issue because male abdication of authority together with female passion and vanity have subverted and threaten to topple the status quo. As Love points out, a successful marriage between Mellefont and Cynthia is necessary to the survival of this

world. That their future nevertheless remains within its confines is indicated by the above-noted failure of the blind to be enlightened, by the "final tableau" of Lord Touchwood and Mellefont "stand[ing] in triumphant righteousness over the cringing figure of the faithless servant,"²⁸ and by Mellefont's reply to Lord Touchwood's closing request for pardon with the words "We are your lordship's creatures" (5.5.80). That they are this world's hope of renewal is indicated in Touchwood's response: "And be each other's comfort; let me join your hands:--unwearied nights and wishing days attend you both; mutual love, lasting health, and circling joys, tread round each happy year of your long lives" (81-84).

Lord Touchwood's blessing embodies both in its balanced syntax and in its imagery of the circle the ideal marriage plot it describes: one in which linear time and change are obliterated by a natural cycle of stability and ever-repeating joys. To this point of formal resolution, however, the play has taken its spectators through a series of images and styles which are either shown to be, or explicitly rejected as, inadequate to the demands of the existing social order. In fact, a self-reflexive style and the circle image are used in several instances to describe the excessively narrow world of self-love. Cynthia, for example, facetiously assures Lord Froth that he and his lady are "the happiest couple in the world, for you're not only happy in one another, and when you are together, but happy in yourselves, and by yourselves" (2.1.80-83). "Lady Plyant," Lord Touchwood tells us, "has a large eye, and would centre everything in her own circle" (3.1.5-6), and Maskwell flatters Lady Touchwood with the euphemistic image of having "wantoned in the wide circle of [her] world of love" (5.4.84). The challenge facing Cynthia and Mellefont is to describe a circle narrow enough to exclude a public sphere in which class breakdown threatens

through the likes of Maskwell, while wide enough to include their social responsibilities.

At the same time, conventional metaphors for relations between the sexes are rejected very consciously by the couple. In the first of two important exchanges on the subject of marriage,²⁷ they move consecutively through gaming, cards and bowling as possible guiding images, rejecting their implications of risk-taking, arbitrariness, and adversarial motives. The dialogue ends inconclusively here with Mellefont's dismissive "only a friendly trial of skill, and the winnings to be laid out in an entertainment" (2.1.145-46),²⁸ followed by a song on the *carpe diem* theme addressed to a reluctant Cynthia. In their second scene alone, Cynthia returns to the logical difficulty embodied in the earlier discussion: if their relationship can be figured accurately by the contest images of a race or a hunt, how can their pursuit of the same prize be a friendly one and yet allow for individual achievement? She argues,

because we are both willing; we each of us strive to reach the goal, and hinder one another in the race; I swear it never does well when the parties are so agreed--for when people walk hand in hand, there's neither overtaking nor meeting: we hunt in couples where we both pursue the same game, but forget one another; and 'tis because we are so near that we don't think of coming together. (4.1.11-18)

The movement of this speech, however, signals the breakthrough: just as the style of the conversation of which it is a part moves away from that of a witty exchange to that of a collaborative pursuit of consensus and truth, the tenor of its linear race-hunt metaphor has been transformed from one of an individualistic pursuit of a prize obtainable only by one of the participants (or of a prize which is one of the participants) to one of a shared goal which is possessed in the act of mutual recognition. Thus Mellefont recognizes that "marriage is the game that we hunt, and while we think that we only have it in

view, I don't see but we have it in our power," and Cynthia continues, "Within reach; for example, give me your hand" (19-22). Although this consensus has the power to establish the private happiness of a marriage contract between two equal individuals, the pair's choice not to exercise that power before obtaining the consent of their social world, if it is humanly possible to do so, emphasizes the ideal congruence sought between private happiness, in itself social, and the good of the larger group.²⁹

The conscious rejections and transformations of Mellefont and Cynthia's conversations are illustrated in the negative by the consequences of relations based upon inadequate metaphors. Lady Touchwood's reproach to the impudent Maskwell reveals the fallacy of the belief that love can maintain a master-slave relationship for the gratification of its own vanity: "Were you not in the nature of a servant, and have not I in effect made you lord of all, of me, and of my lord? Where is that humble love, the languishing, that adoration, which once was paid me, and everlastingly engaged?" (1.2.46-50). An adversarial model of marriage results in the absurdities of the Plyants, arguing about whose honour has been violated by Mellefont's supposed advances to Lady Plyant, whose perverse protectiveness of the "decorum and nicety befitting the person of Sir Paul's wife" has kept her "white and unsullied even by Sir Paul himself" (2.1.215-18). That such a marriage is inadequate to meet the most basic needs is revealed by Sir Paul's pathetic attempts to win sympathy for his sufferings as the much-wronged husband in a stock comic situation. Contemplating cuckoldom, the inevitable lot of the "uxorious, foolish, old knight" he is described as being in the *dramatis personae*, he whimpers to his daughter Cynthia, "That would certainly have broke my heart--I'm sure if ever I should have horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly, I should die of 'em, like any child

that were cutting his teeth--I should, indeed, Thy" (2.1.239-43). Thus the characters' language, by expanding and making literal the conventions of witty dialogue through more conversational exchanges, reveals the superficiality and callousness of those conventions.³⁰ Similarly, these characters' anti-social attitudes are manifested in such faults of style as an artificial wit which prides itself upon laughing only alone, and at its own or a lady's jests, and especially never "at the jest of an inferior person, or when anybody else of the same quality does not laugh with one" (1.2.179-81)--and then proceeds "as . . . a person of honour--for heaven's sake [to] sacrifice [absent friends] to mirth a little" (3.1.438-39).

It is Maskwell, however, who poses the most obvious and deliberate social threat in the play, and who therefore describes himself as the serpent in the garden and is finally detected in his "long track of dark deceit" through "various mazes of unheard-of treachery" (5.4.116-19). Again, other characters are as quick to misapply this stock metaphor as to misinterpret the true sources of their own difficulties; Sir Paul, for example, initially calls Mellefont "serpent and first tempter of womankind" (2.1.206), then by implication transfers the tag to Careless with the words "whomsoever [a man] receives into his bosom, will find the way to his bed" (4.4.15-16). In the play's concluding verses, however, the very image is rendered abortive and powerless. Juxtaposed with his invocation of the timeless circle of love is Lord Touchwood's assertion that "secret villainy" can never succeed in penetrating this circle; rather, its "mischiefs," "How e'er in private . . . conceived," must destroy their unnatural parent at the very point of their birth:

Like vipers in the womb, base treach'ry lies,
Still gnawing that, whence first it did arise;
No sooner born, but the vile parent dies. (5.5.85-90)

Maskwell's plot, it seems, is being redefined as mere busywork, as the illusory growth of a shadowy womb, darkly parallel to the fertile circle of Cynthia's and Mellefont's future, but ultimately excluded from a relatively unharmed status quo by, as Ross points out, "a process of natural law."³¹

In the same way, Markley notes, Lady Touchwood's passionate rhetoric is controlled and effectively excluded from influencing the play's action by its containment within Mellefont's account of her visit to his chamber. Markley's description of the protagonist's language in this account applies equally well to the words of Lord Touchwood at the play's conclusion: "Mellefont's language . . . is not a complex form of mediation but a stable medium," undergirding "the values of primogeniture, class privilege, and masculine authority" by treating moral issues in terms of "the ideological absolutes of decorum and stability."³² Contrasted with and surrounded by this transparently judgmental language, the hypocritical virtue of Lady Plyant's "yield[ing] [her]self all up to . . . uncontrollable embraces" (4.2.51-52) is exposed stylistically through its own illogical volubility, the malicious wit of Brisk's "she's always chewing the cud like an old ewe" (3.1.510), through its own debased imagery, and the glib falsity of Maskwell's "'tis fit I should be still behindhand [in my arrival], still to be more and more indebted to your [Lady Touchwood's] goodness" (4.6.11-12), through its own chameleon transformation of neglect into flattery. The ideal of stylistic decorum thus takes on a moral function; by its light, linguistic faults will out, just as will the hidden vices they express.³³

Congreve's *The Double-Dealer*, then, suggests some of the ways in which a supposed artistic failure may in fact be reread as a self-conscious critique and revision of form. In particular, we see both the play and some of its characters--both art and the world it claims to reflect--engaged in the pursuit

of a collaborative social structure which will preserve order and at the same time invest it with an authority that apparently need not demonstrate its foundation in truth beyond an invocation of nature and the intimate family group's claim to embody that nature. While appeals are continually made to Providence and the devils alike, the line of demarcation between good and evil is rather shown to fall between the social and the self-made man, the peacemaker and the egotist, and it is the "injured friend" who in the end acts as "chaplain" to expose the decidedly human "wonder of all falsehood" (5.5.66-67).³⁴

Good finally reforms its circle as evil excludes itself; the structural and ideological difficulty raised by the former's inability to initiate the exposure and expulsion of the latter, however, has been suggested by a number of readers.³⁵ In the eighteenth-century sentimental novel, the essential innocence and passivity of sociable virtue result in the plot of its isolation, trial, and persecution by evil, with a *Clarissa*-like outcome as its logical conclusion.³⁶ In the more conservatively optimistic fictions with which I will begin, the forces of social good are portrayed, not as hounded by egotistical evil and driven to combat in self-defence, but as successfully seeking out and excluding that evil in the passive guise of the creation of a cohesive and immovable social circle.³⁷ John Bunyan's sequel to *The Pilgrim's Progress* suggests what such an exclusively powerful social circle might achieve.

The Pilgrim's Progress, Part II and the Creation of a Social Circle

While *The Double-Dealer* embodies in a single work the tensions between socially radical novels and their conservative rewritings, a study of Bunyan's sequel in the context of its predecessor introduces most of the features of the eighteenth-century rewritings discussed in the following chapters.³⁸ Born in the shadow of a highly successful elder sibling, the narrative of Christiana's pilgrimage illustrates "the problem of the second novel," as Roger Sharrock summarizes it:

The first book grows directly out of personal experience; its form seems inevitable, and it writes itself. The success of the book the unknown explorer of a single personal theme finds himself a writer with a public; the second novel is a writer's book, self-conscious, the work of an artist with a style (the surprising legacy of his first) looking for a theme.³⁹

Readers have noted that in its emphasis upon the individual's struggle to attain salvation and eternal rest in despite of a hostile world, Part I of *The Pilgrim's Progress* defines the hero in large part by setting him in conflict with society's governing concerns. The 1684 sequel, on the other hand, in tracing the story of Christiana, her sons, and an ever-growing community of pilgrims travelling at a leisurely pace through a friendly world, reflects a shift towards domestic, communal, and socially conservative values. Sharrock's rhetoric of the "unknown explorer" and the "writer with a public," however, goes beyond this commonplace to suggest that the individualistic and sociable dichotomy not only characterizes structure and subject matter in the two works, but also informs the very act of writing for this novel-and-sequel pair.

Rewriting, then, can never be simple repetition, since the first text's private moment can never be recaptured. Rather, the complex of first work and

established audience within which the sequel is written places its author in the role of authoritative mediator, writing the sequel as a kind of interpretive guide to the first work. Interpretation thus becomes both the expected theme and the form of the sequel, with the preceding narrative serving as primary text. If at the same time, as N. H. Keeble has argued of Part II of *The Pilgrim's Progress*,⁴⁰ the new text is more than a mere gloss or commentary, what it chooses to reiterate, develop, or even retract will reflect the conservative, social, and didactic impulses inherent in this new compositional dynamic. Thus a general description of the eighteenth-century sequel as a conservative rewriting includes its attempt to explicate, elaborate, compensate, and qualify; given the context of a textual lineage and inherited audience which the predecessor does not have, the new work will necessarily contain individual reading within the framework of an authoritatively social hermeneutic.

Bunyan's concern in his sequel is above all one of compensation, leading him to expand Part II's focus by introducing communal, secular, and historical dimensions. The result is a fiction that self-consciously constructs a familial circle centred around a woman as a radical alternative to Part I's lone pilgrim-warrior, while qualifying the original's more broadly threatening social implications with a defusing of hierarchical and ideological conflict. Like the reader who has already experienced Part I, the pilgrim-group is now working within an historical frame in the form of Christian's earlier tracing of the same trajectory; the epistemological mode of the sequel thus shifts from experiential proof of a timeless and revealed Word to guided consensus in the interpretation of a tradition. It is because of this shift of emphasis from individual to group, from conflict to community, from immediate experience to mediated distance that Part I's intensely teleological momentum, its one-dimen-

sional linear imagery, and its binary style give way to an expansion of the secular moment, a spaciously hospitable imagery, and a conversational style.

It is important to note, however, that Bunyan does not retell the original story in the restricting and redefining manner that Richardson will be seen to employ as Pamela and Mr. B. look back over their courtship; rather, in supplying the social perspective lacking in the original, the author resembles more the Richardson who succeeds *Clarissa* with *Sir Charles Grandison*. A reading which follows the author's interpretive lead, therefore, will view Part II not as a retraction of its predecessor, but as primarily a mirror image, intended to complete the portrait of the Christian life in the world.⁴¹ Instructive here is the marriage model which links the two parts--metonymically in "The Authors Way of Sending forth" his sequel and literally in the relationship between Christian and Christiana. While such a model undoubtedly retains hierarchical aspects in that Christian's journey legitimizes and paves the way for Christiana's,⁴² it significantly democratizes and domesticates not only the patriarchal image of legitimacy employed by Congreve in the Prologue to *The Double-Dealer*, but also Bunyan's legal imagery in avowing the counterfeit nature of spurious sequels and testifying to the true pilgrim nature of his own work.

This sequel compensates for its predecessor, then, in the twofold *Oxford English Dictionary* sense of to "counterbalance" and to "make up for, make amends for." In the relatively unrestricted and prosperous context in which Bunyan and the Dissenting church find themselves in 1684, a portrait of the believer as solitary and alienated, so unalterably opposed to "the wilderness of this world" as to turn his back on his family, "put his fingers in his Ears," and flee,⁴³ must be held constantly in memory as a historical reality which might again become present experience.⁴⁴ As an implied norm, however, this extreme picture

threatens to become an irrelevant or even undesirable model for Bunyan's audience; in adding the mediating narrative of Christiana and her company, the author therefore attempts to establish an equilibrium between flight from the world and peaceful coexistence with it.⁴⁵ Old Honest's response to the question "Pray how faireth it with you in your Pilgrimage, how stands the Country affected towards you?" illustrates the careful balance of opposites created by the pilgrim company's constant juxtaposition of Christian's trials with its own less troubled passage:

It happens to us, as it happeneth to Way-fairing men; sometimes our way is clean, sometimes foul; sometimes up-hill, sometimes down-hill; We are seldom at a Certainty. The Wind is not alwayes on our Backs, nor is every one a Friend that we meet with in the Way.
(275)

In addition to its counterbalancing of Part I's world-flight imagery, the sequel can be seen to qualify its predecessor's generic portrait of the believer through the creation of numerous, more particularized pilgrim characters. Roger Sharrock has argued that for the early Bunyan writing is "simply . . . an extension of the oral sermon;"⁴⁶ indeed, at no time can Bunyan's authorial awareness of audience be separated from his sense of pastoral responsibility to individuals with a wide range of spiritual needs. Much has been made, in particular, of his evident concern with establishing the place in the church of the woman, child, or man who is not the hero and teacher Christian becomes.⁴⁷ While, as Margaret Olofson Thickstun has pointed out, the portrait of the Christian woman is drawn so as to limit carefully her share of church leadership and interpretive authority,⁴⁸ it is more instructive for my purposes to note the significant modification of the concept of the hero which results from a replacement of the solitary male hero first by a woman and then by a group built around a central family. Indeed, the sequel suggests that it is only through a feminizing and

socializing process that Christian can become Great-heart, "under another name and at another stage of his growth," as Henri A. Talon has said, and like the eighteenth-century Christian hero as notable for his sympathetic and sociable virtues as for his military prowess and didactic skills.⁴⁹

An examination of this feminizing and socializing process can best be approached through the text's own introductory apparatus, the author's initial act of mediation between sequel and reader. This "Sending forth," as I have noted, emphasizes the familial relation between Christian and his wife and sons. While Part I's "Apology" draws on the journey-as-race image, and compares didactic writing to fishing and hunting, the sequel's preface describes the text as a pilgrim knocking on doors, seeking the reader's hospitality. Potential rejection is treated lightly, unlike the detailed provisions made against it in the earlier apology. Indeed, such rejection would be simply a reflection of difference in taste. Since "Some start at Pigg, slight Chicken, love not Fowl,/ More then they love a Cuckoo or an Owl," Christiana is simply to "Leave such . . . to their choice" and "By no means strive" to win favour (171). This passive stance with respect to reader response, the preface implies, is made possible by confidence in an audience which Part I has prepared, through identification with Christian's struggles, to recognize what belongs to the true Way. The sequel's role of complement to Part I is embodied in a metaphor of the travelling husband and the household-managing wife: "What Christian left lock't up and went his way,/ Sweet Christiana opens with her Key" (171).

The narrator of Part II's opening, although ostensibly he of Part I, has also been transformed from solitary visionary to storyteller; he begins, "Courteous Companions, sometime since, to tell you my Dream . . . was pleasant to me, and profitable to you" (174). He is not a wanderer, but a businessman;

he takes lodgings rather than sleeping in dens. Reinforcing this new engagement with the mundane and the secular is the mediation of his dream through a gentleman, Mr. Sagacity. In his role as conveyor of gossip, setting the tone of leisurely and sociable conversation which pervades the sequel, Mr. Sagacity in effect parallels Evangelist at the opening of Part I, even departing from the dreamer at the same point as Evangelist earlier left Christian.⁵⁰ While Evangelist transmits the transcendent Word of God, however, Mr. Sagacity transmits a newly localized and particularized history. Evangelist, further, must interpret the Word for Christian, unlike Mr. Sagacity, who narrates his story without commentary, allowing the emotional outpourings of Christiana and the insinuations of her neighbours to speak for themselves. The reader, of course, experiences all within the context of the preceding narrative, as Bunyan has foreseen in the preface, and the story can thus unfold with apparent transparency, relying upon the authoritative standards of judgment supplied by that context. This sense of interpretive optimism is reinforced by the comfortable agreement between Mr. Sagacity and the narrator as his internal audience, reflected in their relaxed speech and echoes of one another's phrases, and particularly in affirming responses of the narrator, such as "I dare say, . . . I am glad on't, I am glad for the poor mans sake" and "Better, and better" (176-77). This enthusiastic reception models explicitly for the reader a desirable response to Christiana's intention of repeating Christian's journey.

Within the interpretive parameters set by this narrative framework, the gossiping circle of neighbours which follows can be portrayed with no commentary beyond such pointers as are provided by Mrs. Timorous's relation to Christian's tempter Mr. Timorous, and yet represent an effective anti-type to the community of pilgrims which is being formed. Thus Mrs. Timorous's warning--"while we are

out of danger we are out; but when we are in, we are in" (183-84)--is inverted by Christiana's satisfied comment to Mercy when entered at the Gate--"But now we are in, we are in, and I am glad with all my heart" (192)--without need of a more elaborate analysis of her neighbour's faulty perspective. Because the reader of Part II already knows how to judge those who refuse the Way, these preliminary exclusions are quickly left behind in favour of a focus upon the inclusions of the Christian community; Mrs. Timorous and her anti-circle are forgotten once the journey has begun.

In the Mrs. Timorous incident the reader also experiences a deflection of conflict from the central action of the narrative. Although this antagonist "all to revil'[s]" Christiana briefly (183), the latter quickly expels her from the house, and the gossiping group's conversation takes place in another house while Christiana is already on her way; in other words, this anti-circle never poses the real threat to Christiana that Timorous, for example, does to Christian's progress, because it is never allowed to share her frame of time and space. Thus tension and conflict are from the first superseded at the centre of narrative interest by mutual encouragement and companionship in the conversation of Christiana and Mercy as they set out. In short, the opening pages of the sequel quickly establish the domestic, sociable, and secular frame within which the experience of pilgrimage, and therefore the reader's model of its interpretation, will be significantly modified from what they were in Part I.

The domestication of pilgrimage in Part II adds a spatial dimension to the intensely focused, one-dimensional Way image of Part I. Bunyan quickly establishes a precedent for this domestication of the journey metaphor through the heavenly Visitor's quotation of Psalm 119:54 to Christiana: "it is one of the Songs that thou must Sing while thou art in this House of thy Pilgrimage" (180).

James Turner in particular has viewed "the greater assurance and control of space" in Part II as implying a fuller acceptance on Bunyan's part of the Newtonian universe, with its "continuous grid of space and time," which in turn suggests a greater acceptance of an existing "hierarchy of wealth and power founded on place."⁵¹ While agreeing in the main with Turner's perception of an increased acquiescence to the political and economic status quo here, I believe that Bunyan qualifies his accommodation of property ownership through domestic, burgherlike figures such as Gaius and Mnason, whose inn and house replace as the loci of action terrifying landholds such as the grounds and castle of Giant Despair. Bunyan's landscape in the sequel functions under the laws of hospitality rather than of trespass; space as a secular threat is thereby controlled. Or, in Talon's words, the Puritan of Part II "accepts [the world] in order to sanctify it, and in particular, as we must stress because Bunyan himself does, to sanctify it by marriage and family life."⁵²

This added spatial dimension brings with it a privileging of individual units of structure over the form of the whole; in other words, the time frame of this world increases in importance as the teleological drive towards the next is modified.⁵³ Months and even years pass within the safe enclosure of inns and houses, in eating and drinking around dinner tables, and in ministering to neighbours. This expanded sense of time is in part explained by the generally safe and pleasurable nature of the pilgrim-group's passage through the world; there is no need for pilgrims to hurry through Vanity Fair, for example, when its unbelievers are simply "People that [want] their tast of things, yet [have] a Reverend Esteem and Respect for them" (278).

A second factor in the expansion of secular temporality is the historical frame opened up by the repetition of Christian's journey. Whereas the

timeless and essentially impersonal Way which Christian travels is peopled primarily by allegorical figures and spiritual forces such as Evangelist and Apollyon, Christiana's group is very aware of the precedent set by Christian, and is more directly interested in historical documents, in the markers and stories recording his journey, than in the generalized guidelines of Scripture.⁵⁴ While the effect is in part, as I have noted, one of a double image of pilgrimage as "sometimes up-hill, sometimes down-hill," juxtaposition cannot override the fact that two points in time form a lineage, and so both a knowledge of Christian's ancestry and a provision for his posterity become as interesting here as was his preferment by the Prince of the Celestial Country in Part I. In the sequel we read for the first time, for example, that Christian's father and his father's father come of good Antioch stock, and Christiana is admonished to arrange marriages for her sons "that the Name of their Father, and the House of his Progenitors may never be forgotten in the World" (260). As a result, the horizontal replaces the vertical as the anchoring axis of the narrative frame.⁵⁵

The most striking effect of this expansion of the secular in Part II is felt in the Country of Beulah, the place where the rhetoric of Part I has achieved such forward momentum that the reader shares with Christian and Hopeful the "more rejoycing" and "the more perfect view" of the Celestial City that make them press on eagerly, sick with desire (155). For the pilgrim circle, on the other hand, the place has been transformed from a pastoral borderland to a town in which, once again, they lodge and passively await "the time appointed" (304), entertaining themselves with sensory delights and with the histories of past pilgrims. The summons of death comes in the orderly and extended fashion experienced by a community living out a life of routine, free from persecution; the narrator focuses upon the preparations and farewells of this life, rather

than straining for a glimpse of the other side of the river, as he does in Part I; the narrative ends with the family of Christiana living on "for the Increase of the Church in that Place where they [are] for a time" (311).⁵⁶ Most importantly, Beulah appears to have become a kind of heaven on earth: the effective culmination of the voyage, the point where space defeats time in the achievement of stasis through ordered repetition, and the place where no present conflict or future uncertainty introduces tension to mar the sense of arrival.

This absence of tension suggests that the circle of narrative focus has finally succeeded in excluding all undesirable spiritual, social, and physical realities. The conscious effort of this exclusion is hinted at stylistically in the description of Beulah by means of a negation of unpleasing sense imagery -- "In this Land, they *heard* nothing, *saw* nothing, *felt* nothing, *smelt* nothing, *tasted* nothing, that was offensive to their Stomach or Mind" (304)--as well as by a wealth of sensually pleasurable sounds, sights, and smells. When this conclusion is compared with the eternal exclusion of Ignorance which forms the final narrative act of Part I, it becomes apparent how completely the life-and-death spiritual conflicts resulting in such exclusions have been avoided by the sequel. Just as the starkly linear and teleological structure of the original has been softened by the expansion of spatial and historical dimensions, so we have seen its conflictual either-or emphasis upon the definition of characters as in or out of the Way, as destined to life or death, rephrased as an issue of taste or relocated to remain for the most part harmlessly distant from the travelling community as centre of attention. Indeed, Mercy's suitor, Mr. Brisk, need not be defeated in active verbal combat, as must Talkative of Part I; rather, she is told that "there need[s] no great matter of discouragement to be given to him" (227), for he will voluntarily exclude himself as a mere pretender

to religion.

As several critics have remarked, however, the largely successful elimination of conflict from Part II does not reflect a retreat from the exclusivity of Part I's theological system.⁵⁷ Rather, it suggests a shift in focus to the enclosed circle of the believers' community itself which, like the enclosed familial and upper-class setting of *The Double-Dealer*, begs larger social and moral questions through the relatively egalitarian and consensual image of the intimate group. The false pilgrims so vividly characterized in Part I are distanced as mere subjects of conversation, mediated by the values of speakers such as Great-heart and Honest, just as Mellefont puts Lady Touchwood's lust in its place through his account of her attempt on him. The conversation of the community thereby negates plot-as-conflict by its reduction of dangerous experience to monitory narrative, and by its filtration of dissenting voices through a shared, transparent style.⁵⁸ In other words, as Charles W. Baird has pointed out, theme, rather than conflict, lends focus to the scenes of Part II.⁵⁹ While Baird views theme as a means to the end of mimetic characterization, however, I would suggest that the inverse is true: a spectrum of responses is used to mediate theme safely through the human variety acceptably contained within the church in the world.

In contrast to Part I's predominant debates, didactic dialogues, and spiritual examinations,⁶⁰ the conversations of Part II are primarily designed to encourage, to edify by exchange of experiences (a kind of conversation first developed near the end of Part I, between Christian and Hopeful), and even to allow for the sharing of emotional response (one such conversation takes place during the group's celebratory picnic after the killing of Giant Maul). Just as the intensity of Christian's struggle is diffused by interest in the group

as hero, the decrease in verbal tension is undoubtedly related to the replacement of one-on-one dialogue by conversation among several participants.⁶¹ Thus characters respond to one another's speech with repetitions and affirmative locutions, humbly emphasize each other's spiritual attainments (the author underlines this at one point in his gloss "Christiana thinks her Companion prays better than she"--191), and admit hidden failings that they have in common.

Associated with this shift from conflict to consensus, from debate to conversation, is the detailed delineation of a new kind of heroism, exemplified by the narrative of Mr. Fearing's heroic struggle against his own weaknesses of character.⁶² Presented as foibles, like the qualms of Mr. Feeble-mind and the crutch of Mr. Ready-to-halt, rather than as the kinds of moral faults which cause Christian to stumble or go astray, such weaknesses not only are not condemned, but are even shown to contribute to the spiritual growth of the community. As Great-heart explains to Feeble-mind, the mandate of the Christian community is to include such believers, and the Christian leader reveals his heroism in part through his tenderness toward them:

I have it in Commission, to comfort the *feeble minded*, and to support the weak. You must needs go along with us; we will wait for you, we will lend you our help, we will deny our selves of some things, both *Opinionative* and *Practical*, for your sake; we will not enter into doubtful Disputations before you, we will be made all things to you, rather then you shall be left behind.
(270-71)

Inclusion of the feeble cannot be dissociated from the notions of the feminine which necessarily accompany the choice of a female centre for this narrative. As David Seed has commented, in Part II "the notion of responsibility has been broadened beyond the individual."⁶³ Because it is natural to Bunyan that Christiana feel motherly impulses, desire the company and conversation of friends, and suffer from fears and real vulnerability both as a literal

traveller and as a female believer, it is entirely appropriate that she should enunciate the maxim "Bowels becometh pilgrims," which Sharrock has identified as "the keynote" of the sequel. Christiana's circle expands to include other pilgrims in the natural manner of marriage, birth, and friendship, a manner precluded by what Sharrock, again, has called the "masculine, crisis-ridden First Part."⁶⁴ In her role as literal mother and metaphorical Mother Church, Christiana must actively seek out a spiritual leader in Great-heart; significantly, his qualifications reflect her own maternal traits. Great-heart's just-noted statement of his commission indicates this emphasis upon tenderness and sympathy, while actions ranging from his taking a crying boy by the hand to his hunting out enemies of the pilgrims in order to clear the way for their passage indicate that the nature of his idealized virtue is primarily social rather than individualistic. Even in his teaching method, as Gordon S. Wakefield has pointed out, Great-heart "proceeds by conversation, discourse, not just monologue."⁶⁵ God himself, the distant Prince of Part I, is portrayed now as loving father and even as mother hen. Emblems such as the latter are chosen for Christiana and Mercy, says the Interpreter, "because you are Women, and they are easie for you" (202), but Great-heart's later reference to the hen exemplifies just how fully such imagery can pervade and colour a narrative.⁶⁶

In fact, the intimate interchange of qualities between Christiana, her fellow pilgrims, and Great-heart suggests that critical divergence as to whether the hero of Part II is Christiana or Great-heart⁶⁷ overlooks a third alternative, that of the group as hero. As Manlove has suggested, even the narrated journeys of pilgrims such as Mr. Fearing seem of equal importance to that of Christiana and her family,⁶⁸ implying a potentially unlimited multiplication of equally significant and narration-worthy pilgrimages. Because learning in the Puritan

tradition, according to Kaufmann, can occur passively through reflection and meditation,⁶⁹ the remembered and recorded experience of Christian and of other pilgrims is drawn upon as a source of collective strength, helping the group to avoid the dangers of plot, as such inserted narrative material will often do in the eighteenth-century narratives to be examined. Christiana is reprimanded early in her pilgrimage not for actual sin but for overlooking the need for guidance; Feeble-mind is captured not as a result of his straying onto forbidden ground but because he is without protection. Whereas Christian must abandon all and is essentially alone in his fight for salvation, solitude and lack of leadership become in the sequel disadvantages to be avoided if possible. Indeed, these are presented retrospectively as the primary explanations for Christian's failure to recognize the Flatterer and, by implication, for his temporary defeat by Giant Despair,⁷⁰ in contrast with the force of a company of pilgrims who, "now they [are] so strong, and [have] got such a man as Mr. Great-heart for their Conductor" (281), can destroy that enemy. Worthy of note is the fact that the decision to storm Doubting Castle is arrived at through group consultation; although Great-heart pronounces the final word, he frames it as a response and logical conclusion to the discussion.

Such problem-solving through discussion that arrives at an authoritatively stated consensus is the epistemological model which Bunyan establishes in Part II. Unlike its predecessor's focus on the direct testing of Scripture by blind faith alone, as in Christian's survival of his encounters with those elemental spiritual adversaries Apollyon, the Valley of the shadow of Death, and Giant Despair, experience for Christiana and her fellow-pilgrims is largely mediated through texts and their communal interpretation.⁷¹ Action becomes a particularized response, determined by the group, to unique configurations of

circumstance, such as the strength of the company in contrast to the great threat of Doubting Castle, or the earlier desire of Mercy to enter the Gate without a special call, or the later problem of the sleeping pilgrims in the enchanted harbour. This new atypicality of experience thus reflects not only what Leopold Damrosch, Jr., has called "the larger movement of Puritanism from dogmatic clarity to ethical complexity,"⁷² but also the sequel's communal emphasis. The principles guiding such action must be arrived at through a process of consulting Scripture, doctrine, and the accumulated wisdom of experience represented by Great-heart and by historical records of Christian's journey. In other words, human wisdom in its corporate form becomes the instrument of God's leading, in contrast to the opposition between human perspective and spiritual causality which Fish remarks in Part I.⁷³

Indeed, the wisdom of the group becomes in the sequel the most verifiable and trustworthy form of authority. Such a model of the group suggests what John Bender identifies as an eighteenth-century "refiguration of the authority latent in cities" in such a way that "the good citizen is both watched and watcher."⁷⁴ It is important to note, however, that while Bunyan's community shares the relatively egalitarian and mobile characteristics of an urban community, its underlying principle of "bowels," or charity, apparently precludes mutual surveillance for purposes of accusation. Here the fictionalized circle begs questions of internal divisiveness and hierarchies of power, just as eighteenth-century portrayals of the authoritative social circle will do.

In a related and equally significant shift from Part I, the narrator adopts a more objective and distanced stance than that taken in the first text, with its tendency to follow Christian as alter-ego.⁷⁵ As a result of these changes--from direct experience to conversational consensus and from personal-

ized intervention to relatively omniscient reporting--the reader is guided through an interpretive process leaving little room for doubt and is at the same time rendered less conscious of the limits placed on interpretation through that process.⁷⁸ In other words, the problem of interpretive vulnerability raised by *The Double-Dealer's* plot as well as by Part I of *The Pilgrim's Progress* is compensated for by group action that is less morally suspect than that of the individual because it arises out of consensus rather than egocentric desire. A multiplicity of voices is employed to a monologic end which has taken the reader far beyond both Christiana's individualistic failure to seek help in interpreting her dream of the ill-favoured ones and Mrs. Inconsiderate's simplistic separation of pilgrims from the secular world with her peevish "'twas never a good World since these whimsical Fools dwelt in it" (185). Conversation is used to fulfil the sequel's promise to "perswade" of "the right way" (173) by figuring that process of right persuasion.

Congreve's *The Double-Dealer* and Part II of Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* both affirm socially sanctioned structures of authority in opposition to the threat of individualism posed by the self-serving worldly hero and by the world-denying, self-saving hero, respectively. In each of these works, such authority is based less upon traditional political or moral systems than upon the complementarity of interests embodied in an intimate social unit built upon the affective family group. Because the pursuit of differing interests within a marriage, an extended family, or a dissenting community of believers is best furthered by common effort and consensus, the model of the hero as solitary actor in a conflictual plot must be feminized, domesticated, and socialized in favour of the hero as peacemaker, in Congreve, or the hero as group, in Bunyan.

In the play, the sociable hero is set against the plotting individualist, creating, paradoxically, a structure of structures in conflict and thereby leaving to the audience a choice between alternative social models. In Christiana's story, the group overcomes by the exclusion of all threats and by the expansion of its own spatial and temporal dimensions, thereby gaining a passive triumph in the world which suggests that the reader can go and do likewise. At the same time, for the latter work, the model of the writer's text as exploration of a personal theme is radically qualified to suggest that the real story is the communal text that is conversation. By rewriting lived and artistic fictions in this way, Congreve and Bunyan prefigure the appeal of the conversational circle as structural model for the eighteenth century's fictions of social authority.

1. C. N. Manlove's "The Image of the Journey in *Pilgrim's Progress*: Narrative versus Allegory," *Journal of Narrative Technique* 10 (1980): 16-38, treats in detail the individualistic intensity of Christian's struggle and the relation of this narrative pattern to late seventeenth-century concerns. Michael McKeon, in *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), has described Part I's plot as "the conversion and compression of the macroplot of early modern history to the microplot of one commoner's experience of physical and social mobility" (302). In a modified form of this view, Achsah Guibbory's *The Map of Time: Seventeenth-Century English Literature and Ideas of Pattern in History* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1986) sees Part I as a progress at the individual level in reaction to apparent stasis or decay at the level of political history (270-71).
2. The most detailed examination of this shift is the chapter entitled "Women and Children" in Roger Sharrock's *John Bunyan: The Pilgrim's Progress* (London: Edward Arnold, 1966), 42-53.
3. Robert Markley, in *Two-Edg'd Weapons: Style and Ideology in the Comedies of Etherege, Wycherley and Congreve* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 21-23, notes the contradiction inherent in the fact that Bakhtin relies heavily on dramatic metaphors in describing the dialogism of the novel while treating drama itself ambivalently.
4. See, for example, E. Beatrice Batson, *John Bunyan: Allegory and Imagination* (London: Croom Helm, 1984).
5. Ronald Paulson's chapter entitled "Life as Pilgrimage and as Theatre," in *Popular and Polite Art in the Age of Hogarth and Fielding* (Notre Dame: Univ. of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 115-33, points out the use of "the theatrical scene" in narratives of the first half of the century to reflect an emphasis upon the individual as a performing member of society (116). Ira Konigsberg (*Samuel Richardson and the Dramatic Novel* [Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1968]), Mark Kinkead-Weekes (*Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist* [London: Methuen, 1973], 395-461) and Margaret Anne Doody (*A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1974], 84-86, 107-26), have all, in the course of their studies of Richardson's novelistic technique, dealt with the transposition of dramatic form into the novel genre. Perhaps the most detailed treatment of allegory and mimesis in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is Leopold Damrosch, Jr.'s chapter on "Experience and Allegory in Bunyan," *God's Plot and Man's Stories: Studies in the Fictional Imagination from Milton to Fielding* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985), 121-86.
6. N. H. Keeble, "Christiana's Key: The Unity of *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *The Pilgrim's Progress: Critical and Historical Views*, ed. Vincent Newey (Liverpool: Liverpool Univ. Press, 1980), 16.
7. I claim as a precedent for such a partial focus Michael McKeon's "willful misreading" of Part I of *The Pilgrim's Progress* as a literal, novelistic plot isolated from its figurative signification (302-11).
8. Markley, 197.

9. William Congreve, Epistle Dedicatory, *The Double-Dealer*, ed. J. C. Ross (London: Benn [New Mermaids], 1981), 7. All citations of *The Double-Dealer* are taken from this edition and are indicated by act, scene, and line references in parentheses; see Ross's "Note on the Text" for a discussion of his editorial act and scene divisions. Markley, 213.
10. See, for example, the arguments of Laura Brown's *English Dramatic Form, 1660-1760: An Essay in Generic History* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 123-28, Anne Barton's Introductory note, *The Double-Dealer* (Ilkley, Yorkshire: Scholar, 1973) and William Myers's "Plot and Meaning in Congreve's Comedies," in William Congreve, ed. Brian Morris (London: Ernest Benn, 1972), 73-92, regarding *The Double-Dealer* as transitional between Restoration and sentimental comedy; discussions of the play as a reworking of traditional dramatic modes include John Barnard's, "Passion, 'Poetical Justice', and Dramatic Law in *The Double-Dealer* and *The Way of the World*," in Morris, ed., 93-112, and Brian Corman's "'The Mixed Way of Comedy': Congreve's *The Double-Dealer*," *Modern Philology* 71 (1974): 356-65.
11. See, for example, Barnard, 103, Henry Ten Eyck Perry, *The Comic Spirit in Restoration Drama: Studies in the Comedy of Etherege, Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1925), and Maximilian Novak, *William Congreve* (New York: Twayne, 1971), 106.
12. Thus Robert Hume's strong qualification of the assumption of a shift in Restoration comedy ("'The Change in Comedy': Cynical versus Exemplary Comedy on the London Stage, 1678-1693," *Essays in Theatre* 1 [1983]: 101-18) does not alter the fact that critics' difficulties with this particular play are largely a response to its resistance to conventions of unity.
13. Edward Burns, *Restoration Comedy: Crises of Desire and Identity* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1987), 191.
14. See, for example, the critiques of Anthony Gosse, "Plot and Character in Congreve's *Double-Dealer*," *Modern Language Quarterly* 29 (1968): 274-88, and John Ross, xxvi, which treat Mellefont as an ironic anti-hero and an unsympathetic nonentity, respectively.
15. Burns, 192-93.
16. Harold Love, *Congreve* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974), 54.
17. Love, 44.
18. Barton, Introductory note.
19. Susan J. Rosowski, "Thematic Development in the Comedies of William Congreve: The Individual in Society," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 16 (1976): 395.
20. Similarly for Lady Touchwood (but on a level of passion rather than reason), as Donald Bruce points out in *Topics of Restoration Comedy* (London: Victor Gollanz, 1974), the satisfactions provided by lovers are interchangeable until

she is forced to recognise that "the apparent recurrence of the same object in a succession of objects of desire . . . is no more than a community in one's own perceptions" (109).

21. Novak, 96. My argument assumes the parallel, and only loosely intersecting, strands of the plot to be a significant formal feature of the play. Indeed, Gosse (286) and Peter Holland (*The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979], 215-16) treat these strands as very similar thematically, structurally, and stylistically; in other words, the structure of *The Double-Dealer* is highly spatialised in its unity of theme, situation, and style rather than of plot. Not surprisingly, the comedy has been criticized for its unrelated lines of action and for irrelevant scenes, beginning with Lord Kames's description of the latter parts of Act 3 as "mere conversation-pieces, productive of no consequence," because they do not fit his definition of a play as "a chain of connected facts, of which each scene makes a link" (*Elements of Criticism*, 2 vols. [Edinburgh: John Bell and William Creech, 1785; reprint, New York: Garland, 1971], 2.408-09).

22. See Bruce, 106-07, and Rosowski, 394, respectively.

23. Brown rather sees Maskwell's evil as "formally incongruous" with the folly of the Plyants and the Froths because she interprets that evil as more unmotivated than I would do (124-25). She does, however, find a common "depravity and cynicism" unifying these groups of characters morally (128).

24. The former view is held by Novak (91), Holland (221), and Ross (xxi), the latter by Barton (Introductory note) and Aubrey L. Williams, *An Approach to Congreve* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), 128.

25. Holland, 221.

26. Love, 57-59, 54.

27. Harold Weber makes a similar observation about the new mutuality expressed in these conversations, in *The Restoration Rake-Hero: Transformations in Sexual Understanding in Seventeenth-Century England* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1986), 108, while Corman describes the first exchange as unconventional and as "seem[ing] to suggest that beneath the amiable surface Congreve sees a darker reality, one in which the forces of good must undertake an almost desperate search for some form of affirmation in a world in which so little happiness is possible" (360-61).

28. Ross's note here reads the final words of this discussion as "suggesting their marriage is to produce both pleasure, and a sharing of benefits with others."

29. I am disagreeing here with Myers' view of this conversation as destroying the relation between the plot and the moral by establishing a purely private sphere of fulfilment between Cynthia and Mellefont (78-79); in fact, this scene, like the play's plot, emphasizes that a healthy private happiness is the ideal foundation for a healthy social order. Nancy Armstrong's observation, in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford Univ.

Press, 1987), 30-33, of an appropriation by eighteenth-century fiction of the Enlightenment's sociopolitical contract as a model for a domestic contract sheds a helpful light upon the role of this scene in the play's conclusion. Weber describes the ending's attempt to banish tensions as a falling back upon "the power of the chief judicial authority to bring order to chaos and secure the efficacy of the conventional comic resolution" (126). While I agree with him that this conclusion does not attempt *The Way of the World's* complex unity of contraries, I would argue that the context of Lord Touchwood's pronouncement (his need to ask Mellefont's pardon), as well as the couple's previous private agreement, indicates the dependence of judicial authority--indeed, of all social authority--upon the volitional cooperation and sociable spirit of its adherents.

30. See Markley, 207, 214-15.

31. Ross, xxiii; see also Susan Staves, *Players' Sceptres: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration* (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1979), 306.

32. Markley, 209.

33. While employing Markley's argument regarding the decorous language of Mellefont and other characters as a stylistic norm and a means of controlling dialogism in the play, I would limit his claim that moral distinctions cannot be made between languages (207-10) to the Maskwell-Mellefont pair only; in my view the other non-normative characters all expose themselves through their styles, and Maskwell's very villainy lies in his ability to make "ten thousand meanings lurk in each corner of that various face" (5.4.53). His ultimate slip, indeed, marks the victory of monologism as represented by Mellefont and Lord Touchwood.

34. As this statement implies, I do not accept Williams's interpretation of the clerical robes used by Mellefont to expose Maskwell as indicators of heavenly retribution (151). Although Williams's comparison of Lord Touchwood to Providence meting out rewards (151-52) is valid, as must be any such observation about a ceremonial closure effected by an authority figure, a typological mode of meaning has been replaced in this play by an exemplary and very human one--with Mellefont and Cynthia, not Lord Touchwood, as the examples. I agree rather with Staves, who places Mellefont's parson role within the context of the ideology of benevolence, in which "nature is discovered to be the foundation of conventional morality" (292).

35. See, for example, Myers, 79; Holland, 206; Markley, 210-11.

36. John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 227.

37. Brown suggests that *The Way of the World* represents Congreve's successful portrayal of positive moral action after the structural problem of the hero's passivity in the face of villainy in *The Double-Dealer* (129).

38. It should be noted here that Bunyan's 1680 *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* follows *The Pilgrim's Progress's* 1678 publication more closely than does the Second Part, and is associated by the author with the first work in terms of a

similar inspiration "to write, as then, of him that was going to Heaven, so now, of the Life and Death of the Ungodly, and of their travel from this world to Hell" (Ed. James F. Forrest and Roger Sharrock [Oxford: Clarendon, 1988], 1). I have chosen to examine the true sequel, however, in light of its more complex relation to the original both as a continuation and as a compensatory rewriting, implying a necessary repetition-yet-difference of form and style which is not characteristic of *Mr. Badman*.

39. Roger Sharrock, *John Bunyan*, 43-44; see also Keeble, "Christiana's Key," 8. In general, Keeble's argument that the sequel is a kind of corrective completion of the original is very helpful, although it tends to obscure the gap in production of the two texts in its insistence on "their relationship as the two parts of a single work" whose intended effect is a unified one (3).

40. Keeble, "Christiana's Key," 8.

41. Closest to my view is that of R. M. Frye's "The Way of all Pilgrims," in *God, Man, and Satan: Patterns of Christian Thought and Life in "Paradise Lost," "The Pilgrim's Progress," and the Great Theologians* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1960), which argues that "by the device of the two juxtaposed narratives, Bunyan provides a stereoscopic view of the Christian life, fully three-dimensional and vital in its perspective, expressing both the individual and the corporate aspects of the pilgrimage" (97). B. R. White, without discussing Part II specifically, describes individual salvation and the nature of the church as the theological subjects of greatest concern to Puritans in general and to Bunyan specifically ("The Fellowship of Believers: Bunyan and Puritanism," in *John Bunyan: Conventicle and Parnassus. Tercentenary Essays*, ed. N. H. Keeble [Oxford: Clarendon, 1988], 1-19). See also note 37 above regarding Keeble's view.

42. See Christopher Hill, *A Turbulent, Seditious, and Factious People: John Bunyan and His Church, 1628-1688* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 301.

43. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, ed. James Blanton Wharey, rev. Roger Sharrock (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 8, 10. All citations of *The Pilgrim's Progress* are taken from this edition and are indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

44. See, for example, N. H. Keeble's review of the religious tensions of the 1680s in *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity in Later Seventeenth-Century England* (Leicester: Leicester Univ. Press, 1987), 59-67.

45. Such a view of the relationship between the two parts sheds light on the critical difficulty of assigning a role to *The Pilgrim's Progress* in the origins of the English novel. Readers focusing upon Part I point to its model of individualistic mobility, rejection of society, and detailed examination of the self; see, for example, A. Richard Dutton, "'Interesting, but tough': Reading *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 18 (1978): 454-55, who not surprisingly links the work with *Moll Flanders*, *Pamela*, and *Tom Jones*, and Wolfgang Iser, "Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: The Doctrine of Predestination and the Shaping of the Novel," in *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1975), 1-28. Part II has been described as the more

novelistic because of its broadly inclusive treatment of mundane human life; see, for example, J. W. Mackail, *"The Pilgrim's Progress": A Lecture Delivered at the Royal Institution of Great Britain March 14, 1924* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1924; reprint Folcroft Library Editions, 1975), who notes in the sequel a precursor of "the English novel, with its large, searching treatment of actual life" (44). Without referring to Part II, Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth (*Realism and Consensus in the English Novel* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983]) implies a similar view when she describes Part I as "profoundly antisocial and antihistorical" in its vision of private salvation and of revealed truth rather than interpretation by consensus (60). Of particular interest is Hill's linking of the "exuberant mobility" of *The Pilgrim's Progress* with the eighteenth-century novel upon the assumption that the genre reflects the dominant cultural profile: "Only as society restabilizes [at the close of the eighteenth century]," he says, "does the novel settle down to dealing with families, with individuals in relation to other individuals" (361-62). Hill thus dismisses the possibility of the novel of the social circle in the eighteenth century. Sir Charles Firth comes closer to my view in 1898, writing that in certain incidents of Part II "We are passing, in fact, from allegory to the novel with an improving tendency. Bunyan is here the forerunner of Hannah More and a whole generation of novelists who sought to combine realistic fiction and moral teaching" (Introduction, *The Pilgrim's Progress* [London: Methuen, 1898]; reprint, Bunyan: *"The Pilgrim's Progress." A Casebook*, ed. Sharrock [London: Macmillan, 1976], 102.

46. Roger Sharrock, "'When at the first I took my Pen in hand': Bunyan and the Book," in Keeble, ed., 75.

47. See, for example, White, 8, and Sharrock, *John Bunyan*, 45-47.

48. Margaret Olofson Thickstun, "From Christiana to Stand-fast: Subsuming the Feminine in *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 26 (1986): 439-53. Thickstun's account of the determining influence of Christiana's sex upon "both the nature of her journey toward salvation and the quality of her response to her call, her struggles, and her later effacement in her role as 'a mother in Israel'" (440) is one of the most illuminating studies of the sequel to date. At the same time, I disagree with her thesis that the narrative portrays a gradual displacement of Christiana. In part this is because I read Christiana's position as first to pass over the river and her mode of passing as indications of leadership and authority at least as strong as Stand-fast's non-conclusive, though final, position; more seriously, however, Thickstun is misreading when she interprets the phrase "a mother in Israel" as indicating the inferior status of a mere follower. In fact, Christiana uses the expression as part of an authoritative pronouncement against the giant Grim, symbol of the Roman Catholic Church; she says, "Tho' the Highways have been unoccupied heretofore, and tho' the Travellers have been made in time past, to walk thorough by-Paths, it must not be so now I am risen, Now I am Risen a Mother in Israel" (219). The indefinite article is deceiving; the phrase is taken from the song of Deborah the prophetess, serving as legal and political leader of Israel, and refers to victory in battle under her direction (see Judges 4 and 5). In fact, Bunyan appears to associate Christiana with every available biblical image of powerful womanhood; while her role is certainly limited in scope, it is incorrect to deny its "positive allegorical significance," as Thickstun does (441). A

useful background study for Part II's portrayals of Christiana and Mercy is Margaret J. M. Ezell's *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1987), particularly its chapter on the "Good Wife" in seventeenth-century literature (36-61).

