THE PICARESQUE SPIRIT IN ENGLISH FICTION FROM NASHE TO THACKERAY

An Abstract of a Thesis

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Master of Arts

by

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This thesis examines the progress in eight English prose works of a literary genre, the picaresque, the roots of which developed in Spain in the sixteenth century. The study indicates that the relationship be-between the picaro, the central character of picaresque fiction, and the society in which he acts, is the focal interest of picaresque works. This relationship varies from work to work, but a distinction is made between picaros who struggle with a social environment which, in part, determines their actions and picaros whose actions stem more from their own misconceived views of life.

As the roots of English picaresque fiction are Spanish roots, Spanish picaresque literature is examined in chapter I. The Spanish picaresque spirit is seen as a reaction to chivalric literature and as a medium for a realistic appraisal of society. The Celestina, an early Renaissance work, is examined because it presents a character, Sempronio, who is the first real suggestion of a picaro figure in Spanish literature. He observes the love his master, Calisto, has for a young woman, Melibea, and decides to take advanrage of his master's infatuation. Sempronio's calculating mind is referred to as an "organ of computation". This term is used throughout the thesis to indicate the picaro's strong self-interest which, aided by a quick wit, prompts him to take advantage of circumstances. An interesting relationship exists between Sempronio and Celestina. This relationship is referred to as a picaresque bond, which is characterized chiefly by a shared recognition of the significance of material prosperity.

Three major aspects of Spanish picaresque fiction: realism, satire, and the picaro's odyssey from innocence to experience are examined in a

group of picaresque works. A distinction between picaresque works is noted in this general survey. In a work like Lazarillo de Tormes, a naïve picaro suffers from his lack of experience, but learns to sharpen his wits in his fight with society. In a work like The Life of the Great Knave, or as it is more commonly called, Don Pablos, the picaro is himself satirized because he misconceives experience and directs his life to gaining recognition in compensation for his early feeling of inferiority. Both of these works are satirical, but, while Lazarillo sympathizes with the "hidalgo," the dispossessed nobleman who represents a false code of honour, Don Pablos witnesses hidalgos who are only ridiculous and beyond sympathy.

The first English picaresque fiction is generally comic, and the picaro does not suffer in a struggle with society as does Lazarillo. Elizabethan picaros like Jack Wilton of Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller, Piers Plainness of Chettle's Piers Plainness: Seven Years' Prenticeship, and Dorindo of Breton's A Mad World My Masters, are generally disengaged from society and act as observers of society. The keenness of their observations varies; Jack Wilton has a shrewd wit which passes from observation to observation and Dorindo is very adept at assuming roles, a significant characteristic of the picaro. Piers, on the other hand, is a weak observer since he lacks energy. Piers Plainness is closer in external similarities to Lazarillo de Tormes, but it lacks the spirit of its Spanish model.

Defoe's Moll Flanders does recall this spirit in its depiction of a picara's fight for security in a competitive society. Realism of observation, found in the Elizabethan picaresque works, blends with realism

of character and plot in Moll's efforts to become a gentlewoman. Her fear of the law compares to Lazarillo's fear of starvation. Her urge to ascend the social scale gives her adventures a vertical direction as seen in the Elizabethan picaro's movement rather than a simply horizontal one from place to place or from master to master. Her view of life is a product of the society in which she acts. This social determinism for the picaro's actions is seen also in Colonel Jack in which the picaro even though he becomes a thief, reveals a primitive goodness which he asserts against a corrupting social environment.

Fielding uses Jonathan Wild to embody a corrupt social principle, that of "greatness" which is opposed to "goodness". Unlike Lazarillo, his innocence is not emphasized; rather, he seems to bear an almost pre-determined evil. Picaresque qualities such as his role-playing ability and his empiricism only serve to make his criminality more pronounced, although Fielding uses some of these picaresque traits to aid his comic satire of Jonathan. As in Don Pablos the picaro is himself satirized, and this satire is partly directed to Jonathan Wild's misinterpretation of experience.

Smollett's Roderick Random considers the picaro sympathetically and sees him as an outsider who earnestly wishes to participate in society, but finds that society, represented especially by London society, does not want his honest efforts. He takes the sham role of a confidence man to further his ambition, but is ultimately revolted by the corruption of society, and, when he has a chance, withdraws to quieter existence on a country estate. Smollett uses Roderick's experience in London to reveal the sordidness of eighteenth century society. His descriptions of London society recall the

style of Spanish picaresque fiction.

Thackeray's Barry Lyndon recalls Jonathan Wild in its condemnation of the picaro. Thackeray uses his picaro to symbolize the false principle of "success" which Thackeray witnessed in his contemporary society. Barry Lyndon strives to claim the recognition that he felt was denied him as a boy, and so claims to be of the genteel class. In this way, his outlook compares to that of Don Pablos. Like Don Pablos, too, Barry Lyndon misconceives experience and does not recognize his own moral carelessness. His ambition is more aggressive than, for example, Moll Flanders' because it is based on a misconceived egotism rather than on a realistic appraisal of his position in society.