49. Henri A. Talon, "Space and the Hero in *The Pilgrim's Progress*: A Study of the Meaning of the Allegorical Universe," *Etudes anglaises* 14 (1961): 129. A number of my observations about Part II's domesticated and socialized flavour are paralleled in John R. Knott, Jr.'s very helpful discussion of the sequel's theology, entitled "Bunyan and the Holy Community," *Studies in Philology* 80 (1983): 200-25. Kathleen M. Swaim ("Christian's 'Christian Behaviour' to His Family in *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *Religion and Literature* 21.3 [1989]: 1-15) has argued convincingly for the theological continuity of the two parts as portraying through different narrative modes "both Christian's heroism and God's mysterious ways and inclusive mercy" (11).

50. David Seed has noted the appropriateness of Mr. Sagacity's style to the material conveyed and to the sequel as a whole ("Dialogue and Debate in *The Pilgrim's Progress*," in Newey, ed., 85; see also Sharrock, *John Bunyan*, 44). However, although James Turner ("Bunyan's Sense of Place," in Newey, ed.) has argued for a general acquiescence to the secular status quo, including distinctions of rank, in Part II (see p. 23 of this chapter), no notice appears to have been taken of the fact that the characterization of Mr. Sagacity as gentleman implies an acceptance of those social levels explicitly associated with evil in Part I's characters such as Mr. Worldly-Wiseman and By-ends and in the Vanity-Fair trial episode.

51. Turner, 109, 96-98. On the other hand, Brean S. Hammond, in "*The Pilgrim's Progress*:" Satire and Social Comment," in Newey, ed., 118-31, sees this antagonism to the great as even stronger in Part II than in Part I, reading the highly allegorized device of Mercy's dream as evidence of this rather than of a distancing of social conflict, as I do. In my view, the giants fought in Part II have been ostensibly depoliticized even before their defeat, by virtue of the more domestic, urban, egalitarian model of the social group operative in the sequel. Keeble's profile of a predominantly urban middle-class audience for Part II, in *The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 141, is suggestive in the light of this rewriting of social structure.

52. Talon, 130.

53. Hill expresses this in somewhat different terms, writing that "in Part II time seems as elusive as space was in Part I" (223). See also Sharrock, *John Bunyan*, 50, and Charles W. Baird, who calls this a "scenic method of narration," in *John Bunyan: A Study in Narrative Technique* (Port Washington, New York: Kennikat, 1977), 58.

54. Although Christian's experience is admired as a good example by the pilgrims, and although his present beatitude is a source of inspiration to them, his journey is too historically distinct, as it is portrayed in Part II, to be the type which Lynn Veach Sadler calls it in *John Bunyan* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1979), 100. Emphasis is placed as much upon experiences divergent from Christian's--in the Valley of Humiliation, for example--as upon those similar

to his. In other words, the journey exists as a kind of spiritual and narrative frame to be filled and modified by each traveller's experience of it (Manlove, 20-21), while the sequel's subject is, in large part, "the documentary objectivity" of its predecessor (McKeon, 313).

55. In this sense the diminished urgency of the second pilgrimage is countered by a stronger impression of progress, as Knott ("Bunyan's Gospel Day: A Reading of *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *English Literary Renaissance* 3 [1973]: 449) and Batson (48) have pointed out, because Christian's experience can be used by his successors in order to avoid his continual errors and the resulting sense of repetition and stasis which U. Milo Kaufmann, in "*The Pilgrim's Progress*" and *Traditions in Puritan Meditation* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966), 107-112, and Stanley E. Fish, in "Progress in *The Pilgrim's Progress*," *Self-Consuming Artifacts: The Experience of Seventeenth-Century Literature* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), 224-64, have identified as inimical to the progress as a linear model of improvement. Because the means of spiritual guidance are objectified in the form of monuments, stories, discussions, and the direction of Great-heart, the conflicting "double perspective" of "surface action" and "inner landscape" upon which Fish's argument depends (255) is brought into a single, externalized focus. The mood of frustrated desire and constant discouragement is thereby evaporated for the sequel. McKeon has commented that the emphasis on the rise of Christian's family is justified primarily "by Christian's internal merit" (305), indicating the blend of traditional social values and the new ideology of natural merit that has already been identified as important in the eighteenth-century social novel.

56. See Margaret Bridges, "The Sense of an Ending: The Case of the Dream-Vision," *Dutch Quarterly Review of Anglo-American Letters* 14 (1984): 94-95, for a discussion of the impersonal and inconclusive nature of Part II's ending.

57. See, for example, Dutton (445-46, 451), Gordon S. Wakefield ("To Be a Pilgrim": Bunyan and the Christian Life," in Keeble, ed., 128), Knott ("Bunyan and the Holy Community," 204, 221), and Hill (200). This view contradicts the argument of Keeble, who claims that Restoration comedy is "a literature directed exclusively to an enclosed élite" in opposition to Nonconformist writing (*The Literary Culture of Nonconformity*, 223). I would suggest that the latter must merely work harder to enclose its elite, while the former assumes its audience's inherent exclusivity. The generally paradoxical nature of Bunyan's treatment of community is pointed out by Damrosch in his reading of the name of Bunyan's own sect, the "Particular Open-Communion Baptists," as an "oxymoronic declaration of inclusion and exclusion" (122).

58. See pages 55-58 and 276-77 of the text for the speeches of Great-heart and Honest. Vincent Newey's "'With the eyes of my understanding': Bunyan, Experience, and Acts of Interpretation," in Keeble, ed., suggests that the strong realisation of characters who represent negative points of view in Part I results in a subversion of the absolutes it supposedly upholds by "upgrading them [these points of view] to the status of potential alternatives" made the more attractive by the reader's own final exclusion, with the narrator, from the Celestial City (212-13). This argument implies at least one ideological function of the distanced portrayal of morally reprehensible characters. Roger Pooley, in "Plain and Simple: Bunyan and Style," in Keeble, ed., makes the equally important

observation in passing that in Part II stylistic discernment does not provide a means of distinguishing good and evil characters "because the opposition is so rarely allowed a voice" (102). Similarly, in David Seed's view, the conversational style of Part II reflects the fact that "mutual toleration has excluded drama," and that "nothing is at stake," in terms of the success of the pilgrims, in the sequel (88). Of interest here is Monica Furlong's statistical comparison, in *Puritan's Progress: A Study of John Bunyan* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1975), 106-07, 117, of the 17:90 good character-bad character ratio in Part I to the sequel's 29:27 good-bad ratio.

59. Baird, 54-55.

60. See, for example, Christian in verbal battle with Apollyon, 56-60, Christian teaching Hopeful, 109-10, and Faithful examining Talkative, 81-84, respectively.

61. See Batson, 49-50, for some of these observations about the sequel's conversational style.

62. See Keeble, "Christiana's Key," 17.

63. Seed, 85. See also Furlong, 119.

64. Sharrock, *John Bunyan*, 46, and Introduction to Sharrock, ed., 19.

65. Wakefield, 127.

66. See page 213 of the text. Furlong has connected this aspect of Part II with Bunyan's development of the maternal and feminine aspects of his own personality through his second marriage and his pastoral work (169).

67. Thickstun's reading, for example, is based upon the former assumption, and Talon expresses the latter view (129-30).

68. Manlove, 24.

69. Kaufmann, 188.

70. See page 288 of the text.

71. See Damrosch, 184.

72. Damrosch, 183.

73. Fish, 233-40.

74. John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), 76.

75. See Baird, 38-39, and Bridges, 93.

76. See Bender, 201-229, regarding the development in the eighteenth century of the convention of transparent omniscience, which he defines as "the convention that both author and beholder are absent from a representation, the objects of which are rendered as if their externals were entirely visible and their internality fully accessible" (201), and which he argues is a device for narrative control.

CHAPTER 3

Social Authority and the Domestic Circle in *Pamela* Part II

Austin Dobson cautions with reference to Richardson's 1741 sequel to *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded* that "it is idle to ridicule what nobody now reads." The work has nevertheless proved a tempting butt for such critical sallies as T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel's "the great fault of the continuation of *Pamela* is that there was nothing which could happen in it, and the best excuse that can be offered for it is that Richardson was evidently forced to write it, without any urge from inside," and Margaret Anne Doody's chapter title "*Pamela Continued: Or, The Sequel that Failed*."¹ Summarizing these and other evaluations, Terry Castle concludes with the questions "What then to say . . . about a work for which little may be said? Where to go with a text that seems to go nowhere?"² Although Mark Kinkead-Weekes approaches the novel as "in some formal ways . . . a five-finger exercise which extended [Richardson's] technical repertory, in preparation, as it turned out, for *Clarissa*,"³ the impulse of most negative criticism arises from a juxtaposition of the work to its predecessor. Castle, in particular, finds that even among the problematic class of literary sequels, "the novel is more than a disappointment. At times it seems almost to insult us, to affront our expectations, including our very desire for repetition."⁴

Thus it would appear that arguments such as those of William Congreve for the legitimacy of his anti-plot of marriage and of John Bunyan for the relation by marriage of Christian's story to its predecessor might be of use in an examination of this recalcitrant fiction. Indeed, Castle's comments pinpoint

two expectations which the sequel frustrates--the expectation of a plot which provides lineal thrust and the expectation that a reading experience will repeat itself--while suggesting the possibility that the author deliberately disappoints such reader desires.⁵ I believe that Richardson is in fact doing just that: while he cannot be anachronistically confronting a critical tradition which will privilege the novel of linear, conflictual, and open structure over one whose narrative is more circular, harmonious, and enclosing, he clearly feels the need to reinforce an essentially conservative project by contextualizing and thereby repointing his comic plot. Carol Kay has suggested that Richardson's work in general reflects his hope "of social reconciliation and unification" through "the authority of moral discourse," an authority whose "rules . . . seem to emanate from everywhere and nowhere" and which is upheld by the self-regulation of exemplary characters who "subject themselves to the limitations of convention."⁶ As a result, this supposedly plotless, directionless work carefully centralizes authority in the figure of Pamela and controls the forces of individualistic desire by drawing characters into an admiring and imitative orbit around her exemplary figure. Potentially disruptive social energies and their stylistic manifestations are either concentrated according to the terms of Pamela's discourse or deflected and excluded from her circle. Individualistic desire, as *The Double-Dealer* emphasizes, is a socially disruptive force, and Richardson therefore can only either rechannel it into communally acceptable directions or exclude it from the familial circle. As Terry Eagleton has pointedly reminded critics, the fact that they may not be sympathetic to the ideological values served by Richardson's forms does not in itself justify a dismissal of those forms on aesthetic grounds.⁷ In fact, Part II of *Pamela* can be read as a text which attempts to resolve formally tensions its author has

most often been seen to avoid or mismanage, thereby making an ultimately conservative project formally explicit.⁴

Rewriting for *Pamela* Part II, unlike the case of the sequel to *The Pilgrim's Progress*, is a matter not so much of a compensation for, as of a defence of, two aspects of Part I: its courtship story and its claims of Pamela's fitness for her raised status. Further, rewriting within the bounds of marriage calls for a structuring of narrative on bases other than the received notions of conflict, teleology, and interiorization--in other words, for the kind of structuring that was shown to be necessary in *The Double-Dealer*. Finally, whereas in Part I Richardson's female centre of consciousness, defending her honour and the value of her soul as equal to those of a high-born man, inevitably appears to oppose radically a social structure which does not reflect that equality, the heroine of Part II, as a wife, becomes the centre of moral authority and interpretation within the social structure. In other words, social realities must be acknowledged in the sequel, the great conflict between the encroaching and the defending sexes must be deflected or channelled if the direst consequences to personal happiness are to be avoided, and the moral and aesthetic authority of the virtuous female writer must be both established and contained by the domestic sphere.

Indeed, *Pamela* Part II can be roughly divided into three movements, reflecting these three emphases: a first portion in which Pamela's fitness for her newly powerful social role is demonstrated and affirmed through a minutely detailed portrayal of her performance as Mrs. B., a second in which the "new World" of London in confrontation with increasing domestic concerns, brings her into a conflict of wills with her husband, and a third in which Pamela leaves "this undelightful Town" for private life, but in which her now-firmly

established authority is exerted throughout ever-wider social and literary spheres.⁹ This threefold purpose of defence, restructuring, and the modelling of social authority exacerbates the sense of a self-conscious balancing act to which the sequel as a subgenre is already susceptible.¹⁰ Richardson's strategies are an intensified version of those of Bunyan and Congreve: the social group is ostentatiously depoliticized by placing a woman at its centre and by insisting upon its consensual structure and domestic focus, correct interpretation and response are modelled exhaustively within the text itself, time and history are slowed into a static heaven on earth which threatens no change, and disorder is controlled by passive exclusion.¹¹ The product of these strategies is a rewriting of the comic plot of *Pamela Part I*, which Doody has described as a movement "from stability . . . through rebellion and struggle . . . to a new-found and more complete state of harmony,"¹² within a tight circle constructed around the exemplary figure of the heroine. Moreover, this rewriting is presented by Richardson as, paradoxically, both a more truthful and a more controllable model of marriage in particular and of social reality in general.¹³

Like the opening material of both *The Double-Dealer* and Part II of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, Richardson's brief preface to the sequel immediately raises the issues with which it is faced and suggests the strategies to be employed in dealing with them. The very fact of a preface distinguishes the sequel from Part I; furthermore, the Editor explicitly invokes the original's great success, thereby setting it as the backdrop against which the reader is to measure the sequel. He nevertheless couches his hopes in the pessimistic and negative terms of "the good fortune, which few continuations have met with, to be judged not unworthy of the *First Part*."¹⁴ The attempt to defend, rewrite, and model simultaneously is reflected in a style which thus teeters backward and then

thrusts forward, with the preface's claims that Part II is "equally written to NATURE," yet presents rules "equally new and practicable," that it is "not unworthy of the *First Part*; nor disproportioned to the more exalted condition in which PAMELA was destined to shine." Indeed, Richardson's concurrent letter to George Cheyne reveals a sense of the audience-cautious author walking a social tightrope, hoping to "meet not with Minds too delicate on one hand, or too gross on the other."¹⁵ Like the placement of the sequel in relation to its predecessor and its audience, the expression of ideal womanhood within its covers is defined as a social issue. Thus Pamela's recognition of the first letter of Part I, that "it was not every Family that could have found a Place, that your poor Pamela was fit for" (1:1), has been translated, over the great divide of marriage, into the sequel's prefatory promise that she will "shine as an affectionate wife, a faithful friend, a polite and kind neighbour, an indulgent mother, and a beneficent mistress; after having in the former Part supported the character of dutiful child, a spotless virgin, and a modest and amiable bride."

In keeping with this careful contextualization of the sequel and the heroine is the preface's emphasis upon boundaries and circumferences. Just as this novel, "avoiding all romantic flights, improbable surprises, and irrational machinery," will touch the passions only "where requisite," so also has the Editor sought "to bring [a multitude of important subjects] within the compass which he was determined not to exceed," and so also is the reader expected to note the "rules . . . inculcated throughout the whole, for the *general conduct of life*." Commenting upon another letter to Cheyne, in which Richardson writes, "I labour'd hard to rein in my Invention, and made it a Rule with me to avoid unnecessary Digressions, & Foreign Episodes" (*Letters*, 54), Eagleton suggests that for this author "the indecent liberties of 'invention' must be suppressed

in the cause of instruction, ideological closure achieved by a *calculated* sacrifice of *jouissance*."¹⁶ In Richardson's view, the novel of marriage and social relations must voluntarily subscribe to the same kinds of limits as must its female protagonist, whether wife or marriageable daughter. Like the faithful wife whose "Rules and Directions" guarantee that all are "easy and happy" in her husband's household (4:331), the author who "ha[s] so much Matter upon [his] Hands . . . ha[s] not Field for Excursions of Fancy & Imagination" (Letters, 54).

The link between Richardson's watchful guard over his story and the female propriety that its content will reinforce is strengthened in his comments to James Leake about Kelly's spurious sequel as a threatened rape: ". . . if such an Attempt were made, I was resolved to do it myself, rather than my Plan should be basely Ravished out of my Hands, and, probably my Characters depreciated and debased, by those who knew nothing of the Story, nor the Delicacy required in the Continuation of the Piece" (Letters, 43). The sequel will later warn that romances are to be avoided because they teach a young lady "to consider her Father's House as an enchanted Castle, and her Lover as the Hero who is to dissolve the Charm, and to set her at Liberty from one Confinement, in order to put her into another, and, too probably, a worse" (4:426); even the guiltless Profusiana of one of Pamela's educational tales, who simply prefers public amusements to domesticity, finds that as a result of her excursions

her Name indeed is written in every publick Window, and prostituted . . . at the Pleasure of every Profligate, or Sot, who wears a Diamond to engrave it: And that, it may be, with most vile and barbarous Imputations, and Freedoms of Words, added by Rakes, who very probably never exchanged a Syllable with her. (4:448)

Wit, according to the sequel, gives its male wielders the capacity to "throw down . . . those sacred Fences which may lay the fair Inclosure open to the Invasions of every clumsy and viler Beast of Prey" (4:369). Female passion

as well, swelled by "the Torrents of sensual Love," can flood "the Banks of Discretion" unless the breach be stopped by a rare degree of "Resolution and Self-conquest" (4:416-17). Thus the focus upon the defense of besieged virtue in Part I's precarious social limbo becomes, in the sequel, a detailed drawing of the boundaries circumscribing female roles and behaviour under more commonplace conditions, while the original's correspondingly reactive, breathless structure of counter-intrigue and breach-stopping gives way to a text radiating outwards in methodical alignment around a centre of disciplined self-regulation. "To perfect the Design" of *Pamela* is Richardson's goal, and as a result, "there cannot, naturally, be the room for Plots, Stratagem and Intrigue in the present Volumes as in the first" (Letters, 51, 53).¹⁷

Because Pamela's feminine power is thus exercised in the establishment and maintenance of "rules and directions" and "sacred fences," her actions at the same time serve to uphold both the social status quo and Richardson's claim that his heroine's story is essentially conservative in import. Part I's suggestion by B. that Pamela exhibits "more Worthiness . . . than ever [he] saw in any Lady in the World" (1:108) is repeated and elaborated in the first portion of the sequel to justify B.'s choice while removing any danger of its imitation by other gentlemen. In fact, personal integrity in Richardson is achieved through correct placement of the self within a coherent matrix of social and moral values. Pamela's achievement in Part I is therefore the recognition of Providence's direction of her steps towards her ordained role, while in Part II her exemplary response to her marriage, the hope that she will thereby be made "an humble Instrument in the Hand of Providence to communicate great Good to others" (3:110), establishes the keynote for her acts of reclamation and modelling that will set her context in order around her centre.¹⁸ Most important, it is

Providence that directs a passive Pamela into her position of power within the existing hierarchy, so that she can be portrayed as the upholder of social forces without incurring the responsibility, dangerous in an upstart, for their existence and perpetuity.

The conversion of B. provides a case in point. Richardson's retrospective description of the plot of his first novel as the story of a "Libertine . . . [who], from the Foundation of good Principles laid in his early Years by an excellent Mother; by his Passion for a virtuous young Woman; and by her amiable Example, and unwearied Patience, when she became his Wife; is, after a Length of Time, perfectly reclaimed" displaces Pamela into the role of passive agent in B.'s story of reform from anti-social adventurer to ideal husband, while the phrase "perfectly reclaimed" suggests that a deviation has been correctly recentred in her immovable wifedom.¹⁰ It is no accident, therefore, that Pamela's most admired and powerful virtue is her immovability or uniformity. B. is first brought to think honourably of Pamela as servant girl by "a Virtue [he] had never before encounter'd, so uniform and immoveable" (3:207); later, when she has asserted her rights as his wife through her supposed trial of her own conduct, and pleads forgiveness for boldness, Pamela--and presumably the reader--is reassured by her husband that he has "weighed well [her] Conduct" and "[finds] an Uniformity in it, that is surprisingly just" (4:202).

Richardson's careful construct of a centred and immovable female power which functions in support of the status quo is both exemplified and rendered even less threatening by Pamela's resolute insistence upon limiting her operations to the domestic sphere. In contrast to the above-mentioned Profusiana, the Prudentia of the moral tale cultivates those "domestick Virtues, which shall one Day make her the Crown of some worthy Gentleman's earthly Happiness;

and which, of course, . . . will secure and heighten her own" (4:451). Although Polly Darnford is at one point moved to exclaim, "What a publick Blessing would such a mind as [Mrs. B.'s] be, could it be vested with the Robes of Royalty, and adorn the Sovereign Dignity!" (4:53), Pamela's exemplary influence is made possible precisely because, like Prudentia, she "shines, to her last Hour, in all the Duties of domestick Life, as an excellent Wife, Mother, Mistress, Friend, and Christian; and so confirms all the Expectations, of which her Maiden Life had given such strong and such edifying Presages" (4:452).²⁰

Paradoxically, this portrayal of Pamela as representative of externalized and immovable social and moral structures is strengthened by the feminist subtext which is developed in Part II not as a subversive but rather as an adaptive strategy. The running commentary which Pamela intersperses with her account of B.'s curtain-lecture upon her behaviour as a wife in Part I is expanded into a correspondence and conversational exchange between women, of whom the principals are Pamela, Lady Davers, and Polly Darnford. This exchange claims for itself such privileges as the discussion of strategies for circumventing B.'s "haughty way of speaking of our Sex" (3:71) and the sharing of specifically female experiences and fears "on an Occasion upon which our Sex may write to one another; but . . . Gentlemen should not desire to see" (3:420), as well as the freedom for generalized commiserations over that "constant parching Drought" during which "all [a lady's] attributed Excellencies [are] swallow'd up in the Quicksands of Matrimony" (3:343).

That the purpose of this subtext, however, is one of mutual encouragement in acquiescence to the realities of hierarchical marriage is suggested by these examples themselves, with their use of the strategies of humility, extreme delicacy, and passive lament as the only appropriate expressions of a circum-

scribed form of female power. Indeed, Pamela's educational writings and conversations overtly exploit feminist critique as a strategy for survival within the established hierarchy, in keeping with her "absolute Opinion, that Degrees in general should be kept up" (3:324). Thus the frequent superiority of intelligence over their husbands which she observes in wives leads her, after the disclaimer that she is "so infinitely transcended by [her] dear Gentleman, that no Competition, Pride or Vanity, could be apprehended from [her]," to argue that women should receive a better education in order to "make better Daughters, better Wives, better Mothers, and better Mistresses" (4:368). More strikingly, she counsels her ward, "In your *Maiden State*, think yourself above the Gentlemen, and they'll think you so too, and address you with Reverence and Respect In your *marry'd State*, which is a kind of State of Humiliation for a Lady, you must think yourself subordinate to your Husband; for so it has pleased GOD to make the Wife" (4:447).²¹ It is only within the bounds of an established matrimonial hierarchy, then, that Pamela may exercise her moral and social authority, and it is within these bounds as well that Richardson must set his plot.

In the first portion of the sequel, in particular, the author carefully maps out the circle within which Pamela's model career will be played out. The self-conscious balancing defensiveness noted in the Editor's preface is figured in this Bedfordshire section both by Pamela's theatrical behaviour and by the use of an encircling audience internalized in the text in order to reflect back to the heroine, and to her reader, the success of her performance. Such reflection becomes stylistically literal in mirror-like passages such as this one, in which Pamela's father reports that he and his wife

join Hand in Hand together, and I say to her, Blessed
be God, and blessed be you, my Dear. And she, in the

same Breath, Blessed be God, and you, my Love,--For such a Daughter, says the one--For such a Daughter, says the other.--And she has your own sweet Temper, cry I--And she has your own honest Heart, cries she. And so we go on, blessing God, and blessing you, and blessing your Spouse, and blessing ourselves! (3:149-50)

In another representative sequence, Pamela records, first, praise of herself for "an Understanding which comprehend[s] every thing, and an Eye that penetrate[s] into the very Bottom of Matters in a Moment" (3:244), and then, the response to this audience response as a kind of infinite replication of mirror images:

Judge you how pleasing this was to my best Beloved, who found, in their kind Approbation, such a Justification of his own Conduct, as could not fail of being pleasing to him, especially as Lady Davers was one of the kind Praisers.

Lord Davers was so highly delighted, that he rose once, begging his Brother's Excuse, to salute me; and remained standing over my Chair, with a Pleasure in his Looks that cannot be expressed, now-and-then lifting up his Hands, and his good-natur'd Eye glistening with Joy, which a Pier-glass gave me the Opportunity of seeing, as sometimes I stole a bashful Glance towards it, not knowing how or which way to look. (3:245)

In these scenes the admiring audience must sing Pamela's praises all the louder because the very existence of such praises acknowledges the need for self-justification or for a redressing of past objections to the B. marriage, while a Pamela who is appropriately bashful must nevertheless record the public praises which supply proof of her fitness. The overwhelming impression, therefore, is one of a tightly reflexive circle held together by the demand that exemplary behaviour be authorized through group consensus. Furthermore, the correspondents to whom these accounts are directed, as Carol Kay points out, "are addressed as representative social authorities, [who] have a right to pronounce judgment on the behavior of the letter writer and join in the interpretation of other characters." The reader as correspondent is thus situated both at the circumference of this circle, her scrutiny focused inward

on its centre, and at its centre, in the person of Pamela, regulating her own behaviour for an ever-present audience. This structure embodies Kay's above-noted description of social rules in Richardson as seeming to originate "from everywhere and nowhere," and as mirrored by a self-limited subject.²²

Thus Pamela's past is not erased from public memory, as Castle has suggested,²³ but is more precisely remembered as Richardson would have it remembered, by frequent reiterations of the original text's emphases upon Pamela's virtue and unique accomplishments. Thus Pamela's past is treated as a mnemonic device circulated in the form of the single word "story" to remind others of the heroine's moral and social fitness. To the onlookers at church, for example, her "Story" and B.'s "Tenderness to [her]" make of her a unique public attraction (3:229). Furthermore, the most problematic memories of Part I are recontextualized or replayed in altered form. In the former case, B. and Lady Davers both explain apparently dishonourable actions in ways which allow for the aptness of Pamela's original responses while salvaging their own claims to nobility of character; in the latter, as Kinkead-Weekes has noted,²⁴ Sir Jacob Swynford reenacts an ignorant and boorish version of Lady Davers' initial rejection of Pamela, only to be thoroughly and humiliatingly convinced of his error. Typical of Part II's rewriting is the fact that, when B. tells his version of the courtship story, Pamela's definition of honour is revealed to have been his own all along: "Yet my Love was a Traitor to me: That was more faithful to *her* than to *me*; it had more Honour in it at Bottom than I had designed it should have," he explains (207). In other words, the requirement of a linguistic consensus shared by all of the texts in this study is in this case achieved through the affirmation of Pamela's language as the only right one.²⁵

Pamela's fitness for her role is thus confirmed in part through her audience's increasing submission to her narrative terms, with no matching compromise on her part; indeed, B.'s marriage to Pamela is now described by her as a complete resignation on his part of the prerogative of plot: "when he could not have me upon his own Terms," she declares, "God turned his evil Purposes to good ones, and he resolved to submit to mine" (3:84). Lady Davers, in particular, shifts from the Part I epithet of "beggarly Brat" (2:215) to calling the heroine "my charming Pamela; my more than Sister" (3:238), and announces, "Beloved, deservedly beloved of the kindest of Husbands, what a Blessing art thou to this Family!" (3:261). More importantly, she resolves to be guided by the moral and literary example of Pamela, her inferior in age and in birth, as do such diverse characters as Mrs. Jewkes, the hardened sinner who places Pamela's letter, like a sacred talisman, next to her heart, and Jackey, the illiterate dandy who "vows he'll set Pen to Paper, and turn Letter-writer himself" (3:56).

At the same time, and despite the notions of dominance and submission implied in these recognitions of Pamela's authority, this audience retains the Providential prerogative of assigning the roles which Pamela will perform, thereby absolving her of the charge of self-aggrandizement and, at the same time, begging the issue of power which her social victories might otherwise raise. In elaborate and ceremonial exchanges B. and others plead with Pamela to speak to such issues as the awarding of titles and church livings, overruling her demure disclaimers and then responding to her pronouncements with grateful tears or ecstatic praise, later reinforced by the accolades of correspondents. Furthermore, the increasingly broad social authority exercised by this woman and former inferior is carefully channelled through her husband, who on one occasion

proclaims, "Whenever I put Power into your Hands for the future, act but as you have now done, and it will be impossible, that I should have any Choice or Will but Yours" (3:299). This statement illustrates what Kay has called the B.s' "Humean realization of mutual satisfaction in limiting the full play of power," and especially the limitations within which the power of a subordinate operates. Pamela's submissive role-playing at the beck of her audience illustrates as well the identification of religious frameworks of authority with, and their ultimate replacement by, the authority of the watching social world, an authority to which Armstrong sees Richardson as particularly sensitive. At any rate, Pamela's role-playing is not an attempted mystification of her true identity, as Castle would have it, but proof of her essential fitness for her ordained part, in the manner of a concept of character that Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth associates with spiritual autobiography.²⁶ Desireless, prescribed, and yet perfectly consistent with her essential self, Pamela's role-playing provides an exemplary contrast to that of the masquerade, where "many Ladies . . . are so very free, that the Censorious will be apt to blame the whole Sex for their Conduct, and to say, their Hearts are as faulty as those of the most culpable Men, since they scruple not to shew as much, when they think they cannot be known by their Faces" (4:99).

As Pamela's roles change with her marriage, the virtues of humility, duty, and propriety alter their manifestation through her. The harassed servant-girl who calls her master's behaviour "poor and mean" in Part I (1:20) does not contradict herself in Part II, when she carefully describes herself as "withstand[ing] the greatest of Trials and Temptations, from a Gentleman more worthy to be beloved both for Person and Mind, than any Man in England" (3:232), because she is now a proper bride for whom virtue includes seeing virtue in her

husband. Similarly, she cannot directly prefer her low-born relations, although she herself has been raised socially by her marriage, because "in the World's Eye, . . . [she] must, if [she has] ever so much Reluctance to [refuse such preferment], appear in a Light that may not give Discredit to his Choice" (3:22). Finally, we see that her apprenticeship is almost complete and that she is prepared to carry out the balancing act of a wife in London, without the coaching of her admiring audience, when she evaluates herself in the words, "when I look abroad now-and-then, I could be a proud Slut, if I would, I have not small Reason to be proud, having so happily won the Favour of Two such Judges, as Mr. B. and Miss Darnford, and have the good Fortune, likewise, to rejoice in that of Lady Davers, and the Countess of C" (3:386).

As this discussion of Pamela's fitness suggests, her sphere of action shifts in large part, during this first portion of the sequel, from an epistolary one, associated with an introspective and essentially solitary self, to a conversational one, associated with a self that is primarily sociable and role-defined. Although the text continues to be presented in ostensible letter form, these letters not only are addressed to a multiple and diverse audience, including Lady Davers' circle, Pamela's parents, and the Darnford family, but also frequently take the form either of a journal recording weekly routine or of a "conversation-piece" centred upon a specific subject.²⁷ Through the latter form in particular, the sequel takes on "the manner of polite comedy," as Doody has noted,²⁸ suitable to Richardson's intent to structure his text around both "a multitude of important subjects" and the exemplary performance of his heroine. Informal and intimate expression thus necessarily gives way to more controlled and, by implication, more imitable sentiments and forms.²⁹

Related to the new emphasis upon conversation is the increased range of

voices which this structure allows Richardson to develop.³⁰ While no doubt such experiments prove valuable in the composition of the subsequent novels, the greater variety of tone and style in the sequel functions in its own context as a further opportunity of demonstrating Pamela's suitability to, and growing mastery of, her station. Indeed, Sir Simon Darnford recognizes himself as a necessary "Foil . . . to set off some more edifying Example, where Variety of Characters make up a Feast in Conversation" (3:141). The juxtaposition of Pamela's admonishment to Sir Simon in a decorous version of his own jocular style with her letter to Mrs. Jewkes beginning "You give me, Mrs. Jewkes, very great Pleasure, to find that at length God Almighty has touch'd your Heart, and let you see, while Health and Strength lasted, the Error of your Ways" (3:112) proves her mastery of what Mikhail Bakhtin calls not true heteroglossia, but "a forensic and polemical discourse."³¹ Thus B. can justifiably link writing skill with social fitness in the words "Your Maids can do [needlework], Pamela: but they cannot write as you can" (3:165). That Pamela's occasional adoption of a highly formal style is in particular associated with her new status is indicated by her attributing such flights to the gratitude inspired by her benefactors. To Lady Davers, for example, after an extended expression of humble thanks and praise couched in structurally complex sentences, she writes:

Pardon, me, my dearest Lady, for this my free Style.
Methinks I am out of myself; I know not how to descend
all at once from the Height to which you have raised me:
and you must forgive the Reflections to which you
yourself, and your own noble Actions, have given Birth.
(4:35)³²

The benediction pronounced by Polly Darnford upon the heroine--"May you always convert your Enemies, invigorate the Lukewarm, and every Day multiply your Friends" (3:125)--is fulfilled as much through this stylistic prowess as through Pamela's speech. As a result of both, the party of her admirers

steadily absorbs its opposition to form an increasingly symmetrical chorus of admiration: Mrs. Jewkes joins Mrs. Jervis, Sir Jacob Swynford follows Lady Davers, and Mr. Peters joins Mr. Williams, just as the Bedfordshire neighbours joined those of Lincolnshire in Part I. In contrast to its predecessor's starkly dichotomous style and structure, Part II is constructed according to what for Richardson is a more socially realistic image, one of a family clockwork, in which Pamela is "the Master-wheel, in some beautiful Piece of Mechanism, whose dignify'd grave Motion is to set a-going all the Under-wheels, with a Velocity suitable to their respective Parts" (3:41). Pamela's charitable impulses have been regularized into a "*Benevolent Weekly Round*" (3:355), while spiritual and social impulses are so perfectly congruent in her "Heaven of a House" that "being wound up . . . constantly once a Week [by Sunday prayers], like a good Eight-day Clock, no Piece of Machinery that ever was made, is so regular and uniform, as this Family is" (4:53). As the centre of her circle, Pamela is the still point gradually aligning a spinning social world around her morally fixed self.³³

Thus a number of strategies in this first portion of the text operate to dissolve, deflect, and minimize the significance of conflict. The absorption of Pamela's story into the hierarchical status quo, through the revelation that it was in fact less conflictually structured than her papers had presented it to be, through her use of a potentially subversive subtext to ultimately conservative ends, and through her harmonization of individual actions into a clockwork-like regularity, have all been seen to dissolve apparent oppositions into a non-issue. Further, like the rendering impotent of potentially disruptive criticism of the B.s' marriage by the use of the churlish Sir Jacob as the critic, dangerous social commentary is carefully deflected away from Pamela's

voice. The strongest criticisms of marriage are therefore raised not by Pamela or Lady Davers, but by Polly Darnford, as a spirited girl kicking at the traces while dutifully allowing herself to be led into them. Again, Pamela does not directly condemn B.'s rakish friends, lest she appear a moralizing upstart; rather, she strategically shields herself behind the disapproval of the "Ladies," musing, "Yet, it seems, these are Men of Wit! I believe they must be so--because I could neither like, nor understand them.--Yet, if their Conversation had much Wit in it, I should think my Ladies would have found it out" (3:384).

While the first portion of the sequel minimizes conflict in this way, it profits from the intensity supplied by tension through the introduction of mock-conflicts. The several occasions upon which B. pretends anger at Pamela only to approve and enlarge upon her course of action draw upon remembered scenes of heightened suspense in Part I, while providing roundabout approaches to further praise of the heroine and prefiguring the trial motif used to structure the upcoming London crisis. Perhaps most significantly, such episodes develop the category of imagined evil which both reinforces the explanations that have been provided for some of Pamela's sufferings before her marriage and introduces the only adversarial form which Richardson can safely allow into the marriage plot: the conflict of misunderstanding, heightened by the sensible female imagination.

At the close of the Bedfordshire section, the social and moral equations by which the B.s' marriage is defined appear to have been firmly established with B.'s assertion to Pamela that "one such Hour [of innocent married pleasure] as I now enjoy, is an ample Reward for all the Benefits I can confer on you and yours in my whole Life!" (3:3).³⁴ Uniform virtue has rescued B., as well as the text, from the moment-to-moment tensions and reversals arising from "the guilty

Tumults that used formerly to agitate [his] unequal Mind" (3:2). Pamela is the ideal wife of the autocratic but generous husband, one of those "infatuating Creatures" who,

instead of scornful Looks darted in return for angry ones, Words of Defiance for Words of Peevishness, persisting to defend one Error by another, and returning vehement Wrath for slight Indignation, . . . can thus hide their dear Faces in our Bosoms, and wish but to know their Faults, to amend them. (3:133)

Indeed, the logic of the marriage of which the husband is the head allows B. to argue, "Whatever redounds to the Credit of my *Pamela*, redounds in Part to my own; and so I have the less Regret to accuse myself, since it exalts her" (3:211). Into this nonconflictual idyll is inserted the visit to London with its masquerade episode, constituting both a test of the sequel's conjugal ideal and of Pamela's ability to deal with conflict in this context within which the old binary patterns of opposition are both inappropriate and potentially fatal to her future happiness. Richardson thus rewrites his original plot within a new context, in order to demonstrate that the Providential life pattern--immovable virtue severely tried in a contest of wills, a sudden, surprising turn which brings forth good from evil, and a resultant felicity characterized by a condition of rapturous stasis--holds true even within the socially restricted confines of a wife's experience.

That the London sojourn brings a test of this marriage is not unexpected, given the contrast between Pamela's domestic circle and the disorderly, "overgrown Capital" with its "vast Circumference" and "publick Diversions" (4:4). The reader has been prepared to read this test as B.'s straying out of the orbit of Pamela's centre through explicit projections such as her "if I can but find him not deviate, when we go to London, I shall have great Hopes, that nothing will affect his Morals again" (3:212).³⁵ Richardson further prepares the

individual will as the arena of egalitarian conflict (playing upon the same belief in the equal value of every human soul which allows Pamela in Part I to oppose the promised "I will's" of B.'s proposals with her own refusal to submit her will to his purposes) when B. raises "the sleeping Dragon . . . , Prerogative by Name" (3:416), in the argument over the nursing of Pamela's child. Although Pamela acquiesces in this issue, reluctantly agreeing that nursing may not be a mother's absolute duty, the debate has made it clear that should a case of moral imperative arise, even a husband's power would be superseded by the divine.

When Pamela believes her husband to be embarking upon an extramarital affair which amounts in her view to polygamy, she sees herself under such a higher obligation to refuse any part in the arrangement. Her authoritative management of the mock-trial scene is therefore allowable both in terms of her status--"the Character I ought to assume as his Wife" (4:182)--and her moral duty--"that one Hope I had, to be an humble Means of saving the Man I love and honour, from Errors that might be fatal to his Soul" (4:183)--, while it manages to appear "uniform" to B. and to the reader in the light of her proven fitness and prudence as social role-player. Castle argues rightly that the affair resurrects the suggestion that a high-born wife would in fact have been a more suitable one for B., and that it is this suggestion which the heroine emphasizes as the primary charge against herself.³⁶ The real effect of this return to the old issue, however, is to display once and for all exactly why Pamela is the ideal spouse for B. Thus her defence masterfully turns an acknowledgment of her inferior origins into an argument that she is nevertheless superior to the Countess in her moral qualifications--those qualifications which B. himself has equated repeatedly with his social ones--because her love for him extends beyond

his physical and social attractions to his generous mind and, above all, to the good of his soul. Emblemized by the pregnant Quaker wife at the masquerade, Pamela represents the steady attraction of ideal domesticity challenging the "gaudy Prospects" (4:195) of unregulated desire.³⁷

As in the crisis of Part I, of course, Pamela is later able to look back upon "how happily GOD's Providence has now, at last, turn'd that Affair," through the resultant conversion of B. into "a Religious Gentleman" (4:374). Because Richardson is working with a nonconflictual model of marriage, however, this happy turn can only be fully realized through a universally satisfactory solution, as Pamela explains to Lady Davers: "I . . . hope my next will be a joyful Letter; and that I shall inform you in it, that the Affair . . . is absolutely concluded to my Satisfaction, to Mr. B.'s and the Countess's; for if it be so to all Three, my Happiness, I doubt not, will be founded on a permanent Basis" (4:234). The means to this mutual satisfaction, a retelling which dissolves apparent opposition and an appeal to the category of imagined evil, have already been identified as among Richardson's strategies for diminishing conflict. At the same time as the single focus upon Pamela's experience throughout the affair and its culminating trial scene increases the episode's intensity and effectiveness, it also provides for the modification of that point of view by the immediate introduction of alternate accounts by B. and the Countess, leaving Pamela's version of the reality valid but intensified by her emotional and physical isolation, and allowing the other two parties to redeem themselves through extenuating narratives.

Richardson does not go so far, however, as to question Pamela's rightness and timeliness in taking action. Thus Pamela insists later, "The dear Gentleman was to be on the Brink of relapsing: It was proper, that I should be so very

uneasy, as to assume a Conduct not natural to my Temper" (4:376). The Countess, for her part, hopes to become "as solid, as grave, as circumspect, tho' not so wise, as Mrs. B." (4:295), and B. relinquishes reliance upon his own strength of character altogether, in favour of moral dependence upon Pamela. Scriptural allusions, by means of which Pamela during the episode links herself with the prophet Nathan before King David, Queen Esther before King Xerxes, and St. Paul before the governor Felix, all relatively powerless figures in terms of earthly hierarchies but ultimately victorious in a spiritual cause, further assert the moral authority of Pamela's position. When social and moral frameworks are once again temporarily divided, Pamela and the moral structure she represents must remain the immovable centre against which deviation is measured.³⁸

As this centre, Pamela emerges from the trial fully exemplified as "Virtue itself" and as B.'s "tutelary Angel" (4:196). In the latter portion of the sequel's focus upon an abstracted Pamela as virtue itself, one is reminded again that Part II is retelling Part I's story of "Virtue Rewarded." In keeping with the consistent emphasis of the sequel upon the individual as role-player, however, the virtue preserved and rewarded here consists not of Pamela's sexual purity, but of what is proper to her position as B.'s wife. Pamela has earlier in the sequel described "Reputation" as "the most precious of all Jewels" for a woman (3:371), in an interesting shift of emphasis away from the fact of virginity itself. Pamela's victory is therefore not marked by a Clarissa-like transcendence that places her above social restraints, but by an apotheosis of the wife at the centre of the household.³⁹

Pamela herself responds to the new surety of a husband "in all Probability, [hers] upon better and surer Terms than ever," as to a kind of rebirth into a spiritual existence, describing "a Thankfulness so exalted, that it left me

all light and pleasant, as if I had shook off Body, and trod in Air" (4:198). As the third portion of the sequel begins with the B. family's withdrawal from London into the domestic world of Kent, where Pamela can see "all [she] delight[s] in, upon one happy Spot together" (4:207), renewed congruence is marked by a heightened rhetoric of stability and cyclical motion. The B.s' marriage has indeed become a Beulah-like heaven on earth: "Methinks, I am already, dear Sir," cries Pamela to her husband, "ceasing to be mortal, and beginning to taste the Perfections of those Joys, which this thrice welcome Declaration gives me Hope of, hereafter!" (4:379). This spiritualized world of pure and matched desires is best embodied in a reflexive, mirrorlike language. Thus Pamela describes her marriage as a unity obliterating distinctions of present and future, celebrating "this heavenly Prospect, . . . added to all my earthly Blessings! . . . that my dear Mr. B. is, and will be, mine, and I his, thro' the Mercies of GOD, when this transitory Life is past and gone, to all Eternity" (4:379).

In the unchanging light of eternity, particularities of time and space, of daily activities and changes of location, lose their significance, and exemplary narrative resolves into the maxim and tableau. Although B. and Pamela travel more and more widely, her writings do not describe their travel experiences, but rather withdraw increasingly into the private concerns of family life and the education of her children. And, "in a Family so uniform and methodical as ours," she apologizes, there is little to report but "the same things, . . . with little Variation, occurring this Year, as to our Conversations, Visits, Friends, Employments, and Amusements, that fell out the last" (4:372). Seated in her nursery, "surrounded with the Joy and the Hope of my future Prospects, as well as my present Comforts" (4:438), or presiding over a tea-

table to which even "the Pulpit . . . may be beholden" (4:422), Pamela as authoritative educator of children and young women distils experience into its essence as black-and-white maxims in the continuing tense. In this way the linear plot becomes a static circle and socially self-perpetuating activities replace solitary writing as Pamela's world becomes perfectly congruent with her values and desires.⁴⁰ The epithets "naughty" and "good," so important in placing the characters of Part I and of the earlier portions of the sequel according to a dichotomous moral scheme, have now been separated from individuals to stand on their own as moral categories that determine inclusion within, or exclusion from, the circle of the virtuous and the blessed. According to this system, "good Masters seldom fail to make good Gentlemen; and good Misses, good Ladies; and GOD blesses them with as good Children as they were to their Parents; and so the Blessing goes round!" (4:440), while a corollary "sad" law states that "every one that is naughty, first or last, must be certainly unhappy" (4:450).

Nor do Pamela's maxims falsify the Providential plot as she has experienced it; she herself is the "Happy, and the Happy-making" Prudentia of her own tale, as Miss Goodwin recognizes (4:452), even though the attributes of this fictionalized Pamela have become so generalized that she can be transformed into an orphan daughter raised by an aunt and uncle to fit the audience of the moment. Characters who, like Lord and Lady Davers, have the grace to align themselves about Pamela's ideal figure find themselves greatly improved in "Conversation" and "Temper"; indeed, Pamela's fame spreads across the world according to Sally Godfrey Wrightson, who credits the former with the power to ensure "the Good of Thousands" (4:274). Maintaining nevertheless a tension between Pamela's normative nature and its abnormal excellence, Richardson not only shields her social mobility from would-be imitators, but also effectively

distances her from all other characters. As a result, all attention is focused upon her raised figure, while all desires are channelled into emulation, creating impetus inward and upward. The style of B.'s earlier response to the social threat of Pamela's rise illustrates the effect of a simultaneous invitation to virtue and denial of identity with Pamela:

If, I say, my dear Friends, such a Girl can be found, thus beautifully attractive . . . ; and after that . . . , thus piously principled; thus genteely educated and accomplished; thus brilliantly witty; thus prudent, modest, generous, undesigning; and having been thus tempted, thus try'd, by the Man she hated not, pursued, . . . be thus inflexibly virtuous, and Proof against Temptation; Let her reform her Libertine, and let him marry her: And were he of princely Extraction, I dare answer for it, that no Two Princes in One Age, take the World through, would be in Danger. (3:328)

Significantly, the fallen Sally Godfrey, whose story negatively mirrors Pamela's, writes from "an awful Distance" (4:271) that geographically illustrates her exclusion from the exemplary inner circle, though not from the penitent outer one.

This configuration of heroine and internal audience allows almost no escape from its powerful gravitational centre, and therefore exerts an effective, if not a formally realistic, control over interpretation. The "naughty," whose lot is inevitably "unhappy," remain almost out of sight in this narrative, at best mere flashes whose eccentric course carries them momentarily through Pamela's stable orbit. Among such characters are the country rakes and the town lawyers, B.'s friends from before his marriage; the only rake who is represented as repeatedly resisting Pamela's influence is Jackey, one of those "Coxcombs" whose "Delights are centred in himself," and "[who] will not wish to get out of that narrow, that exceeding narrow Circle" (4:263). Like Mr. Brisk of the *Pilgrim's Progress* sequel, and in keeping with Pamela's social passivity as

exemplary centre, it is Jackey who excludes himself from the B. circle through his deliberate defiance of his family's advice. Significantly, the decisive point in Jackey's original downfall is his decision to leave the family and go to London alone; London, symbolized by its public amusements in general and by the masquerade in particular, is "a space that [Pamela] cannot order," even if it is not necessarily, as Castle goes on to argue, one that "works a chaotic magic upon her."⁴¹ Jackey is made predictably unhappy through his own "abominable Folly" (4:393) and is finally reinstated in the circle by his voluntary return, by "[throwing] himself upon the Protection of Mr. B.," and by marrying a prudent and virtuous woman "of Lady Davers's Recommendation" (4:455).

In contrast to the unhappy Jackey, those who are happy in this text are in part so because they have maintained an unbroken purity of action which creates no unpleasant disjunction between past and present. Pamela, unlike Sally Godfrey, has "nothing of this sort [of past sexual error] to pall, nothing to mingle with [her] Felicities," and is therefore "enabled to enjoy every well-deserv'd Comfort, as it offers itself; and can improve it too, by Reflection on [her] past Conduct" (4:273).⁴² In the case of the "naughty" sons and daughter of Pamela's nursery tale, their initially precarious status as the children of "a poor, poor Widow Woman" (4:440) is transformed into definitive expulsion from the social structure by divine punishments in the form of seafaring and resultant drowning, thieving and resultant hanging, unemployment and resultant exile, and sloth and resultant fatal illness. The fidelity of this structure to the reality the novel seeks to portray is indicated by Pamela's justification of the use of rewards for children with the argument: "For is it not by this Method, that the whole World is influenc'd and govern'd? Does not GOD himself, by Rewards and Punishments, make it our Interest, as well as our Duty, to obey

HIM?" (4:306).

Thus, although the text itself generally excludes its own acts of exclusion by refusing to represent them, they are nonetheless suggested through stylistic negations, again like those of *The Pilgrim's Progress* Part II, which reinforce the language of limits noted in the opening section of this chapter. The drama of reformations in Pamela's own household is never recorded, implying that the process has been uniform and unresisted. We are told only after the fact that "the Good have been confirm'd, the Remiss have been reform'd, the Passionate have been tam'd," so that "there is not a Family in the Kingdom . . . more uniform, more regular, and freer from Evil, and more regardful of what they say and do, than [Mr. B.'s]" (4:328). The scantily-treated cog in this household clockwork, of course, is Pamela's waiting maid, Polly Barlow, whose indiscretion with Jackey makes it necessary that her passionate and intriguing influence be removed from Pamela's person and from the household circle--appropriately, through an unsuitable marriage whose uncertain future will be the just reward of her schemes to bring it about. Good children, we read, are "never rude, nor noisy, nor mischievous, nor quarrelsome" (4:439). The ideal tutor to further such family values is described in terms so resonant with "avoid," "shall not," and "nor" as to lead Pamela herself to admit that he has been "negatively describ'd" (4:322-23); presumably the good example of the parents leaves only the necessity of a decorous fence-builder in an educator.