Although great variety exists in English picaresque fiction, this thesis follows one main line of development. The relationship between the picaro and society grows closer in the development of English picaresque fiction. In the three Elizabethan prose works he is seen primarily as an observer of society. In the two Defoe works he is a contender with society, and this struggle with society is again presented in Smollett's Roderick Random. The picaros of Fielding's Jonathan Wild and Thackeray's Barry Lyndon embody wrong social principles. Along this linear pattern of development, the significant contrast between the sympathetic consideration of the picaro and the condemnatory portrait of the picaro will be revealed.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Because the material in the chapter on Spanish picaresque fiction does not of itself present an adequate statement of intention, I am including this short introduction. In chapter I I examine representative Spanish picaresque works which prepare for the study of English picaresque fiction in succeeding chapters.

Study of a literature as varied and prolific as picaresque fiction demands a limiting of scope and a strict definition of terms. Throughout this thesis I attempt not to confuse picaresque literature with general rogue literature. F.W. Chandler in his book, The Literature of Roguery, traces the history of rogue fiction which includes the drama, romantic rogue tales, essays on criminal life, and picaresque fiction. My study is not nearly as extensive; it does not even attempt a history of picaresque fiction.

Misuse of the term "picaresque" has complicated study of this genre. Many apply the term to novels in which a wayward young man travels along roads full of adventurous episodes. Such novels as Henry Fielding's Joseph Andrews have been termed picaresque because they resemble Cervante's Don Quixote. While the episodic structure of picaresque narrative is a significant characteristic of it, the meaning of the term "picaresque" hinges upon the nature of the chief character, the picaro, rather than on the form of the narrative, even though the episodic nature of his experiences influences the picaro.

What I attempt is a study of the qualities of Spanish picaresque

fiction and a close examination of eight English picaresque prose works. Most of these are commonly known, and they show the great variety in attitude of the writers of picaresque fiction. They range from what I have called the comic picaresque works of the Elizabethans to the sympathetic treatment of the picaro in the novels of Defoe and Smollett and the condemnatory portraits of the picaro by Fielding and Thackeray.

The principal aim of this thesis is to show that common ground exists among these works in the relationship of the picaro himself to the society in which he acts and that this relationship takes many forms according to the particular balance of characteristics in each picaro. Therefore, a consequent additional aim is to observe closely each picaro as he functions in each of the selected works. A minor aim is to show the particular social and literary background from which the picaresque works arise where such revelation has bearing upon the treatment of the picaresque material.

Picaresque fiction has its roots in the relationship between society and the individual. In the present age this relationship has become more significant and more analyzed than ever before. The appearance of the totalitarian state has revealed dangerous implications in the growing contact between the individual and the state. Even in a democracy, the proper balance between the rights of the individual and those of the state is continually being scrutinized and reassessed by political theorists in the light of the advance of the welfare state. In literature, the significance of the problem of communication between individuals is paramount. Some writers, such as E.M. Forster, insist, indeed, that the problem of relations between societies is really a problem of relations between individuals. Franz Kafka, among others, however, stresses the unique problems inherent

in the individual's relation to society.

Since the picaro is an outlaw to society, his position provides a good vantage point from which to observe it. R.W.B. Lewis, in his book, The Picaresque Saint, reveals the kind of hero that is typical of twentieth century literature and shows that this hero embodies the nature of both the picaro and the saint. This hero sees the absurdity of life as it has become for him and is a rebel to contemporary social values. In this respect he is an outlaw to the accepted norms of society and recalls the position of the picaro. Yet this modern hero also yearns for some kind of meaning in his relations with his fellows and, hence, in a world that denies the significance of the individual, becomes a martyr, if not a saint. Such a study of the contemporary novel suggests the lasting value of picaresque literature.

The numerous modern novels that are even more generically picaresque than those studied by Lewis testify to the importance of the genre. A comic picaresque novel, The Adventures of Augie March, by Saul Bellow, is one of these. Young Augie March, the boy narrator, at one point indicates the control that society exerts upon him: "All the influences were lined up waiting for me. I was born, and there they were to form me, which is why I tell you more of them than of myself."[1] In his distinction between himself and society and in his clear realization of the force of society, he speaks as a picaro who is aware of his separation from society and also aware that he must come to terms with it. (From this point on the term "picaro" used in general reference will also pertain to the feminine term "picara".)

The procedure followed in this thesis will be first to indicate what literary and social factors bear upon each of the picaresque works. I shall then examine the character of each picaro and show how this character is developed in his contact with society. The place of each picaresque work in the context of the whole thesis will be emphasized at the end of each chapter. Each work is analyzed only in so far as it is picaresque. This means that certain aspects are ignored or receive minimal attention. For example, even though Roderick Random is considered by many to be the earliest successful portrait of sea life in the English novel, this aspect is not treated as thoroughly as it would be in a more general study of this novel. I feel justified in making such a distinction because the term "picaresque spirit" alludes to the character of the picaro rather than to the literary form of the works. Questions of picaresque form are subordinate to study of picaresque character in this thesis.

The terms "picaresque spirit" and "English fiction" in the title demand explanation. In studies of individual picaresque works, the word "spirit" will often be found and it may apply to any of a number of characteristics that the picaro exhibits. The dictionary meanings of the word that apply to the picaro's spirit are: "stimulated or high spirits, liveliness, energy, vivacity, ardor, enthusiasm, courage."[2] The picaro's "spirit" is shown in his ability to counter the force of society with energy and resilience and, even when the picaro is the least appealing, this energy may at least lend humour to his actions. His resilience is akin to Henri Bergson's "jack-in-the-box" theory of laughter. In Bergson's view, the stubborn ability of human nature to reassert itself after each set-back

is a principal inspiration to laughter.[3] The energy of the picaro may be retarded for a moment just as the jack is compressed when the lid of the box is snapped upon him. But little prompting is needed before the picaro snaps back to action with the same vitality as the jack snaps out of his box when it is opened. This strength of the picaro is a prime source of his appeal. The picaro's episodic viewpoint, by which he sees experience as a series of episodes rather than as a closely integrated development, is based upon the same principle as the jack-in-the-box theory. The picaro's spirit is manifested in the energy with which he faces each new venture.

The second term "English fiction" needs less explanation. I do not wish to enter the classical argument as to when prose fiction becomes the novel in English literary history. I use the blanket term "English fiction" for the English works that I examine.

A third term that may be given tentative definition here is the word "picaro." Although the many facets of the picaro will be observed throughout the thesis and a true picture of him is not complete without a realization of his variety, a few basic suggestions of his character may prove useful before the full study is launched. A principal source of the picaro's energy comes from his firm faith in his own importance. He stands outside society to an extent because he knows that it poses a threat to him, but he also knows that he must come to terms with it, and his behaviour may even be a reflection of society because he is conditioned by it. His difficulty in making personal relationships is due to his constant task of facing society as a whole or, at least, his idea of what society is. A very interesting aspect of his nature, however, is that he does make bonds with other individuals when he is sure that he will not be harmed in such

relationships.

Although I apply the term "criminal" to certain of the picaro's acts, I use this term only in so far as society defines these acts as criminal. The picaro should not be confused with the criminal because of the differences in motive between the acts of the criminal and those of the picaro. I reserve a full revelation of the variety of the picaro's motives to the thesis itself except to indicate that the more the picaro seeks power or material gain in itself, the closer he comes to being a criminal. Henry Fielding's Jonathan Wild is, indeed,a criminal, but he also has a picaresque nature which influences his villainy. I have drawn upon the "humours" theory of characterization because each of the picaros manifests a particular quality of his own.

I believe that a study of picaresque fiction is rewarding and that the picaresque genre is one of the principal roots of the English novel.

NOTES

1 Saul Bellow, The Adventures of Augie March (New York: The Viking Press, 1953), p. 43.

2 William Allan Neilson, editor in chief, Webster's New International Dictionary, (2nd edition, Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1958), p. 2428.

3 Henri Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic (Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell, translators, London: MacMillan and Company, 1911), p. 70.

CHAPTER I

SPANISH PICARESQUE FICTION

1. Social and Literary Background. Much against the reader's best intentions, he often experiences, when considering characters such as Milton's Satan or Comus, a sympathy with and interest in these figures in spite of their scurillous natures. He is tempted to suspend judgment upon evil-doers who are courageous, resourceful, and persevering. For the modern reader, this "moral holiday" is made easier because he has come to attribute, at least in part, a character's proclivity to immorality to the social atmosphere in which he acts. Sixteenth century Spain produced a literary genre, that of picaresque fiction, which encourages such a relaxation of judgment.

The strain of revering wholly virtuous characters, on the other hand, becomes too great for the reader. He knows that the altruistic knight's armour rusts from the "winter and rough weather" of actual conditions. When literature constantly asserts standards of morality beyond the reach of human nature, it petrifies; its heroes become puppets, and its heroines too good to be true. This departure of art from life is quite evident in chivalric literature, especially in the Spanish chivalric romances of the fifteenth century. Ever more ardent knights, more doomed and exquisite ladies, and more grotesque monsters crowd out truth and light from the pages of these works.