The heroine's achievement of moral stasis for herself and her world is matched by her establishment of stylistic standards for those genres to which the domestic woman can extend her literary practice. Early criticizing public forms such as the theatre (for its lack of "proper Regulations" [4:58], its whirlwinds of passionate love, and its players who prostitute themselves to play

any character), the opera (for its "mere temporary Delight" [4:89]), and the masquerade (for its lack of "a Standard . . . by which one could determine readily what is, and what is not Wit" [4:99]), Pamela develops her conversation pieces and character sketches into "Characters of Persons . . . whose Conduct may serve for Imitation or Warning" to young women and children (4:437), accompanied by aesthetic maxims such as "I am convinc'd, that no Style can be proper, which is not plain, simple, easy, natural, and unaffected" (4:417). In questions of style, as Doody has pointed out generally for the relation of civilization to nature throughout the sequel, "the life of elegant society is not necessarily bad, nor the enemy of nature; at its highest, it is an art, the flowering of nature."⁴³ Such an optimistic notion of the relation between artifice and nature is reminiscent of *The Spectator's* ideal gentleman, with his art of pleasing,⁴⁴ and illuminates the fact that despite the increasing formality of her language, including elaborate and traditional tropes of B. in his "sunny Sphere" reflected by her own "paler and fainter Beaminess" (4:367), Pamela is consistently commended for the "Truth and Nature" of her writing, for the "artless Ease" by which "[her] Gratitude, [her] Prudence, [her] Integrity of Heart, [her] Humility shine so much in all [her] Letters and Thoughts" (3:52-53). Proper style, it seems, is by definition sincerely clichéd; in other words, its very propriety is a transparent expression of the writer's own values and purposes.⁴⁵ Thus B.'s description of Pamela as "virtue itself" is paralleled in the discursive sphere by the claim "that *Virtue* itself [speaks]" when she does (4:425).

Pamela's texts, like her example, are detached from her person and circulated in increasingly anonymous forms to an ever-wider circle of beneficiaries. Indeed, the sequel would seem to end at the moment in which form overwhelms

narrative, in which the individual Pamela has been completely subsumed in the typological Prudentia, and in which her author's story has fragmented itself into an anthology of exemplary narratives with lives of their own.⁴⁶ In a sense, such a view supports the critical claim that a narrative without a unified plot and without a protagonist who embodies individualistic desire is unviable and unreadable. Richardson's text, however, has gone to literally great lengths to arrive at this unreadability, this complete frustration of the desire for subversive repetition. Indeed, according to Aaron Hill's description of Richardson's novels, "verbosity becomes a virtue" and "redundance but conveys resemblance."⁴⁷ In arriving at this point of complete stasis, the author has taken the intimate conversational circle with a woman at its centre, posited by Bunyan, and granted it a full moral, social, and aesthetic authority of interpretation, evaluation, and prescription which the circle as a metaphor for the church on earth could never exercise, confined as it was within the bounds of sacred text and tradition. Although Pamela's authority as interpretive centre must be firmly established through, and properly aligned within, established social structures, she exercises a freedom of judgment within those limitations that is affirmed by both Providence and her watching social world.

At the same time, the narrative strategies used in *Pamela* Part II to represent virtuous passivity and to dissolve conflict through the model of marriage as the basis of the ideal consensual circle posit one solution to the problems of plot and conflict as they are raised in *The Double-Dealer*. In *Sir Charles Grandison*, Richardson places a well-born and wealthy hero at the centre of such a circle. He is thereby enabled to expand the familial model beyond purely domestic relations to include friendship and casual social interaction and also to undergird the expansion of his circle by means of a real secular

power that Pamela as inferior and wife cannot command. Henry Fielding, on the contrary, experiments with even greater limitations than those within which Pamela operates, gathering his familial circle around a truly passive heroine who wields neither the authority of a story like Pamela's, nor her discursive powers. Whereas Fielding derives the impetus of his plot from a conflict between private and public circles for control over a wavering male hero, similar to the conflict which informs the central portion of *Pamela Part II*, Richardson in *Grandison* uses the force of female desire, concentrated by his hero, as the driving impulse of the novel. It is to this daring experiment in the controlled exercise of desire that I now turn.

1. Austin Dobson, *Samuel Richardson* (London: Macmillan, 1902), 39; T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel, *Samuel Richardson: A Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 149; Margaret Anne Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), 71. See also Doody, 76-77, for criticism of the sequel's lack of plot.
2. Terry Castle, *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1986), 131.
3. Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist* (London: Methuen, 1973), 72-73; see also Donald L. Ball, "Pamela II: A Primary Link in Richardson's Development as a Novelist," *Modern Philology* 65 (1968): 334-42.
4. Castle, *Masquerade*, 135.
5. Castle argues rather that these desires are met through the London journey, which in itself "betrays . . . a desire for plot" (*Masquerade*, 154), and through the novel's masquerade sequence, as a "capsule of narrative delight in a narrative of few delights" (132), a happy accident resulting from the coincidence of Richardson's and his reader's repressed desires for a repetition of Part I's subversive, disorderly plot.
6. Carol Kay, *Political Constructions: Defoe, Richardson, and Sterne in Relation to Hobbes, Hume, and Burke* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1988), 127, 129, 136. Whereas Kay focuses on *Clarissa* as Richardson's response to *Pamela*'s popular success, I would contend that Part II of *Pamela* more expressly formalizes an exemplary model of social authority as an alternative to the fictional structure patterned upon opposition between the individual and the group. Alan Dugald McKillop's early study *Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1936; reprint, Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String, 1960) notes the effects of heightened authorial status in the sequel, linking Richardson's newly "oppressive sense of responsibility" with a shift in his conception of *Pamela* from "shrewd, demure little serving-girl" to "the exemplar of the age"; like the majority of earlier readers and later critics, McKillop dismisses Richardson's sequel as "the poorest performance within the extensive compass of his three novels" (57). Morris Golden ("Public Context and Imagining Self in *Pamela* and *Shamela*," *ELH* 53 [1986]) has described the B.s' marriage as "a harmony of varied interests," arguing that in general Richardson "is able to see projections of himself acting out the changes and the forces of his day, and he shapes these actions positively, envisaging coherence in the family and the nation as symbolic consequences of his rise" (320). The work of William M. Sale, Jr. (see, for example, "From *Pamela* to *Clarissa*," in *The Age of Johnson: Essays Presented to Chauncey Brewster Tinker*, ed. Frederick W. Hilles [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1949], 127-38), although important in its emphasis upon the heroine's desire to be absorbed into the upper class while maintaining her personal integrity, portrays Richardson's social ideal as simply equivalent to the old order. Kay's "authority of moral discourse" suggests rather that Richardson envisages a renewed order embodied in *Pamela* as moral and social exemplar.
7. Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 36.

8. Robert Allan Donovan's treatment of Part I in *The Shaping Vision: Imagination in the English Novel from Defoe to Dickens* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966) is perhaps the strongest argument for its socially conservative framework, emphasizing "the tightness and clarity of its social structure," a structure that is both "rigidly hierarchical and completely hermetic," and therefore sharply contrasted to Pamela's own ambiguous status before her marriage (54, 58, 55). Doody's discussion helpfully points out the sequel's consistency with Part I's argument that "the virtuous Christian soul is at home anywhere, in high life or low life" (77), and she warns against an isolated focus upon subversive aspects of Part I, which ignores "the emphasis upon the strength of family ties at the beginning and end of the novel" (67). Robert Folkenflik's "A Room of Pamela's Own," *ELH* 39 (1972), similarly views the "ordering of space" in Part I as an indication of its essentially conservative affirmation of social order (595).

While Morris Golden, in *Richardson's Characters* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1963), repeatedly invokes the image of the radiating circle to illustrate the relationship between Richardson's heroines and their social environments (see 144-45, for example), he invariably reads the relation between individual and circle as one of conflict: the heroine uses her social circle as a weapon, manipulates it into accepting her authority, and ultimately triumphs over it. Castle, similarly, is possibly dissatisfied with the conservative form of the sequel inasmuch as she reads the original as "a revolutionary story," appealing above all for its "sheer transgressive energy" (*Masquerade*, 135), and portraying "the first realistic heroine in English fiction" (148). Thus, while identifying Pamela's influence in the sequel as a spatial one, working against deviation, she finds Pamela used "somewhat ludicrously, as the agent of order" (144-45) in a way that obstructs any view of her "as a realistic character in even the most limited sense" (148). Although my disagreements with Castle's stimulating reading of Part II will be evident throughout this chapter, we share the underlying assumption that the sequel falls into a three-part structure with the London-masquerade sequence as pivotal. I choose, however, to see the central sequence as a deliberate reworking of social relations within the marriage setting, so that desire and the conflict it provokes are successfully "contained, circumscribed" by the text itself; Castle denies the success of this domestication in repressing Richardson's and the reader's subliminal desires (173-76).

9. Samuel Richardson, *Pamela; or, Virtue Rewarded*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1929), 4:1, 204. References are to this edition throughout and will be indicated by volume and page number.

10. Kinkead-Weekes has remarked upon the new complications of Pamela's situation and the "curious double direction" this lends to the text after her marriage in Part I (60-61). Nancy Armstrong's discussion of *Pamela* Part I in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987) notes that Pamela's voice after her marriage "flattens into that of pure ideology," transforming a radical work into "a static paradigm" in which "the spirit of reform ripples outward in circles radiating from her center" (125, 131). Gerard A. Barker similarly emphasizes, in "The Complacent Paragon: Exemplary Characterization in Richardson," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 9 (1969): 503-19, the significance of Pamela's "forcing Mr. B. to acknowledge the superiority of Richardson's own middle-class attitudes and values" in accepting her version of events (507). While both of these views clearly resemble mine, their invocation of a two-way conflict between bourgeois-

moral and aristocratic-social values from which Pamela emerges absolutely victorious is, as my discussion will show, too simplistic a description of the sequel's attempt to create a careful consensus. Christopher Flint's "The Anxiety of Affluence: Family and Class (Dis)order in *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 29 (1989): 489-514, is more inclusive, recognizing the significance of Pamela's social agenda in Part I even before the marriage; "In Richardson," he says, "the bourgeoisie is not an autonomous class, but the social conscience of the aristocracy" (497). At the same time, Flint reads the sequel as representing Pamela's "self-annihilation" (510), a reading which diverges from mine to the other extreme.

11. In contrast to the secularization embodied in Bunyan's Christian community, however, the impulse of Richardson's heaven on earth is towards a recovery of transcendence, albeit a transcendence firmly earthbound in its happy congruence of virtue and wealth. This difference in thrust between the two texts is a function of the more deeply secular assumptions of *Pamela* from the start, as well as of its sequel's concern for correcting a paradigm of individualism as socially mobile rather than as solipsistic, like the individualism of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This divergence of focus explains the difference between Bunyan's insistence that his character's name is "Honest," not "Honesty" (noted by U. Milo Kaufmann, in *"The Pilgrim's Progress" and Traditions in Puritan Meditation* [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1966], 90, among others) and Richardson's deliberate abstraction of "Pamela" to "Prudentia."

12. Doody, 68-69.

13. A. M. Kearney, in "Richardson's *Pamela*: The Aesthetic Case," *Review of English Literature* 7.3 (1966): 78-90, has described Richardson's primary purpose in *Pamela* as being "to impose a deliberate and literary commentary upon the 'raw event' and, as a result, control it" (81). The outworking of this concern in the marriage portion as a focus upon "questions of propriety," in lieu of "real moral tension," is lamented by Elizabeth Bergen Brophy, *Samuel Richardson: The Triumph of Craft* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1974), 72; Doody, on the other hand, finds something praiseworthy and interesting in Richardson's development of "the manner of polite comedy in prose fiction," with its attempt, albeit "but ill drawn," at "a picture of civilized life, which begins with the family, and radiates its influence outwards to society at large. In the best kind of family, and the best kind of society, both variety and harmony are possible, and different personalities can develop most fully by acting within the atmosphere of a refined and sensitive community" (80-81).

14. This preface is not included in the 1929 Shakespeare Head edition; I am citing the Everyman edition of *Pamela*, 2 vols. (London: Dent, 1914), 2:v, in all references to the "Author's Original Preface to Volume II."

15. Samuel Richardson, in *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 49. Further references to this text will be indicated by the abbreviation "Letters" and page numbers in parentheses. Peter Sabor's "Richardson and his Readers," *Humanities Association Review* 30 (1979): 161-73, has shown in general how prepared Richardson was to revise and rewrite *Pamela* in order to achieve the desired effect upon his readers.

16. Eagleton, 29.

17. As Carol Houlihan Flynn has described Richardson's ideology of the female, "The sentimental woman, the artificial product of sublimation and repression, had to be guarded by her family and husband, matronized by her children, bound in by hoops and rules, to keep social morality properly fixed" (*Samuel Richardson: A Man of Letters* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982], 52); the successful ploy of the sequel, and of all of Richardson's fiction, of course, is to convert the passive female into the active agent of her self-circumscription.

18. While my argument assumes the view of James Louis Fortuna, Jr., in "The Unsearchable Wisdom of God: A Study of Providence in Richardson's *Pamela*" [Gainesville: Univ. Presses of Florida, 1980], that Richardson asserts in good faith the possibility of a life-plot in which moral excellence and social success are brought together through Providential ordering, my interest is primarily in the means by which that ordering becomes more problematic and thus changes its manifestation with Pamela's altered rank.

19. Preface, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. Jocelyn Harris, 3 vols. (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 1:3. A similar retrospective plot outline is provided by Pamela herself on page 420 of the text. June Sturrock ("The Completion of *Pamela*," *Durham Univ. Journal* n.s.43 [1982]: 229), has commented as well on the changed shape of the novel implied by this statement.

20. By making this statement I do not wish to deny the significant political implications of Richardson's model of family life, implications which have been discussed in John A. Dussinger's "Love and Consanguinity in Richardson's Novels," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 24 (1984): 513-26 and Golden's "Public Context," 311-29, as well as by Armstrong, 108-31.

21. I would therefore reply to Eagleton's description of the novel's disjunction between Pamela's decorous speech and her interior response as "a sort of structural guilt" (33) with his own earlier suggestion that Richardson frequently makes conscious just those impulses which threaten to draw away reader sympathy (30-32); in general, I believe Richardson uses such a strategy repeatedly in order to defuse undesirable interpretation and response. Kerry Larson's discussion of Part I ("Naming the Writer": Exposure, Authority, and Desire in *Pamela*," *Criticism* 23 [1981]: 126-40) in terms of Richardson's control of his anxiety over unregulated desire through "the Pamelian view of character" (131) as a fixed and transparent unity, displaying in particular "an ideal of desublimated desire" (140), suggests a similar view of Richardson's treatment of potentially disruptive energies.

22. Kay, 140, 129, 136. From this perspective, Kinkead-Weekes's extensive treatment of similar choric praise in the latter part of *Pamela* Part I as "an assault on the world" mounted by moralized social orthodoxy (58-70) is unhelpfully lopsided.

23. See Castle, *Masquerade*, 137-43 and 147-48, in which she argues that the sequel attempts a decarnivalization, a "mystification" of Pamela's past.

24. Kinkead-Weekes, 74-75.

25. In preferring B.'s version of the courtship to Pamela's as "a great deal more plausible," although "too late . . . to alter anything" (76), Kinkead-Weekes misses the sequel's deliberate deflection, through this affirmation of Pamela's version of truth and of B.'s honour, of the threat posed by conflicting narratives, even if untold ones. John Mullan's *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), in treating Richardson's novels as sentimental explorations of feeling, focuses upon the author's concern about the "dangers and inadequacies of conversational protocols" (61). While such a concern is evident in *Pamela* Part I and *Clarissa*, *Pamela* Part II and *Sir Charles Grandison* are distinctly conversational texts, which attempt both to reform speech and to control interpretation through language.

26. Kay, 151-52; Armstrong, 134-35; Castle, *Masquerade*, 143-44; Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth (*Realism and Consensus in the English Novel* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983], 128-30, 135-37). Castle's problem with the emphasis upon Pamela's uniformity appears related to this view of role-playing as mystification, since she does not consider the possibility of continuity within change, rather reading the claim of Pamela's immovable virtue as diametrically opposed to memory of who she formerly was (139-46). Ermarth, on the other hand, uses the notion of instantaneous transformation acceptable in spiritual autobiography as a model for Pamela's changed behaviour in her change of role, arguing as well that "as a kind of structure that accommodates differences not by mediation but by subordination, hierarchy best suits the experience of a society defined by disjunction" (136). See also Patricia Meyer Spacks's *Imagining a Self: Autobiography and Novel in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1976), 208-18, for a detailed treatment of Pamela's theatricality as revealing her "well-developed and well-founded sense of the power of external judgment" and, indeed, her "authenticity" (209, 218).

27. First introduced in the sequel, the term "conversation-piece" is used enumeratively by Pamela to refer to a series of scenes she records (see pages 3:176, 213), suggesting that Richardson consciously selects this form as a structuring device.

28. Doody, 80.

29. Donovan in fact sees in *Pamela* Part II a conduct-book concept of language as capable of rising to the demands of "any situation which can be met by a form of words sanctified by tradition" (66).

30. Kinkead-Weekes (84-85) and Doody (78-81) have remarked upon this feature of the sequel.

31. M[ikhail] M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), 335.

32. The potentially subversive nature of Pamela's prolific writing after her marriage is pointed out by Spacks (198-99). However, the heroine's insistently humble stance and limitation of her writing to acceptably domestic forms (like the conversation-piece and the educational tale) or to commissioned works (like her books of criticism and on education) illustrate again the rendering harmless of potentially dangerous power through its subordination to existing mores.

33. I do not believe that the language of these tropes justifies either Castle's qualification of them as "horrific" or her anachronistically negative colouring of the word "mechanism" and its synonyms (*Masquerade*, 148-49). The motion evoked is indeed "an endless turning in place" (149), but in the sense of a mutually satisfying harmonization of numerous individual functions (nature) into a living social structure (art). Castle herself has more objectively appealed to the twentieth-century reader not to "underestimate the subliminal charisma of the material world, or the unsettling power of certain objects to create a new human life around them" in "The Female Thermometer," *Representations* 17 (1987): 20. Ian Donaldson, in "The Clockwork Novel: Three Notes on an Eighteenth-Century Analogy," *Review of English Studies* n.s.21 (1970): 14-15, points out that eighteenth-century analogies drawn from human craftsmanship are related to notions of artistry as intellectual and of the intricacy of human action and its motives.

34. For use of the same motif in Part I, see 1:229, 279, 329 of the text.

35. Castle's description of London as a place of confusion and multiformity is helpful (*Masquerade*, 154); her description of the move to London as abrupt and without any explicit logic (153) is puzzling, however, in light of the text's repeated hints that B.'s potential for wandering will be of particular concern when he is exposed to the temptations of London.

36. Castle, *Masquerade*, 167-68.

37. When Castle interprets this emblem as "the visual embodiment of carnival confusion" (*Masquerade*, 131), she appears to overlook the order imposed upon sexuality through Pamela's disguise and through Richardson's portrayal of her as the motionless centre seen by all at the masquerade, not as playing the part of "queen of misrule" (131), but as pronouncing "a general Satire on the Assemblée (*Pamela* 4:98).

38. The issue of a single or a multiple point of view in this episode has proved a vexed one for critics. For Kinkead-Weekes, B.'s later account of the affair proves that "Richardson has learnt the lesson of the need for direct access to B.'s point of view" (82); Pamela's is a "fallible narrative" (84) because of her tendency to imaginative exaggeration, and her later defence of her own action is therefore for the author an aesthetically unfortunate fall "back into prudential calculation" (87). Eagleton rightly dismisses the realist biases of such a reading as irrelevant to Richardson's didactic project; however, he overlooks the fact that the dissolution of conflict here, and in the text as a whole, does not simply make Pamela "the collusive victim of patriarchy" (36), but more precisely illustrates her cleverly 'feminine' strategy for redrawing that hierarchy in Richardson's moral terms. Brophy recognizes that, in presenting the affair sequence entirely from Pamela's perspective at first, "a

series of potential confrontations [is] avoided." Like Kinkead-Weekes, however, Brophy interprets this as dramatic failure rather than as ideologized form (73-76). The most helpful understanding of the issue of perspective is suggested by Ermarth's description of the non-realist idea of self for Robinson Crusoe and Pamela as a concept which "does not involve a consensus among partial perspectives but rather a militant standpoint of the soul apart from time and space altogether. The presence of other viewpoints is not helpful, not mutually informative" (143). Pamela's right perspective, in other words, is based upon her fixed position within an ideally congruent moral and social framework, and not upon the degree of overlap between her perspective and those of B. and the Countess.

39. Although I am emphasizing moral victory here, its social and marital aspects allow for the kind of parallel Castle sees in Part I, in "P/B: Pamela as Sexual Fiction," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 22 (1982): 488-89 n.24, between sexual, class, and Christian ideology. Dolores Peters' study of "The Pregnant Pamela: Characterization and Popular Medical Attitudes in the Eighteenth Century," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 14 (1981): 432-51, effectively traces the sexual development which parallels Pamela's achievement of social and moral authority as I have traced it.

40. Donaldson, who bases his argument in "Fielding, Richardson, and the Ends of the Novel," *Essays in Criticism* 32 (1982): 34, upon such representations of repetitive quotidian life at the end of the sequel, is perhaps the sole critic to suggest that Part II represents a kind of realism not found in the reassuring formal completion of *Tom Jones*, for example.

41. Castle, *Masquerade*, 160.

42. Ermarth has found the same pattern in *Pamela* Part I's portrayal of time: with her marriage, Pamela "takes up residence in a state of blessedness; the refractory episodes disappear, and she passes every period in 'the same agreeable manner. And thus, in a rapturous circle, the time moves on'" (97; see also Folkenflik, 593-94). Ermarth's treatment of non-continuous time, non-causal plotting, and apparently inconsistent characterisation as non-realist features of this novel is very helpful; her argument that memory is depreciated in favour of merely "decoding worldly signs in order to maintain alignment with the eternal Truth" (96), however, while it generally holds true for Part I's writing-to-the-moment, is less applicable to the fact of the sequel's position as a later text which must maintain a continuity with, and justify itself with reference to, its predecessor. Thus Pamela's moral authority arises in large part from the unbroken continuity between her lowly past and her exalted present, a continuity which is sadly lacking for the fallen Sally Godfrey who must now live in disguise as Mrs. Wrightson.

43. Doody, 97.

44. See chapter 1 above. Carey MacIntosh has associated Pamela's "courtly-genteel" style with Richardson's attempt to give her "a varnish of politeness" (*Common and Courtly Language: The Stylistics of Social Class in Eighteenth-Century England* [Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1986], 77); while this view is certainly congruent with the ambivalence displayed by the middling

classes in the first half of the century regarding the relation between manners and natural ease, the generalization is not sufficient to explain the broad range of Pamela's stylistic mastery.

45. That Richardson's view of the compatibility of sincerity and linguistic flourishes was more reflective of his time than of ours is suggested by Warburton's comment in a letter to the author that "no one ever touched nature to the quick, as it were, more certainly and surely than you" (in *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, 6 vols., ed. Anna Laetitia Barbauld, [London: Richard Phillips, 1804; reprint, New York: AMS, 1966], 1:134).

46. Castle's suggestion that "such lapses out of generic uniformity" betray Richardson's vestigial connection with a "carnavalesque literary tradition" (*Masquerade*, 171n.) lends an ideological colouring to Richardson's formal inclusiveness which its explicit rejection of certain public genres and its insistence upon the rightfully didactic purpose of all discourse will not bear.

47. Aaron Hill, in Barbauld, ed., 1:100.

CHAPTER 4

Socializing Female Desire in *Sir Charles Grandison*

Posing as Editor of *Sir Charles Grandison*, Samuel Richardson tells his readers that with this novel he will "produce into public View the Character and Actions of a Man of TRUE HONOUR." In so doing, he claims to "ha[ve] been enabled [both] to obey . . . his Friends" and to "complet[e] the Plan, that was the Object of his Wishes . . . to accomplish." Richardson here retrospectively describes the "Plan" of his fiction-writing career as having been the representation first of the story of a "Libertine, . . . after a Length of Time, perfectly reclaimed," then of the destruction of "a Man void of Principle," and finally of "the Example of a Man acting uniformly well thro' a Variety of trying Scenes."¹ Richardson's preface, like the introductory apparatus of each of the works I have examined, delineates the context of this final rewriting, a context which has become considerably more complex in its literary, personal, and social aspects than that of the sequel to *Pamela*.² On the one level, he presents the new novel as a companion piece to *Clarissa*, making the "Man of TRUE HONOUR," portrayed in "a Variety of trying Scenes," the counterpart to the "truly *Christian Heroine*," who has been "seen involved in such Variety of deep Distresses, as lead her to an untimely Death." In a broader perspective, both of the earlier novels are represented as stages in the fulfilment of a personal project, that of painting a spectrum of male behaviour now completed by the man who is "happy in himself, and a Blessing to others." Finally, Richardson juxtaposes this revelation of "his first design" with a gesture to the wishes his friends (1:3-4). Together with the by-now palpably false mask of Editor,

these juxtapositions of the distressed female and the tried male, of the long-held private plan and the response to audience, establish a tension between Richardson the creator of something new and Richardson the transmitter of a complete history of the male and female self, between Richardson the intentional artist and Richardson the implement of his social circle's desires. To these immediate contexts can be added two further pressures indicated by the novel's Concluding Note: the popularity with reading audiences of the faulty hero, vividly proven to Richardson by the success of Fielding's *Tom Jones*, and the hesitations of readers about accepting the social ideal exemplified by his own hero.³

For Richardson, then, *Sir Charles Grandison* is a text encircled by a variety of textual and societal voices that are potentially either generative and loyal or paralysing and even destructive to its idealistic and polemical purposes. The latter threat notwithstanding, the author more than ever before dares to open the bounds of his text and expose it to this heteroglossia of eighteenth-century fictions and the social forces authoring and seeking to be authorized by its forms. The attempt at interpretive control which is embodied in the tightly centralized authority of *Pamela* Part II's exemplary heroine and which inspires layers of textual addenda and countless letters of defence in the aftermath of *Clarissa* gives way to a notion of the text as stimulus for debate. Richardson is far from relinquishing his belief in textual authority, however; his notion of text-as-debate is in fact rendered problematic by his claim of a coherent and complete design, and by his presentation of an exemplary hero whose virtue rests above all in the uniform application of "one steady Principle" (1:4).

Just as *Sir Charles Grandison* the novel is at once generated by audience

desire and created by a designing artist, so Sir Charles Grandison the character is both the construct of his admiring social circle and the active force which gives that circle coherence and meaning. In contrast to Pamela's circle, characterized above all by a hard-won linguistic and social stasis, constructed through redefinition, reflexivity, withdrawal, and exclusion, this novel's dynamic circle transforms the motions of individualistic desire by centring them upon Sir Charles as the instrument of social good, and enlarges the circumference of its influence by expanding beyond a private and strictly familial sphere to take in a much broader sweep of society. Energized by the masculine blend of attractiveness and action at its centre, the Grandison circle uses feminine desire in particular to achieve the alignment and consensus of its adherents, as well as the enlargement of its influence. To understand the model of the social circle's authority erected in *Grandison*, then, one must examine the interaction of hero and circle, an interaction which involves a redefinition of the former as a creation of the latter as well as a transformation of the latter into the narrative instrument of the former. Further, the *Clarissa*-to-*Grandison* shift of focus from the individual-as-observed centre to the individual as part of the observing circle, together with the displacement from private to relatively public spheres of action, indicates a parallel shift to an alternative, essentially sociable, concept of the self. The dynamics of the conversational and reading circle are emphasized more fully even than in the sequel to *Pamela*, reflecting the need for a non-conflictual model more flexible than that of the marriage to portray a complex network of social relations. Since each of these formal features can be seen to reflect *Grandison*'s self-conscious awareness of its context, however, I will begin by elaborating upon my introductory survey of this awareness.

As early as the initial composition of *Clarissa*, Richardson's notion of his text and the extra-textual correspondence it generates is a porous one. Sending a manuscript of the novel's first portion to Aaron Hill, for example, he requests return of the copy, complete with "loose Papers paged, put in, with your Corrections."⁴ As biographers have noted, Richardson's correspondence with readers burgeons simultaneously with the publication of successive volumes of *Clarissa*. The original tone of this correspondence is primarily one of pleas to the omnipotent author figure that he grant *Clarissa* life and marriage on the one hand, with defences and explanations on both moral and aesthetic grounds on the other. Richardson describes *Clarissa*'s death as "a Triumph . . . over all her Oppressors, and the World besides" (*Letters*, 87) and argues that the novel's ending is "from the Premises the only natural one" (*Letters*, 103).

This retrospective confidence in the rightness of "my Favourite *Clarissa*" (*Letters*, 234), however, is very different from the prospective diffidence of the author in the first stages of a new work. At this juncture in the process of literary production, the reading circle is invited to penetrate the text, well beyond mere stylistic correction or moral underlining, to its very heart: the nature of the protagonist. Most striking among Richardson's repeated invitations to his female readers to supply attributes and experiences for the hero he is drawing is his statement that "it is more in the power of young ladies than they seem to imagine, to make fine men" (*Letters*, 164). The phrasing here suggests a sense at once of the socializing power of the female imagination and of the potential failure of that power, whether through its use for less worthy constructions or through moral and creative apathy. "How can we hope that ladies will not think a good man a tame man?" worries Richardson (*Letters*, 161); how can one make a good man appear attractive in a way which will not prove

incompatible with his moral substance? Like Mr. Spectator, Richardson seems to feel a need to feminize or interiorize an inadequate concept of the hero as pure action and externalized virtues. Thus he laments the conventional limitations which determine that, although as an author he can do "twenty agreeable things" for "a good woman," "philanthropy, humanity, is all that [a man] can properly rise to" (*Letters*, 180); while these benevolent qualities are "glorious indeed . . . in a man," Richardson hastens to add, it appears that a mode for narrating the sensible hero remains to be created. Through these comments, Richardson in fact points to the method of the work itself, in which the female circle's very awareness of its need will bring forth the hero, dazzling in his finished perfection while delicately responsive to the feminine sensibility. In the writing of his final novel, then, Richardson as author becomes a model for the female imagination, ideally sociable and socializing in its creative work.⁵

The correspondence generated during and after the composition of *Grandison* pursues the author's appointed task of socializing the female imagination. Discussions of relative duty, love, and female learning which Richardson carries on with young ladies in particular are not "a Contention for Victory But Truth" (*Letters*, 150); through such discussion, he may succeed in teaching the sheltered woman, who knows only what "relates to the narrow Circle she has moved in," how "to discriminate [in love and marriage]," thereby forestalling "many dreadful Mischiefs and Disgraces to Families" (*Letters*, 257, 259). An ideal response to this novel is therefore one of discussion rather than of simple acceptance of authoritative pronouncements of meaning. "Some debatable things . . . [are] inserted, others let go," not only so that the author might "be called to Account" (*Letters*, 244), but also as "Trials of the Readers Judgment, Manners, Taste, Capacity" as revealed in her response (*Letters*, 315). It is not

surprising that a text composed in an atmosphere, according to Laurence Sterne, of "the fuss and folly of [the author's] opening his street-door, and calling in his neighbours and friends, and kinsfolk, with the devil and all his imps, with their hammers and engines, &c.,"⁶ should exhibit a circularly expansive form very different from that of *Tristram Shandy's* "unaccountable wildness; whimsical digressions; comical incoherencies; uncommon indecencies" (*Letters*, 341).

This newly expansive idealism about the potential influence of his texts as materials for debate, attributed by Mark Kinkead-Weekes to the development of Richardson's circle of admirers into an intimate community in which feeling and moral casuistry are the foundations of an extended family structure,⁷ coexists with two other devices by means of which the once-conflictual nature of the correspondence between *Clarissa's* author and readers is transformed into a conversational one. One of these devices is Richardson's use of the space provided by the relative openness of the novel's ending as a safe territory for imaginative play. Repeatedly teasing his audience with possible continuations of the story,⁸ and calling for "every one of [his] Correspondents, at his or her own Choice, [to] assume one of the surviving Characters in the Story, and write in it" (*Letters*, 306), Richardson circumscribes and renders harmless his readers' insatiable desire for plot while suggesting that the text as artifice can be recreated in their own minds and lives. The second device is a private fantasy of the novel's posthumous publication, by means of which the author's personality would be completely eradicated as a factor in the work's reception. The fact that Richardson speaks from the beginning of *Grandison's* composition right through to his last letters of the probability of its better reception after his death⁹ suggests that he is subduing his fears of failure and his own desire to control response by deferring them from the book's immediate reception.

Indeed, the author ultimately assumes an almost detached, reader-like stance regarding his own creature, as though leaving the question of meaning to the text as a more objective authority on itself than either the author or his contemporaries could ever be. One of Richardson's last statements to Lady Bradshaigh about *Grandison*, in response to her attempt to determine Sir Charles's feelings for Clementina, sounds distinctly the note of the playwright bowing himself off the stage:

If your Ladship will have it so, so let it be. The Book is now before you. That must determine us both. I don't desire to be better acquainted with his Mind, than any of his Readers. Only let them not suppose things contrary to what appears in his Letters; nor question the Veracity of a Man they think good.
(*Letters*, 300-01)

In other words, by relinquishing the text to his readers Richardson bequeaths to them as well the model of authoritative interpretation which that text has proposed: a centre of meaning can be found at the novel's heart, in the mind of its hero, but that centre can only be understood through careful attention to the evidence and the limitations imposed by the characterization of the object of scrutiny, and therefore by a faith in the integrity of his self-representation. This model of interpretation is illustrated in the novel by Harriet as lover-narrator of Sir Charles Grandison.

If the immediate readerly context of *Grandison* gives Richardson a sense of confidence in the possibilities of an expansive social circle, the broader context of novel publication reception appears to have exerted a rather more restrictive influence upon him. The arduous task of justifying Clarissa's death may underlie the wry assurance that his hero will be awarded happiness "in this life: for few, very few, care to pass to another, if they can help it" (*Letters*, 164). Although the implication here is that a consciousness of audience

preference for the comic over the tragic mode has influenced Richardson's decision to employ the former in his final novel,¹⁰ the comic vision and form are here darkened and rendered more problematic than in *Pamela* Part II, suggesting Richardson's continuing difficulty with the superficial morality of generic expectations. Obvious symmetries between the two novels of Christian heroine and hero, such as the concluding prominence given to the miserable death of a villain as the result of a duel, together with alternative developments of aspects of *Clarissa*'s plot, in the abduction successfully averted and the unhappy marriage of a rake and a virtuous woman,¹¹ make it clear that this rewriting is not in any way a compensation for or a retraction of his earlier work. Rather, it is a complement made particularly necessary by a reader sympathy for Lovelace horrifyingly confirmed in the popularity of *Tom Jones*. The public has been made to admire *Clarissa*; it might therefore need only the depiction of a virtuous and sociable man in order to recognize by comparison the faultiness of a Lovelace and a Jones.¹²

The need to make not only his hero, but also his novel respectable and thereby more influential is a preoccupation for Richardson. Although he is rather more proud than ashamed of his own rise from humble origins, Richardson, like many of his contemporaries, associates the low and vulgar in fiction with the morally inferior; both show human nature "in a light too degrading" (3:464). Indeed, he cannot read beyond the first few chapters of *Amelia*, finding "the characters and situations so wretchedly low and dirty, that I imagined I could not be interested for any one of them" (*Letters*, 196-97). Even his own *Pamela*, born before her author "was a little more *aforehand in the World*" (*Letters*, 245) and therefore somewhat embarrassing to her more well-educated younger sisters, needs re-educating, that is, rewriting, in order to be fitted for genteel

society. Thus Richardson continually demands from his correspondents information about the scenes and forms of high life; Robert Craig Pierson has shown as well that many of the subsequent revisions of the novel are refinements upon titles, forms of address, and references to servants apparently adopted in order to make the style more polite.¹³ In response to these perceived audience pressures--the demand for comic form with or without a moral logic and for the trappings of gentility with or without virtue--the ostensibly expansive social comedy of *Grandison* combines a morally earnest, sometimes even sombre overtone with a harshly exclusive undertone.

It is upon the remodelling of the hero as a creation of female need and desire, however, that the attention of the reader is initially focused. The novel's first structural paradigm is a linear one of journey, pursuit, and sequence, culminating in abduction. Harriet Byron's plan of going to London leads to Mr. Greville's threat, "in his usual resolute way, . . . to follow [her]" (1:7); in the city she encounters and rejects a quick sequence of inadequate suitors until she is abducted by Sir Hargrave Pollexfen and carried on a wild ride away from London. Having left her wise and supportive country relations behind, Harriet finds her independence with respect to marriage choice embarrassed by the excessive complacency of her host, Mr. Reeves, to her importunate suitors, the wealthy Sir Hargrave in particular. Harriet cannot "be allowed the same free agency that [she is] ready to allow to others," Sir Hargrave himself tells her bluntly, simply because "Every man who [sees her] must wish [her] to be his; and endeavour to obtain his wishes" (1:95). As Gerard A. Barker has pointed out, Harriet's growing recognition of the need for protection, of the social unworkability of female freedom, exacerbated by the inadequacy and even perfidy of her succession of suitors and protectors,

combines with the reader's anticipation of the appearance of the title character to create a deliberate effect of desire heightened by delay.¹⁴ Writing to the impatient Lady Bradshaigh, Richardson explains, "He [the good man] must not appear till, as at a royal cavalcade, the drums, trumpets, fifes and tabrets, and many a fine fellow, have preceded him, and set the spectators agog, as I may call it. Then must he be seen to enter with an eclat; while the mob shall be ready to cry out huzza, boys!" (*Letters*, 179).

Harriet's "huzza" is in fact a relinquishment of herself to Sir Charles; when he asks, "Will you, madam, put yourself into my protection?", she replies, "O yes, yes, yes, with my whole heart--Dear good Sir, protect me!" (1:140).¹⁵ Sir Charles does so from this point onward, rather pointedly playing the role of protector even in the home of the inadequate Mr. Reeves. Once the hero has established his identity as physical protector, the role of "patron to women"¹⁶ is expanded to include the rescuing of independent women from themselves as their own worst enemies. Since "Ladies, where Love and their own happiness interfere, are the most incompetent judges of all others for themselves" (1:414-15), "independent women" even if they "escape the machinations of men, . . . will frequently be hurried by their own imaginations . . . into inconveniences" (2:368-69). Thus the truly delicate woman is invited to give her very will up to this hero, confident that he will act for her as she has not the strength to act for herself. In the most extreme instances, Clementina seeks from Sir Charles himself the power to implement her decision not to marry him, and Harriet in the reverse position is assured by Charlotte that her acceptance of Sir Charles's marriage proposal is a matter that "may all be left to him" who "knows so well what becomes the character of the woman whom he hopes to call his wife" (3:65). From his appearance in response to female desire, then, the hero

moves into place as guardian of that desire and as fit executor of its most laudable impulses.

Once Harriet has met this protector and his sister, her journey, with its threat of a repetition of Clarissa's trajectory, is at its end, and she takes her place instead in a privileged inner circle.¹⁷ From this privileged social "height" she reports, "Every thing and person that I before beheld without dissatisfaction, in this great town, looks diminutive and little under my aking eye" (1:238). Although this circle displaces itself regularly between the Reeves', the Grandisons' in London, and Colnebrooke, Harriet's suddenly fixed attention results in a curious sense of geographical immobility. "I can write nothing now but of Miss Grandison and her brother," she says (1:195), and despite her relations' repeated suggestions that she escape the growing attraction of Sir Charles, she lingers on, continually excusing, and thereby emphasizing, her mesmerized state. Harriet's new centre of attention, Sir Charles, is "The Soul of us all!" (3:410), "the life of every company, and of every individual" (3:361). Unlike Pamela, who must limit her own authoritative influence with elaborate metaphors of herself as reflecting moon to B.'s sun, Harriet can freely ascribe to Sir Charles a self-generated radiance. The "moment" he enters a room, "sunshine [breaks] out in the countenance of every one" (2:69); petulance is dispelled "the instant he [shines] upon [the Selby circle]" (3:132). This animating force is the product not only of social grace, but also of moral perfection. Harriet uses a gravity metaphor to describe her love of Sir Charles as an inevitable attraction to virtue: "It is virtue, it is goodness, it is generosity, it is true politeness, that I am captivated by; all centred in this one *good man*" (1:389). This virtue is in part attractive, as Marijke Rudnik-Smalbraak has pointed out, because of its active and dependent-

making qualities; beyond his ability to shift social styles, Sir Charles "remains the firm and steady centre of grateful gravity, exerting the pull of a never-ending flow of obligations upon those around him."¹⁸

Sir Charles's concentrating function in the novel is expressed not only in such imagery, but also in the self-conscious preoccupation of all speakers and writers with him as subject. Even in his absence, the hero stimulates conversation; Charlotte says, "My heart always dilates, when I enter into the agreeable subject, and I know not where to stop" (1:279). She might be expressing Richardson's self-consciousness about this singularity of focus when she explains earlier to Mr. Reeves, "Forgive me, that I bring him in, whenever any good person, or thing, or action, is spoken of. Every-body, I believe, who is strongly possessed of a subject, makes every-thing seen, heard, or read of, that bears the least resemblance, turn into and illustrate that subject" (1:136). In Charlotte's case, possession looks more like obsession when she is all but dragged to the marriage altar, lamenting, "My brother has long made all other men indifferent to me" (2:339). Within this configuration worthy male characters can win female hearts only as they imitate and join in praising Sir Charles. Thus male satellites align themselves in orbit around the hero, held in the circle by their admiration of him and by the reflected lustre this attitude lends to them. Edward Beauchamp, admirable enough in his own right to "supply to his friends [Sir Charles's] absence" (2:319), is yet eclipsed in the presence of Sir Charles and wins Emily only when her guardian marries. As Emily writes to Harriet, "I *must* like [Mr. Beauchamp's] company, because he is always telling us one charming thing or other of my guardian; and because he so sincerely rejoices in your happiness and his" (3:443). Similarly, the Count of Belvedere shows himself worthy of Clementina by his promise that together they

"would admire, with an equal affection, that best of men, whose goodness is not more the object of her Love, than of [his] veneration" (3:423).

Countering the obsessive pull of desire, however, is a kind of repulsion, a sense of profound moral distance between the perfect centre and the admiring circle. Charlotte, again, responds explicitly to Lord L.'s question about the source of "this distance between him and us": "He came over to us all at once so perfect, after an eight or nine years absence, with so much power, and such a will, to do us good, that we were awed into a kind of reverence for him" (1:444). It is arguable, in fact, that the text requires as a counterforce to the overwhelming attraction that threatens inward collapse, the kind of alienation often noted in Harriet's description of Sir Charles as an impassive Adam who, although he "would have had gallantry enough to his fallen spouse, to have made him extremely regret her lapse," would have "left it to the Almighty, if such had been his pleasure, to have annihilated his first Eve, and given him a second" (2:609).¹⁹

If an equilibrium of desire and repulsion sustains interest in the hero at the text's centre, much of the narrative energy of the novel arises from a combination of the relative absence of its centre and the excursive and circuitous qualities apparently characteristic of female narration. Doody notes, with a particularly apt image, that "Richardson revolves the hero before us, displaying each of his qualities in their irrefragable correctness";²⁰ Sir Charles is nevertheless not only conspicuously absent from the eponymous novel during its first section, but also anxiously awaited as wooer of Harriet and as master of Grandison Hall for a considerable part of its final one. In between, his lengthy absences from home and his Italian adventures are the source of endless lament and speculation. This speculation falls to the women of the

family circle; repeatedly reassured by its men of the rectitude and dispatch of Sir Charles in the performance of his distant duties, the women with their curiosity about those duties contribute to an aspect of mystery which shrouds all male activity outside of the domestic circle. Harriet's incessant worries about Sir Charles's activities at the inn where he is staying during their courtship, for example, include fears of everything from his murder to his being a secret carouser. Indeed, several readers have commented upon the sense of life lived in the subjunctive mode in *Grandison*;²¹ I believe that the resulting weight of imaginative reconstruction in the novel is part of, for Richardson, a peculiarly feminine form of narrative. Ideally suited to the circumscribed existence of the domestic woman and to her supposed tendency to imaginative excess, speculation supplies Harriet and Grandison's sisters with endless narrative possibilities for hidden love entanglements and vices, just as the susceptibility of the female mind haunts the sleeping Harriet with various tragic and pathetic endings to her own romance.

These excursive and circuitous qualities are particularly pronounced in Charlotte, whose dangerous tendency to indulge the "levity" and "wantonness" of her wit beyond the bounds of "justice" and "decorum" (3:29, 2:662) draws repeated censure from the more self-disciplined Harriet. Charlotte's stubborn "excursiveness" (2:663) in the narration of her own love entanglements illustrates by excess the maxim that "Ladies will, in these points, take a compass before they explain themselves" (1:442). Her "*circumambages*" (2:94), bordering on a violation of the ideal of linguistic transparency and an abdication of her responsibility to speak her own will, are nevertheless repeated by the "*circumroundabouts*" (3:97) necessary to the more admirable Harriet and her female advisors in setting her wedding date. Despite Harriet's exemplary frankness and

the attempts of the ideal lovers to escape the restraints of mere punctilio, then, a polite female narrative style is portrayed by Richardson as a necessary evil, a mode of negotiation which can work against a woman's own best interests when it is not matched by the penetration of a sensible man, even as it supplies much of the energy and delight of narrative itself.²²

Harriet's structural position as primary mediator of Sir Charles's story to the reader is of particular interest. She is characterized as the perfect balance of female excursive energy and its circumscription; Olivia's antithetical description of her--"She is mild, tho' sparkling: She is humble, yet has dignity: She is reserved, yet is frank and open-hearted: . . . I loved, yet feared her, the moment I saw her" (2:647)--translates these traits into a rhetorical form. Her perfect delicacy combined with her love of Sir Charles make her the ideal narrator of Richardson's exemplary hero, allowing an equilibrium between perceptive admiration and resulting self-deprecation which upholds the novel's attraction-and-repulsion dynamic. The anonymous author of the 1754 *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa and Pamela*, writing before the novel's publication in full, captures well her peculiar position as lover-narrator: "Harriet appears to be every thing, and yet may be nothing, except a ready scribe, a verbose letter-writer."²³ Harriet's excellence makes her from the beginning the only woman morally worthy of Sir Charles and the only one able to sympathize fully with his motives.²⁴ Thus Lady L. remarks early in the novel that her brother's and Harriet's "notions" are "exactly alike, on every subject" (2:91), and Sir Charles himself presumes, before Harriet can explain herself, "to explain her sentiments in giving mine" (2:85). In fact, Harriet on occasion becomes mediator between Sir Charles and his family, communicating the state of Charlotte's heart in direct language he can interpret

with certainty; in turn, she receives his story of Clementina with a generosity towards the Italian that matches his own. Because of the hero's feminized sensibility and the heroine's rigorous honesty, the central pair achieve a language of perfectly balanced delicacy and frankness which in its complementarity avoids the extremes of aggressive male penetration and devious female circularity.

At the same time, her love of Sir Charles never allows Harriet herself to presume such a complementarity, for as she explains, "Is it not the nature of the passion we are so foolishly apt to call noble, to exalt the object, and to lower, if not to debase, one's self?" (2:78). Indeed, the closer Harriet approaches to her union with Sir Charles, the more her sense of the distance between them increases, and she writes, "Ah, my partial friends! you studied your Harriet in the dark; but here comes the sun darting into all the crooked and obscure corners of my heart; and I shrink from his dazzling eye; and, compared to Him . . . appear to myself such a Nothing--" (3:132). Harriet's self-deprecation is of course the proof of her great love and of her fitness to be the hero's wife; what draws the critic's attention, however, is the successful blend here of characterization and narrative logic. The psychology of a woman's idealization of her lover as Richardson understands it has provided him with a technique for the portrayal of his hero which serves the requirements of exemplary narrative while avoiding the awkward effects of the heroine's self-narration in *Pamela Part II*.²⁵

This shift from the tightly reflexive circle to one of complementary relationship can be illustrated by an altered use of the mirror image between the two texts. In *Pamela Part II*, Pamela's need to refer to a mirror in order to observe the response of society to her own worth and exemplary influence

suggests, like the recorded praises of her group, the self-enclosing relationship between her acting self and her social circle. In *Grandison*, two users of mirrors in the first volume reveal the ideal of sociable sensibility which governs relationships in the novel. Sir Hargrave refers obsessively to mirrors when in company, signifying not a Pamela-like need for reflected praise but an individualistic confidence in his self-perception as accurate and sufficient. His utter inability to absorb Harriet's differing judgment of his worth is matched by his attempt to define her according to his own image of who she is, "to declare himself to me," as she comments drily, "an admirer of perfections of his own creation" (1:62). The social threat posed by such self-absorption and self-imposition is made clear when he first refuses to comprehend the accepted language of refusal and then abducts Harriet in a forcible attempt to make her his own. Harriet, on the other hand, uses mirrors to sharpen her narrative and social skills. Thus she not only makes mouths in the glass "to try to recover some of Mr. Walden's, in order to describe them" (1:46), but also practises "a wise frown or two" that might help her in her efforts to discourage suitors (1:58). This habit of criticizing herself from the perspective of a scrutinizing social world leads her to imagine vividly the figure she must have made in her "odious" masquerade costume with her arms around Sir Charles's neck (1:183), and finally, to "[know] no other method of valuing herself than by his value of her" (3:369). Unlike *Clarissa*, *Grandison* portrays self-approbation as self-deception unless derived from the approbation of others whose judgment is worthy of attention; ideal self-consciousness is an ability to see oneself in a public, externalized sense. This emphasis on public approval is of course also a feature of the scene from *Pamela* considered above; here, however, the desirable approval takes the form of a discriminating audience's response as a

necessary component of one's self-image, rather than of a mere reflection back of one's own language and values.²⁶

Critics have noted this movement between *Clarissa* and its successor from a self that is essentially inward and private, distinct from the definitions imposed upon it by society, to a self that is above-all externalized and role-defined.²⁷ Unlike the Pamela of Part II, however, who is her role in its purest form, the relation between the social and the essential self in *Grandison* is more problematic. As frequent scenes depicting the invasion of a character's closet suggest, the assigned parts of friend, sister, and wife are a necessary burden on the private self, the tangible manifestation of one's duty to submit to a Providence which determines the roles one is to play.²⁸ Both Sir Charles and Harriet, for example, are called upon to perform difficult parts, those of passive attendant upon the Poretta family's whims and of cheerful supporter of another woman's claims to her beloved, respectively. Both fulfil the assigned duties with resignation, an artifice which Harriet is careful to call heroism as distinct from hypocrisy:

My cousins express a good deal of concern for your Harriet: So does Miss Grandison: So do my Lord and Lady L.: And the more, as I seem to carry off the matter with assumed bravery. This their kind concern for me looks, however, as if they thought me an hypocrite; and I suppose, therefore, that I act my part very awkwardly.

But, my dear, as this case is one of those few in which a woman can show a bravery of spirit, I think an endeavour after it is laudable. (2:259)

The ideal social self, then, is not the Pamelian one which is fully described by the roles it plays, but rather, one which understands clearly and responds sacrificially to conflict between self-fulfilment and the happiness of others, and which discovers thereby the source of its own essential integrity.²⁹ Sir Charles's reflections during the bleeding scene, in itself a symbol of Clementi-

na's confusion between the demands of self and others,³⁰ set forth the public and private extremes of the conflict: "O that my life, thought I, would be an *effectual* offering for the restoring the peace of mind of this dear Lady, and her family But my Conscience!--Prepossessed as I am in favour of my own religion, and in disfavour of that I am wished to embrace; How, thought I, can I make a sacrifice of my Conscience!" (2:193).