Yet the influence that chivalric literature had upon the aristocracy was great. There were Quixotes outside Cervantes' novel who

believed that such fantasy was fact. For example, the chronicler Juan del Castillo, writing of Philip II's marriage to Mary Tudor and the possibility of his gaining the English throne, indicates that Philip promised to abdicate this throne if King Arthur returned to claim it.[1]

By the sixteenth century the chivalric romance had become the literary preserve of the Spanish upper classes who did not care to see the real conditions of the national life. Throughout this century a gradually disintegrating economy loosened the social fabric. The wealth garnered in the New World by Spanish conquistadors was not channeled into use for the general welfare of the poor. Among these poor were many vagrant adventurers who sought sustenance from the royal court. This court's delusion was that full coffers from the Indies reflected general well-being. The full effect of this situation was not felt until the end of the century when the defeat of the Armada disclosed the nadir of the national fortune.

Even while the effete chivalric romance was in vogue among the gentry, a literature developed in reaction to it. During the decade 1550-1560 the picaresque genre sprang to life in Spain. Picaresque literature had an influence which would be lasting and would make the difficult ascent over the Pyrenees to France and England. Its utility as a literary form helped it reach even to the shores of the Mississippi in the pages of Huckleberry Finn. The picaresque genre is distinct from romantic Spanish literature in its hard tone of realism.

Picaresque matter exists both in the drama and the poetry of the period, but is chiefly to be found in prose fiction. The term itself

derives from the principal figure of these works who is known as a "picaro". The etymology of this word is still debated.[2] Some scholars trace it to the Spanish word "picar" which means "to pick up", and so suggests the picaro's identity as a thief. Other scholars stress the use of the word picaro as a synonym for "pinche", a cook's boy or a spit-turner. The authorities of Spanish towns like Seville applied the term to boys who became scullions and "bearers of light burdens". While these last occupations seem innocent enough, they could serve an opportunistic imagination. The number of this fraternity grew so alarmingly in the Spanish cities that the municipal authorities ruled that these boys wear a special costume of green or red.[3] Difficulty arose in distinguishing between boys who legitimately worked as porters and similar public helpers and those who took these roles for less reputable purposes. Association of the word with these occupations is useful because in such roles the picaro met transients of all kinds, especially the vagrants mentioned earlier. These vagrants were sometimes dispossessed lords known best by the Spanish term "hidalgos", who found that service from young picaros helped to soothe their wounded self-respect.

Spanish picaresque literature has various forms, and the particular Spanish picaresque works to be examined reflect this variety. The germ of picaresque fiction is found in The Tragi-Comedy of Calisto and Melibea, or The Celestina, as it is more commonly called, a Renaissance work which mixes the typical conceits and rarefied passion of Petarchan love with a graphic picture of Spanish low life. The first definitive picaresque work, The Life of Lazarillo de Tormes: His Fortunes and Adversities,

hereafter referred to as Lazarillo, resembles a sociological tract with its scathing but good-humoured depiction of the weaknesses of mid-sixteenth century Spanish society. The Life of Guzman de Alfarache, appearing fifty years after Lazarillo, is heavy with verbose but pointed moralizing. Cervantes, in his "exemplary novel", Rinconete and Cortadillo, uses the form of the Italian novella. Francisco de Quevedo's The Life of the Great Rascal, or, as it is more popularly known, Don Pablos, exhibits a vitriolic spirit quite distinct from the milder tone of Lazarillo and Rinconete and Cortadillo.

Where are the common factors in this chameleon-like form? Three salient features are inherent in the genre. These are realism, satire, and a narrative pattern which may best be described as the odyssey of a character of low life. Before these are treated in the other picaresque works mentioned, The Celestina, which is not generically a picaresque work and yet has picaresque elements in it, will be examined. While the emphasis will be upon the nature and function of the picaro himself, the social conditions in which he acts will also be observed.

2. An early example of Spanish picaresque characteristics: The Celestina. The Tragi-Comedy of Calisto and Melibea or, as it has become known, The Celestina, was written probably about 1480, although it was not published until 1499. Its authorship is debated, but many have attributed it to Fernando de Rojas. It is a reflection of the Renaissance interest in all shades of human nature. The reader witnesses a tragedy of love that involves the fortunes of both low and noble persons.

Celestina, a procuress, assists Calisto, a nobleman, in his love for the beautiful, young Melibea. Calisto's two servants, Parmeno and Sempronio, assist Celestina in this affair, and all these characters eventually are destroyed by the results of this love.

In this tragi-comedy is the first evidence of the picaresque spirit in Spanish literature. All the characters of low life have what Charlotte Brontë calls the "organ of computation,"[4] derived from the instinct for self-preservation which is a basic motive of the picaro. The splendid Celestina adopts a role for whatever purpose she wishes and is the first of many witches and wizards who inhabit the picaresque world. She dominates the book and is intensely intriguing, yet very human. She pities herself and complains of the trouble that her skirt gives her as she speeds along her way, seeking new objects for her talents.