A right balance between the social and the essential self ensures that an individual's behaviour will tend neither to the extreme of unworthy acquiescence to false social pressures nor to that of excessive idiosyncrasy. Beginning at the point of equilibrium which Clarissa before him achieves only after enormous suffering, Sir Charles, when he refuses Sir Hargrave's challenge, explains, "I live not to the world: I live to myself; to the monitor within me" (1:206). Almost immediately after this, however, we read that his sister Charlotte, "by her livelier manner, is not so well understood in those lights [as a discreet and prudent woman] as she ought to be; and, satisfied with the worthiness of her own heart, is above giving herself concern about what the world thinks of it" (1:210). "The world's wife" (3:203) thus begins to exercise, in *Grandison*, the ambiguous function of both guiding and restricting individual behaviour which is to become so prominent in the nineteenth-century novel. Her personification in this text suggests above all that no action, whatever its hidden motive, should admit of a dubious interpretation; it is Sir Charles's glory that, as Dr. Bartlett tells Harriet, "Every-thing he *has* done, *does*, and *intends* to do, is proper for you, and for all the world to know" (3:289).³¹

The distinction between Sir Charles's apparently easy integration of his public and private selves and Charlotte's perilous journey to a similar balance point suggests that a woman's role fits less easily into this paradigm. As

usual for this text, Richardson seems to suggest that this is at once a woman's failure--a result of her particular moral susceptibility--and a consequence of the elaborately delineated social patterns within which she is trapped. On the one hand, like her love of speculation and her circuitous narrative style, a woman's instinct for secrecy poses a threat both to the intimate social circle dependent upon transparent relations and to her own happiness. An artful woman is "a departure from honest nature," whose "curvings" of eyes and countenance, matched by excessive apologies or reserves, expose her faulty mind to the observer, presumably male, "who himself disdains artifice" (2:53). Harriet is therefore admirable in her commitment to frankness because of its particular importance and difficulty for a woman. The ideal of frankness in conversation, Harriet's grandfather has taught her, requires "that we women should unlock our bosoms, when . . . called upon" (1:19); the heroine is, however, the sole exception, says Sir Charles, citing Milton's Eve, to female affectation towards the man "for whom she was created" (2:97). Frank or affected, it is clear that a woman needs the help of a man of penetration, a man like Sir Charles, who, Charlotte complains, "winds one about, and about, yet seems not to have more curiosity than one would wish him to have," until, "led on by his smiling benignity, and fond of his attention to my prattle, I have caught myself in the midst of a tale of which I intended not to tell him one syllable" (1:184). Without such help women endanger themselves in love, for example: "always willing to conceal themselves from themselves; they are desirous to smother the fire, before they will call out for help, till it blazes, and frequently becomes too powerful to be extinguished by any help" (1:212).

In contrast to this generalized ideal of frankness, however, Harriet is shown to exercise a selective reserve as a means to some measure of control over

her social environment. She repeatedly avers that she need not answer Sir Hargrave's personal questions because she is not accountable to him, although she will answer the same questions put by the Countess of D. as a gesture of frankness. When importuned by Sir Hargrave, moreover, she criticizes his morals with a "freedom" that directly counters his above-noted denial of her free agency as a desirable woman (1:96). Most importantly, her concurrent open admission to all and sundry of her love for Sir Charles and cover of neutral composure to the loved object himself show her ability to employ the prerogatives of frankness and reserve as tools for the maintenance of dignity and propriety.³² Thus the image of Sir Charles as benign serpent, while ostensibly illustrating the ideal of female self-revelation to a well-meaning male advisor, suggests the necessity for secrecy in matters of love when their revelation may put a woman in the power of a less scrupulous tempter. A similar indication of the especially complex principles governing female openness is provided by the novel's extensive analyses of Sir Charles's reserve toward his sisters regarding his motions when away from them. The reserves of Charlotte and her brother toward each other, which Harriet originally places on the same footing, are soon found to differ in motivation because of the difference in gender. While Charlotte's secrecy shows the lack of self-knowledge and the foolishness in love which are exactly the female propensities requiring male guidance and protection, Sir Charles's reserve arises from his consciousness of the male protector role. As social exemplar he must "keep all his troubles to himself, because he would not afflict any-body, and yet study to lighten and remove the troubles of every-body else" (2:109); as hero, where "a woman may be eloquent, from grief and disappointment," Sir Charles, "though his nobler heart is torn in pieces, must hardly complain!" (2:608). The ideal complement of the penetrating yet

secretive male is thus the frank and sympathetic woman, whose "generous pain" and "noble frankness" call forth an "equal frankness" on the hero's part (2:113), and who can "pity the distress of a manly heart" (2:608).

I began my examination of *Grandison* with a description of the dynamic equilibrium of its social circle comprised of narrative circumference and exemplary centre; the text's privileging of a frank, socially responsible self suggests a related value of outward-looking expansiveness very different from both the carefully enclosed social model of *Pamela* Part II and the inward spiral of *Clarissa*. As radiant male centre, Sir Charles displays an "active, . . . restless goodness" that "absolutely dazzles" Harriet (2:38). Reflecting the "variety there is in goodness" as opposed to the "Sameness" of libertine life-stories (2:667), the reconciliations, conversions, executorships, and marriages negotiated by the hero tax even the boundless speculative energy of female narrative. In Charlotte's words, "Light is hardly more active than my brother, nor lightning more quick, when he has any-thing to execute that must or ought to be done" (3:114). This active heroism takes on an almost Messianic character: "The fame of [Sir Charles's] goodness is gone out to distant countries . . . All opposition must fly before him" (2:317-18).³³ The specifically expansive nature of this influence is emphasized by imagery of unidirectional enlargement. Sir Charles, we find, "cannot recede" from what he himself has once proposed (2:318). "Seas are nothing to him," and Dr. Bartlett is certain that "if he had a call, he would undertake a journey to Constantinople or Pekin, with as little difficulty as some others would . . . to the Land's-end" (2:30). Sir Charles's benevolence is repeatedly exemplified by the generosity of his sympathies and his financial habits. Unlike selfish uncles, scheming step-mothers, and rakes, those "narrow-hearted creatures [who] centre all their

delight in themselves" (1:342), Sir Charles's "enlarged heart can rejoice in the happiness of his friends" (2:608). The grounds of Grandison Hall, we read, are "as boundless as the mind of the owner, and as free and open as his countenance" (3:272).³⁴

How can a scope parallel to this active enlargement be achieved in the passive feminine mode? 'Enlargement of heart' in Harriet is generous sentiment, evidenced by gestures such as her message of forgiveness transmitted to the dying Sir Hargrave by her husband and by her selfless wish for Clementina's happiness. The closest she can come to active enlargement, however, is in her contribution to an increase of Sir Charles's powers. Interestingly, Richardson does not allow Harriet a large fortune with which to expand her hero's capacity for doing good; rather, imaginative excursions must be used to fantasize about having power and consigning it to Sir Charles. Soon after meeting him, she wishes, in a deliberate distancing of herself as mere creator and observer of the fiction, "that the best woman in the world were queen of a great nation; and that it was in my power, for the sake of enlarging Sir Charles's to do good, to make him her royal consort. Then am I morally sure, that I should be the humble means of making a whole people happy!" (1:193). Later, when the marriage settlements are being drawn up, she writes, "If I ever were to be tempted to wish for great wealth, it would be for the sake of Sir Charles Grandison; that I might be a means of enlarging his power: Since I am convinced, that the necessities of every worthy person within the large circle of his acquaintance, would be relieved, according to his ability" (3:28). Again, Sir Charles is portrayed as the embodiment of female desire; Harriet is ultimately granted the power to fulfil her best social and moral impulses not through independence and a fortune, but through her union with the expansive hero. "If marriage had

diminished Pamela and threatened Clarissa," Jocelyn Harris comments, "here Richardson . . . demonstrates that at least ideally it can expand women's lives"; at the same time, the circumscribed nature of this very expansion is summarized in Terry Eagleton's observation that feminized discourse is hereby "recuperated by patriarchy and centred on a man."³⁵

While Sir Charles's sphere is clearly a broad, active, and public one in contrast to the more restricted, verbal, and domestic world of Harriet and the Grandison sisters, it should be noted that his activities and ambitions are in fact limited to an intermediate range that is most accurately called the familial.³⁶ The wide variety of the hero's activities mentioned above is almost without exception concerned with family transactions, ensuring that the passages of travel and homecoming, dowering and marriage, death and inheritance be carried out in an amicable, orderly, and above all financially satisfactory manner. In fact, Sir Charles's favourite charity is "that of giving little fortunes to young maidens in marriage with honest men of their own degree" (2:11),³⁷ and he rejects marriage into a titled family, explaining, "I chose, as much as possible, to fix my happiness within my own little circle" (2:80). In thus proving that although he is "born to distinction" he has "conquered . . . ambition" (2:649) and fixed as his "chief glory" the aim "to behave commendably in the *private* life" (3:99), Sir Charles exalts the family as the primary social unit and earns the love of "the politest country maid, and the loveliest, that ever adorned" England (2:649).

This relative exclusivity of heroic domain is significantly modified by an often-noted wild expansion of the notion of family into a kinship not defined by blood but by sentiment and sensibility. Sir Charles as chief proponent of the model "cannot, ought not to be engrossed by one family" (2:260)--or even by

one wife; he is "almost as much every Lady's as mine," says Harriet (3:281). Indeed, a primary function of the family model in the text is to control relationships and render dangerous desire illegitimate. Her own aptitude in the technique proven by her redefinition of Sir Rowland Meredith and his lovesick nephew as a sentimental father and brother, Harriet quickly suspects that Sir Charles "has been used to this dialect, and to check the passions of us forward girls" when he applies it to both herself and Clementina (2:157). Later, Sir Charles in his turn feels "the exclusive force" of Clementina's calling him brother (2:615). At the same time, conferring a kinship relation is a means of freeing friendship to cross the social bounds of sex, family, nationality, and religion. At its first proffering, for example, the relation of sister to Sir Charles liberates Harriet from the perpetual embarrassment of obligation to her rescuer, while his acceptance into the Poretta family signifies a great condescension on the part of the Roman Catholic Italians.

Sir Charles's ceaseless advocacy of a familial model of social relations includes an exaltation of kinship transactions through political metaphors. In courting Harriet through the mediation of her aunt and grandmother, Sir Charles promises to speak "with all the truth and plainness which I think are required in treaties of this nature, equally with those set on foot between nation and nation" (3:53). Forging of a marriage bond within a harmonious familial environment is an ideal implied by the text; Harriet is accepted by the Grandison family as Sir Charles's wife long before she knows of his love for her, and their formal courtship proceeds through a series of family encounters, beginning with a visit to her grandmother and concluding with a marriage journey to Grandison Hall undertaken by the entire Selby family. Quickly establishing the typically eighteenth-century maxims "that families are little communities;

that there are but few solid friendships out of them; and that they help to make up worthily, and to secure, the great community, of which they are so many miniatures" (1:25), the novel portrays Sir Charles and his expanded family as a kingdom of moral excellence. As Olivia says, "Prince of a man! What Prince, King, Emperor, is so truly great as *this* man? And is he not likewise surrounded by his nobles?--What a number of people of high interior worth, make up the circle of his acquaintance! (2:645). Thus Jean H. Hagstrum describes *Grandison* as "represent[ing] a climax in the domestication of heroism."³⁸

In making the familial ideal central to his text, Richardson seems conscious that, even if it is not of his own creation, it is a relatively new one. Cynthia Griffin Wolff, for one, has commented on the convenient death of Sir Thomas as a necessary prerequisite to the operation of Sir Charles's brotherly benevolence.³⁹ Indeed, the hero's acts of mediation between generations invariably involve correction of the elder's blighting influence upon dutiful and worthy members of the younger; young Beauchamp, Emily Jervois, and the Danby nephews and niece, for example, all reap such benefits. Even when childless, men of the older generation, whether the narrow-spirited Sir Thomas or the blundering Uncle Selby, share in the general abuse by traditional patriarchs of their familial responsibilities. It appears that such drastic measures as a father's death or a perfect mediator's intervention are indeed necessary in order to effect a reformation of the hierarchical family into a relatively egalitarian kinship of sympathy. In the opportune arrivals of Sir Charles to the rescue of unhappily dutiful dependents, the novel once again employs a pattern of desire and fulfilment that, while it emphasizes the inadequacy of traditional social models, points to what a society of truly fine men and the women who admire them might accomplish.⁴⁰ Although by no means non-

patriarchal in nature, as Rudnik-Smalbraak has pointed out, the playing of indulgent brother to readily grateful sisters, the free selection of a wise and discreet father-figure in Dr. Bartlett, and the management of his uncle at the latter's invitation are nevertheless acts which allow Sir Charles and his author to counteract the association of hierarchies with abuse of power and thereby to reduce the potential conflict inherent in such structures.⁴¹

In using a relatively egalitarian family ideal to restructure sexual and inter-generational relationships, Richardson broadens his capacity for rewriting conflict beyond the possibilities of the marriage model of *Pamela* Part II, a model whose possibilities for narrow self-absorption raise the difficulty admitted by Harriet of keeping "fondness within equitable bounds" (3:290). Thus the inherent exclusivity of marriage, which makes Harriet the favoured one over Clementina, is countered by their sisterhood of moral excellence, to the point that, as Charlotte rather cynically notes,

Heroines both, . . . they are mirrors to each other; each admiring herself in the other. No wonder they are engaged insensibly by a vanity, which carries with it, to each, so generous an appearance; for, all the while, Harriet thinks she is only admiring Clementina; Clementina, that she's applauding Harriet. (3:418)⁴²

Similarly, the xenophobic jealousies which have earlier provoked in Harriet, for one, the "narrow-hearted" wish that "this ugly word *foreign* were blotted out of my vocabulary" (2:110) are formally superseded in the treaty arranged by Sir Charles between the Poretts by a model of ideal relationships, whether parent-child or English-Italian, as negotiated for mutual benefit. Sir Charles can therefore conclude the treaty with the wish "that [the Poretts] will consider their family and his, as one family, ever to be united by the indissoluble ties of true friendly Love" (3:375).

An important condition for this crossing of barriers under the influence

of a familial ideal of "friendly Love," indicated by the function of the letter in the novel, is an insistence upon a self that is perfectly communicable. Early in her acquaintance with the Grandison family, Harriet refuses to read a letter from Sir Charles to Dr. Bartlett which Charlotte has obtained by clandestine means, thereby symbolically refusing the potential function of the letter as instrument of intrigue which is so important in *Pamela* and *Clarissa*. When Sir Charles in turn refuses to read a letter, accidentally dropped in his path, that would have revealed Emily's hidden love for him, his respect for Harriet's privacy as writer again denies the possibility of any conflict between the decorous guarding of another woman's secret and Harriet's proven frankness. In fact, most of Harriet's letters, as well as those of every other writer in the novel, are made group property as proof of their ideal sociability which precludes the very existence of a dichotomy between surface and essence. In other words, letter-writing for *Grandison* in particular, as Carol Kay has pointed out for Richardson's novels in general, is inherently a subjection of one's conduct to social rules.⁴³

A concomitant sign of the novel's confidence in interpretation of the written word, and again in marked contrast to *Clarissa*'s epistemology of nuance and indeterminacy, is that letters in *Grandison* can be correctly taken by their readers at face value, regardless of their writers' characters, on the assumption that they are objective statements of fact as reliable as any legal document.⁴⁴ Thus the triple account of Harriet's abduction, for example, while supplied by her rescuer through Mr. Reeves, by Sir Hargrave's instrument Wilson, and by Harriet herself, contributes not alternative interpretations of one event, but varying positions of observation which together provide a factual and emotional whole. Even the jealous Olivia's superlative praise of Harriet in

preference to Clementina is cited by other characters, on the assumption that it is a fair assessment; similarly, the lengthy account given by "that Greville, vile man," of the altercation between himself and Sir Charles is transmitted by Harriet as a reliable one, with only the minor substitution of the word "insolent" for Greville's description of himself as "peremptory" (3:69). In a streamlining of the *Pamela* sequel's careful rewritings of one narrative by another in order to produce an acceptable final version without falsifying any earlier one, multiple or single accounts here are equally to be relied upon because of the trustworthy nature of words themselves. This simplification of the dynamics of narration means that Sir Charles's accounts of his sojourns in Italy provide a simultaneously sympathetic and reliable portrait of Clementina and her family. Equally just readers, Harriet and the rest of her interpretive circle can only respond with a preference for the happiness of the rival group over their own; as Harriet's words to Lucy describe this response of the model reader, "You will even, for a while, forget your Harriet; or, if you are just, will think of her but next after Clementina! . . . O my dear! she *must* be rewarded with a Sir Charles Grandison! My reason, my justice, compels from me my vote in her favour" (2:163).

This last example illustrates the parallel between a reduction of the complexities of narration and an attempt to simplify the complexities of love. There is nothing indiscreet in Harriet's loving Sir Charles before he declares his love for her because "She is goodness itself. She must love goodness" (1:442). Nor is there any promiscuity in Sir Charles's love of two female paragons; his exemplary capacity to admire virtue is a function of his enlarged heart and therefore makes his love not divided, but double. An absolute privileging of consensus over conflict, in conjunction with this belief in the

sublimating qualities of virtuous love, allows for the use of frankness as a means of incapacitating the loved object in order to resolve one's own struggles of love. Thus when Sir Charles finds his feelings for both Clementina and Harriet beginning to take on the aspect of "a competition" he solves the problem "by Miss Byron's assistance" (3:54)--in other words, by making her a party to his courtship of Clementina through her predictable sympathy for Clementina. Clementina too, as I have noted, enlists the support of Sir Charles in rejecting him in favour of her Catholicism.

Ultimately, Sir Charles is permitted to have it all. His love for Clementina is spiritualized into admiration for an angel and is to be consummated in a life beyond the physical, "in a place where all is harmony and love; where no difference in opinion can sunder, as now, persons otherwise formed to promote each other's happiness!" (2:637). It cannot therefore conflict with his marriage to the more flesh-and-blood Harriet, a marriage over which Clementina presides as a spirit constantly invoked by both husband and wife. The vision of an ideal unity transcending all conflicting interests is finally incarnated in the garden of Grandison Hall as an earthly paradise, where divisive sexual love is subsumed into the friendship vowed between Clementina, Harriet, and Sir Charles. "Friendship, dearest creatures," says the hero, "will make at pleasure a safe bridge over the narrow seas; it will cut an easy passage thro' rocks and mountains, and make England and Italy one country. Kindred souls are always near" (3:454).

Sir Charles's latent resemblance to the intriguing Lovelace has been noted frequently by commentators on Richardson.⁴⁵ The parallel between Sir Charles and a rake is repeatedly drawn by the female narrators, by exclamations such as "it is well he is a good man!" (3:127), in an application of their discursive

imaginations that provides some of the spice of plot while relegating its dangers to the realm of impossibility. Indeed, there is a fine line to be drawn between the antisocial plotting employed by Sir Hargrave in his self-willed abduction of Harriet and the "invention, forecast, and contrivance" used by Sir Charles to implement an ideal social order (1:295). Unlike the passive Mellefont of Congreve's *Double-Dealer*, Sir Charles actively out-schemes schemers such as Sir Hargrave and Captain Anderson, rendering them harmless as future predators of the women under his protection.⁴⁶ His plotting is further required in circumventing an inherent female deviousness which is positively threatening, in Mrs. O'Hara and Lady Beauchamp, irritatingly obstructive, in Charlotte, and potentially paralysing, in Harriet. A lover, according to Sir Charles, needs the help ("Don't be affrighted, Ladies!" he inserts) of a little disguise "to develop the plaits and folds of the female heart"; the comment provokes from the rake Everard the complaint, "Sir Charles may with more safety *steal an horse*, than I *look over the hedge*" (1:429). In the courtship of Harriet and Sir Charles, his designing capacities are greatly developed because their innocent intent allows for full play; his other love entanglements, by contrast, have required that he maintain a strictly passive role in order to prove his claim to be "a man, whose perplexities have not proceeded from the entanglements of intrigue, inconstancy, perfidy; but from his own compassionate nature" (3:68). Indeed, even in the courtship game, Sir Charles defuses potential conflict between himself and his competitors, making of Greville, Orme, and Sir Rowland a friend, brother, and father, respectively.

The ideal represented by Sir Charles in his active zeal to replace paradigms of conflict with those of consensus is mirrored in reverse by his sister Charlotte's recalcitrant insistence on oppositional patterns of relation-

ship to her family and husband. While the role of playful designer is rendered attractive and effective, though latently dangerous, in Sir Charles as wooer, Charlotte's love of confrontation for its own sake makes her "an enemy . . . of her own happiness" because, unlike her brother, she cannot limit her playfulness to appropriate times and occasions. She tells Harriet, "Your happiness, child, is in the still life. I love not a dead calm: Now a tempest, now a refreshing breeze, I shall know how to enjoy the difference" (2:329), but she errs in refusing to let her share of variation arise from the inevitable vicissitudes of life. As a result, what should be the free conversations of equals within the intimate circle become trials of her past conduct and interrogations of her intentions, ending inevitably in her defeat and humiliation. Most seriously, she enters marriage armed with an inadequate military metaphor for her relationship with Lord G., a metaphor reflecting what Kinkead-Weekes has described as a too-constricting role-definition.⁴⁷ Two days after her wedding, she writes with naive optimism to Harriet, "We seem, however, to be drawing up forces on both sides.--One struggle for my dying liberty, my dear!--The success of one pitched battle will determine which is to be the general, which the subaltern, for the rest of the campaign" (2:359-60). She is ultimately forced to alter, if not her vivacity, her conflictual metaphors; she describes this change as an abandonment of "the road of perverseness," with its threatening nightfall and potential "Serpents . . . in the brakes," in order to "get home as fast as I can, and rejoice every one, who now only wonder what is become of me" (2:519).⁴⁸

Before this point, Charlotte's insistent individualism is rendered all the more aberrant by its contrast with the context within which it is generally displayed: that of the conversational circle. With the use of letters in *Grandison* primarily to record and comment on social exchange, the interactions

of the intimate group become the fundamental units of narrative. Since these interactions are above all conversational, their subjects, their accompanying gestures, and their revelations of character become the focus of the writers' communications, a focus which is appropriate to the emphasis upon the social self already noted for this novel. With the exception of the first London visits made and received by Harriet, which act as a kind of foil to the social encounters to follow, the conversations recorded in detail occur almost entirely within the Grandison family circle, supplemented by scenes of the Poretts, the Selbys, and a few other peripheral groups. The adversarial nature of exchanges such as Harriet's lengthy debate with Mr. Walden on the subject of learning and her verbal duels with the amorous Sir Hargrave forms a notable contrast to the serene and consensual harmony of the Grandison circle. Sir Walter Scott's anecdote of the "venerable old lady" who preferred hearing Grandison read to "any other work, 'because, . . . should I drop asleep in course of the reading, I am sure when I awake, I shall have lost none of the story, but shall find the party, where I left them, *conversing in the cedar-parlour*'" is perhaps the wittiest comment upon the generally consensual, timeless effect of this conversation structure.⁴⁹

Sir Charles, like *The Spectator's* ideal family gentleman, acts as moderator, belonging equally to everyone, and introducing topics of conversation which allow every member of the circle to shine in turn. The seriousness with which he treats women in conversation, in contrast to the superciliousness of Mr. Walden, realizes Mrs. Shirley's dream of conversation which is not preoccupied by differences of sex, and thereby "confined to such narrow limits" (3:244) that women are given no opportunity for improvement in matters which are otherwise inaccessible to them. The conversation of women, on the other hand,

is according to Sir Charles able to "improve a man of sense, sweeten his manners, and render him a much more sociable, a much more amiable creature, and, of consequence, greatly more happy in himself, than otherwise he would be from books and solitude" (3:250). As "master of every subject" (3:138), moreover, the hero is able to introduce the most improving and edifying into every setting, so that when he meets with Sir Hargrave and his rakish friends, Lord L. is of the opinion "that his brother's noble behaviour, and the conversation that passed at table, . . . [will] make more than one convert among them" (1:289). Even in his absence, as I noted earlier, Sir Charles is introduced into such conversation as treats of "any good person, or thing, or action" (1:136).

Given conversation's moralistic and idealistic associations, it is not surprising that the conversational units of the novel function more thematically than dramatically.⁵⁰ The discussion of mixed conversation cited just above is a case in point, as are several passages in which Harriet undertakes to provide her correspondents with distillations of Sir Charles's conversation. Similarly, conversations may be organized so as to show a spectrum of character-revealing and illustrative responses to an issue such as the appropriate wording of a letter to one's unnatural mother.⁵¹ At such points, dramatic momentum is reduced to a bare minimum, making of the text a collection of sentiments connected by a logic of theme rather than action and lessening again the sense of intensity or conflict. Even where an encounter is inherently dramatic, as in the case of Sir Charles's visit to Sir Hargrave's house, its tension is deliberately reduced through Harriet's prior knowledge of its outcome and through its objectified presentation as the transcript of a shorthand document. Only when the reader is intended to feel first with Harriet and then with Sir Charles the suspense

of his private conversations with her and of his passive dependence on the outcome of Clementina's deliberations is the dramatic potential of the conversational unit exploited.⁵²

My use of this dichotomy between drama and theme would be misleading, however, if taken to suggest that only that which creates suspense is dramatic. I have alluded to the ceremonial aspects of Grandisonian conversation and to the importance of gesture in the conversation scenes; these prominent features result in a kind of stylized drama that bears affinities to the conversation-painting or to the dance. At its extreme, speech itself is subsumed in the presentation of a tableau which captures the essence of a relationship and, as Wolff has pointed out, again indicates the novel's confidence in public methods of interpreting the individual.⁵³ Harriet, for example, describes to the Grandison sisters "a pretty picture" of Sir Charles and her grandmother in conversation which summarizes without need for reported speech the "dignity and familiarity in her manner" and Sir Charles's attitude of "modesty and reverence, . . . delighted, as admiring her wisdom," not forgetting the significant details of a pointing finger and clasped hands (3:91). Even the more active altercation between Sir Hargrave and Sir Charles in the former's garden is portrayed as a series of movements which emphasize the efficiency and coolness of the hero in disarming his opponent. After each of the novel's weddings, a dance produces a series of highly significant pairings which are seen by the participants themselves as representative of the delicate shadings of relationship. Thus Sir Charles, for example, is called upon to dance with Harriet by a carefully defined group of characters who fall utterly silent as they dance and then break into applause, "as at some well-performed part, or fine sentiment, in a play" (2:346).⁵⁴

In other cases, gestures accompany conversation as equally self-conscious indicators. Seated trios are particularly prominent, portraying various dynamics of power and protection. When Harriet is accosted by the Grandison sisters regarding her love for Sir Charles, they sit on either side of her, each taking her hand in a gesture of simultaneous encouragement and imprisonment. Sir Charles's settlement of money upon each of his sisters is accompanied by his raising them from their knees to the same seating arrangement, with himself at the centre in the role of generous benefactor. His first declaration to Harriet takes place after he has seated her, in deference to her timidity, between her aunt and grandmother; the fainting Clementina, when reunited with her family in England, is supported between Lady L. and Harriet, with Sir Charles seated opposite.⁵⁵

An even more frequent social gesture, however, is that of withdrawal from the social circle. While from the perspective of true epistolarity such a gesture either implies retreat from a relatively public exchange to the more intimate communication between correspondents⁵⁶ or, in *Clarissa* especially, expresses an individual's freedom from social pressures, it is most often perceived in *Grandison* from the point of view not of the one who withdraws, but of those left behind. Its function is therefore transformed into one of social control. Not surprisingly, Sir Charles as the centre of social prescription in the novel makes the most conspicuous use of the device, separating himself from unruly behaviour in unspoken condemnation and thereby underwriting the social fiction that an unpleasant conflict can thus be eradicated from the collective memory. In the most spectacular instance, he refuses to remain with the passionate Olivia after she has tried to stab him; he responds in the same way to the bloated passion of Mrs. Giffard. On other occasions he withdraws in

compassion--for Charlotte's confusion after she has forced him to name Captain Anderson and for Lord W.'s tears of shame after he has allowed his nephew to pay off his mistress, for example--, returning typically "with a look of serenity, as if nothing had passed to disturb him" (2:88).⁵⁷ A second function of withdrawal is that it allows the mastery of emotions that would distress the social circle and betray an undisciplined self if witnessed; for this reason Sir Charles leaves the room after the discovery of the miniature his mother has left him and for a similar reason Harriet withdraws in the course of her parting interview with Sir Charles before he leaves for Italy in order "to contemplate [Clementina's] great behaviour" and prepare herself to imitate it by acting "above" herself (2:300).

At times the interplay of presence and withdrawal takes on the aspect of a kind of elaborate dance, with characters entering and leaving the room at regular intervals which serve only to emphasize the emotions and struggles being excluded from the social circle. Equally elaborate are the groupings and regroupings which may accompany such movements to underline their controlling and excluding function. In the first invasion of Sir Charles's home by the O-Haras and Captain Salmonet, the hero's attempt to separate them by having them shown into different rooms fails, and the trio succeed thereby in penetrating his territory as far as his study; the division he finally effects is clearly intended to separate Mrs. O-Hara's only partially legitimate claim to his notice from the completely inappropriate visit of the men. Upon further provocation, the men are dismissed once again into another room, but the trio's belligerent refusal to comprehend the language of domestic architecture leads finally to a physical altercation and their ejection from the house.

Another, even more elaborate series, in the form of Harriet's and the

Reeves' first visit to Sir Charles's London house, opens the original second volume of the novel. The guests are first conducted in to the Grandison siblings, in a room adjoining that of the main company, where they are given brief character sketches of the other members of the family circle, followed by introductions in an order and with degrees of formality that reinforce the advance designations of character exactly. More significantly, after dinner Harriet is drawn away from the company by Lady L., immediately joined by Charlotte, to be asked her opinion of its members. Sir Charles next comes to them, commenting on their grouping as proof that "goodness to goodness is a natural attraction" and adding, "We men, however, will not be excluded." Dr. Bartlett is then ceremonially drawn into this off-centre circle of virtue which is rapidly becoming the centre of attraction. The arrival of Everard Grandison, saying, "What! Is there not another hand for me?," is treated typically as an "interruption" and by Sir Charles's "How the World . . . will push itself in!" At this Everard complains, "But if you exclude me such company, how shall I ever be what you and the Doctor would have me to be?" The Lords L. and G. arrive next, prompting Charlotte to decide that, with only the Reeves and Emily left at the now-vacant centre, it is time to "be orderly" and form one circle. She asks, "Is there more than one heart among us?--This Man's excepted, humorously pushing Mr. Grandison, as if from the company" (1:234-35). A discussion of goodness as a requirement for membership in the company of the good ensues. Symbolic at once of Harriet's absorption into the Grandison inner circle in the ensuing volume, and of the identification of this group's workings with the social function of exemplary virtue, the scene illustrates the moral and social premises of expansion and exclusion upon which the novel is based. As Sir Charles explains on another occasion,

There is a kind of magnetism in goodness. Bad people will indeed find out bad people, and confederate with them, in order to keep one another in countenance; but they are bound together by a rope of sand; while trust, confidence, love, sympathy, and a reciprocation of beneficent actions, twist a cord which ties good men to good men, and cannot be easily broken. (2:45)⁵⁸

With a man of impeccable social credentials at its centre, the social circle of *Grandison* can afford to be both more broadly inclusive and more actively exclusive than can the circle of Pamela B. Whereas Pamela's own hybrid status makes it imperative that she avoid such potentially misconstrued gestures as helping distant relations or overlooking the slip of her maid Polly or even cultivating friendships through many of the allowable amusements of genteel ladies, Sir Charles can associate with his father's former mistress and with Everard Grandison's new city wife secure in the knowledge that his own reputation is untouchable. At the same time, while it would have been presumptuous for Pamela herself to condemn the masquerade Countess or Lord Jackey, Sir Charles can with impunity correct Olivia for her breaches of female decorum and eject the O-Haras from his premises. Above all, as characters such as Everard and Olivia and even Charlotte feel to their cost, his power of granting or withholding approval is a very effective socializing force. It is her brother's absence, for example, which allows Charlotte to tempt her fate with her husband for as long as she does, for Sir Charles has warned that if she depreciates Lord G., he himself will be "apt to forget that [he has] more than one sister: For, in cases of right and wrong, we ought not to know either relation or friend" (2:114). Indeed, this man who "sees before him at a great distance" (2:609) becomes almost the judging eye of God, as Harriet's striking image of a composed and invulnerable Adam illustrates in its elevation of the hero beyond mortal fallibility. The force of his attractiveness, which creates a desire to emulate

and be approved by him, thus renders all the more devastating his exclusive moral rigour.

Balancing these explicit definitions of the bounds of the ideal social circle effected by Sir Charles is the more implicit, but equally effective exclusivity of the novel's female narrators and the settings from which they write. I have indicated that Sir Charles's activities outside of the narrow domestic setting remain essentially mysterious to the women who are left at home to speculate about them; except for accounts of the hero sent back from the wide world of merchants, soldiers of fortune, inns, and Alpine sleds, the environment recorded by Harriet is an almost completely enclosed one. While she assures the reader in passing that she has indeed gone to some of the public amusements of the city and dined in a few inns on her travels, her original preference for "the home" as "the chief scene of her pleasures" (1:91) sets the limits of the novel when she summarizes its plot from her perspective: "frighted by the vile plot upon me at a masquerade, I was thrown out of that course of diversion [that is, the public one], and indeed into more affecting, more interesting engagements; into the knowledge of a family that had no need to look out of itself for entertainments" (2:406-07).⁵⁹

As the domestic sphere becomes her whole universe, the text takes on the tinge of complacency and self-enclosure characteristic of the novel of manners. Here there is nothing of Pamela's round of visits to her poor, with their specific woes of agues and abusive husbands, or of Clarissa's progress to sainthood through brothel, shop, and debtor's prison;⁶⁰ rather, the young Emily's education consists in carefully sheltering her from her embarrassing mother, and in judiciously squireing her to a representative series of London amusements by means of which, as Sir Charles says, "a boundary is set to her imagination; and

that by her own choice; for she thinks lightly of them, when she can be obliged by the company of my two sisters and Lord L." (2:8). Since the progress of friendship and love "between two persons not indelicate, must be perplexing" (2:332), a focus on the intimate circle supplies volumes of narrative material, again ideally suited to the speculative female style. In fact, despite Charlotte's repeated avowals that her fascination with her brother is irreproachable because of their near relation, the second half of the novel, in which the chief correspondents are Harriet and Charlotte discussing the motions of Sir Charles as lover of Clementina and then of Harriet herself, develops a self-reflexive and incestuous atmosphere. "My brother says he has sent you a Letter, and your grandmamma another--," Charlotte writes, "Full of grateful sensibilities, both, I make no question You will give us copies" (3:26). Harriet obliges Charlotte but not the novel's reader, since the letters are not included in the text, and the sister proceeds with a point-by-point analysis of the brother-lover's behaviour as this "more than man," "for whom so many virgin hearts have sighed in vain" (3:68).

It should be noted, however, that Richardson never allows this refined and self-reflexive narrative circle to become a completely unself-conscious one, as it may in the novel of sentiment or manners. As Doody has explained, by imprisoning a character such as Charlotte in its domestic world the text reminds the reader that, from one perspective, the proper upper-class woman, though she may love her confinement, is nevertheless a gilded canary, whose lord "has dominion over his bird" and "can choose her cage," while all she can do is "sit and sing in it" (2:503-04).⁶¹ Likewise, Charlotte enjoys reminding Harriet of the unregenerate realities that "there is more indelicacy in delicacy, than you very delicate people are aware of" (2:350) and that "self-love, self-love" is

"at the bottom of all we say and do" (2:551). Her teasing suggestion of a *ménage à trois* for Sir Charles, Harriet, and Clementina serves a similar function to Richardson's rather lurid fantasized endings for the novel, reminding the reader of the constructed nature of love and fiction, while emphasizing the need for constant cross-reference between the ideal social structure and quotidian reality.⁸²

The image of the bird in its cage is only the most extreme example of a metaphor cluster in the novel linking the female with the house and thereby evoking the boundedness and domesticity which are both her very essence and what she most resists. The circumscribed nature of Emily's education, for example, is an effort to compensate for the problem that "women's eyes are wanderers: And too often bring home guests that are very troublesome to them, and whom, once introduced, they cannot get out of the house" (2:8). As ideally vigilant keeper of the house of her own body, Harriet has "been careful ever to shut the door of [her] heart against the blind deity, the moment [she] could imagine him setting his incroaching foot on the *threshold*" (1:67), and is no less wary of the dissembling wooer, a "male hyaena" who "will come to us, even into our very houses, fawning, cringing, weeping, licking our hands" (1:24). The text of *Grandison*, then, models the decorous female narrative as one which will keep its eyes carefully focused homeward and inward, perhaps regularly patrolling its boundaries and exchanging speculations and cautionary tales regarding the wilderness outside the home, but essentially concentric and conversational rather than teleological and aggressive.⁸³

This is not to say that the feminized narrative cannot portray a mixed and thought-provoking version of reality. Its male-determined action and ever-absent centre, its refusal of a conflictual structure and therefore of the

fulfilment of desire offered by the resolution of conflict, its insistently public self, and its exclusively domestic sphere are felt as an undertone of sadness to the social comedy which has been remarked by several critics.⁶⁴ Despite his role as knight-errant in the moral, social, and financial rescue of so many women, Sir Charles can only be allowed to carry one of them in his arms into his own coach; a good portion of the final section is spent commiserating over the love-wounds of Clementina and Emily, after the frequent wishes of Charlotte in the first two that she might have married a man like her brother. The extensive casuistry as to the impossibility of another Pamela in Richardson's earlier sequel is nothing to the anguish felt by these characters, and presumably the readers, at the impossibility of there being another such hero. Because there is only one Sir Charles, he is "nobody's," not even his bride's on her wedding day (3:232). Richardson's own statement that "the best of our Happiness here is but Happiness by Composition, or Comparison" (*Letters*, 107) captures the tone of compromise felt with particular force in the case of the Harriet-Sir Charles-Clementina triangle. While its legitimacy is carefully worked through, the very excruciating detail with which each member's disinterested and appropriate feelings are elaborated, together with the earlier-noted parcelling out of the spiritual and the corporeal Sir Charles between the women, produces an inevitable sense of limitation and dissatisfaction that is made even clearer by comparison with the full and painless resolution of the Pamela-Mr. B.-Countess triangle.⁶⁵

So strong is the socialization of desire in *Grandison*, moreover, that the narrative can no more conclude with a marriage as private point of arrival and closure than can Harriet be allowed sole possession of Sir Charles. Unlike the apotheosis which allows Pamela to attain stasis and exemplified abstraction in

the midst of her temporal circle, stability in *Grandison* is fully detached from the individual and exists socially only in terms of the family and morally only as the ultimate irrelevance of temporal counters. Thus her arrival at Grandison Hall reduces Harriet from the chosen bride of its proprietor to the last in a long line of Lady Grandisons, represented by the "unbroken series" of pictures in the gallery; with her marriage the object of her desire shifts from the hero to the possibility of being one day "allowed a place among [those portraits]," and thereby of achieving the permanence of a family ancestor (3:278). As regular deaths throughout the last portion of the novel serve to carry Harriet and her companions "from our sunshine prospects home; that is to say, to thoughts of the general destiny!" (3:282), the virtue of a Sir Charles is valued for its claim to perfect acceptance of the upcoming resolution of death, whether imminent or in a yet-distant moment.⁶⁶ The complexity and inexorability of social and moral forces beyond the control of the individual and even of the conversational group eventually lead Sir Charles and Harriet, in a moment of closural uncertainty unprecedented in Richardson, to relinquish control of Clementina's story, admitting that, "circumstanced as she is" (3:313), even the laws of uniform adherence to principle fail to provide clear guidance. It appears, then, that the intimate group's capacity for achieving authoritative consensus and interpretive certitude reaches its limit when, as in Sir Charles's earlier dilemma between social love for the Poretas and truth to his own conscience, an individual's essential self cannot be brought to assume the desirable social conformation.⁶⁷ Similarly, the circle's stasis, although it can survive expansion, is ultimately vulnerable to the engulfing progresses of history and mortality.

In this larger context, the only means of doing full justice to Clementi-

na's complex circumstances, it appears from the last volume of the novel, is to discuss them endlessly, reviewing the case from every perspective of piety, filial duty, and individual conscience.⁶⁸ *Grandison* thus ends where it began, in the hands of its readers, as a porous text posing questions--questions inviting the interpretive circle to discuss the disposal of Sir Hargrave's bequest, the behaviour of Sir Charles as husband, and above all, the "variety of amiable lights" in which "a TRULY GOOD MAN" appears. The reading circle is invited to continue constructing the hero of its desires as he once again recedes from view and refuses to legislate the future, while restricting itself to imagining a goodness based "upon principle, in every relation of life" and to responding, like Harriet, with an appropriately socialized emotion of gratitude (3:462-63).⁶⁹ The absent centre of the circle is a hero whom his author will not claim to know better than his readers, whose secret thoughts may remain the subject of endless speculation, but whose possibilities for wish-fulfilment are delimited by "what appears in his Letters" and by his definition as a man who is good.⁷⁰

Indeed, the novel provides its readers not only with a subject left finally unfinished within the bounds established by his own words, but also with the exemplary model of a narrator who has sublimated herself in order to structure her narrative according to the movements of that subject. "Your Harriet was not a mute:" she writes on one occasion, "But you know, that my point is, to let you into the character and sentiments of Sir Charles Grandison: And whenever I can do them tolerable justice, I shall keep to that point" (1:430). Richardson's final ideal of feminine sociability, then, is not a Pamela endlessly reflecting upon the self reflected in the mirror of response to her role-playing, nor a Clarissa scrutinizing the private self stripped of

its social definitions, but a Harriet whose self is defined in the process of creating a narrative centre outside of herself, in the active virtue of a hero who is also the man she loves. His social functioning, as the ideal subject of the female narrative roundabout, gives her own self and its modes function and meaning while her own desire that can never be at rest through absolute possession of its centre assures the endless deferral of self-satisfaction in a dynamic equilibrium between self and other. This dynamic equilibrium will prove to be the highest achievement of the novel of the conversational circle. With Fielding's *Amelia*, the heroine's attractive power at the centre of her social circle is both non-narrative and passive, resulting in a circle which can hold its own by offering a stable alternative to a chaotic public world, but which has almost no active or expansive power and is therefore reduced from an authoritative ideal to a private option.⁷¹

1. Samuel Richardson, *The History of Sir Charles Grandison*, ed. Jocelyn Harris (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), 1:3-4. All further citations of the text are taken from this edition, and will be indicated by volume and page numbers in parentheses. These volume numbers, it should be noted, are those of this edition, and do not correspond to the volume numbers of the novel's original publication.
2. Students of Richardson have of course found similarities between the two works, particularly in their emphases upon manners rather than moral conflict. See, for example, Margaret Anne Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), 67, 98, and Mark Kinkead-Weekes, *Samuel Richardson: Dramatic Novelist* (London: Methuen, 1973), 59, 72, 76.
3. Alan Dugald McKillop summarizes these contextual features in his early study *Samuel Richardson: Printer and Novelist* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1936; reprint, Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String, 1960), 193-207. John Mullan, in *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), suggests that "it makes sense to see the composition of Richardson's last novel in terms of his renowned habits of addition and recapitulation" (93).
4. Samuel Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 63. Further references to this text will be indicated by the abbreviation "Letters" and page numbers in parentheses.
5. This reading of *Grandison*'s hero as the creation of readerly desire suggests an interesting complementarity of the novel to the *Clarissa* of William Beatty Warner's *Reading Clarissa: The Struggles of Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1979), with the important distinction that the desiring male reader of Richardson's heroine implicitly becomes her violator, while the inherent passivity of female desire in Richardson limits its expression to either the relatively chaste mode of speculation or the self-destructive mode of lovesickness. Very illuminating here is Mary V. Yates's association of *Grandison*'s metaphor of seduction with eighteenth-century pedagogical methods in which "the philosopher is polished, given accomplishments, dubbed a gentleman, and brought into the drawing room," and therefore "subtly eroticized" ("The Christian Rake in *Sir Charles Grandison*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 24 [1984]: 559). See also John A. Dussinger, "Love and Consanguinity in Richardson's Novels," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 24 (1984): 525-26, and Mullan, for whom Sir Charles is "an effect of feminine awe" (83). Mullan identifies many of the features of the text that I will discuss here, including Sir Charles's creation through repetitious female praise, the lack of conflict in the novel, and its conversational and familial emphases (82-93). At the same time, he underplays the dynamic role of female narrative energy itself in providing interest and material for discussion. Charlotte's contribution to "the circle of applause and compliant sensibility around Sir Charles's empty presence" (87), for example, is dismissed in a sentence. Pat Rogers, on the other hand, goes so far as to suggest that "the open, unschematized, unhierarchical form" of Richardson's novels provides for his female readers an enlarged sense of freedom, in general and particularly in terms of their participation in literary activity ("Richardson and the Bluestockings," in Myer, ed., 154-56).

6. Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983), 436. Susan Greenstein's "Dear Reader, Dear Friend: Richardson's Reader and the Social Response to Character," *College English* 41 (1980): 524-34, suggests that Richardson deliberately invokes the conceit of friendship with his characters as a means of encouraging in his audience both careful reading and a habit of moralized criticism.
7. Kinkead-Weekes, 280-84. Cynthia Griffin Wolff (*Samuel Richardson and the Eighteenth-Century Puritan Character* [Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String, 1972], 3-4) has ascribed Richardson's new social idealism to an emergence from the crisis of personal identity produced by "massive social change" earlier in the century; without denying this possibility, I would wish to see Richardson's final novel as arising also out of its particular position in his writing career. See also R. T. Jones, "Sir Charles Grandison: 'A Gauntlet Thrown Out,'" in *Samuel Richardson: Passion and Prudence*, ed. Valerie Grosvenor Myer (London: Vision, 1986), 135-44, for a helpful discussion of the novel's topical structure in the debate context of its composition; I differ from Jones, however, in his conclusion that there must therefore be no morally authoritative centre in the novel, and that "the content of the novel's morality is only there to be questioned and modified" (143).
8. See, for example, *Letters* 215-16, 253, 270, 277-78.
9. See, for example, *Letters* 182, 224, 289-90, 315.
10. Wolff, among others, has also argued convincingly that comic order in *Grandison* can be successfully achieved because of the power of a male protagonist to make the world conform to his virtue and to make society "stable and continuing" so that the sensible heroine can "assume her rightful place" in it (191; see also 221).
11. Doody, *Natural Passion*, 302, Wolff, 194, and Sylvia Kasey Marks (*Sir Charles Grandison: The Compleat Conduct Book* [Lewisburg: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1986], 57), have noted the development of these motifs from *Clarissa*'s plot.
12. See Richardson, *Letters*, 92, 102-03, 126-27, 141, 143-44, and Doody, *Natural Passion*, 241.
13. See, for example, *Letters*, 179-80; Robert Craig Pierson, "The Revisions of Richardson's *Sir Charles Grandison*," *Studies in Bibliography* 21 (1968): 163-89. Pierson's view of these changes as strengthening the text because of their consistency with the characters' station and the book's tone, in contrast to their detrimental effect for *Pamela*, is more satisfactory in its acknowledgment of the unique link in *Grandison* between composition and reader response than is Jocelyn Harris's dismissal of the changes based on an assumed dichotomy between "aesthetic purposes" and "deference or response to the opinions of Richardson's correspondents" (Note on the Text, Oxford edition, xxvii-xxviii).
14. Gerard A. Barker, *Grandison's Heirs: The Paragon's Progress in the Late Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1985), 17-18. Other examples of inadequate protectors include William Wilson, Harriet's

false servant, and the cloaked man who pretends to come to her aid during her abduction, but is in fact one of her abductors.

15. Wolff has noted the significance of this emphasis upon protection both as the most essential feature of Sir Charles and Harriet's relationship and as a contrast to the absence of such a protector for Clarissa (194).

16. Harris, *Samuel Richardson* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987), 144.

17. See Lesley Berry, "'Anfractuous Ways,'" in Myer, ed., 114-25, for a reading of Clarissa's story as a pilgrimage.

18. Marijke Rudnik-Smalbraak, *Samuel Richardson: Minute Particulars Within the Large Design* (Leiden: Leiden Univ. Press, 1983), 158.

19. See McKillop, 210, Doody, *Natural Passion*, 271-74, and Kinkead-Weekes, 363-66, with respect to this comparison of Sir Charles to Adam.

20. Doody, *Natural Passion*, 257.

21. See John Sitter, *Literary Loneliness in Mid-Eighteenth-Century England* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1982), 211, and Lois A. Chaber, "'Sufficient to the Day': Anxiety in *Sir Charles Grandison*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 1 (1989): 293-94. For Sitter this stylistic technique contributes to an emphasis upon manners and delicacy, while Chaber sees it as one source of the novel's general mood of anxiety. Both Sitter and Chaber also identify similar functions for the use of minor characters as doubles to major characters in the novel (203-04 and 290-93, respectively). My focus, rather, will be upon the deflection of conflict from actuality to mere possibility which results from these narrative techniques (see ch. 5 below). McKillop notes also the novel's division of roles between more than one character as a means of diffusing conflict in contrast to the intense struggle that structures *Clarissa* (212), while Doody views it as a means of maintaining some form of variety within a socially restricted world ("Identity and character in *Sir Charles Grandison*," *Samuel Richardson: Tercentenary Essays*, ed. Doody and Peter Sabor [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1989], 126).

22. This is of course Clarissa's case, when Lovelace abuses her delicate responses to his half-hearted marriage proposals. Sir Charles's style, interestingly, varies between an extreme parataxis apparently meant to illustrate his rational and competent masculinity ("I ordered my coachman to break the way. I don't love to stand upon trifles. My horses were fresh: I had not come far" [1:139]) and a complex of hypotactic and negative structures signifying the delicate gymnastics of the double love ("I own to you, Ladies, that what was before honour and compassion, now became admiration; and I should have been unjust to the merits of so excellent a woman, if I could not say, Love" [3:56]).

23. *Critical Remarks on Sir Charles Grandison, Clarissa and Pamela. Enquiring, Whether they have a Tendency to corrupt or improve the Public Taste and Morals. In a Letter to the Author. By a Lover of Virtue* (London: J. Dowse, 1754), *Three Criticisms of Richardson's Fiction, 1749-1754* (reprint, New York: Garland, 1974), 58.

24. Although Harriet herself gives this place to Clementina as a sign of her own ideal humility and disinterested love, the latter is not capable, because of her religious zeal, of matching Sir Charles's tolerance, a quality which can only be fully manifest in an English Protestant. Doody has pointed out Harriet's superiority here (*Natural Passion*, 327-30); Jean H. Hagstrum (*Sex and Sensibility: Ideal and Erotic Love from Milton to Mozart* [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980]) has called this feature of the plot a "sanction" of "the indigenous and the similar" (217).

25. Barker, by contrast, criticizes the novel's division of narrator and protagonist as allowing the threat of Harriet's usurping the reader's interest (35-36). In so doing, he overlooks the function of this narrative dynamic in the novel's project of idealization. Rudnik-Smalbraak argues from much the same position as does Barker (146). Kinkead-Weekes, in his detailed discussion of "a closing-off of consciousness" in the portrayal of Sir Charles, treats this as a similar problem, although in contrast to his critique of the lack of dramatized portrayal in the *Pamela* sequel (see ch. 3 above) he allows for the deliberate use of the technique in this case (352-66). Doody is closer to my point of view when she suggests that it is "the vitality of the female characters in love with Sir Charles" which makes him seem real despite his essentially static characterization (337).

26. Paul R. Crabtree has in fact pointed out "a new, universal self-consciousness" on the part of *Grandison*'s characters, who "all care deeply about what is reflected of them in the mirror of society" ("Propriety, *Grandison*, and the Novel of Manners," *Modern Language Quarterly* 41 [1980]: 158-59).

27. Wolff, for example, discusses in detail Richardson's "adoption of social realism rather than psychological realism as the means for defining character" in *Grandison* (173-90; see also Carol Houlihan Flynn, *Samuel Richardson: A Man of Letters* [Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1982], 48). Carol Kay has called *Grandison* "a story of conspicuous illustration," in comparison to *Clarissa* as "a plot of intimate knowledge" (*Political Constructions: Defoe, Richardson, and Sterne in Relation to Hobbes, Hume, and Burke* [Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1988], 193).

28. In Crabtree's words, "the presence of people" is in *Grandison*, as in the later novel of manners, "the great subject or problem; . . . a familiar enveloping quality without which life could hardly be imagined--and yet at the same time, on a level too deep for conscious awareness, . . . something wrong, not the felt evidence of community but a continuously alien pressure . . ." (159; see also Doody, "Identity and character," 114).

29. See Kinkead-Weekes, 334-35, for a discussion of role-playing in *Grandison* as a kind of "moral engineering" of "inherited characteristics."

30. See Doody, *Natural Passion*, 323-24.

31. This portrayal of the congruity of public and private selves as an obligation of virtue rather than an inevitable proportionality, so central to the texts of this study, is noted by Wolff, 199-200.

32. Sir Charles, again unlike Lovelace with Clarissa, respectfully allows Harriet to maintain that cover in moments of emotion when a less delicate man would have taken advantage of her vulnerability. George E. Haggerty has rightly argued, in "*Sir Charles Grandison and the Language of Nature*," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 2 (1990), that "sincerity becomes a kind of power" for Harriet (133), while Charlotte's secret promise to a lover is "a perversion of the public role of language" (136). At the same time, he does not deal with the issues of necessary secrecy and the gendering of frankness which complicate this generalization. Doody has associated the tension between reserve and frankness in the novel with aesthetic as well as moral concerns, arguing that it reflects Richardson's strategy for maintaining reader interest ("Identity and character," 121-24). She also makes the interesting observation that the male desire to penetrate female reserve in *Grandison* suggests the "sexually attractive" nature of that reserve (125).

33. Sir Charles has been described by Sitter, 208, and Doody, *Natural Passion*, 337, as a static hero because of Richardson's emphasis on virtue as restraint of the passions; while such terminology is helpful in pointing to the absence of portrayed internal struggles on the part of the hero, it can be misleading if taken to mean a physical fixity similar to that of Pamela as wife and mother, or that of Harriet as domestic woman, for example.

34. The circular metaphor of expansion outward from a centre is more accurate to the text, I believe, than is Kinkead-Weekes's image of excess (315-21) which, in its apparent contradiction of the ideals of balance and uniformity, confuses what is in fact a coherent cluster of images associated with Sir Charles in the novel.

35. Harris, *Samuel Richardson*, 146; Terry Eagleton, *The Rape of Clarissa: Writing, Sexuality and Class Struggle in Samuel Richardson* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1982), 95. In describing the novel as "a map approaching the size of the territory it depicts," and therefore ultimately "not an interpretation of experience but its replacement," Sitter has suggested the vicarious experience provided by feminized narrative's excursive form for the enclosed domestic woman of the eighteenth century (213).

36. In not identifying this intermediate range between the public and private, critics such as Eagleton, 95-99, Kinkead-Weekes, 282, 291, and Mullan, 90-91, create some confusion and apparent contradiction in their discussions of the novel's focus as private and public, respectively. Dussinger in turn associates this middle range more with the "spiritual vocation" of the country gentleman than with a non-geographical notion of the family (523).

37. Wolff has suggested that the importance given to Sir Charles' pecuniary generosity is one feature of the externalization of inner life in the novel (187-90). Such an interpretation further supports my arguments that the public in *Grandison* is in fact the familial, and that the self is portrayed as consciously codifying itself in forms which can be seen and interpreted by the social circle.

38. Hagstrum, 214. Pursuing such rhetoric in the opposite sense, Doody has argued in "Richardson's Politics," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 2 (1990), that Sir Charles is Richardson's ideal "unbigoted Church of England" alternative to Charles Stuart, and that the novel "embodies a dream of restoration, reconciliation, and wholeness to an England badly divided and given to division" (125, 126). Barbara Ann Olive, on the other hand, although she has discussed the restoration of "a strong patriarchy" in *Grandison*, does not treat the modification of its form ("The Eighteenth-Century Family and Puritan Domestic Literature: A Study of the Origin and Development of Fictional Domestic Themes" [Ph.D. diss., Southern Illinois University, 1978], 142). See Ronald Paulson's "The Pilgrimage and the Family: Structures in the Novels of Fielding and Smollett," in Tobias Smollett: *Bicentennial Essays Presented to Lewis M. Knapp*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and P.-G. Boucé (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), 57-78, for a more general treatment of the early novel's increasing interest in the relations of the individual and the family. Speaking of *Clarissa*, in particular, Paulson says that "the family acts as fetters around a strong intelligent offspring" (78); Leopold Damrosch, Jr., has made the same point in *God's Plot and Man's Stories: Studies in the Fictional Imagination from Milton to Fielding* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985), 215.

39. Wolff, 193-94.

40. In its emphasis upon brother-sister relationships, the *Grandison* family model in fact attempts a blend of the best features of the family, the marriage, and the friendship; Harris's discussion of the marriages based upon such a relationship in "'As if they had been living friends': Sir Charles Grandison to Mansfield Park," *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities* 83 (1980): 383, elaborates on this point.

41. Rudnik-Smalbraak, 160. Eagleton's comments regarding the undermining of patriarchy through a family model which expands "to become effectively coextensive with the 'public sphere' of which [Richardson] is spokesman" (12-13) are therefore particularly relevant to *Grandison*. Suggesting a relationship between Sir Charles's social reforms and the narrative speculation already noted, Kinkead-Weekes describes the novel's high life setting as "a dream-stage" allowing the hero "free scope for elaborate displays of good behaviour," although he denies the inherent social implications of this move into an imaginative realm (286).

42. Doody has similarly described the effect of this division of focus between marriage and sisterhood as a deliberate division of reader sympathies (*Natural Passion*, 313), and Wolff has commented that the sympathetic bond of Harriet and Clementina in England appears stronger than the relationship of Harriet and Sir Charles (217). Significantly, the reader accustomed to the marriage plot shares Harriet's difficulty with its being subsumed into the family model; Richardson thus complains that his readers seem unable to love both heroines and insist rather on crediting one "at the expence of the other" (*Letters*, 288).

43. Kay, 140. See Kinkead-Weekes, 288, Rudnik-Smalbraak, 141-45, and Sitter, 210, for similar observations about the role of the letter in *Grandison*.

44. See Wolff, 227. That this epistemological model differs from *Clarissa's* careful construction of a composite truth is suggested by Richardson's own comment upon the "twofold Correspondence" of the earlier novel in contrast to the later, in which "the Answers to the Letters of the Narratist are only supposed, & really sunk" (Letters, 234-35). As "narratists," Harriet and the other writers of *Grandison* speak in multiple voices but simply reiterate the same truth; in Melinda Alliker Rabb's terminology, borrowed from Bakhtin, *Grandison's* method would be one of syncretism to *Clarissa's* anacrisis ("Underplotting, Overplotting, and Correspondence in *Clarissa*," *Modern Language Studies* 11.3 [1981]: 63). See also Mullan, 85-88. Of more general relevance is Paulson's observation, in *Emblem and Expression: Meaning in English Art of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1975), ch. 5, of a tendency in mid-century art to a simplification of interpretive demands made upon the reader. Paulson's view serves as a reminder of Richardson's frustration, noted at the beginning of this chapter, with reader 'misinterpretation' of *Clarissa*.

45. See Yates, especially, for a detailed study of the function of these parallels in characterizing the exemplary hero through the safe method of mere allusion to the rake's faults.

46. In this I differ from Ira Konigsberg (*Samuel Richardson and the Dramatic Novel* [Lexington: Univ. of Kentucky Press, 1968], 70-72), who likens Sir Charles to the passive hero of sentimental comedy. While conflicts between virtue and vice are indeed deflected away from the centre of attention in the novel, the hero is always, as far as the female narrators are concerned, out fighting evil in the wilderness of the larger world; he is active in his reactive virtue more in the manner of a crusading righter of wrongs than of a peacemaker who tries simply to hold vice at bay.

47. Kinkead-Weekes, 341.

48. Charlotte's use of martial imagery, as well as of that of the trial and the caught prey, is reminiscent of the prominent hunt, trial, and conquest metaphors embodying the intensely conflictive structure of *Clarissa's* plot (see, for example, Penelope Biggs, "Hunt, Conquest, Trial: Lovelace and the Metaphors of the Rake," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 11 [1982]: 51-64, and Rosemary Bechler, "'Triall by what is contrary': Samuel Richardson and Christian Dialectic," in Myer, 93-113). Such metaphors in *Grandison* are consistently marginalized through their association with Charlotte, or distanced through the perspective of the female narrator as properly within doors looking out from her safe enclosure at a wilderness of hyaenas and wandering women, or rendered benign through their reapplication to the game of courtship from which they were originally drawn in *Clarissa*. Thus exclusion on the level of imagery strengthens the sense of domestic enclosure associated with feminised narrative in the novel. As Doody has pointed out for a parallel case, Charlotte's use of animal imagery to give sexual relations the much more loving and orderly connotations of protection and petting rather than hunting and preying conveys the notions that "nature is tractable, and civilization is the apotheosis of nature, not a mask concealing the horror beneath" (*Natural Passion*, 344).

49. Sir Walter Scott, *Sir Walter Scott On Novelists and Fiction*, ed. Ioan Williams (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), 43-44.

50. See Doody, 279.

51. See page 2:76 of the text; see also Marks, 63, and Sitter, 215-16.

52. Doody points out further that when suspense is allowed to build in such cases as the threatened duel of Sir Charles and Sir Hargrave, these "small knots of complexity are unravelled over several successive scenes" rather than contributing to a sustained intensity like that of *Clarissa* (*Natural Passion*, 301). See Kinkead-Weekes, 305-12, for a detailed analysis of the effects of the averted duel scene. *Grandison*, like the sequel to *Pamela*, has been criticized for its lack of a conflictive plot. Elizabeth Bergen Brophy in fact considers the two works so similar in their failure to establish emotional intensity through conflict that they share a chapter as examples of poor craftsmanship in her *Samuel Richardson: The Triumph of Craft* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee, 1974). T. C. Duncan Eaves and Ben D. Kimpel (*Samuel Richardson: A Biography* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1971]) are dismissive in their description of the effects of the model character in both *Grandison* and *Pamela* Part II, describing Sir Charles's rectitude as a "glacial virtue" which "freezes all conflict" (150). No doubt they are correct, at any rate, in detecting suggestions in Richardson's correspondence that the plot of *Grandison* is not inevitable in the sense that the design of *Clarissa* is. Nevertheless, I feel that they are rather wide of the mark in suggesting that the novel develops a pattern of "natural" conflicts and rebellions which are quelled by the arrival of Sir Charles and his virtuous conversation (392). Kinkead-Weekes is somewhat more charitable in his willingness to allow "Mr. Richardson the bourgeois moralist" a limited imaginative success in visualizing "beyond the normal horizon of human capacity," despite his failure to achieve his greatest potential in the absence of conflict as a stimulus (285-92). Edward Copeland, in his more theoretical discussion of "Allegory and Analogy in *Clarissa*: The 'Plan' and the 'No-Plan,'" *ELH* 39 (1972), sees *Grandison* as "firmly grounded in the casuistical delicacies of the social virtues," as "the triumph of the 'No-Plan,'" and therefore as "the 'answer'" to *Clarissa*'s tension between the allegorical thrust towards cosmic significance and the analogical pull back toward "the social and psychological world of the novel" (265).

53. Wolff, 227. This view of gesture as a stylized language diverges from readings of Richardson's novels as uniformly sentimental in portraying the language of the female body as more truly and effectively expressive than speech (see, for example, Mullan 88-89). While this is the case for *Pamela* Part I and *Clarissa*, to a degree, it is not so for their rewritings.

54. Doody's detailed discussion of music and dancing images in *Grandison* (*Natural Passion*, 352-64) provides a helpful elaboration of this point.

55. Kinkead-Weekes sees a number of "moral tryptichs" in the plot itself--for example, son Charles as a combination of qualities of both his mother and father (312). While I do not find all of the "tryptichs" equally convincing, when even some of them are put together with these trio tableaux they suggest the appeal of the triangle configuration's peculiar blend of equilibrium and irresolution in the construction of a non-conflictive yet social novel.

56. See Richardson's own description of the "converse of the pen," which "makes distance, presence; . . . which makes even presence but body, while absence becomes the soul; and leaves no room for the intrusion of breakfast-calls, or dinner or supper direction" (*Letters*, 65).

57. An intriguing precursor to Sir Charles's use of withdrawal is that of the father in Daniel Defoe's *The Family Instructor*, Vol. 1 (New York: AMS, 1973), 129; here the gesture is clearly a means of both punctuating his authoritarian claims and giving the son an opportunity of reconsidering his defiant response. Flynn has drawn a more extensive parallel between the two works, showing how both reveal "eighteenth-century society's contradictory desires for mutual subordination and voluntary compliance. Both Defoe and Richardson, creating the newly reconciled 'self' for their domestic fictions, endorse compliant behaviour that strains against the belief in the individual that their culture was inventing" ("The pains of compliance in *Sir Charles Grandison*," in Doody and Sabor, eds., 134).

58. Harris has traced this mode of moralized expansion in describing the role of the marriage choice as an instrument of reform in *Grandison* and *Mansfield Park*: "Good women recognize good men, men become good in order to be recognized, good men make it worth a woman's while to be good" ("As if they had been living friends," 399).

59. I am in some disagreement here with Peter Sabor's claim, in "*Amelia* and *Sir Charles Grandison*: The Convergence of Fielding and Richardson," *Wascana Review* 17.2 (1982): 3-18, that *Grandison* is the least domestic of Richardson's novels (6); while the hero is more cosmopolitan in his sphere of activity than are the earlier central male figures and while the Italian women are portrayed as either excessively free or excessively sheltered, the ideal world of the Englishwoman is more restrictively domestic than ever.

60. Marks has pointed out the dearth of concrete acts of charity performed by women in the novel (112). Indeed, when Harriet's generous heart prompts her to make a gift to a repentant William Wilson matching those of Sir Charles and Sir Hargrave, her impulse is praised but she is dissuaded, as female victim of his treachery, from what it would "become a man to do . . . who has not been injured by him" (1:295). This advice suggests that even charity, when extended beyond the domestic sphere and beyond sentiment into action, indicates in a woman a kind of dangerous promiscuity which must be circumscribed.

61. Doody, *Natural Passion*, 293; Clementina's sacrificial Catholicism, according to Doody, serves a similar function of "counterpoise" to the "rational 'cheerfulness' of the practical Christianity that Sir Charles represents" (322).

62. In a related acknowledgment of a referential world of imperfect social intercourse, Charlotte's stubborn snobbery, in her behaviour towards Mrs. Oldham and Everard Grandison's new wife, for example, can be seen as preventing just that "complete identification of personal virtue with social propriety" which Wolff sees as making of the novel "a monstrous caricature of the real world" (176).

63. Doody has examined house imagery in *Grandison* for its somewhat different, although not contradictory, embodiment of an acceptance of this world and its social structures, in contrast to Clarissa's coffin as symbol of a rejection of the world (*Natural Passion*, 348-52).
64. Even Barker, who refers at one point to the novel's "tone of easy, even naive optimism" (25), speaks later of Richardson's successful exploration of the anxiety felt by characters in their relation to the paragon hero (32-35). John Allen Stevenson ("A Geometry of His Own": Richardson and the Marriage Ending," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 26 [1986]: 469-83) argues that *Grandison* is in fact "the anti-courtship hero par excellence, a glittering image of the endlessly unattainable," thereby reflecting Richardson's fear of the sexual release of marriage as closure (474, 480). For Doody, happiness in *Grandison* can be achieved, but only through the suffering of "self-recognition and self-division" in love (*Natural Passion*, 338). In a related argument, Chaber writes of the anxiety embodied in the mirror characters, subjunctive syntax, and dreams underlying the novel's ostensibly providential plot (288-300); however, although she first discusses Sir Charles as a providence surrogate (285-88), Chaber separates the providential character from the providential plot and hence does not elaborate on the function of the desirable-yet-unattainable hero in the production of this anxiety. Similarly, although I have shown there to be indeed an early sense of journey and arrival for Harriet as narrator in *Grandison*, Yates's application of this dichotomy to the whole narrative, with courtship as pilgrimage and marriage as "the earthly counterpart to the 'Land of Beulah,' where Bunyan's Christiana meets at last both savior and husband" (551), is too simplistic and too determined by the outlines of the courtship plot against which Stevenson has set *Grandison*.
65. Sir Charles's 'choice' of Harriet over Clementina, like Mr. B.'s return to Pamela from the Countess, symbolizes the victory of the domestic and similar over the public and foreign: once again, Richardson configures political and social conflicts within a sexual and domestic framework.
66. See, for example, 3:293.
67. Or, as Doody has suggested, the thrust towards sympathy and conformity must nevertheless stop short of a full identity between individuals ("Identity and character," 121-22).
68. Harris's view, that Richardson's sympathy for Clementina makes it "impossible" for him to legislate her destiny (Introduction, xx), similarly points to a relinquishment of authorial control over the text at its end.
69. That a novel such as *Grandison* is likely to be received into a reading circle rather than by a solitary reader is argued by Patricia Howell Michaelson in "Women in the Reading Circle," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 13 n.s. 3 (1989): 59-69. Such a view of eighteenth-century reading habits makes Richardson's responsiveness to his own circle in the composition of the novel a particularly appropriate marriage of form and purpose. Although the limited scope of this discussion will not allow for a detailed examination of style in *Grandison*, the novel's frequent use of proverbs and allusions to widely known elements of contemporary culture such as *The Spectator* can be seen not only as a means of

rendering the work accessible to the less educated middling reader, as Harris argues (Introduction, xiv), but also as a further step in opening the interpretive boundaries of the text to its readers by not making its vocabulary a pointedly Puritan or cultivated one, as in the cases of *Pamela* Part II and *Clarissa* respectively, and thereby not identifying its style with a private authorial voice to the exclusion of conversational, public, and readerly voices.

70. See Richardson's letter to Lady Bradshaigh, quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

71. Interestingly, Richardson does appear to point the way to the silent and centred heroine in one portion of the novel, when Sir Charles becomes the representative narrator-reader of Clementina's story; Richardson conflates the hero's and the reader's responses to "the Italian Lady's Magnanimity," explaining to Lady Bradshaigh at one point that Sir Charles must love her because of her capacity "to astonish him, and every-body, even to attach the Readers of the Story in her favour" (*Letters*, 282-83).

CHAPTER 5

Silencing the Centre in Fielding's *Amelia*

For Samuel Richardson, increasing literary authority is accompanied by a growing confidence in the power of his model of the conversational circle to socialize desire that is by nature individualistic. For Henry Fielding, on the other hand, the self is naturally sociable, while society in general is corrupted by widespread and degenerate self-interest. In his early "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," Fielding renders in prose Pope's image of the circle expanding from self-love to social, at the same time changing its thrust from one of commonsense prescription to one of evaluation as the most "certain Rule" for judging character:

If a Man hath more Love than what centers in himself, it will certainly light on his Children, his Relations, Friends, and nearest Acquaintance. If he extends it farther, what is it less than general Philanthropy, or Love to Mankind? Now as a good Man loves his Friend better than a common Acquaintance; so Philanthropy will operate stronger towards his own Country than any other: but no Man can have this general Philanthropy who hath not private Affection, any more than he who hath not Strength sufficient to lift ten Pounds, can at the same Time be able to throw a hundred Weight over his Head. Therefore the bad Son, Husband, Father, Brother, Friend; in a Word, the bad Man in private can never be a sincere Patriot.¹

If Fielding's statement of the principle here implies a resignation to the fact that there will always be unsociable as well as sociable men, ideal sociability in *Tom Jones* is even more elusive, existing only in implied, imperfect, promised, or future form: in Tom's potential for responsible behaviour, in the squirearchy of Allworthy, in the dream of marriage with Sophia, or in the headship of Tom over the estate and the family projected beyond the novel,

respectively. In *Amelia*, on the other hand, Henry Fielding the highly successful creator of flawed and socially alienated individuals shifts boldly from portraying the pursuit of the implied ideal to describing its incarnation, just as Richardson rewrites the internalized self in a sociable context in his final novel.²

Thus Fielding creates an intimate domestic circle with an exemplary, silent, and self-effacing heroine at its centre as the setting within which the male protagonist's potential for social virtue can be most fully revealed. At the same time, he places that circle against a public backdrop so completely hostile to it that the outward expansion from domesticity to true patriotism described in the "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men" becomes almost impossible. In other words, *Amelia* is Fielding's fictional juxtaposition of an ideal of the orderly, expansive circle, embodied in a model domestic group, and that ideal's perverted reality, the all-consuming vortex of self-love, represented by the public structures within which the domestic group is located.³ Openness of the domestic circle to the larger social world is as desirable in Fielding as the outward expansion of circles in water is inevitable; at issue in this novel is the distortion of that necessary relation between public and private worlds and the resulting fate of the sociable individual caught between the two. There is even less place in *Amelia* for the bowling-ball self-sufficiency of the stoic than there was in *Tom Jones*; the city affords neither harmless retreat nor refuge from the fact of interdependence.⁴ At the same time, unlike Bunyan and Richardson, the Fielding of *Amelia* does not possess enough confidence in his social ideal to create of it a stable heaven on earth or an authoritative force which can impose its perfect harmony upon an urban chaos. In fact, the novel's structure resembles the tentative one of

Congreve's *Double-Dealer*, in which the possibility of an ideal intimacy is set in conflict with ingrained and unsatisfactory patterns of relationship.

Fielding's social authority at the time of writing *Amelia* extends well beyond that of the successful moralist-author writing to a carefully cultivated and private audience, as is the case with Richardson in the composition of *Grandison*. Like Richardson writing his last novel, Fielding is at the height of his literary reputation and his sensitivity to audience expectations; unlike the printer, however, his literary offspring is shaped by a paradigm of its introduction, not into an intimate circle of readers through whom he can safely experiment with the outward expansion of text into context, but into a figurative court of law. As Westminster magistrate Fielding is required to exercise a daily, practical authority over a social chaos which asserts its own bold reality against the social ideal, and as journalist and pamphlet-writer, he is in the habit of submitting his use of that authority to the court of public opinion.⁵ Throwing into relief his portrait of the ideal social circle in *Amelia*, therefore, is a powerful anti-ideal, the public world as a vortex whose all-consuming centre is a passionately self-absorbed woman, and whose false arbiters of honour and duty uphold a perverted authority contrary to the laws of social order exemplified by Amelia's circle and propounded by Dr. Harrison.

Thus the balance maintained between conflict and consensus differs in this novel from that of the Bunyan and Richardson works: like the plot of the Congreve play, *Amelia's* conflict is driven by self-interested forces inherently conflictual and therefore inimical to domestic harmony. As a result, the heroine's passive innocence, with its apparent incapacity to shape the novel's action, is a critical difficulty like that of Mellefont's passive gullibility in *The Double-Dealer*. In the Fielding work, however, the central focus of the

plot is less upon the machinations of a single villain such as Maskwell than upon the figure of William Booth, Amelia's husband, as choice-maker placed between the public world, promising influence and security through intrigue and corruption, and the private world, offering the stable harmony of life with Amelia. The eighteenth-century man hesitating between two worlds, Booth is susceptible through his own pride and egotism to the false circle, while essentially attracted to the true. Thus it is primarily he who controls the extent and effects of intersection between these two worlds in the novel, and resolution is brought about when his choice of Amelia's circle becomes definitive.⁶ Social reality in the form of the relationship between the two circles is therefore portrayed as a desperate struggle between two entirely different modes of attraction and even of narrative function as a manifestation of what John Bender has called "Fielding's overriding concern . . . with the deployment of narrative as an authoritative resource" in a degenerate social structure. *Amelia* is thereby similar to *The Double-Dealer* in its refusal to eradicate evil from the fictional world at its conclusion, yet morally rigorous in its claims that an alternative can be portrayed and that effective choices can be made by responsible individuals.⁷

This emphasis upon individual moral responsibility is effected in the text by the most authoritative character of Fielding's novel canon. The distanced narrator who in *Tom Jones* carries on a gentlemanly conversation of mingled abstraction and wit in the old Augustan style here becomes part of the circle, in the person of Dr. Harrison, spokesman for the domestic group; the disembodied and the lowly quotidian are thus brought together at the level of the narrative in a manner that is not achieved in *Tom Jones*. Although as a character he is fallible in some of his immediate judgments, Dr. Harrison

articulates Fielding's ideology of the domestic circle and its link with public life in an authoritative voice that the author grants neither to his silent heroine nor to his bungling and divided hero. Between the Doctor and Amelia, more particularly, Fielding separates the functions of narration and exemplification in much the same way that Richardson does in *Grandison*. There is a crucial difference, however: whereas *Grandison* unites, in the person of the hero, authority and the exemplary as the circle's centre which attracts and orders female narrative power, *Amelia* makes a silent, self-effacing heroine the centre of its circle, with the authoritative word, in the person of Dr. Harrison, at its periphery. Like Booth located at the edge of the domestic circle, Dr. Harrison models an ideal outward expansion from the private into the public realm and tries, albeit with little success, to encourage Booth (and presumably his readers) to enact the same.

Amelia, like *Grandison*, follows upon a novel whose tremendous popular success is nevertheless tempered for Fielding by significant problems of reader response. Richardson's correspondents plead for a comic ending and the rehabilitation of Lovelace despite their admiration for his virtuous heroine and for the novel's moral sentiments; Fielding's readers similarly respond to narrative form and idea as separate entities, admiring *Tom Jones*'s inclusive and intricate plot while condemning its mixtures of good and evil and its 'low' incidents and dialogue. Indeed, both Richardson and Fielding write a final novel which can be seen as to a degree accommodating their perceptions of "the Taste of the Age":⁸ Richardson in his use of a comic plot and Fielding in his more overtly moralistic structure.⁹ At the same time, however, Richardson's adoption of an exemplary male hero and a feminized narrative structure is more than a ploy to sell novels; it cannot be separated from an optimism about the

potential social authority of fictional form as it is mediated through his circle of reader-admirers. That Fielding does not share this optimism is suggested by his use of an exemplary female centre whose silence is part of her virtue and who is therefore dependent upon the narrations of male protectors and upon the effects of "repetition and variation" to embody her opposition to the ways of the world.¹⁰

In sum, Fielding concedes to the Richardsonian social ideal in replacing his Augustan conversational mode with a domestic and feminocentric circle. In associating that construct, however, with an ideal of femininity that refuses to assume narrative authority, he is left with a circle that can establish its authoritative right only through dramatized contrasts with its opposite's falsity, through the differing effects of the hero's good or bad choices, and through the endorsement of its spokesman and of the plot's resolution. I will therefore examine in *Amelia* the dramatization of the ideal domestic circle, the contrasts established between the domestic virtues and the destructive qualities of the public anti-circle, and the positions of Booth and Dr. Harrison as intermediary figures between the two types.¹¹ In comparing these two circles, I will focus in particular upon the role played by conversation--as vicarious experience, self-narration, and sympathetic communion--in establishing legitimate textual and social authority. My study will make it clear that for *Amelia* the confluence of a model social circle embattled by widespread corruption, a feminocentric structure which can achieve at best circumscription and self-enclosure, and an implied audience overwhelmed by false modes of authority, results in a text whose force is more cautionary and elegiac than prescriptive and expansive, suggesting inadequacies of the social ideal that will lead to its ultimate failure and reduction to an otherworldly vision.¹² Although the

feminized circle achieves a limited kind of victory at the novel's close, the restrictions which Fielding places upon its modes of authority ultimately reveal the vulnerability of the intimate social group to its larger context, a vulnerability which will be faced squarely in Sarah Fielding's sequel to *The Adventures of David Simple*.

Such a guarded success in ordering social reality seems not to have been the expectation of Fielding's audience. A reading of *Tom Jones* guided by its narrator provides emotional satisfactions that not only led the earliest readers of *Amelia* to expect more of the same, but also have caused critics since that time to succumb to the desire for a repetition of beloved aspects of *Tom Jones* in the later novel.¹³ In this sense, *Amelia*'s reception history parallels that of the sequel to *Pamela* more than that of *Grandison*. For *Pamela* Part II and *Amelia*, the portrayal of married life is seen as a departure from the novelistic norm, and as therefore subject to difficulties of plot construction. The early reviewer John Cleland finds *Amelia*, "from the choice of [Fielding's] subject, . . . the boldest stroke that has yet been attempted in this species of writing"; like Stephen Duck with his fear that the *Pamela* sequel's subject "seems too barren of Distress to excite our Pity," however, a 1762 review of the French translation finds in the novel "a monotony that sheds a general coldness over this production." Bonnell Thornton in turn parodies *Amelia*'s narration of domestic routine in a description of the heroine's "little family . . . squatted upon the hearth close by her knees, and gnawing each of them an huge luncheon of bread and butter," crying "'Mammy!--where's Pappy?--Mammy!--where's Pappy? --Mammy!--where's Pappy?'" In contrast to such distaste at the novel's domestic focus, admiration for *Amelia* reflects the parallel portrayals by Richardson and Fielding of their heroines as domestic angels; indeed, Cleland's terms for

Amelia echo Richardson's descriptions of Pamela as ideal role-player:

[Amelia] is painted, in fine, as the model of female perfection, formed to give the greatest and justest idea of domestic happiness. She fills every character, in every scene, in every situation, where the tender, agreeable wife, the prudent fond mother, and the constant friend can have leave to shine.¹⁴

Pamela's story and story-telling, however, are given the authority and the potency to order her world around her, while Amelia's example shines only as an attractive option which remains enclosed and separate from the social vortex out-of-doors. Richardson's social optimism in *Pamela* Part II, as I have argued, depends upon the almost unspoken exclusions of Pamela's familial circle and upon her being allowed to leave London for the latter portion of the novel. Fielding rather immerses his heroine in a city which aggressively attacks her domestic circle, and this circle thereby becomes part of a construct of contrary gravitational centres that can never be resolved into one.¹⁵

Amelia begins with the announcement that its subject is "the various Accidents which befel a very worthy Couple, after their uniting in the State of Matrimony."¹⁶ The style and structure of this opening, with its placement of the anonymous "worthy Couple's" united state in a position of temporal anteriority and final emphasis, while beginning with reference to the accidents befalling them, serves as a kind of paradigm for the moral and narrative structures of the novel. The contingent and temporary, the reader is led to expect, will be given a threatening prominence, but ultimately will serve only to prove the durability of an ideal marriage. Accordingly, the first chapter of the narrative, and indeed its first three books, are devoted to the accidents of Booth's arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, his Newgate picaresque, and in particular the meeting that sparks his illicit affair with Miss Mathews.¹⁷ At the same time, the initially overwhelming effect of this series of accidents is reduced greatly by

the expansion of the novel's temporal framework through Miss Mathews' and Booth's narratives. Although the objectivity of both stories is questionable, as will be seen below, and despite Miss Mathews' simultaneous seduction of Booth, the reader is provided with a picture of a younger Booth choosing rightly between Amelia and Miss Mathews, in contrast to the latter's unerring capacity for making the wrong choice. Thus the apparently arbitrary moment is set in a context of life patterns which reflect some correlation between the individual will and social consequences.

Meanwhile, Justice Thrasher's court and Newgate prison create together an image of the public social structure which is confirmed by later descriptions of Ranelagh, Vauxhall, and Bondum the bailiff's house. The conflating effect of Fielding's earlier picture of "the splendid Palaces of the Great" as "often no other than Newgate with the Mask on"¹⁸ is given narrative embodiment throughout the novel in the figure of an all-consuming vortex, into which the innocent are drawn arbitrarily and without hope of escape. Thus Justice Thrasher has profited from a Rochefoucauldian cynicism whereby "every Man is taught to consider himself as the Centre of Gravity, and to attract all things thither," and as a result, the dichotomy of "Right" and "Wrong," which the narrator implies is fixed and determinable, has been replaced by the criterion of profit as the basis of legal 'justice' (21). For the poor, Thrasher's realm leads directly to Newgate, an inverted underworld wherein the apparently virtuous are revealed to be utterly indecent, and a character such as Robinson is rendered increasingly unreadable through a series of shifts from friend to pickpocket to maligned innocent to possible cheat and liar. Worse, the unquestionably innocent, such as the girl imprisoned for bodily harm and the acquitted soldier recommitted for his jail fees, are simply sucked into this maelstrom and

destroyed.

Throughout *Amelia*, individuals set in positions of authority--from Justice Thrasher and "the Governor of the enchanted Castle" of Newgate (152), to the nobleman who refuses to use his political power to reward merit, to the "little great Man" who swallows Booth's bribe "as a Pike receives a poor Gudgeon into his Maw" (476)--clearly contribute through their voracious self-interest to the corrupt condition of the public social structure. Fielding therefore portrays that structure's depersonalized malfunctioning as the inevitable consequence of an agglomeration of faulty parts. Whereas the ideal state should circumvent "the ill Execution" of its laws because "good Laws should execute themselves" as does a well-constituted clock (19), this state's operations are described as "the Wheels in the Great State Lottery of Preferment. A Lottery indeed which hath this to recommend it, that many poor Wretches feed their Imaginations with the Prospect of a Prize during their whole Lives, and never discover they have drawn a Blank" (499).¹⁹ When Mrs. Bennet and her husband find the possibilities of "Exchange" of curacies limited in the country, they move to London as "the great Mart of all Affairs ecclesiastical and civil" (286); as Fielding's original puff here for the Universal Register Office indicates (App. VI, 572), the possibilities for exchange afforded by the city are not intrinsically evil, but unscrupulous advantage is taken of these possibilities by such as the noble lord, who exchanges flattery, trinkets, and false hopes for the chastity of Mrs. Bennet and ultimately the life of her husband. The narrator's lengthy explanation of how Dr. Harrison is brought to employ the crooked lawyer Murphy illustrates the ease with which individual corruption can go undetected by even the most clear-eyed moral authority in the anonymous and compartmentalized mechanism of the city, where the Doctor has "seen this Man but three Times since his

Removal to Town, and then conversed with him only on Business," and thereby can "remain as ignorant of his Life and Character, as a Man generally is of the Character of the Hackney Coachman who drives him" (515).²⁰

This unregulated institutionalization of social relationships allows for the development of a kind of perverted interior logic in public structures which is revealed by the narrator to the reader as Booth penetrates them. Thus, although to Booth the workings of accident upon him remain essentially arbitrary and inexplicable for the greater part of the novel, Bondum the Bailiff in fact manipulates his victims according to the well-established principles of "the Way of Business" (513), so that with "no more Malice against the Bodies in his Custody, than a Butcher hath to those in his" (312) he can unctuously wish Booth a speedy release while dispatching his porter to collect as many actions against him as possible. The relationships that lead the noble lord, Trent, and Colonel James to employ the same man in their final attack on Booth are all institutionalized as part of "Business of the pimping Vocation," in which "this subaltern Pimp" works with "his Superior Trent" (495) in a parody of military efficiency. Even interaction with self-absorbed and self-seeking characters such as the Jameses is subject to seemingly arbitrary shifts of warmth and coldness that may be explained in terms of immediate motives but ultimately serve only to illustrate the couple's distorted notion of the rules of friendship.²¹ When Amelia makes her delayed appearance in the novel through a successful penetration of the Newgate vortex to reclaim her husband, she immediately becomes a centre of stability in the novel, opposed to the perverted structures outside of her home. This function is indicated by the narrator's rhetoric of balanced contrasts, when upon Booth's receipt of a cold letter from James she "endeavour[s], as usual, to the utmost of her Power to console him under one of the

greatest Afflictions which, I think, can befall a Man, namely, the Unkindness of a Friend; but he had luckily at the same time the greatest Blessing in his Possession, the Kindness of a faithful and beloved Wife" (186). On an earlier occasion, Amelia herself offers Booth the comfort that "however other Friends may prove false and fickle to him, he hath one Friend, whom no Inconstancy of her own, nor any Change of his Fortune, nor Time, nor Age, nor Sickness, nor any Accident can ever alter" (175).

This constancy and its stabilizing role in the marriage are made concrete by Amelia's physical fixity in her lodgings in a near-absolute separation from the structural and relational chaos of public London. Her only excursions are initiated by others, and she resists all public pleasures but those of the masquerade, proposed by the noble lord who is to prefer Booth, and the Vauxhall Gardens, proposed by Dr. Harrison. The most striking example of Amelia's active efforts to remain at home is her avoidance of the second masquerade, which Mrs. Atkinson attends in her place.²² "My Inclinations," she assures her husband, "would, I am afraid, be too unreasonable a Confinement to you; for they would always lead me to be with you and your Children, with at most a single Friend or two, now and then" (362). In fact, it is the domestic confinement of Amelia's love, a confinement to which Booth can choose to commit himself, which offers the only refuge of this world, in opposition to the forcible and abusive imprisonments represented by Booth's stays in Newgate and the bailiff's house. When, early in the novel, Booth remains home to avoid arrest, the reader is told not only that Amelia knows "no Happiness out of his Company, nor scarce any Misery in it," but also that Booth gives her "at all times so much of his Company when in his Power, that she [has] no occasion to assign any particular Reason for his staying with her" (192-93). An externally imposed limitation to

the home is thus transformed into a celebration of married love.²³ It is not until her husband learns to choose this domestic refuge at all times, however, and we read at the conclusion of the novel that since his move to Amelia's estate he "hath never since been thirty Miles from home" (532), that the family's happiness is complete.

As centre of the domestic circle, Amelia's fixity is accompanied by an attractive power that draws her husband--and other men--to her. Thus the narrator compares her, as Harriet does Sir Charles Grandison, to the sun, in that it is as impossible "to withdraw Admiration from [her] exquisite Beauty" as it is not to feel the warmth of the sun. Because of the difference in sexual roles, however, admiration of Sir Charles by women can only lead to their own misery, whereas admiration of Amelia by men must be active, and therefore cannot remain innocent, for "Desire is sure to succeed" admiration, followed by "Wishes, Hopes, Designs, with a long Train of Mischiefs" close behind (232). Amelia's satisfaction with her domestic sphere is therefore matched by an extreme vulnerability when she does venture into the public eye: at her first excursion to the oratorio, she is marked as a target by the disguised noble lord, and she continues to be accosted, whether by him or by unnamed rakes, whether at Lady Betty Castleton's rout or at Vauxhall Gardens. In a condensed emblem of this sexual vulnerability, the heroine suddenly realizes upon her return from Atkinson's supposed deathbed that with her wardrobe reduced by theft and the pawnshop, she cannot even safely walk on the city streets alone, and must therefore hire a chair. On the occasion when she does wish to go to the masquerade with Mrs. Ellison, lulled by her belief in the noble lord's disinterested generosity, her confidence is utterly betrayed; her later disappointment in a similar belief in the altruism of James's motives for helping her husband

indicates that nothing but the utmost circumspection on her part can prevent the success of stratagems against her and against the stability of her marriage.²⁴

Amelia is endangered not only by excursions into the public world, but also by malicious invasion of the domestic circle on the part of predatory self-interest that invariably takes a sexual form. Miss Mathews begins by desiring from Booth the "Sacrifice" of his wife, for "are there any Bounds to the Desires of Love! . . . As for Sacrifices, I can make them too; and would sacrifice the whole World at the least Call of my Love" (155-56). Later, men who desire Amelia attack Booth by refusing to stand bail quickly, by offering posting to a distant country, by incitement to gamble, and by a challenge to a duel. In their exploitation of Booth's financial and personal weaknesses, such actions represent more than a conflict between the predatory male and the virtuous female: they become an attempt to destroy a social unit whose limits individualism refuses to respect. In fact, designs on female virtue, when the woman is a wife, reveal the fundamental opposition of a corrupt society to the domestic circle. As Doctor Harrison describes the process in his letter on adultery,

The Ruin of both Wife and Husband, and sometimes of the whole Family, are the probable Consequences of this fatal Injury. Domestic Happiness is the End of almost all our Pursuits, and the common Reward of all our Pains. When Men find themselves for ever barred from this delightful Fruition, they are lost to all Industry, and grow careless of all their worldly Affairs. Thus they become bad Subjects, bad Relations, bad Friends and bad Men. (414-15)

A violation of the integrity of the family group as the basic unit of society, in other words, produces consequences which extend far beyond that unit in undermining the social structure.²⁵ Thus the kind of miserly love which Amelia and Booth hold for one another, to use their own image for it,²⁶ offers a potential social stability which London promiscuity cannot provide.

The pervasive cynicism about love and marriage that is revealed in society's attack on the family appears so universal as to suggest Fielding's own cynicism with respect to his reading audience.²⁷ This note is first sounded in Miss Mathews' response to Booth's story, when she sarcastically refers to Amelia's secret resistance to the advances of Bagillard as "brave" and "heroic" (134), and, indeed, when she turns the completed narrative of married love to flattery of Booth in order to pursue her own goal of his seduction. The various proposals of James and Trent that Booth "carry [his] Goods to Market" (228) in order to profit from the noble lord's attraction to Amelia are generalized in the masquerade bucks' derision of Dr. Harrison's letter on adultery. Even the peer who refuses to prefer Booth on the strength of the Doctor's representation of his "very extraordinary Merit" combined with his "great Necessity" of providing for his family and the additional recommendation of a wife who is "one of the best and worthiest of all her Sex" (457) contributes in a generalized way to the portrait of a society determinedly severing all links with the family as guardian of its honour and patriotism.

Such an attitude is characteristic of a fallen social state which married love can, with caution, avoid. Mrs. Bennet's early marriage proves to her that "A Match of real Love is, indeed, truly Paradise" (285); Booth also describes his country life with Amelia as a paradise.²⁸ It is important to note, however, that this is paradise not in the sense of the static uniformity of desire and language achieved in *Pamela* Part II, but in the sense of an alternative, a haven from the public world, as Dr. Harrison's letter suggests in its terminology of the "Reward of all our Pains" and "delightful Fruition." Domestic harmony consists indeed of a complex balance, precarious and not easily achieved. Seeing all "through the Medium of Love and Confidence" (178), Amelia cannot at

the same time be fitted for the public world through the morally tainted cynicism of a Miss Mathews, in whom such a spirit is part of the "something so outrageously suspicious in the Nature of all Vice" (161). Amelia's only defence in her vulnerability, therefore, is what characters such as Miss Mathews and Mrs. Atkinson call her prudery, the kind of prudery which, while it refuses to suspect the virtue of "abundance of Women, who indulge themselves in much greater Freedoms than [she] should take," insists that "the liking of all Men, but of one, is a Matter quite indifferent to me, or rather would be highly disagreeable" (190).²⁹ Amelia's avoidance of the second masquerade, achieved through the collusion of her domestic desires and elaborate plot devices, highlights the social pessimism of this novel in contrast to *Pamela* Part II. Whereas Pamela herself stands at the masquerade as moral centre pronouncing a satire on its social and referential chaos, what Amelia stands for must be spoken there, in her absence, by Dr. Harrison's letter focusing on the specific issue of adultery. Miss Mathews' reentry into Booth's life by means of the masquerade emphasizes her affinity with deceit and irresponsibility, in contrast to the essential candour and modesty which preclude even Amelia's attendance at such a paradigmatically public spectacle. Again, the familial circle is positioned as a last-ditch refuge from the social masquerade, rather than as an expansive social structure able to invade and domesticate it by the force of authoritative female language.³⁰

Because of her necessary isolation from the corrupt social world at large, experience for Amelia is gained through the narrations of others, providing Fielding with an opportunity for exploring the authority of storytelling itself in its social context. In his "Essay on the Characters of Men," Fielding suggests the value of learning from the described experience of others, "since

that open Disposition, which is the surest Indication of an honest and upright Heart, chiefly renders us liable to be imposed on by Craft and Deceit, and principally disqualifies us for this Discovery."³¹ Numerous writers have commented upon the importance of Mrs. Bennet's inserted narrative not only as a digressive parallel to the stories of Amelia and Miss Mathews, but also as a means for Amelia to gain knowledge without incurring the consequences of direct experience. The narrative's suggestions of Mrs. Bennet's tainted virtue and of Amelia's own susceptibility to a fall because of her similar delusions about the liking of the noble lord for her children and her husband have generally been recognized; it has sometimes been concluded that Fielding wishes to dissociate his heroine from such suggestions in order to maintain her status of perfect innocence.³² The text's repeated use of contrastive parallels, however, indicates rather that Fielding portrays Amelia as comparable to Mrs. Bennet in order to emphasize the fact that she is more capable than the latter of adapting example to her own experience and of profiting from it according to her own high moral standards. Thus she is able to use her knowledge of the noble lord as an incentive to avoid him at all costs and even to her own apparent detriment, while Mrs. Bennet, even after the lord's attempt to deceive Amelia, permits herself to be compromised by playing his own false game. In this way, Amelia represents the kind of reader for whom the vicarious does indeed produce a certain loss of innocence through knowledge, but at a far lower cost than that of direct experience. That she does achieve knowledge is indicated not only by her sympathetic tears and faintings throughout Mrs. Bennet's story, but also by her subsequent wary resourcefulness in avoiding Colonel James as a new threat; despite her relative seclusion, her knowledge of the corruptions of London is in a very real sense greater at the end of the novel than is Booth's.

Although narration similarly provides several other characters in the story with opportunities for knowledge, none of them passes the test so well as does Amelia. Booth initially indicates through his responses that he understands the motives of vanity and self-justification underlying Miss Mathews' distorted account of Hebberts' flattering and rationalizing courtship; nevertheless, he appears unable to resist her sins himself when she turns the arsenal of admiration and approval upon his own narrative. Worse, Miss Mathews' comments throughout Booth's story of his life with Amelia reveal her inappropriate and voyeuristic enjoyment of his detailed descriptions.³³ Indeed, Booth's inability to detect a lover's wiles when they are directed at himself, together with Amelia's own insensitivity to both Atkinson's noble admiration and James's dishonourable one, suggests the necessity of combining narrative exchange, as a socializing force which arms an individual for real experience, with the combined observations of several individuals in reading the social situation of the moment. The text and the friend can thus together provide support to the individual as an alternative to the cynical suspicion which the narrator denies Amelia, but "without some Use of which nothing is more purblind than human Nature" (362).

As their differences as experiencers and hearers suggest, Miss Mathews and Amelia function in numerous ways as polar opposites around which contrasting values cluster and to which Booth is variously attracted.³⁴ Both are known to Booth from his youth, and Miss Mathews quickly reveals her position as rival for the hero's affections at that time in a prefiguration of her efforts to attract Booth away from Amelia. This symmetry of plot functions draws attention to the differences between the two women. Motivated entirely by the grossest kind of vanity and egotism, Miss Mathews' original attraction to Booth arises instan-

taneously by means of jealousy over another woman's threatened precedence at a ball, whereas Amelia's love for Booth is a highly refined form of self-love, responding gradually to his sympathy at her disfiguring accident and indignation at malicious reactions to it. In a similar distinction, Miss Mathews' continued attempts to portray herself as an equally loving alternative to Amelia cannot blind Booth to the fact that her attractions are entirely physical, which can for him only be "the Object of Liking," while Amelia's attraction for him illustrates the sole power of "Love to be the Object of Love" (226). Thus the courtship story of Amelia and Booth illustrates both Booth's maxim that love begets love and Fielding's belief that ideal self-love radiates outward to encompass, first immediate relations and friends, and ultimately all of mankind. Miss Mathews' jealous and destructive passion, on the other hand, acts as a specific illustration of the social perversions figured by the vortex structure of the novel's opening: when Hebberts' deceit of her, effected largely by her willing self-flattery, is revealed, she attempts to destroy him, and when the guilt she feels in having disappointed her father makes self-deceit a "Necessity," she contrives a hatred of him over a disobliging trifle in order "to ease [Her]self" (57).

Indeed, Miss Mathews' attempted re-configuration of causal reality according to her self-love is illustrated in the skewed syntactical pointing of her description of her father's fate: "When any tender Idea intruded into my Bosom, I immediately raised this Fantom of an Injury in my Imagination, and it considerably lessened the Fury of that Sorrow which I should have otherwise felt to the Loss of so good a Father; who died within a few Months of my Departure from him" (57-58). When focus shifts from the hearer to the teller of a story, then, Fielding views the potential of narration for portraying an objectified

self as highly dubious; the willed externalization of a Harriet Byron studying herself in the mirror or in memory as Sir Charles must have seen her would appear to be an impossibility. As Bender has described it, *Amelia's* two prison autobiographies associate first-person narration with "self-serving immorality."³⁵ Miss Mathews' distorted syntax provides evidence that in "viewing [her] Virtues and Vices as through a Perspective, . . . [she] turn[s] the Glass always to [her] own Advantage, so as to diminish the one, and as greatly to magnify the other" (31); lest the reader remain undecided, Booth's attempt to restrain laughter at one point and his later interruption of the self-pitying account with a question about the fate of the father provide guides to interpretation. Thus her attempt to rewrite her own story in telling it to Booth is doomed to failure.³⁶ Booth's own story, in turn, may escape the worst pitfalls of self-rationalization in its focus on Amelia rather than upon himself, but its romantic content nevertheless seduces him into an emotional state which makes him only too ready to conclude with a grateful address of "great Tenderness" to Miss Mathews and a revival of the "much Affection" for her which he had presumably all but forgotten before the narrative began (150).³⁷ Finally, Mrs. Bennet's story begins with details about her early life that suggest to the narrator that "she was desirous of inculcating a good Opinion of herself . . . before she came to the more dangerous and suspicious Part of her Character" (268); she wavers between calling herself "an Adulteress and a Murderer" and suggesting that Amelia "be readier to acquit [her] than [she is] to acquit [her]self" (267). In this case, Amelia immediately improves on the hint of her role as reassuring listener, leaving the reader even more uncertain than he or she was in the case of Miss Mathews about the degree to which rationalized guilt can be detected in the narrative.