But Sempronio is most typical of the picaro's attitude. He makes no outright theft, but he is the first to see that profit can be made from his master's passion. Calisto's expression of love is ridiculous, full of lofty Petrarchan conceits. Sempronio judges this language as that of a madman. As a dramatic counterpoint to Calisto's hyperboles, are Sempronio's crude, animalistic images: "I'll let him fester a while and come to a head. I've heard that it's dangerous to open or press a boil while it's green, for it only gets the more inflamed."[5] The language preferred by Sempronio is concrete and straightforward, and he admonishes his master for his extravagant verbosity. Calisto speaks of day's end: "Apollo's horses have been put to pasture after

their daily run."[6] Sempronio replies:

> Leave off these high-flown phrases, sir, this poetizing. Speech that's not common to all, or shared by all, or understood by all, is not good speech. Just say "until sunset" and we'll know what you mean.[7]

Irony results when these two forms of diction are juxtaposed. Calisto, overjoyed by Sempronio's offer to help him meet Melibea, calls his mission to Celestina "pious work"[8] and later in prayer compares Sempronio's trip to the journey of the kings to Bethlehem. He knows who Celestina is, because Sempronio describes her to him as a "witch, astute and wise in all evil things."[9] "She can move the very stones to lechery if she sets her mind to it!"[10]

Sempronio revels in the hypocrisy of others, even Celestina's:

> She uses her beads to count the number of maidenheads she's got on hand for repair, how many lovers there are in the city, how many girls she has contracted for, and what almoners and canons are the youngest and most free with their money.[11]

Such hypocrisy in others helps the picaro to justify his own materialism.

While he denies the existence of any non-material nature, Sempronio knows how to manipulate the belief that others may have in the validity of emotional or religious experience. When Calisto rewards Celestina with a hundred pieces of gold, he asks for Sempronio's opinion of such generosity. Sempronio replies that Calisto's generosity is honourable. He twists the argument to his own advantage and, in doing so, expresses the sententiousness common among the low characters in the work: "Honor is sullied by the heaping up of earthly treasures, but magnificence and

liberality win honor for you and raise it to sublimity."[12] He is an opportunist, in tune with Celestina's Machiavellian observation that, "Fortune always favors the bold and defeats the timid."[13]

A positive aspect of Sempronio's character is his admiration for Celestina. Her machinations are attractive to him, and he enjoys her calculating imagination. She loves to share her joys and, as long as it does not cost her anything, she enjoys others' happiness. Her conviviality is crystallized in her question, "is there any pleasure without company?"[14] Sempronio later answers her question affirmatively in conversation with Parmeno with whom he is allied by Celestina: "Oh my friend Parmeno, how good it is to have a companion to share one's thoughts! Even if Celestina did nothing else for us, this would be enough."[15] When Parmeno criticizes Celestina, Sempronio defends her: "She's greedy; that's her only weakness. Leave her alone. Let her thatch her own house, and later on she'll thatch ours, or it will be the worse for her."[16]

Unfortunately, this "only weakness" leads to her defeat. Celestina's greed and deception, when she conceals a gold chain that Calisto gives her, are too damning for the materialistic Sempronio. Sempronio and Parmeno brutally murder her.

These characters of low life are betrayed by their own failure to surrender self-interest. At a level upon which sacrifice is not necessary, conviviality is possible: as Sempronio says, "we're all in the family."[17] But each is primarily motivated by self-interest. Sempronio says of his master whose wits are strained by love: "It's better for

him to die whose life is a burden than for me who enjoy it."[18]

The association of Sempronio with Celestina is an example of a relationship between the picaro and other individuals which, throughout the thesis, will be called the picaresque bond. This bond can be vitalized from several sources, but a shared recognition of the primary importance of material fortune is essential to it. The confidence that the faithful may gain from religion or, at least, from an optimistic view of life, the picaro lacks, and he may compensate for this lack in the recognition of a kindred spirit who shares his distrust of society. Normal sexual motivation is not necessary to support this relationship, as the bond between the young Sempronio and the old witch Celestina proves. But what makes a picaresque bond precarious is the primary self-interest of the parties in it. Each, although hoping for conviviality, may slip back to a self-concern which will rupture the bond.

Sempronio has many of the picaro's characteristics. He manipulates others, chiefly Calisto, and seizes opportunities to turn his master's actions to his own advantage. Like Celestina, he enjoys role-playing, as evinced by his sententious moralizing to Calisto on the glory of giving. This role-playing is very strong in the picaro's nature because, to gain from society, he knows that his character must be supple enough to take the outward expression that circumstances demand. His ridicule of pretentious language is similar to the satirizing of pretentious persons in later picaresque works. He is a somewhat pathetic man because his self-interest leads him to destroy the woman whose influence has made him more

humane.