The impossibility in *Amelia* of self-narration issuing in self-knowledge points to two other, apparently contradictory, features of the novel. While telling one's own story is suspect, it is also the primary vehicle of narration in this work; the refusal of the narrator of *Tom Jones* to tell *Amelia's* story has long annoyed lovers of the earlier novel, as I have indicated. Unlike the genially despotic narrator of the earlier work riding comfortably upon a surface of gossip and partial perspective, *Amelia's* narrator seems himself unable to find a reliable vantage-point and tone for his story, suggesting that the world he is depicting neither generates a coherent image of itself nor even allows for the imposition of such an image.³⁸ Thus he abandons the reader to the commentary of Booth during the long narrative of Miss Mathews, suggests a plethora of excuses for the adultery of Booth only to leave him entirely to the reader's judgment, hints at explanations for characters' actions which are later shown to be manifestly false,³⁹ and moralizes upon the basis of judgments which prove as superficial and inadequate as those of his characters. The latter difficulty is illustrated in his early lament, inspired by James's generosity, "that so few are to be found of this benign Disposition; that while Wantonness, Vanity, Avarice and Ambition are every Day rioting and triumphing in the Follies and Weakness, the Ruin and Desolation of Mankind, scarce one Man in a thousand is capable of tasting the Happiness of others" (170); James is of course later revealed to illustrate exactly this incapacity of sympathizing with Booth.⁴⁰

This propensity to errors of judgment is paralleled by the fallibility of Dr. Harrison despite his authoritative status as friend, mentor, and spiritual guide; he is mortified enough by the discovery of James's villainy to admit that he is "shocked at seeing it so artfully disguised under the Appearance of so much Virtue" and that "[his] own Vanity is a little hurt in having

been so grossly imposed upon" (374). If Amelia, Dr. Harrison, and the narrator can be so thoroughly, albeit temporarily, deceived with respect to a character's motives, one is tempted to conclude that the watchful prudence of an Amelia and the collaboration of heroine, male and female friends, and advisor are all necessary in order to detect and thwart evil. In an interesting contrast to the over-plotting of Maskwell in *The Double-Dealer* and of Blifil in *Tom Jones* which finally leads to their detection, James's evil is both less and more secure from discovery in the world of *Amelia*: less so because the text also contains an intimate and virtuous social group that can find it out through hard work, and more so because it never is fully revealed to Booth and to society in general.⁴¹

Given the unreliability of self-narration and even of more conventionally authoritative narration, it is appropriate that Amelia does not act as teller for herself or for others in any portrayed conversation. Most frequently cast in the role of sympathetic listener, she confides in the Doctor as advisor and surrogate father only under great necessity or at Booth's direction. Her recorded comments in fact suggest in crucial moments of self-consciousness a lack of verbal facility that seems designed to reveal genuine and undisguised emotion with an exemplary discomfort not found in the more artful disclaimers of Miss Mathews or Mrs. Bennet. Amelia's response of "Well, nay, . . . I don't know what I am doing--well--there--" (482) when Atkinson at last confesses his love and begs the favour of a kiss is anticlimactic, to say the least. Booth admits that he does Amelia "an Injury" when he represents only her words of response at his mock-confession of love for another woman: "La! Mr. Booth.--In this Town. I--I--I thought I could have guessed for once; but I have an ill Talent that way--I will never attempt to guess any thing again." Indeed, it is "Her Manner, Look, Voice" which are "inimitable" in their "Sweetness, Softness,

Innocence, Modesty" (71). As inarticulate heroine, Amelia admirably avoids the egotism and delusion which seem to contaminate all self-representation. For her to tell her own story would require in her the self-consciousness of Richardson's Pamela and Harriet, a self-consciousness which for Fielding is compromising to the domestic heroine, and which he must therefore deny her even if that denial threatens the very authority of narration itself. At the same time, her self-abnegation requires that she resign portrayals of herself to others, most obviously in the instance of Dr. Harrison's verbal and Mrs. Atkinson's corporeal representations of her at the masquerade, and thereby abdicate the potential, exploited by Pamela's verbal skills, for the expansive ordering of social chaos around her exemplary centre.

Amelia's exemplary nature involves not only an unwillingness to represent herself in any public form, but also an ability to be secretive about what would infringe upon the well-being of others.⁴² In this society in which individuals are all too ready to express their passions in a self-indulgent and destructive manner, Amelia is admirable in her readiness to be thought "mean, vulgar, and selfish" by her husband on the occasion of Bagillard's assault on her virtue (134), or peevish at the snobbery of Mrs. James when in fact avoiding the attentions of the husband, or foolishly superstitious about dreams in hopes of preventing a meeting of the two men after James's challenge. That such secrecy is less than ideal is unquestionable, but that it is also a necessity, because of a code of honour which is an even greater evil, is evidenced by the approval of Amelia's actions by Dr. Harrison, the Atkinsons, and even Booth when cognisant of them. Thus the heroine's silence is a feature of her rational and socialized self-discipline more than of an ideal sensibility of speaking gestures.⁴³

In contrast to the heroine's verbal self-discipline, both Booth and Amelia's opposite Miss Mathews fail to maintain a similar kind of secrecy. At one point the Doctor enjoins Booth to silence regarding his letter on adultery as "a wholesome Exercise to [his] Mind" (424-25), an exercise which Booth fails shamefully to perform, using the letter as a weapon to accuse Amelia unjustly of secrecy in order to hide his own gambling debt. Miss Mathews' entire story represents a failure to maintain the kind of secrecy which in a lady signifies, it not virtue, at least shame. Thus she reveals her passion prematurely to her lover in a manner that assures him of her subsequent easy yielding of her chastity to him, and later inappropriately betrays the affair to her father while in a fit. By the time she meets Booth, she laments, "now I have no Secrets; the World knows all." Rather than learn from the consequences of this failure to guard her words and her virtue, however, she now concludes that "it is not worth [her] while to conceal any thing," using past failure as a justification for revealing to Booth what he did not know and what will ensnare him: her former affection for him (47). These contrasts to the behaviour of Amelia, together with the heroine's own secrecy about the letter in which Miss Mathews has revealed the affair with Booth, point clearly to the admirable nature of Amelia's secret-keeping.⁴⁴

Amelia's concealments are integral to her ideal domestic virtue in that she has no secrets of her own to hide. Unlike Miss Mathews or even Mrs. Bennet, whose status as a woman with a past renders her attractive but also potentially dangerous and certainly morally compromised, Amelia's watchful innocence and her focus of all her desires upon her husband and children mean her private story can be told with no cause for apology or rationalization. Even the narrator's scrutiny of her response to Atkinson's confession of love shows that it passes

"without any Injury to her Chastity," as but "a momentary Tenderness and Complacence" (482-83) which she effectively channels into a celebration for her family of her "unusual good Spirits" (488). When revelation does become necessary, however, Amelia's enlisting of the help of Dr. Harrison indicates that a judicious selection of one's confidants is as important as a careful guarding of dangerous secrets. In agreeing to hide her love for Hebberts from her father, Miss Mathews is as faulty as she was in revealing that love to the soldier. More important to the novel itself, Booth's error in not confessing to Amelia "a Crime . . . which he fore[sees will] occasion him so many Difficulties and Terrors to endeavour to conceal" exposes him to all of the direct conflicts inherent in plots and plotting instead of allowing him the ideal resolution offered by the marriage relationship of "immediate Forgiveness from that best of Women" (176). Colonel James, the man in whom Booth does confide, is of course the worst possible choice because of his infatuation with Miss Mathews. Thus the secrecy motif is made to underscore again the contrast between the false security offered by supposed friends and the domestic circle as a safe environment for intimate self-revelation--except, significantly, when the corrupt values of society, represented by the obligations of the code of honour, have already infiltrated the private sphere in the character of Booth.

In his portrait of Amelia's social and narrative behaviour, Fielding challenges the reader to acquit or convict his heroine as ideal centre of his model circle, just as Congreve and Richardson challenge their audiences with the task of judging their heroes. Beginning with Miss Mathews' cynical comments, the varied responses to her range from accusations of prudery, to lust after her person only, to near-reverence of her as an angel. The author of course provides numerous indications, especially through the structural

parallels and contrasts between Amelia and Miss Mathews, of the choice which the ideal reader will make; the most overt and succinct judgment expressed in the novel is probably that of the authoritative Dr. Harrison: "I do her no more than Justice, when I say, she is one of the best Creatures I ever knew. She hath a Sweetness of Temper, a Generosity of Spirit, an Openness of Heart--in a Word, she hath a true Christian Disposition. I may call her an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no Guile" (387). This curious evocation of a Christian, patriotic, ungendered, and not specifically domestic standard belies in one sense the circumscribed sphere within which Amelia is content to operate. Identifying Amelia with generalized ideals for the individual in a social context makes the reader's choice a broadly significant one, suggesting that a choice for or against the domestic circle is simultaneously an alignment with or against virtue.

As representative choice-maker in the novel, Booth moves from an attempt to function in both worlds, through the complete frustration of that attempt, to the choice of Amelia's form of confinement as an expression of his freedom of choice. In despite of the tendency of critics to argue either for the admirable good nature of Booth or for his weakness and unworthiness as a husband,⁴⁵ it is important to recognize that it is precisely the mixed nature of his social position which makes him susceptible to the attraction of both spheres. Unlike his wife, he would like to order his life according to a pattern of variation, telling her that "large Companies give us a greater Relish for our own Society when we return to it" (362), but he is caught repeatedly between the two as irreconcilable. Booth's failures as choice-maker thus reflect in part the corruption of the public world in which he moves for at least part of the time. Although married love can be "truly Paradise" because

of its stabilizing influence on individual desire, this is a world which prefers the masquerade as "a sweet, charming, elegant, delicious Place" to which "Paradise itself can hardly be equal" (248). Other social ideals besides that of marriage are equally perverted. The military code of honour which once legitimately required Booth's participation in the Gibraltar campaign has become an obligation to resolve misunderstandings or even to protect one's own vices through duelling: Colonel Bath provides an illustration of the man of many domestic virtues who has become a social menace because of his slavery to this code.⁴⁸ Achievement and its reward of promotion have been replaced by a system of bribery and arbitrary preferment. In an orderly public world, Booth's qualities of good nature, good breeding, and honour might allow him to live with a clear conscience in his public and private lives simultaneously, but given the polarization of the two as evil and good respectively, such a balance is impossible.

In addition, the Booth of most of the novel's action is living with a burdened conscience and is therefore incapable of choosing well between public evil and private good. Because he feels guilt over his adultery, he can be happy neither with Miss Mathews in Newgate nor with Amelia upon his release, and as James points out when Booth indignantly defends the superior attractions of Amelia, his ensnarement by Miss Mathews belies his claim of loyalty to his wife. The taint Booth thereby brings into the domestic circle obstructs the conversational process which is the marital ideal of response to externally originating conflict. Attacks by the noble lord, James, and the bailiff cannot threaten the Booths united; when Booth is hiding the prison affair, a gaming debt, or an assignation with Miss Mathews, on the other hand, the resultant division of purpose renders the couple vulnerable. With actions such as Booth's selection

of James as his confidant rather than Amelia, his manipulation of Amelia into a false quarrel which therefore cannot be genuinely reconciled, and his abandonment of her in response to the call of the gaming table or the threats of Miss Mathews, the hard-earned nonconflictive structure of this ideal social model is much more seriously threatened than it could be by any outside enemy alone.

The potential seriousness of a breach in the domestic wall effected by the moral weakness of one partner is amply illustrated in the story of Mrs. Bennet, where the noble lord successfully penetrates the paradise, literally contaminating both Mrs. Bennet and her husband and by implication contributing to the latter's death of "a Polypus in his Heart" (302). In the even more distasteful account of the noble lord's relationship with Trent and his wife, the couple's previous susceptibility to evil allows for the transformation of their domestic circle, through the lord's means, into a public locus for the unchecked absorption of both the self-gratifying and the unwary into a maelstrom of vice. Thus the figure of the male as intermediate figure between public and private worlds, so common in eighteenth-century literature, is rendered a threat to the family group through Fielding's final version of the good-natured yet fallible male wanderer, first portrayed in the character of Tom Jones but now seen from the domestic perspective.⁴⁷

The novel is explicit in its indications that Booth is morally responsible for many of his family's troubles. Chief among these indications are Dr. Harrison's anger at the cause of Booth's final imprisonment, his willingness to abandon the latter in favour of needy families "who are by Misfortune alone brought to Want" (502), and his reluctant extension of help only on the condition that Amelia "not trust [her] Husband a Day longer in this Town" (505). In the newspaper account of the heroine's recovered fortune, no attempt is made,

even on the loyal Amelia's part, to correct the statement that "the Right Owner of this Estate is a young Lady of the highest Merit . . . who some Time since was married to an idle Fellow, one Lieutenant Booth" (529). Although this report reflects a superficial public view, as Martin C. Battestin has pointed out, Booth's belated confession to Amelia of his own folly and unworthiness becomes necessary to his redemption both spiritually and in the eyes of the reader.⁴⁸ As is commonly acknowledged, Booth's invocation of the doctrine of the passions to avoid the self-condemnation attendant upon the alternative possibility "that any Pleasure upon Earth could drive the Thoughts of Amelia one Instant from [his] Mind" (109), together with his subsequent adultery, indicates his refusal to acknowledge his own responsibility as choice-maker. The novel's careful illustration of "the several small and almost imperceptible Links in every Chain of Events by which all the great Actions of the World are produced" (496) exposes the dishonesty of such a denial of individual responsibility and its threat to a healthy marriage.⁴⁹ It is only Booth's "firm and constant Affection" for Amelia (415) which finally motivates him to break out of the orbit of Miss Mathews; because Colonel James's own marriage, by contrast, provides no such counter-pull to the charms of anti-social love, the Colonel is last seen doting on a bloated and tyrannical Mathews in an illustration of the effects of the all-consuming vortex of self-love on individual freedom. Booth's rupture with Miss Mathews and his confession of the affair to Amelia thus indicate that the assumption of moral responsibility is a necessary aspect of any attempt to function successfully in both public and private spheres.

Dr. Harrison is the moral agent who successfully bridges the gulf between the novel's private and public worlds. As I have noted earlier, he acts generally as a representative of domestic values outside of Amelia's home, and

particularly as an authority figure in her stead at the masquerade. As spokesman for a social ideal, he thus plays the role of moral guide to the reader, making the kind of choices in the capacity of judge which Booth avoids making in the capacity of actor.⁵⁰ In general, his application of Christian ethical standards to public issues such as preferment and the support of literary production matches his concern for Amelia's right action in the family matters of attendance at the masquerade and prosecution of her sister. While Harrison finally recommends that Booth flee the town because of his incapacity to function successfully in it, his own active pursuit of legal justice with respect to Murphy in the novel's dénouement illustrates directly his own "Maxim . . . that no Man [can] descend below himself in doing any Act which may contribute to protect an innocent Person, or to bring a Rogue to the Gallows" (523). The Doctor's example thus creates a pointed contrast to several instances of less admirable citizenship: to Booth's suspect prosecution of the thieving maidservant after he himself has stripped Amelia of all her goods, to the surgeon's unwillingness to involve himself in pursuit of Murphy, and to the mob's readiness "to enter immediately upon Business . . . in order to proceed to do Justice in their summary Way" (519).⁵¹ He condemns the perverted code of honour through displays of an alternative conversational mediation, in which he compliments Bath for his generosity in "fight[ing] so zealously for a Religion by which [he is] to be damned" (366) and shames James into withdrawing and keeping secret his challenge to Booth. Dr. Harrison's value for, and skill in, domestic conversation as well is revealed in the fact that he "is not only able to advise [Booth], but . . . knows the Manner of advising" (148). On another occasion, Amelia is able to confide in the Doctor when the interference of Booth's dependence on James and the potential effects of jealousy make it

impossible for her to converse openly with her husband.

At a less direct level, the Doctor functions through letters, as a voice of admonition against excessive grief at a mother's death, of chastisement for the folly of Booth's presentation of himself in public with an equipage, and of judgment upon the attack on social stability represented by adultery. In each of these cases, the essential truth of the Doctor's message is subject to abuse by the larger social world, whether through the mockery of Miss Mathews, through the original misrepresentation of facts by neighbours, or through the falling of his letter into wrong hands. Ultimately, however, his judgments are confirmed by the structure of the novel. Regret over the loss of Mrs. Harris and of her fortunes can neither negate the Booths' happiness in each other nor hasten the ultimate return of the estate; similarly, Dr. Harrison's ill-founded criticism of Booth's imprudence on one occasion is highly applicable to his behaviour in general, and the attack on adultery is as broadly relevant as the response of the masquerade bucks makes apparent. In keeping with Fielding's insistence upon the interrelation of private and public virtues, it is fitting that the self-love of Justice Thrasher, who condemns the innocent and then sits down to the spoils at the local ale-house, thereby setting in motion the social vortex of Newgate which entraps Booth, is finally replaced at the instigation of Dr. Harrison by the selflessness of the good justice who abandons his dinner table to collaborate in bringing larger social structures into alignment with Booth's repentant merit.⁵² Such action for the establishment of right order is accompanied by authoritative pronouncements of its meaning; thus it is the Doctor who tells Booth, "Providence hath done you the Justice at last, which it will one Day or other render to all Men" (522).⁵³

The domestic detail of delayed dinners, child-care arrangements, and

newly-redeemed gowns that accompanies the novel's just dénouement, representative of the kind of detail which made Richardson abandon his reading of the work and which is parodied by Thornton, is in fact employed by Fielding in *Amelia* as a technique directly opposed to the kind of rarefying and abstracting effect of the conversational circle in Richardson.⁵⁴ Thus *Amelia* has the gift of creating "*Happiness in a Cottage*" (86), of embracing and transforming the ordinary, whereas Miss Mathews can only romanticize away or make a mockery of quotidian realities, and the Jameses allow the most superficial of them to govern and distort their essential selves. Most frequently, domestic tableaux in *Amelia* are centred upon a supper table, at which either Booth and *Amelia* enjoy a simple meal together or *Amelia* waits alone while her wrongly-choosing husband sits at a gaming table, a tavern table, or the supper table of Miss Mathews. This fundamental image of the reality of, or at least the potential for, domestic happiness in the face of poverty and an aggressive outside world runs as a theme with numerous variations through the text. *Amelia*, Booth assures Miss Mathews at the beginning of the novel, was as beautiful in the rags of her old nurse as she had ever been when dressed for an assembly; we find later that she is able to perform "the Office of a Cook, with as much Pleasure as a fine Lady generally enjoys in dressing herself out for a Ball" (236), and that "it [is not] possible to view this fine Creature in a more amiable Light, than while she [is] dressing her Husband's Supper with her little Children playing round her" (488). For Miss Mathews, on the other hand, poverty is only a romantic cliché, so that "A Cottage with the Man one loves is a Palace" (86), and generosity stems merely from the fact that to her "Money [is] as Dirt, (indeed she may be thought not to have [know] the Value of it)" (158). While *Amelia*'s essentially fixed and virtuous nature, like *Pamela*'s, is transparently expressed in every station of

life and in every domestic function, Mrs. James's 'nature' changes with her social station, and Colonel James provides an example of those who "dress out their Countenances at their own Pleasure, as they do their Bodies" (361).

This almost sacramental view of the everyday lends itself to a focus on the table group as the centre of the ideally domestic, expansively hospitable conversational circle. Fielding strongly associates Amelia with the welcoming table at which she "bestir[s] herself as nimbly to provide [her husband] a Repast, as the most industrious Hostess in the Kingdom doth, when some unexpected Guest of extraordinary Quality arrives at her House" (213). Again, however, the ideal is first portrayed by its antithesis. Conversation round the table of "the Governor of these (not improperly called infernal) Regions," that is, Newgate, at which are seated "Persons of Honour" including the already implicated Booth, along with Miss Mathews, Mr. Robinson, and the corrupt lawyer Murphy, predictably degenerates from its veneer of elaborate courtesy to oaths, open insults, and recommendations of the efficacy of bribery and perjury "to save the Life of any Christian whatever, much more of so pretty a Lady" as Miss Mathews (60-64).⁵⁵ Similarly, the refreshment table at Vauxhall is by virtue of its public situation vulnerable to the intrusion of the two rakes, who are able to destroy "totally . . . the Mirth of this little innocent Company [of Doctor Harrison and friends], who were before enjoying complete Satisfaction" (398).

Furthermore, the hospitable openness between private circles is itself subject to abuse. When Colonel James invades the domestic circle seated around a supper-table first at the Booths' lodgings and then at the Atkinsons', he brings, on the first occasion, the outsider's gaze which leads to his passion for Amelia, and later, the discordant influence of the partially known deceiver whose double meaning incites misunderstanding between husband and wife. This

abuse of the laws of hospitality is duplicated by the noble lord, who invites himself into Amelia's home and in turn induces Trent to invite the Booths to dine in hopes of luring her into a position of vulnerability with the help of a gaming table for Booth. Mrs. Ellison's table, like Trent's, serves as an ambiguous and potentially treacherous unknown ground, where the lowly Sergeant Atkinson can meet Mrs. Bennet, but also where the latter formerly met the noble lord, and where under the influence of alcohol the landlady's discourse becomes offensive and self-condemning. Colonel James's table, of course, must be avoided by Amelia at all costs throughout much of the novel.

Several figures, however, offer hospitality which differs significantly from the pattern of false friendship and entrapment that appears to characterize the majority of London's interiors. The provincial Dr. Harrison acts not only as host to the Booths, but also as willing dupe of the old gentleman and his scholastic son; much earlier, his immediate and warm hospitality to Booth and Amelia upon their return from abroad contrasts markedly with the cold delay of Amelia's sister, which serves as "a kind of Key to her future Conduct" (141). Furthermore, the Doctor's free hospitality is a reflection of his disregard for differences of rank and fortune in the encouragement of merit and virtue; thus he commends Amelia for a friendship with Sergeant Atkinson, "in Opposition to the Custom of the World; which instead of being formed on the Precepts of our Religion to consider each other as Brethren, teaches us to regard those who are a Degree below us, either in Rank or Fortune, as a Species of Beings of an inferior Order in the Creation" (377). By means of its rejection of cynical corruption in favour of an ideally sociable virtue, then, the social circle for which Dr. Harrison speaks becomes the most truly inclusive of the circles I have examined to this point. From the noble lord to Betty the maidservant, those who

exclude themselves from this group do so not with the tacit encouragement of its centre, but by their own deliberate choice of aggressive and isolating evil.⁵⁴

In this respect, the Doctor provides an index to the series of table groupings with which the novel concludes. The affinity of Dr. Harrison with the good justice who charges Murphy has already been noted; in contrast to Justice Thrasher's selfish and class-conscious appetites, and like the doctor's egalitarian zeal for justice, this good magistrate first defers his dinner in order to respond to the need and then invites Harrison and Booth to share it with him.⁵⁷ This table marks an ideal conjunction of the private and the public, a conjunction whose successful attainment of virtue is symbolized by Amelia's arrival in her "clean white Gown" to grace the table with her happy beauty. The magistrate's good humour can thus be vaguely attributed to "Amelia's Beauty, or the Reflexion on the remarkable Act of Justice he had performed, or whatever Motive" (525). Symbolic reconciliations and *eclaircissements* continue, first around the breakfast table, between Mrs. Atkinson, Booth, and Amelia, and then at the dinner table of the Jameses, presided over by Dr. Harrison. Finally, the Booths and Atkinsons travel to Amelia's house, where they are grouped, with Amelia's former nurse and Atkinson's mother, around a dinner table "at which perhaps were assembled some of the best and happiest People then in the World" (531). The narrative thus concludes in a representation of the domestic ideal as egalitarian, familial, virtuous, and therefore happy. Its basis in merit rather than social status or blood relationship thus suggests an accessibility of the example to all that is absent in Pamela's tales opposing the good and wealthy to the naughty and poor, or in Harriet's symbolic induction into the hall of the Grandison ancestors.⁵⁸

Further, as these ideal and anti-ideal table groupings suggest, conversa-

tion is used as a chief moral indicator in *Amelia*. Unlike *Tom Jones*'s conspicuous avoidance of detailed conversational portrayals, particularly those of an intimate rather than a comic nature,⁵⁹ the later novel includes equally conspicuous and lengthy discussions indicating their expanded function as a vehicle for the exploration of ideas and characters and as a means of portraying the domestic group.⁶⁰ This difference reflects in part a shift from a predominantly Augustan portrayal of conversation as an exchange of ideas between men of an equally high intelligence, educational level, and status, exemplified in general by the relation between narrator and reader in *Tom Jones* as opposed to its characters, to a more Spectatorial view of conversation as an exchange of responses between unique individuals for the purpose of establishing a consensus of value and a common ground of knowledge. Or, as Loftis has argued, by providing for shared perspectives and a measure of objectivity, intimate conversation in the family setting illustrates the strength of the domestic group over the solitary individual in interpreting experience.⁶¹

Fielding's "Essay on Conversation," first published in 1743, suggests that this shift between the novels represents a clear distinction between a conversational ideal and its practical social function.⁶² Just as for Mr. Spectator, so for Booth and Amelia the most mutually satisfying and productive conversation is that between intimates, where openness and respect allow for the fullest understanding combined with the deepest communion. It is no accident, therefore, that the Booths' most successful verbal exchanges culminate in sexual conversation, while their greatest unhappiness arises from a thwarting of the conversational process thwarted either by physical separation or by the spiritual separation occasioned by Booth's dishonesty. Thus, for the sake of contrast between the marriage of cold convenience and ideal wedded conversation,

the narrator at one point follows Mrs. James through an evening of "talk[ing] again and again over the Diversions and News of the Town" to her solitary bed, and then describes the Booths, who, after a humble meal and pleasant conversation, retire "happy in each other" or, according to the first edition, "with mutual Desires, and equal Warmth, [fly] into each other's Arms" (180 and App. VI, 569).⁶³ The implicit link between verbal and sexual conversation in the Booths' relationship becomes a dangerous one when the former is viewed simply as a means to the latter, however; thus the long exchange of stories between Booth and Miss Mathews in Newgate shades through Booth's euphemistic choice of "Miss Mathews's Conversation" in preference to either "the Punch or the Pillow" when the Governor offers to "lock up double" into a week of "criminal Conversation" between the two prisoners (153-54).

Existing within a foreign and hostile social context, the unanimity of husband and wife in *Amelia* can be achieved only through the medium of often-painful conversations, such as the debate, raised by the penetration of the noble lord's influence into the Booth household, about Amelia's attendance at the first masquerade. Significantly, such conversations often conclude short of the truth about outside characters and their actions of which the reader is more fully aware; the narrative structure thus repeatedly and deliberately emphasizes unity over such truth, resolving conversation rather with reconciliation and an embrace. The implication is that marital consensus is sufficient in itself to deflect the threats of externally originating conflict.⁶⁴ The success of such exchanges is contrasted to the conversations illustrating the impossibility of sympathetic conversation outside of the domestic circle. Such exchanges include the superficial conversation between Amelia and Mrs. James, "in which the Weather and the Diversions of the Town, [are] well canvassed"

(180), or abortive conversation in which Booth attempts to "[open] his Heart" to Colonel Bath, whereupon "the Colonel [is] got into his Stilts; and it [is] impossible to take him down, nay, it [is] as much as Booth [can] possibly do to part with him without an actual Quarrel; nor would he perhaps have been able to have accomplished it, had not the Colonel by Accident turned at last to take *Booth's Side of the Question*" (195-96), or insinuating conversation in which Trent hints to Booth how to "make [his] Fortune without the least Injury to the Chastity of Mrs. Booth" (440), that is, by pretending to prostitute her.

The notion of domestic conversation as unique and precarious in *Amelia* makes evident another contrast between domestic temporality as it is portrayed in *Pamela* Part II and in this novel. When Pamela retrospectively describes B.'s account of his conversion, for example, the reader is being given a summary of the foundation upon which the B.s' static and definitive domestic round has already been built. Defused conflict, tableaux, imagery, and fragmentary narrative forms create a heaven on earth in Richardson's sequel which Fielding's focus upon marriage under attack never seeks to convey. In fact, it is Miss Mathews who denies temporality in her attempt to revive a former attraction and thereby cause Booth to forget his intervening commitment to Amelia; the ideal setting for her seduction, therefore, is what J. Paul Hunter has called the prison's "timeless world of the moment where past and future can be temporarily construed as meaningless."⁶⁵ In *Amelia*, therefore, the temporal mode of domestic harmony is the sum of innumerable processes of inadvertent misunderstanding, clarifying discussion, and reconciliation. The seemingly endless repetitive-ness of the Booth's troubles at the hands of deceptive friends, which more than one critic has found claustrophobic, is transformed within the intimate circle into endless opportunities for what the narrator calls "exquisite Moments" of

reunion and mutual endearment, of which "a very few . . . do, in Reality, over-balance the longest Enjoyments which can ever fall to the Lot of the worst" (359).⁶⁶ Although the equation here appears superficially similar to Mr. B.'s claim that one hour of married bliss outweighs a lifetime of guilty tumults and is worth a lifetime of service, Pamela's husband is speaking of any hour in an unbroken series of tranquil hours, while the narrator of *Amelia* is referring to reunion after physical or psychological estrangement. In fact, the terms of this exchange are more explicitly stated by Booth in describing the eclairsissement after Bagillard's attempted seduction of Amelia: "To say the Truth, I afterwards thought myself almost obliged to him for a Meeting with *Amelia*, the most luxuriously delicate that can be imagined" (133).

Mutability, then, is a fact of the human condition in *Amelia*. Although the time scheme of the novel is only questionably exact, despite arguments of Arthur Sherbo to the contrary, the passage of time in itself is given great prominence as the indicator of Booth's varying degrees of freedom;⁶⁷ in contrast to the steady and directed journey of *Tom Jones*, however, this movement is a record of the repetitious and seemingly arbitrary swings in the fortunes of Booth. In the midst of such temporal flux, the relative constancy of an ideal centre such as the heroine renders all the more admirable her steadfast love and virtue and, as Eric Rothstein has pointed out, provides for the judgment of character the index of an ability to "mak[e] the past germane to the present."⁶⁸ Steadfastness does not result in a transcendence of change and decay, however; unlike Pamela, who appears physically invulnerable despite smallpox, repeated lyings-in, and the deaths of parents and even Polly Darnford, Amelia begins her narrated life with an accident that leaves her scarred and ends that life described in qualified terms as "still the finest Woman in *England* of her Age"

and in the biased ones of "Booth himself," as being "as handsome as ever" (533).

Despite the apparently unending cycle of expansion, threat, forcible separation, and reunion to which the Booths are subject through the machinations of numerous villains and even through the susceptibility of Dr. Harrison to false appearances engineered by these villains, the passage of time in the novel is in fact governed by a force sympathetic to Amelia as an appropriate centre of sympathy, admiration, and love, a force which Dr. Harrison identifies as Providence. Symbolic of this opposition between a cyclical and uncontrollable fortune and a purposeful, progressive temporality are the perspective glass which leads Booth into "a disadvantageous Opinion of Providence" in the belief that his own misfortunes are beyond his desert and control (31), and the miniature of Amelia which initiates in its original thief Atkinson and the perjurer Robinson the chain reaction of love and pity that restores to the Booths Amelia's fortune. That providential temporality is allied with recognition of Amelia's essential worth is further indicated by the fact that the pawnbroker, for whom Amelia has no identity except as a customer in the public world of his shop, advances her only the value of the framing gold and diamonds, calculating "the prettiest Face in the World . . . as of no Value into the Bargain" (487), while it is through the sight of the familiar face that Robinson is awakened to a sense of guilt.⁶⁹ Rothstein explains the novel's resolution in favour of Amelia as a kind of affirmation of what she symbolizes in contrast to the systems of the larger social world: "What Amelia is, and what she providentially brings to the Booths' marriage, also leads to preferment higher and more significant than anything Mrs. Atkinson could have won as a false Amelia from my lord, or that James, as a would-be Booth in Amelia's arms, can offer."⁷⁰

The emphasis of Dr. Harrison's first letter upon the brevity of life as

a "Journey to the glorious Mansions of everlasting Bliss" (138), echoed at the novel's mid-point with Booth and the stoic discussing that brevity's effect on the experience of suffering, remains implicit, as I have indicated, in the terms of the novel's concluding descriptions. In what sense, then, is stasis achieved? Although its most visible indications are the restoration of Amelia's fortune and the removal of the Booths from the city, the concluding stability of this novel resembles that of *Pamela* Part II's conclusion, if not in a defeat of mutability itself, in a permanent physical and spiritual union of the central couple as an end to the cycle of separations and returns around which the novel has been structured. The Booths, we read, have not ceased to grow old, but rather, "have, ever since the above Period of this History, enjoyed an uninterrupted Course of Health and Happiness." After the payment of his city debts, as I have indicated, Booth "hath never since been thirty Miles from home." Dr. Harrison, true to his achieved balance of the public and private, "divides his Time between his Parish, his old Town, and *Booth's*" (532).

Nevertheless, the force of the values which the Booths represent has not succeeded in drawing the city into alignment with the domestic circle. As the fates of the evil actors indicate, the only character who appears to have changed is Booth, who has chosen Amelia as his centre and therefore necessarily turned his back on the city. The rightness of that choice is underscored in the penultimate sentence: "Nothing can equal the Serenity of their Lives," while its foundation in the strength of the domestic unit is reflected in the *Pamela*-like reflexivity of the narrator's suggestion to Amelia that Booth has "the best of Wives" and her response that he has "made her the happiest of Women" (533). The individualistic and singular nature of this conclusion, however, suggests less the optimistic construct of the exemplary heroine imitated in aligned and

admiring circles than a stark polarization of moral choice as leading to two extremes of misery and happiness. The novel thus concludes in a stylized divorce between the domestic circle and the social vortex because of the refusal of larger social structures, and the self-serving individuals who operate within them, to allow the orderly model to expand through its male representative into a broader philanthropic and patriotic sphere.

As self-effacing and unself-conscious centre of the domestic social circle that is the starting point of virtuous male action for Fielding, Amelia herself can have no direct role in the ordering of the larger social world. Indeed, her vulnerability to verbal misrepresentation and sexual attack immobilizes her in an enforced fixity that is the price of her attractive stability as centre. As Fielding would have it, the exemplary heroine's vulnerability heightens his portrayal of the corruptions of the public world; the failures of the novel's female self-narrators nevertheless imply as well that any female attempt at narrative authority is suspect. The domestic model therefore remains intrinsically dependent upon the received authority of the individual male. That male may be a wise and devoted Christian patriarch such as Dr. Harrison; then again, he may be a well-meaning but weak and morally tainted Booth. In the latter eventuality, the female domestic centre can finally prove attractive enough to fix the male and ensure a circumscribed happiness, but it can never effect an ideal expansion of the circle into virtuous public action.

Thus the private circle and the public vortex remain in inevitable opposition, with the latter as an ongoing threat to be watchfully resisted by the former. The resignation of moral initiative to the domestically peripheral male, whose irresponsible default leaves the family circle exposed to an aggressively hostile public world, reduces the model of an authoritative

conversational circle, so hopefully and fully outlined in *Sir Charles Grandison*, to the status of an otherworldly vision at worst, a circumscribed retreat at best. Sarah Fielding's *The Adventures of David Simple*, written before *Grandison* and *Amelia*, awards the latter, relatively optimistic place, to the ideal, while the 1753 sequel, *Volume the Last*, retreats from even that limited optimism to represent the conversational circle as nothing but a distant dream.

1. Henry Fielding, "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," in *Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq; Volume One*, ed. Henry Knight Miller (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1972), 174, 176-77. See also Miller's extensive introductory comparison of Fielding's social philosophy with that of Cicero (xviii-xxvii).

2. Supporting this view of the two authors' altered portrayals of the self in their final novels is Peter Sabor's study of their movement towards a similarly psychological-social model of characterization, in "Amelia and Sir Charles Grandison: The Convergence of Fielding and Richardson," *Wascana Review* 17.2 (1982): 3-18. See also Michael McKeon's *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1987), 417-19, for a discussion of the increasing commonality of Richardson and Fielding in a shift of the novel genre from a preoccupation with progressive or conservative concerns to its later focus upon the self in conflict with society.

3. Thus *Amelia* provides an early version of a fictional structure that Nancy Armstrong describes in *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987), as contrasting "the marketplace driven by male labor . . . imagined as a centrifugal force that broke up the vertical chains organizing an earlier notion of society" with "the nuclear family, a social organization with a mother rather than a father at its center" as a "centripetal" force holding isolated social units together (95).

4. See Fielding's use of Horace's image of the self-sufficient soul as a smooth ball in "Of the Remedy of Affliction For the Loss of our Friends" (*Miscellanies*, 213), and *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*, ed. Fredson Bowers, intro. and commentary Martin C. Battestin (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1975), 471-72, 760-61. *Amelia*, with its city setting, has been seen as the author's most fully developed portrayal of social interdependence by James E. Evans, in "The Social Design of Fielding's Novels," *College Literature* 7 (1980): 92, 99-101. Even Robert Alter, who sees the novel's public and private domains as insufficiently integrated, praises the tightly drawn lines of connection between parts of the social structure (*Fielding and the Nature of the Novel* [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968], 172). Alter (150-51) and Battestin ("The Problem of *Amelia*: Hume, Barrow, and the Conversion of Captain Booth," *ELH* 41 [1974]: 613) have both emphasized the importance of marriage as the fundamental social unit for Fielding and therefore the significance of its centrality in *Amelia*. Battestin has also commented here upon the novel's condemnation of antisocial self-interest (626-28), as have Evans (99-101) and C. H. K. Bevan ("The Unity of Fielding's *Amelia*," *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 14 [1970]: 91-93, 98-99, 104).

5. It should be made clear that Fielding creates this context to a great extent through his self-appointed role of censor of politics, manners, and literature in his journalistic writings (See, for example, *The Jacobite's Journal and Related Writings*, ed. W. B. Coley [Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1975], 127-29, and *The Covent-Garden Journal and A Plan of the Universal Register-Office*, ed. Bertrand A. Goldgar [Oxford: Clarendon (Wesleyan), 1988], 40). Fielding's first discussion of *Amelia* in the *Covent-Garden Journal* takes the form of a trial in the "Court of Censorial Enquiry"; as Goldgar has noted in his edition of the *Journal*, a number of Fielding's defences of the novel here

do not respond to, but in fact anticipate, published criticism of the novel (*Covent-Garden Journal*, 57 and n.1). Martin C. Battestin, with Ruthe R. Battestin, in *Henry Fielding: A Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), has provided evidence of Fielding's sense of responsibility in censoring and educating the English public, both in his legal practice and through his writings, during his tenure as magistrate (460-63, 470-71).

6. See ch. 4 above. Murial Brittain Williams, in *Marriage: Fielding's Mirror of Morality* (University: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1973), has pointed out the significance of the novel's "division of the center of interest and the center of action" between Amelia and Booth, respectively, to its central marriage theme (107-08), and Carla Mulford ("Booth's Progress and the Resolution of *Amelia*," *Studies in the Novel* 16 [1984]: 29 n.8) describes Amelia as the focal point toward which Booth progresses. For J. Paul Hunter, in *Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and the Chains of Circumstance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1975), 196-99, Booth almost courts temptation while Amelia avoids it in a distinction that goes beyond eighteenth-century notions of gender to that between classical and Christian patterns of virtue. John E. Loftis's "Imitation in the Novel: Fielding's *Amelia*," *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 31 (1977): 226-28, has gone further in describing the marriage unit in *Amelia* as protagonist rather than background (226-28). In contrast to these views, critics such as Aurélien Digeon (*The Novels of Henry Fielding* [New York: Russell and Russell, 1925; reprint, 1962], 200-06) and Robert L. Oakman ("The Character of the Hero: A Key to Fielding's *Amelia*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 16 [1976]: 478) have variously selected Amelia and Booth as the novel's focus of attention to which the other acts only as a subsidiary and unsatisfying second.

7. John Bender, *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of Mind in Eighteenth-Century England* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1987), 139. Thomas R. Cleary (*Henry Fielding: Political Writer* [Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1984], 285-86) and Brian McCrea (*Henry Fielding and the Politics of Mid-Eighteenth-Century England* [Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1981], 158-59, 184-87) have emphasized Amelia's non-partisan treatment of political and social ills; while these writers disagree in their explanations of this non-partisan tone as a reflection of Fielding's political allegiances at the time, this tendency to move away from public action as the starting point for reform is in keeping with the novel's emphasis on the private individual as socially responsible and morally influential. The novel's insistence upon assigning responsibility for social ills has led a number of readers to identify the work as an early, if not the first, novel of social protest; see in particular Mona Scheuermann's chapter on *Amelia* in *Social Protest in the Eighteenth-Century English Novel* (Columbus: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1985).

8. Samuel Richardson, *Selected Letters of Samuel Richardson*, ed. John Carroll (Oxford: Clarendon, 1964), 126.

9. Critics who have associated *Amelia*'s female and domestic centre and its newly un-ironic, sentimental moralization with Fielding's response to Richardson's popularity and to misunderstandings of *Tom Jones* include Sabor, 5, Hunter, 193-210, Alan Dugald McKillop, *The Early Masters of English Fiction* (Laurence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1956), 139, and T. Duncan Eaves, "*Amelia* and *Clarissa*," in A

Provision of Human Nature: Essays on Fielding and Others in Honor of Miriam Austin Locke, ed. Donald Kay (University: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1977): 95-110.

10. The expressions "discriminated variety" and "repetition and variation" are used by Eric Rothstein in *Systems of Order and Inquiry in Later Eighteenth-Century Fiction* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1975), 17, 162-63, 183-89, 196, to describe both Fielding's portrayal of a wide range of role possibilities for Booth and his introduction of interpolated stories with parallel features. McKillop has argued that *Grandison* and *Amelia* are premised upon a similarly "melioristic doctrine" in their emphases upon the influence of the social environment upon behaviour, with the difference "that Richardson in his last novel dwells on the good that can be done by those who have the power, Fielding in his last novel on the evil wrought by the bad practices of society and on the ensuing martyrdom of virtue" (141-42).
11. Criticism of *Amelia* has itself been peculiarly structured by a kind of struggle of opposites: analysis and explanation of *Amelia*'s failure has focused studies by Eustace Palmer ("Amelia--The Decline of Fielding's Art," *Essays in Criticism* 21 [1971]: 135-51), Cynthia Griffin Wolff ("Fielding's *Amelia*: Private Virtue and Public Good," *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 10 [1968]: 37-55), Alter, and Andrew Wright (*Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast* [Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1966]), while proof of its success has provided even more of a challenge for the few--notably Digeon (197-204) and George Sherburn ("Fielding's *Amelia*: An Interpretation," *ELH* 3 [1936]: 1-14)--ranged against the critical majority. Similarly, the aesthetic norm of tension and resolution as the basis of novelistic plot has lent to the metaphor of *Amelia*'s falling "between the two literary stools on which it is precariously perched" (Alter, 141) the force of a paradigm for explanations of its supposed failure to resolve its tensions between private and public, ideal and real, good and evil, order and fact, instruction and delight, freedom and necessity, satire and sentiment; see, for example, Alter, 141-48, Wolff, 49-54, C.J. Rawson, *Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal Under Stress: 'Nature's Dance of Death' and other Studies* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 68-70, 96, Wright 44-45, 105, Battestin, "The Problem," 613-48, and Ronald Paulson, *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), 163-64, 234-35.
12. This interpretation is supported by portrayals of Fielding as a transitional figure between aristocrat and man of business, between the stable, hierarchical, and public and more fluid, egalitarian, and private values of their respective social ideals; see Rawson, x, 9-26, Hunter, 10-12, 15, 19-20, 136-39, and McCrea, 9-11, 31-46, 113-21.
13. Robert Folkenflik's "Purpose and Narration in Fielding's *Amelia*," *Novel* 7 (1974): 168, has stated this succinctly with respect to Anthony J. Hassall's reading of the novel ("Fielding's *Amelia*: Dramatic and Authorial Narration," *Novel* 5 [1972]: 225-33). Terry Castle's comments on desire and its inevitable disappointment in the sequel, referred to in my introduction, are of interest here. Wright's discussion of *Amelia*'s failure illustrates the point. Because Fielding's aesthetic is for Wright epitomized in *Tom Jones*, the author must have been trying to achieve the same effect in *Amelia*; Dr. Harrison, for example, "is obviously meant to occupy a position of the same order of centrality as does Squire Allworthy in *Tom Jones*" (169). As a result, the later novel reveals, "if

not second childishness, at best retrogression" (173). Some of the most illuminating studies of *Amelia*, on the other hand, have used the formal and stylistic changes from *Tom Jones* to *Amelia* to illuminate Fielding's unique moral and social purposes in the later work. John S. Coolidge's "Fielding and 'Conservation of Character,'" *Modern Philology* 57 (1960): 245-59, is very useful in this respect; see also Folkenflik, 168-74, and Digeon, 197, 199.

14. John Cleland, *The Monthly Review*, 5:510-15, qtd. in Ronald Paulson and Thomas Lockwood, eds., *Henry Fielding: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 304; Stephen Duck, qtd. in Carroll, ed., 52 n.20; Unsigned review, *L'Annee littéraire*, qtd. in Paulson and Lockwood, eds., 434; [Bonnell Thornton], *Have at You All: or The Drury-Lane Journal*, qtd. in Paulson and Lockwood, eds., 322; Cleland, 308-09. See also Samuel Johnson's praise of *Amelia* as "the most pleasing heroine of all the romances" (Hester Lynch Piozzi, *Anecdotes of the Late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.*, qtd. in Paulson and Lockwood, eds., 445), and A. R. Towers, "Amelia and the State of Matrimony," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 5 (1954): 144-57, for a general discussion of the significance of the novel's marriage focus.

15. In light of Richardson's optimistic portrayal of feminocentric circles in *Pamela* Part II and *Grandison*, Hunter's suggestion that *Amelia* is darker than *Tom Jones* because of its focus on a woman (210-11) is too generalized to be of use; Fielding's implied view of the relation of women to authority, however, might necessarily render his version of feminocentrism darker than both *Tom Jones* and these Richardson novels.

16. Henry Fielding, *Amelia*, ed. Battestin (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1983), 15. All subsequent references to the text will be taken from this edition and will be indicated by page numbers in parentheses.

17. Terry Castle, in *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century English Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1986), 190-204, notes the lack of forward momentum and the sense of fragmentation of the first half of the novel, in which Booth is suspended "between two worlds: that of Miss Matthews, the embodiment of lassitude and corruption; and that of Amelia, representative of moral purity and the domestic virtues" (203). My divergence from Castle's view of this dichotomy as radically subverted later in the novel will become clear in this chapter.

18. Fielding, *Miscellanies*, 10. As Kim Ian Michasiw has put it, "At the heart of Fielding's city yawns a vacancy; there exists no centre of moral authority" ("The Plot of Sensibility: Emotion and Narrative Form in English Fiction, 1750-1800", [Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Toronto, 1984], 93).

19. In comparing the novel's dénouement to a lottery (246), Castle deflects Fielding's metaphor in a reading that is consistent with her own view of the novel's events as arbitrary, but inconsistent with the actual narrative's revelation of order in the apparent profusion of disorder which proceeds from the masquerade. In general, Castle's insistence upon an amoral reading of the text is disturbing in that it allows for valid observations, yet is extremely limited interpretively in its complete refusal to read the sign of contrast so central to the moral code of the work.

20. Loftis has pointed out, with reference to the anonymity of the masquerade's mocking rakes, that "Christian, natural, legal, and human values all are virtually non-existent in contemporary London; they have been replaced by the oaths, cant phrases, and self-centered actions of virtually anonymous men" (223). Alter has similarly interpreted the anonymity of the noble lord as "the ubiquitous spirit of corruption of a degenerate aristocracy" (152). For Peter V. LePage, in "The Prison and the Dark Beauty of *Amelia*," *Criticism* 9 (1967), the struggle of "London versus the Booths" is embodied in the prison (337), which is both "a symbol for the dominance and enchaining of the individual" and a seductive "freeing from responsibility" (343). More broadly, Bender sees *Amelia* portraying "liminal confinement as the archetypal experience of contemporary life" (185).

21. Or, as Rawson describes it, Thrasher, Bondum, and Newgate reflect a separation of social institutions from the human purposes they are intended to serve which in effect renders those institutions absurd and incomprehensible to their victims (71-79). The link between such a portrayal of institutions and the mysteries of false friendship is suggested by Rothstein's observation of the reader's lack of motivational clues to explain the actions of newly introduced characters as part of a major movement throughout the novel of inevitable disappointment in, and reluctant distancing from friends (178-79).

22. As the subsequent discussion of *Amelia*'s role in the novel will indicate, I use the word 'active' advisedly to describe the heroine's hardworking, if spatially circumscribed, efforts to maintain her virtue and her family's equilibrium. While this activity may be seen as reactive, or preferably, ameliorative, as the name 'Amelia' suggests (see Murial Brittain Williams, 104-05, Loftis, 223-23, Simon Varey, *Henry Fielding* [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1986], 120-22, and Castle, 203), to view it as simply passive, as Morris Golden (*Fielding's Moral Psychology* [Boston: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1966], 63), Wolff (40-42, 53), and Frederick G. Ribble ("The Constitution of the Mind and the Concept of Emotion in Fielding's *Amelia*," *Philological Quarterly* 56 [1977]: 114-15) have done is, I believe, reductive.

23. In this respect I differ with Michasiw in his reading of marriage for Booth as "preeminently a legal contract attaching him to one woman, one nest of children, one network of responsibilities" (94); the Booths' marriage is rather an affective alternative to social relations which must be kept in place through legal bonds. While the relationship is a contract in that it functions on a model of the mutual benefit of equals, its strictly legal basis is never invoked after the early attempt of Mrs. Harris to obstruct the marriage.

24. I am not necessarily disagreeing here with Hunter, who attributes *Amelia*'s inability to detect James's designs to her own vanity (197-98); the reader knows that *Amelia* is aware of her own beauty, and such an explanation of her vulnerability simply underlines the need for the combined perspective of the group in interpreting experience.

25. Several critics have emphasized this significance of the adultery theme to the novel. Alter points out the contrast between the wide social implications of adultery here and the sense of responsibility only to oneself associated with Tom Jones's affairs (153-54). He also views the masquerade as this corrupt

world's "central rite," allowing "hungry sexual egos" to forget "the limitations and obligations imposed by family and society in ordinary maskless life" (155). One might be tempted to qualify this statement with the novel's image of widespread inversion, suggesting that the masquerade emblemizes not freedom from obligation in other settings, but an abandonment of those duties altogether.

26. See page 382 of the text.

27. It is interesting here to reflect upon Bender's argument that Fielding in *Amelia* is rewriting the "total irony" of John Gay, through his "discursive control and his polarizations of character" which locate this irony as a personality trait and a social disease, as a stance of cynicism which can therefore be condemned as a willed and wrongful moral position (152-53).

28. This repeated metaphor suggests Fielding's use of the country-city distinction as a tonal backdrop to his primary contrast of idealized marriage and other social institutions, as Loftis has pointed out. He has also noted the souring of the Booths' original country sojourn as evidence that Fielding is not, however, idealizing rural life (227). The economic pressures which led to this collapse provide an interesting point of departure for a study of Sarah Fielding's *Volume the Last*, in which economic pressures felt in a country setting, rather than sexual ones associated with the city, become the means of attack upon the social circle.

29. Amelia's reaction to the ostensible deathbed confession of Sergeant Atkinson's love is not intended to falsify this claim, but rather, to indicate its volitional nature. While critics have commented on the sense in which the uneasiness she feels at the confession compromises her devotion to Booth (see Castle, 242, in particular), what is seldom noted is the determination with which she meets this temptation by returning home to prepare a special meal for him, in contrast to her husband's simultaneous promise to dine away from home out of fear of Miss Mathews' power over him. It is worthy of note that taunts of prudery arise invariably in the novel from imperfect motives such as Miss Mathews' jealousy, Mrs. Ellison's incitement to flirtation, and Mrs. Atkinson's self-justification heightened by excessive drinking. The accusation is nevertheless viewed as an indication of Fielding's own half-conscious critique of his heroine's form of virtue by John S. Coolidge, "Fielding and the Conservation of Character," *Modern Philology* 57 (1960): 256-57.

30. Castle's insightful observation of the parallel between the scene of Amelia's unmasking to Booth after her accident and the masquerade itself (178-80, 198), interpreted by her as evidence undermining the very significance of the masquerade as sign in the novel, rather indicates in my view Amelia's selection of an appropriate moment for, and witness to, her intimate self-revelation, a self-revelation which notably does not reveal any hidden fault. Castle also identifies this second masquerade as the "hub" and "kernel" of the plot (232-33), but her arguments that it is morally compromising to Amelia and the instigator of actions that will lead to the dénouement (228-35) seem somewhat specious to me, in that Amelia's use of "deceit" is carefully rationalized and distinguished from that of other characters, as will be seen below, and the good which apparently arises out of the masquerade can as well be attributed to forces

such as Amelia's refusal to compromise and Atkinson's love for her as to a subversion of all of the novel's moral indicators.

31. Fielding, *Miscellanies*, 156.

32. See, for example, Coolidge, 256, and Castle, 213-14. Rothstein makes a slightly different point, arguing that Mrs. Bennet's story widens awareness of possibilities for action and reaction but does not preclude repetition because characters such as Mrs. Ellison are seen to be still at work in the present (*Systems*, 162-64). Such a reading points to Amelia's prudence in the midst of a constantly menacing world as the deciding factor in her ability to learn from the experience of another.

33. Unlike Alter (174), I would suggest that Miss Mathews' emotive parody of a sympathetic response to Booth's prison narrative is intended less to undermine the ideal of sympathy itself than to portray its abuse as sensibility for its own sake.

34. Charles A. Knight, in "The Narrative Structure of Fielding's *Amelia*," *Ariel* 11.1 (1980), views Fielding's "piling up of parallels" in general as a device moving the focus of the text from plot to social issues through a "technique of alienation" (40-41). Coolidge sees Fielding's concerns about the "generous imprudence" Booth represents "re-expressed in the form of a confrontation between his *Amelia* and another kind of woman" (251). Raymond F. Hilliard, in "Desire and the Structure of Eighteenth-Century Fiction," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 9 (1979): 357-70, portrays the hero's attraction to the two women as an emblem of his wavering between acceptable and unacceptable, because boundless and self-aggrandizing, desires (360-61); Miss Mathews, therefore, while she is the typical eighteenth-century villain, characterized by irrational passion, mobility, disguise, and invasion of the family space, also personifies Booth's own impulses (363-65). See also Rothstein, *Systems*, 173-74, Sheldon Sacks, *Fiction and the Shape of Belief: A Study of Henry Fielding, With Glances at Swift, Johnson and Richardson* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press), 220-23, Murial Brittain Williams, 106-07, and Wolff, 42. Miss Mathews' unbridled passion and contradictions between physical appearance and moral reality also point to the more extreme contrast between *Amelia* and Blear-Eyed Moll, a contrast which has been suggested by Rothstein, *Systems*, 174 n.11, Evans, 101, and Sean Shesgreen, *Literary Portraits in the Novels of Henry Fielding* (De Kalb, Illinois: Northern Illinois Univ. Press, 1972), 169.

35. Bender, 183.

36. Rothstein, *Systems*, 175.

37. Rothstein has also seen Booth's story as indiscriminating in its simplistic portrayals of character later introduced into the novel (*Systems*, 175-76).

38. I am indebted to Rothstein here for his treatment of the "epistemological empathy" created by the novel's narrative method (*Systems*, 154-57). See also Hassall, 226-28, Folkenflik, 168, 171, Hunter, 209-10, and Varey, 128.

39. See, for example, the narrator's original suggestion that Mrs. Bennet's dislike of the noble lord is a manifestation of her jealousy at his admiration of Amelia (204).

40. Wright views this kind of effect as "merely coy" (50), while Rothstein, again, relates it to Fielding's epistemological concerns (*Systems*, 156-57, 179).

41. In keeping with this view of widespread deceit and self-delusion, Fielding's masquerades, as J. Oates Smith points out, reveal characters not only attacking the innocent, but also deluding themselves, as being "so without rational morality that they become almost innocent" ("Masquerade and Marriage: Fielding's Comedies of Identity," *Ball State Univ. Forum* 6.3 [1965]: 10). The backfiring of both Colonel and Mrs. James's schemes at Ranelagh provides an example of this.

42. The fullest study of this issue is Donald Fraser's "Lying and Concealment in *Amelia*," in *Henry Fielding: Justice Observed*, ed. K. G. Simpson (London: Vision, 1985), 174-98. For a general treatment of the motifs of secrecy and disclosure in *Tom Jones*, see Alan T. McKenzie, "The Process of Discovery in *Tom Jones*," *Dalhousie Review* 54 (1974-75): 720-40. Although McKenzie describes the "comforting" demonstration that the hidden or deceitful will be exposed as true of eighteenth-century novels in general (723), it is certainly more true of *Tom Jones* than of *Amelia*.

43. A reading which attempts to understand Amelia's character through the paradigm of sensibility therefore encounters difficulties with the critique of sentimental excess implied in Miss Mathews' behaviour and with the narrator's uneven treatment of emotional effects; see Rawson, 88-92, for example. It may be preferable, as I am suggesting, to view Amelia's silence and speaking gestures as only one aspect of her characterization as a self-deprecating and sympathetic domestic paragon.

44. Although Castle comments helpfully on the narrator's emphasis of the secrecy theme in his chapter headings (201), her treatment of Amelia's secret-keeping as a destabilization of her idealized character (239-40) fails to draw the important distinctions I am making here. See also Varey for another overly simplistic view of secrecy between Booth and Amelia as an indication that "the relationship . . . is its own curse" (129) and Janet Todd, *Women's Friendship in Literature* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1980), 332, for treatment of Amelia's secretiveness as manipulative. Fraser, on the other hand, sees both Amelia and the narrator as carefully avoiding all overt lies (183-88) and her keeping of secrets "for virtuous purposes" as part of her demonstration of an ability to live truthfully in the world (190-94).

45. Thus Catherine Talbot writes to Elizabeth Carter in 1752, "Amelia makes an excellent wife, but why did she marry Booth?" (in Paulson and Lockwood, eds., 350). See Samuel E. Longmire, "Amelia as a Comic Action," *Tennessee Studies in Literature* 17 (1972): 75-78, Murial Brittain Williams, 108-14, and Mulford, 20-23, in defence of Booth against the accusations of Talbot and later readers such as Digeon, 202, and Coolidge, 167. Sacks points out Fielding's simultaneous criticism and awarding of credibility to Booth in the first books of the novel in his role as representative of "moral normalcy" (190; see also 106). Although I am focusing here on Booth as a character functioning within a social network,

I do not intend to discount the fact that as actor Booth's ambivalence is given an ideological dimension through his belief in the theory of the predominant passions and his ultimate conversion. The philosophical conflict portrayed through Booth has been discussed in some detail by D. S. Thomas, "Fortune and the Passions in Fielding's *Amelia*," *Modern Language Review* 60 (1965): 176-87, Battestin, "The Problem," 622-33, and Rothstein, *Systems*, 8-9, 154-207.

46. Although Dr. Harrison represents "the Honour of a Soldier" which requires Booth to go to Gibraltar as "a Treasure, which he must be your Enemy indeed who would attempt to rob you of" (100-01), that honour which is here a male equivalent to female chastity is later associated by the Doctor with the "Desire of feeding the Passion of female Vanity with the Heroism of her Man" (504). Thus Alter, 146, and Lyall H. Powers, in "The Influence of the *Aeneid* on Fielding's *Amelia*," *Modern Language Notes* 71 (1956): 334-36, are justified in pointing out an emphasis in the novel on the new Christian hero who is to turn his back on a pagan concept of honour in favour of benevolent and Christian virtues.

47. This is one cause of the bringing forward in *Amelia* of that "background of the potentially serious" which R. S. Crane has seen in *Tom Jones* ("The Concept of Plot and the Plot of *Tom Jones*," in *Critics and Criticism, Ancient and Modern*, ed. R. S. Crane [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1952], 638).

48. Battestin, "The Problem," 614. For the purposes of this study I am simply treating Booth's conversion as a necessary moment of self-recognition and assumption of responsibility on his part, without raising the vexed question of its advance preparation and realistic portrayal. Aside from the issue of realism, many writers on *Amelia* have something to say about the significance of the conversion; some of the most interesting treatments with respect to my concerns view it as a means of portraying character change (Sherburn, 151, and William B. Coley, "The Background of Fielding's Laughter," *ELH* 26 [1959]: 251), as a statement about the need for such change in redeeming both human nature and the social construct (James A. Work, "Henry Fielding, Christian Censor," in *The Age of Johnson: Essays Presented to Chauncey Brewster Tinker*, ed. Frederick W. Hilles [New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1949], 144-47, Wendt, 146, LePage, 353-54, C. R. Kropf, "Educational Theory and Human Nature in Fielding's Works," *P.M.L.A.* 89 [1974]: 118-19, Rothstein, *Systems*, 201-04, and Knight, "Narrative Structure" 42-43), and as structurally prepared for by the first prison sequence, the confinement motif, and the central role of Amelia's virtue (Aubrey Williams, "Interposition of Providence and the Design of Fielding's Novels," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 70 [1971]: 274-75). Since I see the conversion as firmly linked with moral action in the world, I can agree neither with those who dissociate the inevitably private and individualistic nature of such religious experience from its social implications (see, for example, Sherburn 157, Alter, 164-65, Wolff, 53-54, Rothstein, *Systems*, 166-67, Diane Osland, "Fielding's *Amelia*: Problem Child or Problem Reader," *Journal of Narrative Technique* 10 [1980]: 60-64), nor with those who view the ending in general as a mere "pat solution" unrelated to the structure of the foregoing narrative (see Varey, 134; also Scheuermann, 121, and Shesgreen, 174). At the same time, Knight's argument that *Tom Jones*'s final role as country magistrate makes the earlier novel's ending less of a retreat to a private world than that of *Amelia* ("*Tom Jones*: The Meaning of the 'Main Design,'" *Genre* 12 [1979]: 392-93) could be seen to suggest that for the non-aristocrat and the placeless man, isolated acts such as the

bringing of a thief to justice are the only meaningful public gestures allowed by the existing social structure.

49. Critics who have argued that the text negates the doctrine of the passions by carefully interlinking individual motives and seemingly arbitrary events include Sherburn, 149-53, Allan Wendt, "The Naked Virtue of Amelia," *ELH* 27 (1960): 139-42, Folkenflik, 172-73, Knight, "Narrative Structure," 35, 43, Murial Brittain Williams, 98, McKillop, 139, Osland, 58-59, and Varey, 113. Golden, *Moral Psychology*, 62-63, 91, and Smith, 16, 21, on the other hand, see the characters as static and the action as atomized and accidental, revealing no psychological necessity, while Tuvia Bloch, in "Amelia and Booth's Doctrine of The Passions," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 13 (1973): 461-73, argues that Booth's view of the passions as he expresses it at the beginning of the novel is Fielding's. Battestin's reading in "The Problem of Amelia" is, I believe, more helpful than these in recognizing an implied change in Fielding's psychological theory towards an emphasis upon the strength of the passions in governing behaviour, while acknowledging the novel's structural affirmation of individual choice as maintaining control over those passions. In my view, however, Fielding's emphasis upon choice is firmer than Battestin makes it, suggesting that the British public can follow the leads of Amelia, Dr. Harrison, the good Justice, and ultimately, Booth, in the struggle to govern desire, thereby rejecting the examples of the majority.

50. See McKillop, 141, Sacks, 75, 105, 126-28, 143-45, Wolff, 43, Hassall, 231-33, Battestin, "The Problem," 614, Rothstein, *Systems*, 185-87, Loftis, 224, and Bender, 185, on the role of Harrison in the novel. Bender also examines that role as restricted by the rules of evidence as a model for realistic narrative and juridical process (190-96). An important treatment of Dr. Harrison is Hugh Amory's "Magistrate or Censor? The Problem of Authority in Fielding's Later Writings," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 12 (1972): 503-18. Amory opposes the fundamental and intuitive religious authority of Harrison to the utilitarian magisterial and rational authority of the justice of the peace and the writer of 'histories,' suggesting that in *Amelia*, as in Fielding's other late works, there is no common ground for effective action between the two. In having Dr. Harrison 'incarnate' his religious authority as humble citizen aiding the justice in implementing the novel's resolution, however, Fielding does, I believe, bridge that gap while modelling the action of the Christian hero in the world.

51. The relatively clear-cut significance of such action and its explanation points to the usefulness of an exemplary character in portraying ideal social behaviour; because Booth's character is more mixed, his active pursuit of the serving maid-turned-thief, while admirable in its imitation of Harrison's and Fielding's precepts, as Bloch has indicated in "The Prosecution of the Maid-servant in *Amelia*," *English Language Notes* 6 (1969): 269-71, is also tinged with his projected guilt about his own contribution to Amelia's sufferings.

52. Wendt, 146, and Battestin, "The Problem," 619, 630-32, have emphasised the symbolic significance of Booth's nearly simultaneous conversion, release from prison, and restored fortune. Bender views the ending of *Amelia* as a portrayal of institutional disorder righted by the parallel forces of Providence and plot (186); I would merely qualify this view by emphasizing that Fielding is

exemplifying how disorder might be righted, rather than portraying an actual and effective rectification on any broad scale.

53. See Battestin, "The Problem," 614, for a discussion of the Doctor's statement.

54. Loftis has identified the "humble domestic scene" as "the most important center of value in the novel" (225). With this novel's location of hospitality within the home it is interesting to compare the role of the inn in *Tom Jones*: see David Goldknopf, "The Failure of Plot in *Tom Jones*," *Criticism* 11 (1969), for a discussion of the inn's ambivalent status between the polarities of rural and urban, permanent and transient, hospitable and remunerative value (266-67). See also Timothy D. O'Brien, "The Hungry Author and Narrative Performance in *Tom Jones*," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 25 (1985), regarding the importance of Mrs. Miller's dinner table (629-30). In highlighting the table gathering in this way I do not wish to undermine the central significance of the prison image noted above; in fact, the table as the centre of a willing gathering can be seen as representing the power of domestic happiness to transform confinement into the freedom of self-expression within an accepting circle. In this way Amelia transfers Mikhail M. Bakhtin's "idyllic chronotope," in which time is related to space through "an organic fastening-down, a grafting of life and its events to a place, to a familiar territory," from the country to the domestic interior, in which the "basic realities" of food and drink are given a social significance through a portrayal of the family gathered around the table (*The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist [Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981], 224-27).

55. Castle has noted the "parody of domestic arrangements" in this scene (208), but her discussion of the novel's portrayal of the inversion of social pleasures in general minimizes the standard against which the inversion is portrayed. Thus she focuses upon the *partie quarrée* which, although it "suggests a certain ideal geometry of social relations," is rendered unstable in the novel by inappropriate cross-relations between members of the parallel couples; yet she does not deal with the essential stability of the Booth marriage by contrast (209-11). Fielding, however, seems to make a point of contrasting the marriage-based ménage with other failed housekeeping arrangements--the joint household of the Booths and Harrison's curate and wife, and the unstable relations of Mrs. Bennet as a girl with her father and stepmother and then her aunt, for example--as the only stable basis for the intimate knowledge of one another engendered within a household.

56. The egalitarian nature of Amelia's circle marks an important shift from *Tom Jones*; John Richetti, in "The Old Order and the New Novel of the Mid-Eighteenth Century: Narrative Authority in Fielding and Smollett," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 2 (1990), finds in the earlier novel a concentration of authority in the narrator which is like that of "the Hanoverian-Whig oligarchy" (190) and which makes no place in its hierarchy for the miseries experienced by a character such as Partridge (191-93). Eric Rothstein has also focused on the authority of *Tom Jones*'s narrator as an expression of "an individual will" by means of a "power of grouping and exclusion" unparalleled in "any other major eighteenth-century novel" ("Virtues of Authority in *Tom Jones*," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 28 [1987]: 123, 112). Such readings make clear the essentially

conservative political project of *Tom Jones*, while suggesting as well how *Amelia* rewrites that project in its ideal of the marriage circle and the concentrating power of the silent heroine.

57. Battestin, "The Problem," 614, has commented on the framing effect of the evil and the good justices in the novel.

58. Golden's study of "Fielding's Politics," in Simpson, 34-55, suggests an interesting reading of the Atkinsons as representative of Fielding's developing sympathy for the socially mobile classes willing to compromise with questionable means in order to obtain just ends (51-53). Certainly the Atkinsons, while somewhat tainted by worldly corruption, are able to survive in the city while remaining worthy of Amelia's friendship, whereas Booth is not allowed such a straddled position. See also McKillop, 144-45, and Rawson, 3-29, for cautious suggestions of democratic tendencies in *Amelia*. Miller's introduction to the *Miscellanies* notes Fielding's middle ground with respect to the issue of social hierarchy (xxxiv-xxxv); examples of qualifications of both hierarchical and egalitarian positions from Fielding's own writings include "Of Good Nature," 33-34, and "The Essay on Conversation," 124, 127, 132, 141 of the *Miscellanies*.

59. See, for example, *Tom Jones* 698, 902, 912.

60. Critical opinion is divided as to the effectiveness of this shift. Alter, for example, sees it as a generic innovation (176), while Wilbur L. Cross, *The History of Henry Fielding* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1918; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1963) finds in the novel an "inordinate amount of narrative" by talkative characters (2:326), and Wright criticizes its use of too many "entirely static discussions" (47).

61. Loftis, 228-29. Loftis here contrasts Fielding with Richardson in the latter's use of individual narrators; as my discussion of *Grandison* has shown, however, Richardson does work towards similar strategies for objectifying experience and narration. Sacks also points to conversations in which the moral weight of Amelia as "a sort of 'non-discursive' paragon" is used to confirm the "dicta" of Dr. Harrison (123, 125, 158-59).

62. Fielding, *Miscellanies*, 142-46.

63. Bevan has commented upon the use of such sequences to heighten the portrayal of domestic happiness as a worthy end of the individual's desires (93-96).

64. Such exchanges surely also provide the kind of detail which, in contrast to the stylization of *Pamela* Part II and in light of the mockery by Thornton cited above, render Alter's and Rothstein's complaints that the novel refuses to elaborate specifically the relationship of Booth and Amelia (167-68 and *Systems*, 204-06, respectively) somewhat anachronistic at least. Rothstein, indeed, assumes that genuine marital happiness presupposes a full knowledge of one another's natures, an assumption which I do not believe Fielding shares.

65. Hunter, 194.

66. Smith, 19, and Castle, 204. Hunter has also referred to "a certain claustrophobic, smothering sense of frustration, panic, and doom" created by "Booth's seemingly endless petitions to great men, his furtive routine calculated to avoid the eternal pursuit of creditors, the pointless circularity of the masquerade, the silliness and failure of the wine-basket device to gain Booth access to Amelia." Hunter sees only the dark aspects of this repetition as a portrayal of "the absurdity of trying to cope in a world where evil is relentless and goodness has few allies" (194-95); while this may be the case at moments during the text, I believe the rapturous unions, the Sunday freedom of Booth and his family, and even the simple pleasure his company affords Amelia during his confinement are intended to indicate the possibility for transformation and transcendence of the prisonhouse of repetition.

67. Arthur Sherbo's "The Time-Scheme of *Amelia*," *Boston University Studies in English* 4 (1960): 223-28, while it helpfully points to the importance of an exact time scheme in portraying Booth's confinement to the Verge of the Court for six days of the week, assumes unnecessarily an attempt at exact chronological verisimilitude on Fielding's part, and is therefore forced to set the novel in 1750, despite explicit indications of the text itself to the contrary.

68. Rothstein, *Systems*, 198. The Jameses, for example, live in the present as though they had no past friendship for the Booths, and are therefore sources of evil, while Sergeant Atkinson has been continuously devoted to Amelia and thereby brings good to the Booths (199).

69. A comparison with Fielding's use of Sophia's image in the mirror as the hero's guarantee of his future behaviour in *Tom Jones* points to this less explicit version of the motif in *Amelia*. Sheridan Baker ("Fielding's *Amelia* and the Materials of Romance," *Philological Quarterly* 41 [1962]) has pointed out the romance motifs which Fielding translates into economic and Christian terms here (444-47).

70. Rothstein, *Systems*, 200.

CHAPTER 6

Constructing and Dismantling the Social Circle

in Sarah Fielding's *David Simple*

Mutability might be said to constitute the principle feature of human life as it is portrayed in the fictions of Sarah Fielding and particularly in her first novel, *The Adventures of David Simple* (1744), and its 1753 sequel, *Volume the Last*. In the original work of this pair, change is successfully ordered through the narrative form of the quest, as the subtitle "Containing an Account of His Travels Through the Cities of London and Westminster in the Search of a Real Friend" indicates. The narrative form of the picaresque is used to embody in an episodic series of encounters the social fragmentation caused by individualistic desire; the protagonist's frustrated quest for friendship evolves, however, into the purposeful construction of an intimate community as a stable alternative to that fragmentation. *David Simple* Part I, coming after *Pamela* Part II and before *Clarissa* or *Tom Jones*, provides almost a blueprint for the conversational circle I have located in some contemporary fictions, allowing the reader to observe the dynamics of that circle's formation out of the typically linear and individualistic plot. The novel culminates in a manifesto that asserts the possibility of such social formations, concluding,

And, as strong a Picture as this is of real Happiness, it is in the power of every Community to attain it, if every Member of it would perform the Part allotted him by Nature, or his Station in Life, with a sincere Regard to the Interest and Pleasure of the whole.'

Very little is known of the life of Sarah Fielding in the gap intervening between this optimistic declaration and the appearance of her *Volume the Last*,

but that her first novel was popular, that she was admired by and an intimate of both Samuel Richardson and her brother Henry Fielding,² and that she suffered the losses of immediate family members and probably also certain effects of poverty and dependency.³ More is known about the literary climate within which her first novel was read. Among the major events were Richardson's stubborn refusal to allow his *Clarissa* happiness in this life and Henry Fielding's establishment for *Tom Jones* of an ideal community conspicuously upheld by birth, wealth, and social position, followed by an apparent reversal of each author's stance in the optimistically expansive social vision of *Grandison* and the retreat of the domestic circle to wealth without public function in *Amelia*. In the correspondence and journalistic writing surrounding *Clarissa*, *Tom Jones*, *Amelia*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*, the moral implications of their fictional forms were discussed endlessly, as well as their models of social virtue for a society generally viewed as well advanced in moral corruption. Specifically, the optimistic vision of *Grandison*, *Tom Jones*, and even *Amelia*, to a more limited extent, clearly called upon the material wealth, supposedly secondary to the happiness of the ideal community, as a necessary proof of concluding stasis in an unstable existence.⁴

Sarah Fielding, by contrast, explicitly sets out in her sequel to *David Simple* to strip the social circle, so confidently established in its predecessor, of every material comfort and mark of prestige upon which its relational happiness might be said to have been premised. In so doing, she reveals the self-destructive tendency inherent in the interdependent circle of friends idealized by Richardson and Henry Fielding, as well as by her own first work. Ultimately, *Volume the Last* rewrites not only its own original, but also the models of social authority erected by Richardson and Henry Fielding upon the

terms of earlier writers such as John Bunyan and William Congreve. The result is an elegiac work; while the ideal of the conversing circle remains the only virtuous option, that ideal has not succeeded in transforming the rapaciously egotistical social climate of *The Double-Dealer*, and the individual is ultimately left facing death alone, as Christian faced the river, with the vision of community fading away as nothing more than a passing dream. Indeed, the communal social ideal is becoming the increasingly elusive, extra-textual and abstract goal which the characters of Frances Burney, Jane Austen, and George Eliot will pursue with ever-diminishing success. In rewriting *The Adventures of David Simple*, then, Sarah Fielding, heir of the early eighteenth-century social ideals that culminated in the novels of Richardson and Henry Fielding and acknowledged innovator of the early novel,⁵ can be seen as instrumental in the ultimate exclusion of the conversational vision from fiction. As a modern reviewer has commented, "Behind Sarah Fielding's novel lies the late Augustan yearning for true friendship, sympathy and real honesty in a world which seemed to have grown corrupt."⁶ This movement from prescription to exposure can best be illustrated by an examination first of the ideal as it is established in the original work and then of its dismantling in the sequel.

The journey metaphor of *David Simple*'s title and opening is clearly a means of emphasizing the object of desire and thereby of preparing the reader for a moment of arrival and fulfilment. David, we are told, begins by "wishing he could meet with a human Creature capable of Friendship" in order to create "a little Community, as it were of two, to the Happiness of which all the Actions of both should tend with an absolute disregard of any selfish or separate Interest." This ideal is a "Fantom" whose pursuit renders David "as mad as Quixotte himself could be with Knight Errantry," and finally leads him

to take "the oddest, most unaccountable Resolution that ever was heard of, viz. To travel through the whole World, rather than not meet with a real Friend" (26-27). Form is thus from the outset made an explicit reflection of an individual's social condition; David's wandering is the result of an unnatural state of overpowering desire and alienation from the society around him, and will by inference cease when that unnatural state is altered. Historians of the early novel who simply classify this novel as picaresque are therefore often overlooking the gradual modification of the form, beginning near the end of the second of four books, into a group tour and finally a static conversational circle.⁷

In the meantime, however, the episodic nature of the picaresque pattern initiated by David's resolution is used to heighten the effect of alternate hope and frustrated desire as the protagonist meets successive disappointments, first in an intended bride and then in a series of guide figures. These characters share a deceptively attractive use of conversation which is exposed only through the accidental truth-revealing devices of another overheard conversation, in the case of Nanny Johnson, or the revelations of a third character who has heard "the History of [the guide-figure's] whole Life" (97), in the case of Mr. Spatter. In this way, truth is constantly deflected away from the apparently direct source, illustrating repeatedly that a character can be "so odd a one, that no body could find it out, unless they had conversed with him a great while" (97), and therefore establishing an inadequacy in David's very method of inquiry. His assumption that by acquiring a private conversational intimacy with those he encounters he will be enabled to judge social dispositions, while valid for "the Lower Sort of People . . . who [have] not had those Advantages from Education, which teach Men the way of artfully disguising their Dispositions" (125), merely exposes him to the abuse of those of a higher social

station. For such, "in Conversation, the real Thoughts are often disguised," while in the more adversarial exchanges of the gaming table, "the Mask is thrown off, and Nature appears as she is" (78).

The continual disappointment of David's hopes is figured in images of a repeated return to the starting point of his journey; after his discovery of Nanny's mercenary passions, for example, he is left "in the same Condition as when he discovered his Brother's Treachery. The World [is] to begin again with him; for he [can] find no Pleasure in it, unless he [can] meet with a Companion who deserve[s] his Esteem" (45). At the same time, such moments are accompanied by assurances that the quest is not in vain because David's own innate goodness serves as "a Proof to him, that Generosity, Good-nature, and a Capacity for real Friendship, [are] to be found in the World" (46). The discovery of Cynthia therefore signals at once the expected shift in David's fortunes and a correlative shift in narrative form. Cynthia's conversational integrity is indicated by the fact that she entrusts David with the history of her whole life; what has until now remained hidden until a moment of accidental and indirect discovery is here brought to the surface with a transparency that for Sarah Fielding, as for Richardson, is in itself a sign of truth. Because decorum cannot allow a continuation of the friendship after Cynthia has refused David's proposal of marriage, she leaves for the country and David is "to begin the World again" (125). The fact of his having found a friend who confirms his ideals of virtue, however, implies that the quest has now become a double, if divergent, one. The protagonist's immediately subsequent encounter with Camilla and Valentine fixes his own quest, and ultimately that of Cynthia, who has returned to London "like People in a burning Fever, who, from finding themselves continually uneasy, are in hopes by every Change of Place to find Relief" (175). In a deliberate re-

echo of the *Paradise Lost* echoes cited above, when David finds her upon her arrival in the city and invites her home to their mutual friends, we read that "they [set] out together, to find all which either of them value[s] in this World" (186).

With the end of the solitary picaresque portion of the novel signalled thus, the narrative form shifts to a conversational model very similar to that portrayed in the rewritings I have examined earlier. Writing with particular reference to Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Tobias Smollett's *Peregrine Pickle*, Ronald Paulson has noted that "in England, picaresque structures of satiric exposition, as they grew increasingly more complex, tended to become intense knots of . . . chance relationships," particularly through the use of the family as a locus for "replacing coincidence of recurrence with causality."⁸ In *David Simple*, the reader sees this transformation of the line into the circle occurring as chance encounters become interrelated recurrences all tending towards the creation of an ideal family. Thus the atheist of Cynthia's stagecoach journey becomes David's treacherous brother who disappeared soon after the novel's opening, Camilla becomes the friend of Cynthia's youth, Valentine becomes the young gentleman she has secretly loved since then. Even the clergyman who began simply as Cynthia's unwelcome suitor is transformed into a catalyst for the construction of this network, reappearing first to give an identity and history to the atheist and later to perform the double marriage that creates the extended family of the novel's conclusion.⁹ The causality which Paulson identifies in the portrayal of a family network that shapes Tom's childhood and character, however, is in *David Simple* a causality that intertwines conversation with experience and ultimately makes them equally significant and efficacious. Thus David's love for Camilla, aroused by his acquaint-

ance with her behaviour and story, is confirmed by the revelation that "she [is] the person whom *Cynthia* had mentioned in so advantageous a Light" (172), while the clergyman's moralized account of "the Life of an Atheist" (285) becomes a means of portraying to his friends David's history of goodness and sensibility.

From the beginning of the novel, indeed, narration has been used to supplement David's direct experience of characters; in fact, as I have indicated, the story of a character's life is generally used to show by contrast the deceptiveness of mere encounters. Mr. Orgueil, in particular, excels in telling the stories behind the apparently amiable and disinterested members of a conversational group with whom he and David have spent an entertaining evening. This focus on the absolute dichotomies between conversation and character established by Orgueil and the other guide-narrators of David's travels gives way with the picaresque, however, to a use of narration as vicarious experience that is less in direct opposition to lived experience than a broadening of its scope through truthful representation and sympathetic listening.¹⁰ Thus *Cynthia's* story allows the hero to be, as it were, an intelligent woman forced to play the role of toad-eater, and *Camilla's* story makes him "afraid every time [she] open[s] her Mouth, what he [shall] hear next; for he [finds] himself so strongly interested in every thing which concern[s] her, that he [feels] in his own Mind all the Misery she [has] gone through" (168). Similarly, the history of *Isabelle* becomes a kind of tragic, foreign, and excessively passionate translation of the group's own comic experience, as its members' "inward Exultings of their Minds, at the thought that they [have] met with the same Happiness in each other" (219) indicate before its turning-point. Like other fictions in my study group, the novel thus avoids through inset narration the dangers of direct conflict between members of the circle, while allowing the

reader to feel its thrills and presumably learn its lessons.

The text's increasing reliance upon inserted stories thus furthers a reduction of conflict for its protagonist that has been the general tendency of the plot structure since the beginning. David's initial confrontation with his diametrical opposite, his brother, becomes the overheard disagreement between Nanny Johnson and the friend who, albeit falsely, takes David's part, and from there is even more distanced through the intermediary guide-narrators who tell the revealing stories that allow David to escape from, rather than confront, the exposed persons. From there it is a short step to a life that is lived, for the protagonist, entirely in the experience of narrators such as Cynthia, Camilla, and Isabelle. In conjunction with this shift to reduced conflict, it is evident that the structural function of the hero is being modified.¹¹ From older brother and heir David has evolved into benefactor of and attendant on women, and in terms of his sympathetic identification, almost into injured female virtue itself. Here the feminized characteristics of conversational narrative do not meet with the same resistance that they do in the person of Grandison, and Sarah Fielding appears much more confident of the inherent interpretive and representative capacities of female speech than does Henry Fielding in *Amelia*, or than even she herself will be in creating the story-telling Mrs. Orgueil of *Volume the Last*.¹² Thus Cynthia's story marks the beginning not only of a modified narrative structure, but also of a reliance on admirable female narrators. The overall effect, however, is one less of focused feminocentricity than of the replacement of the single male traveller by the group, much in the manner of Part II of *The Pilgrim's Progress*. David's point of view remains of interest, but frequently only as it contributes to the portrayal of a range of perspectives, whether in the entertainment of telling thoughts in turn during a coach

ride or in the narration of the emotional fluctuations of the four characters as lovers. In fact, once the group has been established, its preferred entertainments become the stories of other circles and the modulations of character within them, and its travels by coach and barge serve primarily as stimuli to the reflections of "Minds, so philosophical as their's" (252), upon the generalized moral and social significance of all they see. Stories and travels become interchangeable according to the weather as the group's interest in one another's sentiments replaces the search for friends.

In this pleasure in one another's company the group again models the exemplary social circle. As ideal moderator because of her combined intelligence, submission to the will of the group, and knowledge of the world, Cynthia proposes subjects which draw out all members in turn, or tells stories herself to provide entertainment; David's part as admirer and tutor is to encourage the self-doubting Camilla. More important than an absolute abstracted truth as the goal of the group's conversation is the integrity of self-representation between its members. Thus exchanges between David and his earlier guide-narrators, in which strictly veracious accounts of others were rendered dubious as the products of falsely represented motives, are replaced by Camilla's concern less with the probability of her vision of houses full of "*Mothers-in-Law*, working underhand with their Husbands, to make them *turn their Children out of Doors to Beggary and Misery*," than with the delicate question of whether her "pleasing Sensations . . . for being *delivered herself* from those Misfortunes," which "more than over-[balance] her Sorrow for her Fellow-Creatures" are "not in some measure triumphing over them" (190). Like Booth and Amelia, whose conversations end in a sexual resolution more often than they end in truth, this group aims in its conversations at a kind of self-revelation conducive to spiritual

intimacy. The irony of Camilla's interpreting all as a variation upon her own experience is therefore a gentle one, since her proven honesty and self-doubt are the guarantees that her individualistic interpretations will be intercepted by the group before they can lead her into error.

Indeed, this community is confident of its ability to interpret corporately the experience that has deceived David Simple in his naive solitude. Similar to Camilla's attribution of her own family history to strangers are the quartet's conjectures about Isabelle's mysterious circumstances:

Camilla [can] not forbear enquiring of Cynthia, if this young Lady [has] not a Father alive, and whether it [is] not probable his marrying a second Wife might be the cause of her Misfortunes: But before there [is] time for an Answer, David [says], 'I think, Madam, you mentioned her Brother; he possibly may have treated her in such a manner, as to make her hate her own Country, and endeavour to change the Scene, in hopes to abate her Misery.' In short, every one guess[es] at some Reason or other, for a Woman of Isabelle's Quality leading a Life so unsuitable to the Station Fortune [has] placed her in. (194-95)

Fielding treats these instances of blindness, as well as those caused by the partiality or anxieties of love, with a lightness that suggests their relative safety within a setting of transparent and virtuous conversation. At the same time, the parallel between these cases of subjectivity and the rhetoric of Mr. Spatter, who "look[s] through the Magnifying-Glass at all [the] Defects [of every person discussed], and thro' the other end of the Perspective on every thing commendable in them," underscores the necessity for a knowledge of the world like Cynthia's, in combination with a goodness and sincerity like David's, in establishing a successful epistemological strategy for the group.

The group's acceptance and affirmation of each member's perspective illustrate the egalitarian nature of the ideal circle, but again, as so often in these works (and in Sarah Fielding's later writings¹³), apparent freedom is

carefully balanced by a conservative gesture towards traditional patterns of authority. The potential authority figures who have failed to guide David to a true friend have clearly also been unable to compensate for the more serious absence, for all four members of the group, of parental figures. David and Cynthia are orphans; the former's uncle dies at the beginning of the novel, Valentine and Camilla's father and stepmother have driven them from their home, and their relations have abandoned them on suspicion of incest. Although the group's free establishment of love relationships and heterosexual friendships thus occurs unimpeded in a structural vacuum, an impasse occurs at the point where declared love would lead to irrevocable marriage ties and the formalization of that economic dependency upon David which is already a fact. The appearance of the estranged father serves less to resolve the issue than to obfuscate the lack of practical function of such parental authority in this social construct. For one thing, the father has been reduced by his error to the position of suppliant for his children's forgiveness. Further, his arrival ostensibly frees David to ask Camilla's father for permission to marry her, but the protagonist asks Camilla first after all, and she accepts them with the same sentiments of gratitude that had earlier made him hesitate to make her feel obliged. Cynthia's original refusal of Valentine, as well, turns on her own penury; the father's permission to his son, accompanied by a reduced fortune, cannot substantially alter the fact that David's fortune will supply the largest portion of support for the extended household. At the same time, the group has been symbolically reconciled to the society whose corruption had led to the forcible ejection of each of its members. Thus the deathbed confession of the stepmother, the transformation of the nobleman who admires Camilla from seducer to advocate, the redeployment of the clergyman from unwelcome suitor to

performer of weddings, and above all the metamorphosis of the cold father into the fond parent function as signs of a general social approbation which nevertheless does not in any way impinge upon the group's foundation in the mutual inclinations of equals.

In its distinguishing features of sympathy, sincerity, and equality, this conversational group is, as I have said, much like the model established in similar contemporary fictions. In several respects, however, Fielding's version of the circle can be said to be unique. One of these is the prominence of the David-Cynthia axis of the circle. As the first two of its members introduced and the most fully characterized, David and Cynthia establish a heterosexual friendship of mutual benefit and satisfaction which at times makes the addition of Camilla and Valentine appear a mere convenience allowing the former pair to continue their relationship with the added decorum and orthodoxy of a kinship tie.¹⁴ Secondly, Cynthia's worldly wisdom and intellect make her the leader of this mixed group, while David's naive sympathy and his possession of an income assign him an entirely separate role as benefactor. By distributing conversational roles between Cynthia as intellectual leader and David as benefactor and chief sympathizer, this group establishes a more equitable dynamic than that of the Grandison circle, drawn as it is around the protagonist's aggregate superiority of judgment, experience, fortune, and physical prowess.¹⁵ Finally, the group's sharing of all property in common further suggests a radical dismantling of the power which generally accrues to wealth, in a direct rejection of the abusive financial dependency which the group members have variously suffered. By highlighting David's generosity, the novel makes it symbolic of the expansiveness of the ideal social self beyond its own circumference. While the dispensing of money is a conspicuous feature of Sir Charles

Grandison's sociability as well, his generosity, parcelled out as dowries, settlements, and allowances, generally functions to reward or encourage the performance of specific duties within well-defined structures of dependency. *David Simple*, on the other hand, more radically treats property in its undisputed form as belonging equally to all members of the circle. In the opening contrast between David and his brother Daniel, the former in his generosity is conspicuously opposed to the latter as "one of those Wretches, whose only Happiness centers in themselves" (11), "hugg[ing] himself in his Ingenuity" at cheating David of his fortune (15); later a miser and spendthrift are described as sharing a common "Selfishness, which makes every thing center wholly in themselves" (60). David's lack of any sense of 'mine' and 'yours' thereby illustrates the same ability to displace the centre of self into another that is revealed in his sympathetic listening.

The Adventures of David Simple ends in a description of the "Scheme of Life followed by this whole Company" (303) which expands into the manifesto partially cited at the beginning of this chapter. Through a "virtual catalogue of eighteenth-century metaphors of order"¹⁶--the roles which combine to produce a theatrical performance, the parts which constitute a machine and "regulate its Motions" (304), the shrubs and trees which compose a beautiful prospect (with a couplet from Pope)--the text insists upon the possibility of social happiness in any community where natural and ordained places are maintained, not so much in a hierarchy of stations, as in a sharing of conversational talents. We read,

If every Man, who is possessed of a greater Share of Wit than is common, instead of insulting and satirizing others, would make use of his Talents for the Advantage and Pleasure of the Society to which he happens more particularly to belong; and they, instead of hating him for his superior Parts, would, in return for the Entertainment he affords them, exert all the Abilities Nature has given them, for his Use, in common with

themselves; what Happiness would Mankind enjoy, and who could complain of being miserable? (305)¹⁷

By implication, it was not David Simple's desires that initiated his picaresque journey, but a society which was so corrupted by envy and self-interest that it had degenerated into a mere mass of individuals, each vying for the privilege "of playing the Top-part" (304). Thus the inherently sociable self was forcibly excluded and remained detached from the whole until it found a "little Society" (304) of equally sociable selves. The journey was therefore only a state of transition en route to a heaven on earth, where the exercise of differing gifts for the common good would override all considerations of gender or fortune. Having arrived at the ideal narrative form with which to portray this social ideal, Fielding uses it to replace the conventional dichotomy of self in opposition to society, established at the novel's opening, with an opposition of actual confusion and order in the novel's final statement. The "most exact Model" of friendship praised in Henry Fielding's preface to the second edition (7) has been erected, as it were, before the reader's eyes.¹⁸

The gradual and complete nature of this modification may enable the reader to forget the sense of overwhelming corruption and unregeneracy with which the first part of the novel is imbued; indeed, Fielding seems to have intended it so to heighten an effect of optimistic potentiality at the novel's close. If this was her original purpose, however, the subsequent *Volume the Last* reverses any teleological effect of the original's progression from picaresque to community by placing a corrupt and unregenerate larger society in direct conflict with the little society of David Simple. As Janet Todd writes, "Heaven in *David Simple*, captured, he had thought, on earth in the secluded community of Part I, is seen to be entirely distinct from it. The progress of the male sentimentalist in a depraved world is here towards crucifixion, but not a

resplendent resurrection."¹⁰ Thus a continuous reading of the two parts of *David Simple* illustrates how a strong second work can alter even the effect of the first.

In fact, Part I contains numerous fissures which appear much more visibly from the perspective of Part II. Several of these tension points have already been cited, although to different effects. The parallel between Don Quixote and David Simple, for example, with its specific emphases upon the goal of a "little Community" as a "Fantom," an "Idol," which the protagonist worships as an "Enthusiast" (26-27), appears in the context of the original novel's successful quest to reflect the false cynicism of the larger social world, but in retrospect suggests that ideal community may in fact be only a chimaera. The repeated power of selfish plotters over the innocent in the early experiences of David, Camilla and Valentine, and the Marquis de Stainville, which appears overcome by the strategy of group interpretation, can be read alternately as an unconquerable naiveté and incapacity for independent judgment on the part of a character such as David. Similarly, the potential malice of the envious outsider towards members of the exclusive intimate circle is illustrated by Le Neuf's plot to make de Stainville destroy his friend Dumont, and earlier, by the jealousy of Cynthia's mother and sisters over her friendship with Camilla. In the latter case, the combined attraction and suspicion of the power of friendship for the outsider is succinctly drawn in Cynthia's comment about her mother: "I verily believe, she thought we should draw *Circles*, and turn *Conjurers*" (107). Isabelle's story, with its evident parallels to that of the central group, originally deflects the dangers of passion and internal conflict away from that group, but later appears as a warning of its vulnerability to the weakness of any one member. Thus David and Valentine's "great Admiration of the

Marquis de Stainville and the Chevalier Dumont's sincere and faithful Friendship" as an image of their own relationship (219) invites a later reading of the tragic and to the foreigners' friendship as a hint of the parallel losses that will fragment the community and leave the protagonist, like Isabelle, resolved upon "retiring from a World, in which it [is] impossible for [him] to meet with any thing worth [his] Regard, after what [he has] lost" (250).

Even the ideology of the perfect community as in itself a heaven on earth can be seen in retrospect to contain several flaws, beginning with David's overconfident assumption that "if he ever [does] attain to what he [is] in pursuit of, he [shall] be the *happiest Creature in the World*" (76). Indeed, Camilla discovers the opposite when her brother's illness exacerbates her own despair, at the same time as it encourages her to desperate risks. The principle of transparency nourished by love and sympathy between members of the group can also succumb in reality to affectation and misinterpretation. As a result, David's long-sought happiness is described even at the moment of its apparent fulfilment as more of a delusion than a reality, as the product of a fanciful mind:

Valentine and Camilla often sighed at the Remembrance of their Father's Usage; but they cautiously hid from their generous Benefactor, that any uneasy Thoughts ever intruded on their Minds: He fancied them entirely happy, and that their Happiness was owing to him. None but Minds like David's can imagine the Pleasure this Consideration gave him. Cynthia saw through Valentine's Behaviour; and yet sometimes she could not help fearing that his Thoughtfulness might arise from some other Cause than what she would have it; and her great Anxiety concerning it, naturally produced Suspicion. (277)

Although ironically deluded happiness becomes real through the marriages that replace desire and uncertainty with fulfilment, the capacity for worldly or practical concerns to disturb the peace of the community in the form of "uneasy

Thoughts" and "Suspicion" here reminds one of the disruptive effects of the guilty conscience Booth brings into his home, and hints at the ultimate impossibility of all desires being fulfilled even within the confines of the safely isolated group.²⁰

It is "the potentialities of these ironies," to use Malcolm Kelsall's phrase, that "come to maturity" in the 1753 sequel.²¹ An increased literary authority appears to have emboldened Sarah Fielding, not to reiterate the ideal which her first fiction had espoused in hopes that she might effect an application of the text to social life, but to examine that ideal with stringent honesty.²² The timid and anonymous writer of *The Adventures of David Simple*, who allows her reader to approach the work as a "Moral Romance (or whatever Title the Reader shall please to give it)" and is full of apologies for it as "the Work of a Woman, and her first Essay,"²³ has found the success she hoped for from its entertaining capacities, and now faces an audience prepared to be pleased. A new assurance is reflected in her deliberate choice of the sequel as a particularly demanding form, in the use of a more confident and dominant narrative persona, and in the sense of inevitability which pervades her text from its beginning.

The preface to *Volume the Last*, written by "a Female FRIEND of the AUTHOR" (probably Jane Collier), refers with a much greater intimacy to the author's intention and compositional process than does Henry Fielding's second-edition preface, with its more distanced and somewhat patronizing stance of admiring gentleman-reader-turned-editor. This new preface's proffered "Explanation of the following Design" therefore claims to be a fairly accurate statement of the author's own views about the relation of her sequel to its predecessor and to its pre-established audience. The reader remarks first that the original novel

is, with the emphasis of threefold repetition, described as a completed quest: "The Author of *David Simple* has . . . carried him thro' many Disappointments to his desired Port. He sought a faithful Friend and a most amiable and faithful Companion; he found both: the History of this SEARCH therefore was naturally at an end." Furthermore, the author takes on the task of presenting old characters as a deliberate challenge to both "the unaffected Simplicity she has a Desire to recommend" and "the skilful Hand" that must produce interesting variety within known situations as proof that it is not "endeavour[ing] to put off a second-rate insipid Piece, void of the Spirit of the first" (309-10). In other words, Fielding deliberately sets herself on moral and artistic trial in much the same way that David Simple and his society are to prove their worth in the narrative.

The note of confidence established in the preface is carried over into the creation of a more authoritative and self-assured narrative persona in the text itself. Part I's narrator is a complex of self-conscious formality ("Upon which ensued the following Dialogue; which I shall set down word for word; every body's own Words giving the most lively Representations of their Meaning"--35), anxious apology ("And I believe my Reader, as well as myself, is heartily glad to quit a Subject so extremely barren of Matter, as that of Gaming; and into which I would not have entered at all, but that it would have been . . . "--81), and self-deprecation ("to describe this Scene . . . requires a *Shakespear's* Pen; therefore I am willing to close it as soon as possible, being quite unequal to the Task"--294) suitable to the inexperienced traveller accompanying David on his excursions. The narrator of Part II, on the other hand, launches forth with a confident advertisement of her story ("I . . . doubt not, but those Persons who were then pleased with [David Simple's] Character, will be no less pleased

with knowing the Remainder of so very uncommon a Life") and continues with a detached, generalized observation much in the manner of Jane Austen's narrator: "A Man, actuated by neither Avarice nor Ambition, his Mind moving on no other Axis but that of Love, having obtained a Wife his Judgment approves, and his Inclination delights in; seeing, at the same time, all his Friends chearful and pleased around him, seems to be in a State of Happiness, in comparison of which, every thing in this World is trifling" (313).²⁴ This greater assurance is reflected throughout the narrative itself in the form of digressive discussions of moral issues raised in the text, designed to guide interpretation; on other occasions, an appeal is made to readerly sympathy as a necessary interpretive tool. At times one is also reminded of the narrator of *Tom Jones*, particularly when judgments passed on David Simple by characters in the text, by the world at large, and by the reader are paralleled in a clear bid to make reader response a social and educational issue. In other words, the narrator as naive alter-ego of the picaresque hero in Part I has been replaced by the narrator as authoritative social commentator and interpretive guide; increased authorial responsibility is reflected, in a variation on Carol Kay's model, in the increased social authority not of the protagonist, but of the narrator. As confidence in the social ideal itself is undermined, it would seem, the reader is invited to transfer that confidence to the narrator who exhibits such control over the process of its demise and such insight into its meaning.²⁵

A corollary effect of this new narrative authority is the fixing of the story's end at its beginning, with the announcement that the story will focus on the period

in which *David Simple* began to be convinced that although no Scheme for Happiness could be built on a better Foundation than his; although the Union of Hearts, which subsisted in that happy Family, was

sufficient to compensate every common outward Evil; yet there may be such a Concurrence of Events, such heart-rending Scenes, arising from this very friendly Connection, as must undeniably prove the Truth of that Observation, so common both in the Writings and Conversations of Mankind, namely, 'That solid and lasting Happiness is not to be attained in this World.'
(313-14)

The reader is thus encouraged to focus less upon the outcome of events than upon the process they initiate in David Simple's mind, a process which ends ultimately in the transferral of his hopes from a community in this world to happiness in the next. The sequel does not deconstruct the social ideal of the original; it emphasizes, rather, the fact that the constancy of each member of the group and its achieved harmony survive all sufferings.²⁶ *Volume the Last* redefines the self in a shift opposite to that traced between the two parts of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, or between *Clarissa* and *Sir Charles Grandison*: the well-being built upon the social foundation of a "Union of Hearts" is relocated in the individual "Christian Mind, whose Reliance on a future State is its only Foundation for Happiness" (333) and whose achievement is therefore essentially solitary. The impetus for this redefinition arises from a dynamic similar to that established by Henry Fielding in *Amelia*: the larger social world in its corruption will inevitably attack and invade the little society which represents the ideal from which it has fallen, and the invasion finds the group vulnerable because of its inherent virtues of transparency, generosity, and affection. In *Amelia*, however, the domestic circle's exacerbated vulnerability arises from Booth's ambiguous position between the two social constructs, which in turn diverts Amelia's ideal use of secrecy and conversation to undesirable ends; Booth's conversion wholly to the domestic ideal, proven by his separation of himself from the city and its various holds on him, therefore completes the invulnerability of the little society. *Volume the Last's* circle, on the other hand, is

invaded in its very retirement and is found vulnerable because of the perfect application of its ideals.