The Celestina has elements of the picaresque genre: pointed satire, a prototype of later witch or wizard figures in the person of Celestina, and a fairly well-developed picaro, Sempronio. It is at times brutally realistic. But Sempronio remains a secondary character, and his activities do not have the order of an odyssey from innocence to experience as is customary in generically picaresque fiction.

3. A general survey of Spanish picaresque fiction. Not until 1554 does the first pure picaresque fiction appear. Lazarillo presents a sharp contrast to the chivalric fantasy world of knights and kings. Its hero, the youthful Lazarillo, suffers in the actual, contemporary world of the Spanish cities, and his sorrows reflect the poverty of the Spanish masses. In its opening pages, Lazarillo gives the rationale for all picaresque works that follow it. His purpose is stated boldly: "no circumstance ought to be omitted, how insignificant soever it may be, but all should be made known, especially as some fruit might be plucked from such a tree."[19] This deliberate moral intent is blurred in later picaresque works; it becomes a mere tag to Don Pablos and the example in Cervantes' exemplary novel, Rinconete and Cortadillo, is difficult to find. Of the works examined, Guzman de Alfarache is the notable exception. But the frankness remains. A strong desire to give a realistic image of life is common to the writers of picaresque literature. They refer to the chivalric world chiefly in an ironical vein. While Don Quixote is only

partially a picaresque work, Cervantes taps this vein in his treatment of his fantasy-possessed figure.

A picaro's view of Don Quixote would see him as only ridiculous, for the picaro would judge his character by his outward actions such as his misplaced adoration of the wench whom the gracious knight refers to as Dulcinea del Toboso. The picaro could not see the subtler meanings of Don Quixote whose essential intention is to remake the world after a nobler pattern and to people it with a better human race. For the picaro, the world is an established, immutable fact which he must gird himself to challenge. His impression of this world is based on its outer appearance and his impression of men is based on their outward manner.

This limited view of the picaro produces a limited realism in picaresque fiction. The picaro's understanding stops far short of any spiritual interpretation of life because it insists upon the physical nature of men and is concerned with the minds of men basically in terms of their practical, hedonistic calculations. This limited realism of picaresque fiction ignores the soul; the chivalric romance ignores the body. Together they reflect the central problem of Spanish literature which is "the difficulty of living, when it tries to integrate body, soul, and mind — which is different from giving preference to the latter at the expense of the other two."[20]

The image of man in picaresque fiction is that of a creature controlled by the demands of necessity which limit his aspirations. In Chapter VII of Guzman de Alfarache, a mythical tableau is presented in

which a heavenly conversation develops. The gods discuss the condition of man and agree upon the justice of the act which deprived man of the content with which he was originally invested. Discontent was substituted for it so that men will know:

> ...their own misery, and thy [Jupiter's] mercy; thy happy state, and their own wretched condition; thy ease, and their trouble; their paine, and thy glory; thy power, and their own weaknesse.[21]

The picaro is fully aware of this discontent which can serve as a motivation for his endeavours in such a work as Lazarillo. Usually, however, the discontent does not encourage him to seek a reconciliation with God.

Lazarillo's prime necessity and what he seeks is a full stomach. At the end of his arduous apprenticeship to life, his benefactor, the Archpriest of St. Saviour's, gives him a "load of wheat, meat on festivals, sometimes loaves of fine bread."[22] This provision is symbolic of the boy's success. Each of his masters is evaluated by the degree to which he satisfies Lazarillo's hunger. He is served by none of them, and he soon learns that he must outwit them to prevent starvation.

His first temptation occurs with the blind man, his first master. He sends Lazarillo to the inn to purchase wine which the old man will drink with the sausage that he hoards. Because the sausage tempts Lazarillo, he substitutes a turnip for it and devours it on the way to the inn. On his return, the blind man accuses Lazarillo of the theft, forces his nose into the boy's mouth, and reclaims the sausage which is thrown up.[23] It is an ugly picture, but it vividly reflects the torture of extreme hunger.

This hunger is even more grotesquely presented in Quevedo's

Don Pablos. Lazarillo constantly appeals to the reader's sympathy, but often Don Pablos merely shocks. Quevedo has a penchant for bizarre figures. For example, Don Pablos is faced with a schoolmaster whose "beard had lost its colour from fear of his mouth, which being so near seemed to threaten to eat its neighbour from sheer hunger. . . ."[24]

In a short cameo scene, Lazarillo goes to the water-side. He notices his master, this time an impoverished hidalgo, with two fair ladies. They return his compliments with a suggestion that he pay their breakfast bill. Finding him penniless, they pass to those who can pay.[25] Social relations are determined by physical advantage, and ladies are not so concerned that their stomachs be hidden, as that they should be filled.

Hunger erodes the picaro's morality and shapes his individuality. While serving an avaricious clergyman, his second master, Lazarillo prays for funerals: "Then we could eat well, and I wished, and even prayed to God that he would kill someone every day."[26] Guzman finds that "Hunger and Shame could never yet be made friends."[27]

Yet this portrait of poverty is not unrelieved. Comic distance is created at times, especially in Lazarillo, to bring grim events into perspective. In his struggle with the clergyman to gain a share of his bread-hoard, Lazarillo poses as a rat who at night nibbles through the chest containing bread. Like a rat, he makes a hole in the chest and then opens it with a key that he has had a locksmith make for him. He tears the bread as a rat would tear it. The clergyman tries to repair the damage during the day, but gets nowhere, for Lazarillo continues his work at night.[28]

This comic interplay transforms the real anguish into a game of wits. Comparison to Penelope's weaving helps to put the action into a lighter frame.

Such humour produces objectivity. Cervantes' Rinconete and Cortadillo also attempts to present an objective portrait. After they have become friends through a number of shared adventures, two boys, Rinconete, the older, and Cortadillo, the younger, encounter a criminal organization in Seville. It is operated by Monipodio, who is described as "the picture of the most rustic and ill-shapen barbarian in the world."[29] Cruelty is common in the establishment; in fact, the general public pay its members to beat their enemies. The police are bribed to overlook this work. Monipodio encourages his gang to live by their wits, creates a sense of pride in their ability to gull the public, and builds a brotherhood from self-directed individuals. All this intrigues and delights the boys, for their own talents can be recognized in such a gang. Monipodio's society of thieves is far more tolerable than the one depicted in Don Pablos; it shares Celestina's "pleasure in company" principle. Quevedo's criminals lose none of their self-interest. When they sleep, they lie "as close together as knives in their sheathes."[30]

Quevedo's picture is not more realistic. By being vehemently cynical, he misses the possibilities of human nature even in its most primitive form. Cervantes preserves at least a sense of good cheer among his rogues.

That picaresque realism is limited is generally true. It by-passes or treats superficially certain profound facts of life. The picaro cannot

get too involved in personal and spiritual relationships if he is to keep resilient. He is a constant witness to the distortion of emotions and naturally learns to deny the possibility of love.

A common picaresque joke is that in which the terms of love are used to describe the material bonds between people. Don Pablos' little brother dies and his father moans because the "lad was a gifted and willing thief."[31] After a wench named Juliana is beaten by her lover, Monipodio chastises the man and sings Juliana's praise in terms of her value as a wench.[32] This irony diverts attention away from the possibility of legitimate feeling.

Spanish picaresque fiction realizes the force of passion, but gives it only one dimension. Sex is sometimes presented frankly, but never maturely. When Juliana complains of her beating, Granciosa, an older prostitute, who is wiser in the wages of love, advises her "that he who loves well chastises well, and when these brutes strike us, leather us and kick us, it is then that they adore us."[33]

Sempronio ridicules Calisto's passion partly because it is exaggerated, but partly, also, because he cannot comprehend the source of it. Don Pablos, too, is blinded by the ridiculous manner of love and does not try to evaluate its nature. He dissociates the manner from the intention of a group of lovers who come to a convent in search of their beloved nuns. He sees that:

> . . . this one was staring hard, without so much as winking; that one stood with a hand on his sword and another on his rosary, like a statue on a tomb, another would have his arms stretched out angelically. . . . [34]

This convent scene from Don Pablos has a cynical tone. To find nuns who secretively undermine the vow of chastity is a shock.

Rarely does the Spanish picaro confront the essential problem of love, described by C.S. Lewis as the passage in an individual's consciousness from the realization of himself as subject to the realization of himself as object.[35] In a developed sensibility, this passage often produces profound concern about one's value to another human being. The picaro cannot sacrifice his self-concern to this degree.

The picaro's religion is superficial. Guzman goes to Mass regularly, but for apparently no reason other than custom.[36] When Don Pablos is caught by the law, he searches for an escape:

> ... sometimes I decided to beg mercy for Jesus Christ's sake and then, reflecting how our good Lord was used, when alive, by members of the legal profession, I soon gave that the go-by.[37]

The picaro's mind is almost ironically prosaic, incapable of committing itself to the non-material. A religious corner of the mind exists in some picaros, but no sorties are made from this corner to influence either his calculations or his actions. His nominal religious loyalty is at best an effort to identify himself with what he thinks society deems proper.