The structure of the sequel takes on the simplicity of allegory, as Kelsall has suggested.²⁷ The group's perfections are first outlined briefly and generally through its response to minor, because above the threshold of material and social necessity, troubles. The ways of the world, characterized above all by envy, self-interest, and pride, are represented by the Orgueils (with the assistance of the Ratcliffs) as a kind of anti-community and the source of continual attack. These attacks are experienced by David in particular, as legal owner of the group's property, as father, as naturally naive and idealistic, and therefore as the most vulnerable target. Because of the narrowed focus on David, the group's gradual dismantling around him, through physical separation and death, heightens the impression of a self ultimately alone. The use of the Orgueil family as a continual point of contrast to and source of attacks upon David's family effectively transforms the optimistic teleology of Part I's move from the picaresque to the conversational into a schematized tableau of social reality as a fixed and recurrent triumph of envy over benevolence. Thus, as Kelsall has indicated, the experience of Cynthia and Valentine in Jamaica serves not as an alternate and distanced narrative possibility, as did the story of Isabelle, but rather as proof that social evil is everywhere the same, and that the search for a new world can only end in a repetition of the old.²⁸ As Cynthia writes at one point, "I could almost have imagined I heard Mrs. *Orgueil* speaking; but such kind of Women are the Growth of every Climate; and I believe it is my Fate eternally to meet with them" (393)--and Cynthia should know indeed, for it is her experience as the tyrant lady's toad-eater in Part I and the near-repetition of it by the young Camilla, her successor in understanding,

in the clutches of Mrs. Orgueil at the end of the sequel, which contributes largely to the effect of inescapable recurrence.

Mr. Ratcliff, his attorney, and Mr. Orgueil are the sequel's false financial advisers who replace the false guides of Part I.²⁹ Although these characters are quickly suspected by the group to be duplicitous, they usurp a kind of patriarchal authority over the little society that is far more damaging than the ambiguous conversational authority of the earlier guide-narrators. The nature of their power is economic, and it is granted in part because of the inherent reluctance of the group to be "guilty of even the Appearance of Rudeness of Ill-Manners" (320), in part because of a veneer of generosity which blinds the group to these men's actual poverty of motive, but above all, because David is "entangled in the Snare of his Love for others" (352). The reader is repeatedly told of the resulting "timidity" which leads the protagonist to act against the dictates of his own prudence and the advice of the whole group; it is "by the Help of this Timidity [that] both Mr. Ratcliff and Mr. Orgueil [get] an Ascendancy over the Mind of *David Simple*, that no Creature on Earth could ever have obtained, had SELF alone been his Consideration" (352). Fittingly, David's betrayal by such 'friends' at last forces him into the arms of Mr. Nichols the avaricious steward, who calculatingly lends him a paltry sum in order to be assured of foreclosure on the property painstakingly preserved by "our little Family of Love," in which every member acts out of a desire "to contribute by Labour and Industry to one another's Comforts" (372).

For as long as the little society is granted a certain measure of economic independence, it thrives in a rather rarefied element of unbroken conversation, its "Chearfulnesss and Good Humour," free from the "bon-mots, insulting Raillery, malicious Ridicule, and murtherous Slander" so often mistaken "for the

Attic Salt of Society" (315), while its "Family Affairs" are managed out of sight, with perfect "Peace, Calmness, Concord, and Harmony," in those spare moments when the wives "[can] not have the Pleasure of conversing with their Husbands" (316). The introduction of a few financial losses and the undesirable acquaintance with the Ratcliffs and the Orgueils can effect no significant changes while the group remains economically viable. In this portion of the text the word "still" takes on the nature of a refrain signalling the end of each narrative segment detailing a stage of retrenchment: "they were still possessed of enough to gratify every innocent Desire, and no extravagant Wishes did they ever entertain" (316), "still might our Society be styled *the happy Family*" (327), and again, "Thus settled in their humble Cottage, still might our Society retain the Name of THE HAPPY FAMILY" (333). When more desperate necessity follows, however, the group's preoccupations become the much more fundamental ones of provision, and every event must be measured in financial, rather than purely affective terms. Thus the opportunity for Valentine and Cynthia to go to Jamaica forces them to place "any Prospect of Success in worldly Affairs" ahead of the previously absolute value of a common life (336), and even the deaths of Camilla's father and several of her children are the occasions of thankfulness that they are released from the community's sufferings.³⁰

In reducing her conversational circle to a state of poverty, Sarah Fielding questions, as I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the possibility of disinterested felicity as it is portrayed in Richardson and Henry Fielding. In her detailed analysis of a timidity like David's as a direct effect of the experience of "being, with a large dependent Family, in a Situation in Life, that you know not how to go out of, and yet are not able to

support," and in possession of a sociable nature whose "warm Affections . . . make you look with Dread and Horror on every Step you take, lest the Consequence of it should be any ways prejudicial to the chief Object of your Love" (351-52), Fielding confronts the ideal of the conversational circle with the implications of the fact that social man is not only sympathetically and epistemologically interdependent, but also economically so. This is of course not a new observation in the era of Mandeville, but its application to the model domestic group arguably signals the end of the model's usefulness as a seriously posited alternative to, rather than microcosm of, the larger structures of which it forms a part. Thus Lady Mary Wortley Montagu may not have been so facetiously off the mark as she herself thought, in writing to her daughter that Fielding's *Volume the Last* "conveys a usefull moral (tho' she does not seem to have intended it); I mean, shews the ill consequences of not providing against Casual losses, which happen to almost every body."³¹ Such a realistic moral, however, is predicated upon an assumption of the complete irrelevance of the ideal of a society held together by selfless generosity, the ideal upon which David Simple's community forms itself and risks its future. Indeed, Fielding's denunciations of every kind of abusive dependency as a corruption of power equivalent to slavery provide a continuous thread, marked by some of her strongest writing, through both parts of the novel, indicating that her moral critique is pointed more to the abuses of economic power than to the imprudence of those who find themselves without it.

The Orgueils are a family whose preoccupation with providing against the remotest possibility of loss is an expression of egotistical domesticity in contrast to its ideal form in the novel's central community. Mr. Orgueil's provision for his family is the accidental side-effect of his need to preserve

a conspicuous rationality in all of his actions, while his wife's care of her daughter's interests in opposition to those of others reflects merely a preference for "something she [can] call her own." That something is of course "forced to yield the Pre-eminence," in turn, "to a yet dearer Friend, namely, herself" (346). Conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Orgueil is a matter of a patriarchal insensibility to a woman's views on the part of the husband, and of manipulation by flattery on the part of the wife. Unlike *Amelia* with its implication that domestic loyalties are by definition virtuous, *Volume the Last* thus pointedly contrasts individualistic and sociable forms of domesticity. As a model of the latter, David Simple's family welcomes to itself the farm girl Betty Dunster, teaching her to read and in turn learning from her knitting and spinning, until Mrs. Orgueil pries her away from them "by taking her into [her] own Family" (328), that is, by making the girl wait upon her spoiled daughter. Similarly, in little Cynthia's fatal illness David goes to the expense of hiring a chariot because "no Thoughts [remain], but that of saving his Friend's Child" (346), and is thereupon rebuked by Mr. Orgueil for "spend[ing] his Substance on Strangers" (358).³²

Mrs. Orgueil is on several occasions more pointedly contrasted with Cynthia because their similar intellectual gifts are in Mrs. Orgueil perverted by selfish envy into an abuse of the character of friend and conversationalist. She is civil to Camilla only as part of a plot to supplant Cynthia in her sister-in-law's favour, but her flattery of Camilla is false to the conversational ideal both in its assumption that differences between friends must be the source of envy and insult if known, and in its disguise of her self-gratifying intent. Because her true desires are of an utterly anti-social nature, she must inevitably blunt her own social talents in the pursuit of those desires. In a

contrast between the false conversation of Mrs. Orgueil and the language of Mrs. Dunster, for example, we read that despite the farm woman's rustic language, "as her meaning [is] good, she fail[s] not of giving more Comfort to *Camilla* than could all the Flowers of Rhetoric, hiding beneath them the lurking Snake of Ill-design" (404). Although Mrs. Orgueil's "Endeavours to seduce any of this Society from the Friendship of the rest" (377) are all in vain, she exerts a considerable potential power over them through her verbal attacks on her husband with a collection of moral tales, each featuring the sad capacity of "a Man, under the Pretence of Friendship and Generosity, to ruin his Wife and Family." However, these stories, which display the teller's "Art, by dropping some Circumstances, and altering and adding others, of turning any Story to whatever Purpose she please[s]," are ironically abortive because of the intended hearer's narcissistic preference for "deep Debate with himself" (408).

The Orgueils' conversational failings are not matched by a similar lack of influence over the physical well-being of the conversational circle that is so much their moral superior. Mr. Orgueil's refusal to give David more than bad advice contributes directly to the latter's ultimate recourse to the steward whose henchman, symbolically, destroys David's last house by fire; in fact, conversations between the two men "always [leave] *David* in the highest Perplexity; for he [finds] all *Orgueil's* Discourse [leads] to something of which he [has] no Image"--in other words, to self-admiration and the maintenance of his hearer's dependency--(364), while his own ability to flatter Orgueil is restricted by vivid visions of the needs of his wife and children. Similarly, Orgueil's definition of the word 'friend' is so different from David's that it misleads his hearer into a state of greater enslavement. Like his favourite Nichols, Mr. Orgueil might therefore be the subject of David's blunt statement

"You don't talk our Language, Sir" (369), pointing out the corrupt values which make him unable to hear David's appeals. Mrs. Orgueil's cruelty to the children, in turn, is directly responsible for several of their deaths. Even after the loss of all but the young Camilla has freed David from the greater part of his timidity, he is forced to seek for a polite excuse for refusing Mrs. Orgueil's offer of educating his daughter out of a fear of the destructive potential of her hatred and anger if unleashed against the girl.

Separation and other forms of distress elicit from the little society itself an increasingly stoic silence very different both from the conversational pleasures of the original and from the affected rhetoric of false friends. Valentine's letter upon the death of his child and the prospect of his own financial success, for example, neither dwells on the "melancholy Subject" nor contains "Professions of Friendship" and "Promises of lending or giving," speaking simply "in the plural Number" which expresses the assumed commonality of "one united Family" (362). In the same way, Cynthia's letter after the loss of Valentine leaves her own grief unspoken in consideration of the effect upon the recipients and in confidence that their sympathetic imaginations will supply the rest. (By Mrs. Orgueil, of course, Cynthia's reticence is misinterpreted as unworthy even the death of a pet monkey.) At the conclusion of the novel, the conversation of David and Cynthia, the original and sole-surviving friends, has been so purified of the unnecessary that the narrator can summarize it with the words "It is sufficient to say, that they spoke the Words dictated by the Hearts of *Cynthia* and *David Simple*" (427). In this way, a shift in concern from professions of community to its essence, and from the conduct of social life to the inner lives of individuals is reflected in an altered treatment of conversation as theme.³³

A general decrease in the narrative use of conversation in the sequel supports this observation of a shift in the significance attached to conversational styles. Self-narration, which was accepted as an indicator of a sociable and transparently virtuous self for Cynthia and Camilla in Part I, is now ideally absent as an indication of the self-control of individuals in consideration of the feelings of the group. It is Mrs. Orgueil who, in a moment reminiscent of Miss Mathews' passionate self-indulgence, waxes hysterically eloquent in a letter describing her state during her husband's illness. The quantity of recorded conversation is again greatly decreased in the sequel, in favour of the authorial commentary and narration of mental and emotional states noted above. The exceptions to this rule are in themselves noteworthy; Mrs. Orgueil's stupid and spiteful partiality, for example, is ably captured in her distorted and self-contradictory style comparing the dying child Cynthia and her own spoiled daughter:

The little Hussey sets up for such Delicacy! she pretends she has got a Cold, and fancies she lay in a wet Room the first Night of our Arrival; but I know it is all Humour, because she was contradicted. Nothing would serve her, truly, but to lye with my Miss Cassy, though she knows the poor Child hates to lye with any one, but her own Maid, whom she is very fond of; for it is a gentle, loving, little thing; and I will not suffer her to be vexed, and spoil her Eyes with Crying, to please any humoursome Brat in *England*. (343)³⁴

Similarly, the conversation between Mr. Nichols and David, "in which neither Party [can] well comprehend the other," is presented in full in order to illustrate the differences in language and values between the steward, who can talk only of security and interest, and David Simple, who says "I have no Bond, or Note, Sir; *Valentine* is my Brother, my Wife's Brother, and that's the same thing" (368). Finally, the novel ends, not with David's last conversation with Cynthia, but with a collation of his last thoughts, intended "to give . . . an

Image of the Disposition with which he left this World" (430).

Mr. Nichols, with his "Pair of Compasses, by which he [can] take as true a Measure of every Man's Disposition concerning Monies, as of his Lands" is, we are told, generally accurate in summing up the character of economic man--for as long as he "[does] not meet with such Men as David" (371). Significantly, a description of the industrious activity of David's household follows immediately upon Nichols' attempt at taking a one-dimensional measure of the hero; in this description the fruits of orderly domestic labour, a flourishing garden, and a growing family are described in terms of "Plenty and Variety," "joyful Thanks," and, at table, "the Height of Rapture" and "a Pleasure that the Great, at their luxurious Tables, might reflect on with Envy, and which all the Kingdoms of the Earth could not give to Minds unqualified for it" (373-74). The balance of labour and reward, production and consumption, which "our little united Family daily enjoy[s]" (374), like that of Amelia's household, can be maintained for as long as that domestic circle can remain a closed and self-sufficient unit. As I have already indicated, however, the envy raised by its contented self-enclosure in characters such as Mrs. Orgueil, and the false authority imposed upon the group through its financial vulnerability and David's resultant timidity, are forces which render such moments of self-sufficient stability only a fleeting respite.

Pursuing the text's economic causality further, the reader finds that the community's own fruitful expansion contributes to its vulnerability and inevitable destruction. *Volume the Last's* emphasis upon the circle's perpetuation of itself through its children and their education reiterates a feature of the intimate circle's exemplary social bias in each of the fictions I have examined; this sequel simply makes the most overt statement that "the chief

Study and Employment of our Society, [is] to improve the Understandings, and meliorate the Dispositions of their Children" (326). Unable to alter social structures as they are, the implication seems to be, the group will focus on the next generation as the basis of its hopes for expansion. At the same time, in a development of Amelia's frequent laments over the probable hard fate of her children, *Volume the Last* is the most detailed of these texts in its treatment of the increased exposure of the group to attack by virtue of this very self-perpetuation. Trusting, obedient, and desirous of giving pleasure to others, the children of the circle are therefore individually vulnerable to the cruelty and negligence of Mrs. Orgueil, whose treatment of them is, as I have noted, directly responsible for the deaths of three. Her final attempt to gain control over young Camilla is consciously motivated as an attack on the group: "although the long Friendship which had subsisted between *Cynthia* and *Camilla* had always baffled her Designs, yet . . . the young Mind of *David's* Daughter would certainly bend under her Artifices, and yield to whatever Impressions she chose to give it" (416). More generally, David's concern for his children's financial provision leads him to sacrifice them to the destructive 'friendships' of the Ratcliffs and the Orgueils.

If children thus prove, in a sense, the downfall of the conversational community at its point of greatest potential for expansion, the group's educational emphasis is nevertheless affirmed in the sense that the sole survivors of the general destruction are the young Camilla and Cynthia, whose relationship has always been one of pupil and mentor. Cynthia's successful voyage to gain a promise of protection for them both after David's imminent death means that this nucleus of a new community will not have to set out on a renewed journey in search of a friend. The modification in the sequel of the

communal ideal from one of earthly possibility to one of a momentary, vulnerable, and partial foretaste of the heavenly city suggests, however, that the premises of the surviving community will be different ones from those expressed in the confident manifesto of its original founding. For Todd, this ending, with its promise of "providentially supported female community,"

moves towards the escapism of noneconomic, nonpolitical female bonding, characteristic of the novel of sensibility. Power through sentimental struggle in an evil world has been denied, but the extreme importance of women promises a quasi-magical power entirely outside the bourgeois economy in which the rest of the novel has functioned.³⁵

Although a commonality of interest and the priority of the group over individual desires will continue as its basis, Cynthia is to teach Camilla, says David, "to consider [my Death] as my Deliverance" (432), just as he has already taught her to prefer the loss of her mother to the sight of her "painful Passage through this World" (414).

It is upon the final inner state of David Simple rather than upon the future of the community he established that the novel's conclusion is focused. In carrying out her examination of the communal ideal of happiness to its announced end of displacement beyond this world, Fielding explores the paradox of community which renders its disintegration inevitable. Made vulnerable by fears for his wife and family, David has been led into decisions which have contributed to her death. Now, reduced to virtual solitude by that death, David has ironically regained the self-sufficiency which renders him impenetrable to the assaults of the Orgueils of this world; we read that

as Mr. Orgueil had not, with his whole Fortune, the Power of giving him equal Pleasure, so neither had he the Power of tormenting him, as when he cruelly refused to relieve his beloved *Camilla*. She was out of the Reach of feeling the Effects of Hardness of Heart, and consequently *David* could never again feel the same

Strokes. His own Pains, indeed, might force from him a Groan; but it must be the Sufferings of another that could quite dissolve and overcome all his Resolutions. (414)

In a second twist of the ironic knife, however, even this regained impenetrability comes too late, because the inevitable result of a complete identification of the self with the being of another is a fatal injury to that self, described by the narrator as "a Rent in [David's] Heart, which he vainly endeavoured to heal" (415). In striking contrast to the physical motion which earlier allowed a solitary David to leave disappointment behind in pursuit of his desire, the reader is told that "he attempt[s] not, by flying from Place to Place, to hide from his own Mind the Death of *Camilla*" because "he [knows], unless he [can] fly from himself, the picture [can] not be rooted from his Heart" (415). In the face of this paradox, David's only hope of resolution is in death.

In this rewriting of the conversational community, then, Sarah Fielding neither modifies the terms of the model nor wavers in her insistence upon its viability and efficacy as the means to the highest possible social happiness in this life. By measuring the ideal in a test situation, however, a situation of interrelated external and internal pressures, she makes explicit the implicit assumptions which have enabled her contemporaries to construct an exclusive and static social circle in their fictions, and thereby displaces the ideal community of common conversational and material wealth back into the heavenly city of Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Although the prominence of death in Fielding's *Volume the Last* may at first seem a mawkish or melodramatic appeal to the reader's sensibilities, its overwhelming presence in fact lends force to the egalitarian vision by providing the only inescapable affront to the egotism of characters such as the Orgueils.³⁶ That death which, according to David Simple's Christian schema, will validate his own social ideal, is the same death

which all of Mrs. Orgueil's schemes are designed to disguise; indeed, her sole "Grain of what is commonly called Compassion," unmoved by "any of the Vicissitudes or Chances of this mortal Life," is aroused by the occasional intrusion of "the Image, that both herself and her Miss *Cassy* must, one time or another, share the common Fate, and fall a Sacrifice to Death" (361). The mutability that has displaced the social ideal out of this life for David and his little society thus becomes the means of its replacement by a symbolic community of all humankind before the inexorably egalitarian end. The inability of such a community to penetrate the determined self-absorption of Mr. Orgueil in his supposed last illness emphasizes just how intangible it is as a basis for social relations. Nevertheless, given the prevalence of self-interest, pride, and envy in the fictional world of Sarah Fielding, the only hope for deflecting the individual from pursuit of his or her own desires into a concern for the common good ultimately lies not in a social ideal which may motivate an exceptional few, but in a recognition of the common solitude of death. The task of the novelist thus becomes one of a portrayal of the common condition of humanity as an essential solitude whose recognition by the reader may in itself become the fundamental act of community.

1. Sarah Fielding, *The Adventures of David Simple*, ed. Malcolm Kelsall (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1969), 304. Further references to the novel are taken from this edition, which uses the second edition as copy-text, and are indicated by page numbers in parentheses. I have used this text for citation because of its accessibility and its inclusion of *Volume the Last*. My choice of the Oxford edition should not be understood as an endorsement of such interest in differences between the two texts as is motivated by a wish "to peer over Henry Fielding's large shoulder as affectionately, patiently, whimsically, ironically, this very busy man read[s] through the brave and bungling literary efforts of a loving, trusting sister" (Robert S. Hunting, "Fielding's Revisions of *David Simple*," *Boston University Studies in English* 3 [1957]: 121). Dale Spender has made some observations about the general tenor of critical representations of Sarah Fielding which, I believe, have needed to be made (*Mothers of the Novel: 100 good women writers before Jane Austen* [London: Pandora, 1986], 180-86). At the same time, Janet Todd makes the important qualification that "the humility and gratitude of the stance" created by Henry Fielding for Sarah in his preface may well have received her endorsement as an appropriate portrait of her as a female writer (*The Sign of Angellica: Women, Writing and Fiction, 1660-1800* [London: Virago, 1989], 162); C. Woodward makes a similar point in "'Feminine Virtue, ladylike disguise, women of community:' Sarah Fielding and the female I am at mid-century," *Transactions of the Samuel Johnson Society of the Northwest* 15 (1984): 58.

2. Aurélien Digeon has described Sarah Fielding as "confidante and 'liaison officer'" between her brother and Richardson in *The Novels of Henry Fielding* (1925; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), 27. Sarah Fielding's probable authorship of the 1749 *Remarks on Clarissa* (intro. Peter Sabor [Los Angeles: Univ. of California, William Andrews Clark Memorial Library (Augustan Reprint Society), 1985]) makes that publication an interesting point of contact between the writings of the two authors. Fielding structures the *Remarks* as a series of conversations illustrating exemplary and faulty reading as well as the tendency of individual characters to read idiosyncratically. The conversational group thus functions to counterbalance individualistic interpretations while reflecting the structure of *David Simple* and prefiguring that of *Grandison*. As Sabor has also noted in his introduction, the *Remarks* "played a significant role in shaping Richardson's revisions and additions to *Clarissa*" (vi). Jane Spencer, in a section entitled "Masculine Approval and Sarah Fielding" in *The Rise of the Woman Novelist: From Aphra Behn to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 91-95, discusses the literary implications of Sarah Fielding's relationships with Henry and with Richardson, suggesting that a combination of serious encouragement and carefully delimited expectations of female writing leads Sarah to rein in her satiric impulses and thereby compromise the unity of *David Simple*. Ronald Paulson's earlier treatment of the work in *Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1967), 209-11, also posits a Fielding- and Richardson-inspired blend of satire and its effects upon relationships, but implies rather that the blend is a successful one.

3. See April London's "Sarah Fielding" in the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 39, Part 1, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Detroit: Gale Research, 1985), 195-204, for a biographical summary.

4. Kelsall has suggested that in her sequel Sarah Fielding takes, although "her outlook is narrower," a "harder look at some of the dilemmas of human kind" than does either Henry Fielding's comedy or Richardson's psychology (xvii).

5. See, for example, R. Brimley Johnson in his introduction to *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia*, 1757 (Scholartis, 1928), xv, Ann Marilyn Parrish, "Eight Experiments in Fiction: A Critical Analysis of the Works of Sarah Fielding" (Ph.D. diss., Boston Univ., 1973), and Deborah Wheatley Downs-Miers, "Labyrinths of the Mind: A Study of Sarah Fielding" (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of Missouri-Columbia, 1975), 2. Among the innovations noted, however, that of the social model first erected and then made problematic has not been included.

6. "Love and Friendship," *The Times Literary Supplement* 29 May 1969, 589.

7. Such writers include Johnson, xvi. Descriptions of the novel as a sentimental picaresque similarly overlook the shaping force of the hero's strong sense of a goal, which keeps subordinate what is a primary focus on response in novels such as *A Sentimental Journey* and *The Man of Feeling*; see, for example, Robert Palfrey Utter and Gwendolyn Bridges Needham, *Pamela's Daughters* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1936; reprint, 1972), 115. Downs-Miers, "Labyrinths," 26, has more accurately found elements of the apologue, the travel-tale, the picaresque, the romance, and even the bestiary in the first part of *David Simple*.

8. Paulson, "The Pilgrimage and the Family: Structures in the Novels of Fielding and Smollett," in *Tobias Smollett: Bicentennial Essays Presented to Lewis M. Knapp*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and P.-G. Boucé (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), 65.

9. Although I do not claim that this modification of narrative mode is entirely smooth or convincing, I believe that several critics have condemned the second portion of the novel primarily because it is no longer conventionally picaresque in its qualities without asking what it has in fact become. For B. G. MacCarthy, for example, the novel "fails because its form stresses variety of external events while its purpose stresses a variety of character analyses" (*Women Writers: Their Contribution to the English Novel 1621-1744* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1944], 261). Jerry C. Beasley, in *Novels of the 1740s* (Athens: Univ. of Georgia Press, 1982) dismisses the latter part of the novel as "a flabby succession of satirical episodes from high life, probably inspired by her brother's fiction," together with assorted travel adventures and moral histories, which has "descended . . . to the easy options of romance and conventional providential maneuvering" (182; see also Kelsall, xiii-xiv). Downs-Miers, on the other hand, privileges Cynthia's narrative as a subversive subtext ("Springing the Trap: Subtexts and Subversions," in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670-1815*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski [Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1986], a classification which at once diminishes its constructive role in the novel and leads Downs-Miers into difficulties with Cynthia's explicit and valorized arguments for female education (312).

10. These effects of a greater correlation between speech and reality and a broadening of 'experience,' together with an accompanying reduction of direct conflict, might explain a narrative mode which Kelsall intriguingly describes as a "refusal to render the substance of life dramatically" (xii). Kelsall's

hint at conscious choice in this phrase, together with his comparison of this method to that of Steele in *The Tatler*, suggests again the affinity of the conversational novel with both the methods and the ideals of early eighteenth-century periodical literature. John Butt, in *English Literature in the Mid-Eighteenth Century*, ed. and completed Geoffrey Carnall (Oxford: Clarendon, 1979), 450, has also noted similarities between Fielding's narrative method of presenting and then discussing an *exemplum* and the periodical essay's overt examinations of human nature.

11. Beasley has emphasised for the novel in general the connection between David's isolated virtue in conflict with a corrupt world and the period's notion of the Christian hero (11-18).

12. Woodward has seen David's feminized character as Fielding's strategy for exploring his ideal of female community (62-64).

13. See, for example, the circle of school girls which regulates its own submission to Jenny Peace as senior girl, to Mrs. Teachum as governess, and to the families to which its members belong, in Fielding's *The Governess or, Little Female Academy* (1749; reprint, London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1968), or the 'natural' friendship of Ophelia and Lord Dorchester which succumbs to her discovery of decorum, in *The History of Ophelia* (1760; reprint, New York: Garland, 1974).

14. At the same time, the range of relationships possible between the members of such a foursome promises a maximum of stability and potential fulfilment; again, as Terry Castle has pointed out in her discussion of *Amelia* in *Masquerade and Civilization: The Carnavalesque in Eighteenth-Century Culture and Fiction* (Stanford: Stanford Univ. Press, 1986), such a *partie quarrée* "suggests a certain ideal geometry of social relations" (209). The misinterpretation to which the brother-sister relationship of Valentine and Camilla is subject contributes to the later sense of fulfilment and stability of the foursome; this function of the incest allegation in the novel provides an additional, though not necessarily alternative, explanation to Battestin's biographical speculation in "Henry Fielding, Sarah Fielding, and 'the dreadful Sin of Incest,'" *Novel 13* (1979): 6-18.

15. Todd (*Sensibility: An Introduction* [London: Methuen, 1986], 88, 94-95), and Gerard A. Barker ("David Simple: The Novel of Sensibility in Embryo," *Modern Language Studies* 12.2 [1982]: 69-80), have made similar distinctions between Grandison as man of principle and as active, worldly Man of Feeling, respectively, and David Simple as man of mere compassion and naive reaction. Barker goes on to admit, however, that David is "more forceful and resolute" (70) than his successors of the same type; in fact, my distinction between the kinds of response and actions undertaken by the two men with respect to the deserving is a more useful one, I believe. For Downs-Miers, Cynthia is the text's real, though hidden, protagonist, in opposition to David Simple as its ostensible one, and must be removed to Jamaica in the sequel to allow for a focus on the latter (311). While agreeing with Downs-Miers' emphasis on Cynthia's intellectual superiority and on the significance that it is Cynthia and a child-pupil who remain at the novel's end (311), I think this rhetoric of rivalry for the title

of hero is reductive of the author's attempt to place a community, rather than an outstanding individual, at the centre of her novel.

16. London, 197. The preface and dedication of *The Governess* make even balder statements of the desirability of encouraging the social virtues as the basis generally of "the Happiness of all Societies" (xiii), and particularly of the happiness offered "in any of the Stations of Life allotted to the *Female Character*" (iv).

17. The masculine pronoun used here cannot obscure the fact that the passage refers to Cynthia, the intelligent woman, more than to any of the other characters of the novel. Downs-Miers' argument about disguised female protagonists and their subtextualized narratives is perhaps most relevant at this point in the work.

18. Fielding uses a similar movement from individualism to community as a means of structuring the first portion of *The Governess*.

19. Todd, *Sensibility*, 102-03; see also *The Sign*, 165, 173. Todd's treatment of the two parts as one in the latter study weakens the precision of her otherwise-suggestive comments. At this point, a note clarifying the relation between my reading of *David Simple* and those emphasizing its role as a precursor of the sentimental novel (see, for example, Utter and Needham, 114-15, Butt, 449, Barker, Thomas R. Preston, *Not in Timon's Manner: Feeling, Misanthropy, and Satire in Eighteenth-Century England* [University: Univ. of Alabama, 1975], 58-59, and Todd, *Sensibility*, 88-109, *The Sign*, 161, 174) is in order. My view of the sentimental novel, discussed in more detail in the conclusion of this study, places it at the end of this group of fictions as one expression of the failure of their prescriptive project. Thus *David Simple*'s two parts are transitional in that they exemplify both the ideal and its unworkability. A similar suggestion, though with an implied difference in causality, is made by London: "If *David Simple* endorses an ideal analogous to *Tom Jones*'s final gesture toward shared benevolence, *The Adventures of David Simple. Volume the Last* (1753) reflects the effects on that ideal of the sentimental novel's ethos of inevitable victimization" (197). The notion of *David Simple*'s being a precursor of the sentimental novel tends to obscure its very real differences from the subgenre's most typical exemplars. Indeed, Barker's article emphasises those differences as much as similarities, remarking, as I have noted, that the protagonist is "more forceful and resolute" than the later man of feeling (70), and also that the novel gives a negative moral colouring to the emotional display associated with sentimentality (74-75), that it portrays ironically the self-destruction inherent in the sentimental ideal of a community of love (77), and that it tests the retired community by subjecting it to the trials of everyday existence (78).

20. Butt has praised such cases of "the failure of rapport between her amiable characters" as among Fielding's "subtlest observations" (451).

21. Kelsall, xiv. Because it resumes action immediately where the original left off and orients itself in relation to the original, *Volume the Last* is generally treated as the true sequel to *The Adventures of David Simple*, despite the intervening *Familiar Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple* (1747). Johnson is one of the few writers to call the *Familiar Letters* a sequel,

classifying it "as a special variant of the usually unsuccessful 'continuation', so disastrously exemplified in 'Pamela,' her Second Part" (xviii). The effectiveness of the sequel suggests in fact that Fielding's unusual strategy of dismantling her original construct while asserting her own narrative authority offers one workable solution to the problem of the sequel.

22. Barker has described Fielding in the sequel as "willing to test David's 'little Society' empirically in the stress and strain of everyday domestic life" (78). Parrish's summary of the sequel's argument in mathematical terms accords well with the text's own explicit treatment of economic factors: "the nature of this world is such that friendship with another only doubles one's potential disappointment and heartbreak. In a perfect community of eleven, the potential for disaster is a mathematic nightmare" (74). Spencer's model of the circumscribed authority used by late-eighteenth-century women writers such as Frances Burney and Jane Austen to endorse the contemporary female ideal, while illustrating abuses of power to which the heroine can be subject, might thus be applied to a text as early as *Volume the Last*, if a critique of the Richardsonian social model is seen as a corollary of the female domestic ideal (140-80). Woodward's attempt to separate the "nurturance and non-hierarchical sharing" of this "womanly community" as endorsed by Fielding from her destruction of "those persons who most fully exhibit the feminine virtues of innocence, passivity, and privacy, thereby depicting the insidiously oppressive force of such 'virtues'" (62) seems to me to be an anachronistic and unconvincing splitting of hairs.

23. These quotations are taken from Wilbur L. Cross, *The History of Henry Fielding*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1918; reprint, New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), 2:6-7. Cross cites Sarah Fielding's first-edition "Advertisement" in full.

24. In claiming that Fielding acquiesces to received definitions of the female sphere by not dramatizing herself within her own narrative (95), Spencer overlooks this significant shift to a more authoritative narrative voice.

25. Butt has noted the narrator's "firmly analytical manner" as the device that "controls the paralysing hopelessness that constantly threatens to dominate the story" (452). *Volume the Last* thus serves as a significant exception to Todd's rule that female writers of the mid-eighteenth century found it inadvisable to claim authoritative power within their narrative (*The Sign*, 125-27, 141-42).

26. As Todd has put it, although sentimental beliefs cause suffering there is "no decent alternative" to them (*The Sign*, 166).

27. Kelsall, xii-xiii. The focused effect that results from *Volume the Last*'s simplicity of style, tone, and structure has been praised by the *Times Literary Supplement* reviewer (589), Barker (77), and Kelsall (xi, xiv-xv).

28. Kelsall, xv.

29. The reappearance of Mr. Orgueil from the picaresque portion of Part I heightens the gloomy effect of the sequel's rearrangement of elements from the earlier movement from evil to good into the oppositional scheme of evil opposing good. Parrish has argued that "Orgueil comes closest to seeing the world as it

is" (57); the character's assumption that his is the realistic view of social relations, at any rate, is a significant part of his power in the sequel. See also Todd, *The Sign*, 173, for a discussion of the effect of context upon the ideal of the benevolent community.

30. Both Todd (*Sensibility*, 97-99) and Utter and Needham (114) have discussed the significance of the poverty motif as sign and test of the hero's virtue in the sentimental novel. They include with it, however, a disdain of work or of ameliorative action, a quality which is not reflected in either the merchant origins of David Simple's fortune or the attempts of himself and Valentine to generate income in the sequel.

31. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, *The Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, 3 vols., ed. Robert Halsband (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), 3:67.

32. In her later *History of the Countess of Dellwyn* (London: A. Millar, 1759; reprint, New York: Garland, 1974) Fielding's sociable domesticity has become the institution-founding of the Bilsons, who establish seminaries, alms-houses, and a house for destitute gentlewomen and thereby are enabled to "[support] some Hundreds" (1:204-08). This institutionalization of benevolence after the abandonment of the conversational ideal supports John Mullan's identification of the second half of the eighteenth century as the period during which such institutionalization occurs (*Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* [Oxford: Clarendon, 1988], 144-45).

33. This tendency becomes even more marked in *The Lives of Cleopatra and Octavia*, where Cleopatra's all-consuming and destructive love for Antony expresses itself in displays of false passion, while Octavia's genuine and selfless love refuses to vaunt itself and suffers in silence. This moral dichotomy is also clearly parallel to the contrast between Miss Mathews' consuming and self-proclaiming passion and Amelia's verbal restraint in Henry Fielding's novel. Again, however, the distinction is not simply a preference for sentimental gestures over words, for both the actions narrated and the narrative style itself at these points in *Volume the Last* are highly restrained.

34. Butt, 452, has commented on the success of this portrayal of Mrs. Orgueil's voice.

35. Todd, *The Sign*, 174.

36. In fact, the treatment of deathbed scenes is less problematic here than in most of Sarah Fielding's works, where almost the only, and certainly the infallible, means of bringing a character to acknowledge truth and a readiness to change is through the experience of a real or imagined deathbed.

CONCLUSION

A Failed Plot? The Demise of a Model of Social Authority

In 1755, Samuel Richardson received two letters from members of his group of correspondents which show to what extent the ideal of the intimate conversational circle had taken hold of at least one mid-century group of writers and readers. Mary Collier writes of conversational evenings spent in the company of an elderly couple of low "social station":

I hardly ever met with more simplicity and good sense than they both have, and it is with some degree of pleasure that I sit in an evening with them, and hear the discourse and gossippings of the day; it makes me smile often, and sometimes rises to a downright laugh; and whatever promotes and causes this, with innocence and good humour, is as eligible (as far as I know, in the way of conversation) and as worthy to be ranked of the sort called delightful and pleasing, as in the routs and hurricanes of the great, or at court, or even in company with my Lord Chesterfield.¹

For Collier, the conversational circle is the place where the humble can please as well as the cultivated, and where simplicity and good humour are valued above wit and intrigue; intellectual debate does not even enter into her comparison. For Sarah Fielding, writing of the Richardson household from afar, the conversational ideal carries with it an even stronger promise of domestic felicity and moral stimulation:

To live in a family where there is but one heart, and as many good strong heads as persons, and to have a place in that enlarged single heart, is such a state of happiness as I cannot hear of without feeling the utmost pleasure. Methinks, in such a house, each word that is uttered must sink into the hearer's mind, as the kindly falling showers in April sink into the teeming earth, and enlarge and ripen every idea, as those friendly drops do the new-sown grain, or the water-wanting plant. There is nothing in all the works of nature or of art

too trifling to give pleasure, where there is such a capacity to enjoy it, as must be found in such an union.²

This writer is convinced, it seems, of the power of the intimate circle and its words to make of reality a pleasant round of delight and contemplation. Such explicit statements suggest at once a conscious orthodoxy of conversational exchange and a felt need to continue to affirm that orthodoxy to one another as a valid social model in the face of disinterest or perhaps even opposition.

Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier's *The Cry: A New Dramatic Fable*, published in the preceding year, 1754, is a lengthy illustration of both the creed and its inimical social context. The very fact of this experiment, in which a conversation between Portia, Una (who represents truth), the Cry (followers of Error, representing general public opinion), and at points Cylinda replaces authorially narrated action entirely by self-narrations and the responses to them, suggests the degree to which these writers were determined to deflect fiction away from the "surprising incidents and adventures" of romance into "the perverse interpretations made upon [the heroine's] words" as the most accurate representations of social reality.³ At the same time, the "sweet retreat" which Portia succeeds in forming together with her husband, his sister, and the penitent Cylinda is only that, and in fact is never represented in the text.⁴ Rather, the work is taken up with Portia's painstaking defence of her thoughts and words as she attempts to tell her story, so that the lions and giants of romance become indeed "the spiteful and malicious tongues of her enemies," the Cry.⁵ Conversation in the novel never achieves its ideal except at one remove, as Portia insists upon delightful exchanges with Ferdinand and Cordelia without their ever being represented; the dialogue actually portrayed is a constant debate between an embattled Portia on the defensive and a mob that delights

consistently in attack, no matter how arbitrary and unpredictable its grounds for that attack. The suggestion of Fielding's conclusion to *David Simple*. Volume the Last seems borne out here: the ideal of the conversational circle, while it may be embodied in such isolated havens as the cottage of Mary Collier's elderly couple or the Richardson household, is generally left waiting in the wings while the first business of the virtuous individual--to justify her conduct before a scrutinizing and hostile social world--becomes the endless preliminary act occupying the entire stage-piece of this world.

The Cry thus seems to verify Michael McKeon's observation that, after Richardson and Fielding, novel history records the process by which "hypostatized over against the individual, 'society' slowly separates from 'self'

. . . , a ponderous and alienated structure whose massive impingement on the individual paradoxically signifies the latter's autonomy, the very fact of the individual's 'rise,' as well as the subjection of self to this greater power."⁶ If such a change is made more specific to the group of novels I have been examining, the apparent abandonment of the conservative model of social authority posited so earnestly by Richardson and the two Fieldings according to the possibilities outlined by Congreve and Bunyan can be explained formally and socially. The formal explanation has already been offered by the numerous critics who have disliked these works as plotless and disunified failures, presided over by too-perfect individuals at the centre of a too-harmonious universe. My argument has, I believe, suggested that such criticism reflects a lack of recognition of the complex stabilization of desire and deflections of conflict that these fictions achieve in rather sophisticated ways. The social explanation is indeed the more promising of the two. This group of novels responds to the threat of individualism in its various forms by means of a model

of authority based upon an egalitarian and consensual social circle; their replacement by other configurations of individual desire and social necessity therefore signals a shift in the contemporary understanding of social realities. The progress of the fictions I have studied has gone through the secularization of an otherworldly ideal by means of a tightly reflexive familial circle, to the opening up of that circle into a dynamic equilibrium of expansive virtue and concentrated desire, to the retrenchment of the circle in the domestic interior, surrounded by the hostile anti-circle of the city, and finally to the acknowledgment that there is no boundary excluding from the intimate circle the fact of its social, moral, and economic interdependence in this world. Conflict, it has become clear, cannot be evaded through consensus because the necessary precondition of exclusive like-mindedness cannot be met in a mixed society-- and if it is apparently met, the circle construct is simply begging the issue of difference. Thus the individual is confronted once again with the need to find her way alone through a hostile society in the hope of earning the reward of like-mindedness and community, not within the life of the novel, but in the existence posited beyond its close.

The construct of the intimate social circle, with its accompanying promise of conversation, consensus, and stability, does not disappear entirely from the novel, however. In the interval between the mid-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at least four fictional adaptations of the social circle can be identified, each of them retaining at least some of these characteristics.⁷ One of these is the full-fledged conversational novel, in which the process of exchange and the task of consensus become all, while non-verbal action is reduced to a minimum. The near-perfect stasis of such a novel, and hence the impossibility of its serving as a model for other works, is illustrated by

Laurence Sterne's 1759-67 *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*. This novel's adaptation of the static conversational circle, which so bewildered Samuel Richardson, precludes by its refusal of action any moral and social authority, becoming an impotent and vestigial caricature of the Richardsonian ideal. At the same time, its very impotence reveals the power, if not the authority, of the social circle over the individual, as its peculiarities become the shaping forces in Tristram's life and text.

In sentimental novels which allow the formation of an ideal group or groups rather than leaving their heroes searching without success for a friend, the tendency of the conversational circle to exclusivity and retreat, particularly evident in *Amelia* and the first part of *David Simple*, is given full rein, in the assumption that a hostile society no longer holds any place for such a construct. Thus the earnestness of the exemplary ideal expressed in *David Simple* Part I's conclusion, which suggests an attempt to revitalize outdated moral and political systems with a model of social life that will hold a place for the desiring individual, is replaced by a nostalgic aestheticization of sociability, again divorced from a moral appeal to application. Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), for example, with its seemingly impersonal victimization of Primrose and his family by arbitrary social evils and with Primrose's reactionary and otherworldly virtue, offers no ideal that is more broadly authoritative than the individualistic repentance sermon preached in the prison to society's misfits. At a greater extreme of social detachment is Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy* (1768), in which Yorick's perpetual motion in search of sentimental encounters leads him to form momentary groupings with one nameless character after another in a series of posed tableaux without any social continuity or verbal foundation to lend them any more than the most

generalized and repetitive meaning. The very helplessness and marginalization of the sentimental novel's central character or group suggests the irrelevance of its circle as merely an image of an idealized idyll or an irretrievable past.⁸

A less limiting adaptation of the conversational group in the novel is that of the responsive circle that provides a range of individual reactions to a single event as a means both of characterizing members of the circle and of creating a larger, coherent perspective on the portrayed reality than can be realistically achieved by any individual character. In such a novel, the authority of the group rests in the sum of its perceptions rather than in any individual centre; this model of authority embodies the principle of consensus as the means to truth while denying accuracy of interpretation to any but the reader, who receives the whole. In *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, written by Tobias Smollett in 1771, such a responsive circle modifies the journey pattern which structures a number of Smollett's earlier novels, and creates in the process a travelling community whose consensual and relatively egalitarian qualities are reminiscent of the fictions I have been examining.

Frances Burney's 1796 *Camilla or A Picture of Youth* takes this notion of a range of response even farther than Smollett, developing the *Grandison* motif of characters whose experiences double those of one another, but whose life trajectories differ greatly according to the complex and unique blend of character and circumstance which is the lot of each. For the circle of children that surrounds the little Camilla as "fairy mistress of the ceremonies,"⁹ the boundaries of innocence are soon broken and they are exposed directly to misrepresentation, error, and evil; while Camilla is finally welcomed back from her wanderings by the encircling arms of her family and her lover, for others there can be no return to this stability. Community, for Burney, is subject to

the divisive force of "individual experience" as the source of "injustice, . . . narrowness, and . . . arrogance" simply because "What, at last, so diversified as man? what so little to be judged by his fellow?"¹⁰

This full intrusion of plurality and the problem of knowing into the intimate group signals a final adaptation of its formal potential for the novel. In its careful tracing of the experience and interactions of a group of characters within a restricted circle, *Camilla* uses that circle as a social, moral, and economic microcosm of the self living among other selves. Jane Austen's novels, particularly *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, and *Emma*, explore the dynamics of the restricted circle to their fullest, using conversation as well as the internal states of characters to develop the relationship of the individual to her group, as that group's product and as a contributor to its corporate nature in turn." In Burney and in Austen, it is the authoritative narrator, like the narrator of *David Simple. Volume the Last*, who presides over the text as guide to its meaning; unlike the conversational tone adopted by the narrator of *Tom Jones*, however, this persona's voice is transparent and generalized, as though speaking for the reader the interpretive conclusions she or he is inevitably drawing. Epistemological authority, again, has been taken from the conversational circle under the fiction that it is being relocated in a circle of like-minded readers whose own judgment is not unjust, arrogant, or narrow because it is formed through the medium of words, and therefore is beyond the limitations of immediately lived experience.

This overview of adaptations of the conversational circle in works published soon after the mid-eighteenth century in one sense makes understandable the exclusion of fictions of the ideal circle from the retrospectively formed canon of the novel genre. Certainly the ideal's most extreme develop-

ments are closed avenues and, ultimately, modes of representation no longer felt to be true to the realities of individual difference and social experience. At the same time, overlooking these fictions of Richardson and the Fieldings, together with the self-conscious prescriptive project they represent, skews our critical understanding of the range of fictional constructs that constitutes the early British novel. And above all, as I hope this study has shown, we as dismissive readers suffer a loss because of the intrinsic interest of these texts: as components of their authors' comprehensive social visions, as participants in the discourse of authority of the mid-eighteenth century, and simply as unique fictions.

1. Mary Collier, in Anna Letitia Barbauld, ed., *The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson*, 6 vols. (London: Richard Phillips, 1804; reprint, New York: AMS, 1966), 2:74-75.
2. Sarah Fielding, in Barbauld, ed., 2:71-72.
3. Sarah Fielding and Jane Collier, *The Cry: A New Dramatic Fable*, 3 vols. (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1754), 1:11, 13.
4. Fielding and Collier, 3:286.
5. Fielding and Collier, 1:13.
6. Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1987), 419.
7. Ronald Paulson, in "The Pictorial Circuit & Related Structures in Eighteenth-Century England," *The Varied Pattern: Studies in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Peter Hughes and David Williams (Toronto: A. M. Hakkert, 1971), 165-87, also views changing uses of a circular structure in eighteenth-century English art, including the novel, as reflecting a shift from a range of expressions focused on a central object to the disparity between perceptions themselves. Although Paulson organizes his illustrations chronologically rather than by category, his observations on *Pamela*, *Humphry Clinker*, and *Tristram Shandy* parallel my own in several points.
8. Some of the thematic and formal similarities and differences between the novels I have been looking at and the sentimental novel can be identified in Janet Todd's *Sensibility: An Introduction* (London: Methuen, 1986), and Leo Braudy's "The Form of the Sentimental Novel," *Novel 7* (1973): 12; for example, Braudy associates a preference for disjunction and episodic structure over plot and continuity with the sentimental novel, but also sees it as privileging emotional over verbal communication. See also John Mullan, *Sentiment and Sociability: The Language of Feeling in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), 114-46, for a discussion of the retreat of sentimental virtue into a domestic and aesthetic space, and G. A. Starr, "'Only a Boy': Notes on Sentimental Novels," *Genre 10* (1977): 501-27, which offers a useful analysis of the social implications of the subgenre.
9. Fanny [Frances] Burney, *Camilla, or A Picture of Youth*, ed. Edward A. Bloom and Lillian D. Bloom (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1972), 18.
10. Burney, 913. Margaret Anne Doody's *Frances Burney: The Life in the Works* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1988) and Peter Glassman's "Acts of Enclosure," *Hudson Review 30* (1977): 138-46, have taken an illuminating autobiographical approach to Burney's portrayals of the self as restricted and defined by society.
11. This generalization about Burney and Austen supports Ronald Paulson's argument that "the dominant structure of the English novel as it moves toward the nineteenth century" is the family, as both "a restrictive force" and "a context of explanation" for the traits of a character ("The Pilgrimage and the

Family: Structures in the Novels of Fielding and Smollett," in *Tobias Smollett: Bicentennial Essays Presented to Lewis M. Knapp*, ed. G. S. Rousseau and P.-G. Boucé [New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971], 78. For representative discussions of Austen's use of the restricted group as a social microcosm within which the individual must learn both self-expression and self-discipline, see Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1986), Kenneth L. Moler, "The Two Voices of Fanny Price," in *Jane Austen: Bicentenary Essays*, ed. John Halperin (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1975), 156-71, Raymond F. Hilliard, "Emma: Dancing Without Space to Turn In," in *Probability, Time, and Space in Eighteenth-Century Literature*, ed. Paula R. Backscheider (New York: AMS, 1979), 275-98, Elizabeth Deeds Ermarth, *Realism and Consensus in the English Novel* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1983), 144-77, and Gary Kelly, "Jane Austen and the English Novel of the 1790s," in *Fetter'd or Free? British Women Novelists, 1670-1815*, ed. Mary Anne Schofield and Cecilia Macheski (Athens: Ohio Univ. Press, 1986), 285-306.

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