The limitation of picaresque realism is disclosed by its deficiencies. But this limitation also produces positive elements. Fascinating minor characters are found in the genre who are almost of a romantic hue. Monipodio, for example, is something of a Blackbeard in his pronounced virility: "He wore neither jacket nor vest, and through the aperture in front of his shirt, one could see a veritable forest -- so much hair had

he on his breast."[38] He shows a humorous discretion, not a usual accompaniment to cruelty, when he discusses the "memoranda" of attacks to be made on the public: "it is enough to do the job without having it mentioned in public, as it is a great charge upon the conscience."[39]

Another advantage of limited realism that is absolutely necessary in the revelation of the picaro's character is that the picaro can be gay even when he is not expected to be. The picaro is very often prosaic, but he can make a game of language. An actual criminal rarely uses euphemism, and when a modern Monipodio such as James Hoffa dresses his questionable acts in idealistic clothes, he is considered more impertinent than comic. But the picaro's euphemism adds strong humour to his actions. The innkeeper in Don Quixote, part I, chapter III, describes his former adventures as a picaro in Don Quixote's language:

> . . . he himself, in the days of his youth had betaken himself to that honourable employ, wandering through divers parts of the world in search of adventures, not omitting. . . the hedge taverns of Toledo. . . where he had exercised the agility of his feet and the dexterity of his hands. . . making himself known to most of the tribunals and courts of judicature in Spain: and that at last he had retired to this castle. . . .[40]

Style can be an aid to picaresque realism. Spanish picaresque works often lack detailed, specific description, and prefer flat photographic accuracy. Everything is delineated neatly and consistently, but not precisely. The simple is preferred to the complex, and various devices are used to develop concreteness. There is generally an understating, almost suppression, of emotion and abstraction.

The sausage scene in Lazarillo is vivid in its scatology. The

narrative style of such episodes is direct and telling in its simplicity. An example of the understatement of emotions is his mother's farewell to Lazarillo. It is the epitomé of stoicism: "I shall see you no more. Strive to be good, and may God direct your ways. You have been brought up, and are now put with a good master. Farewell!"[41]

The abstract phrase is often turned into a joke by a concrete interpretation of it. In order that he be acquitted of a crime, Don Pablos surreptitiously bribes the constable: "I grasped his meaning and he grasped fifty more of my silver crowns."[42]

The writers of Spanish picaresque fiction have a passion for realism which derives from their social consciousness. At times, such as in Don Pablos, this passion becomes too vehement. Life just can't be that nasty, even in sixteenth century Spain. But the portrayal of Spanish society remains forcible and intriguing. Against this social background emerges the picaro, marked by the materialism of this society, with an intense interest in the ways of the world.

A consequent product of picaresque realism is its satire. The picaro, as an outsider, without a vested interest in any social position, can comment objectively on society. His suffering from the abuse of his different masters is testimony to the ferocity of those who represent an un-Christian church, an unjust law, and a warped aristrocracy. His pragmatic sense of values provides him with a ready weapon to puncture the hypocrisy of his social superiors. His adventures throw the deficiencies of society into stark relief.

The avarice of Lazarillo's priest and the passion of Don Pablos' nuns have been observed. One other picture of the decayed Church can be drawn from Lazarillo. His fifth master is a pardoner who by adroit craft sells indulgences. When sales are not going well, he connives with a constable to foil the poor folk of a village near Toledo. Before the congregation the constable first condemns the indulgences as false and then, after the pardoner has prayed for divine intervention, pretends that he has been struck by God's wrath and falls into a frothing, kicking fit. The pardoner is shaken from his "delirious dream"[43] to ask God's forgiveness on the man. He is perfect in his mock piety: "My master raised his hands to heaven, and turned his eyes up until scarcely anything could be seen but the whites."[44] After this scene the people urgently buy indulgences. Lazarillo speaks with the voice of Chaucer, Sinclair Lewis and all others who have seen mock piety at work: "How many tricks will the rogues play on these innocent people!"[45] Lazarillo's witness of such corruption prompts him to distrust those who pretend to believe in a spiritual world.

The separation of law enforcement from natural justice is the fundamental weakness of sixteenth century Spanish law. This dissociation turns law enforcement into privileged banditry. The picaro's view of the catchpole, or police man, is precisely this. Upon leaving an inn with a carrier whom he has met there, Guzman is overtaken by the police who condemn the pair as thieves and brutally beat them. Guzman suffers many blows before an officer, recognizing that both still possess their left thumbs, stops

any further legal proceedings because the man whom they search is without his. Guzman comments: "But questionlesse, they had a great desire to beat somebody, and so fell upon him that came first to hand."[46] The existence of a mean and ferocious law does much to promote sympathy for the picaro. In the misapplication of justice, society's agents become cruel and give a natural logic to the picaro's acts.

The satirical tone varies from one picaresque work to another. Don Pablos and Lazarillo show a difference in their depiction of the dispossessed hidalgo who struggles to maintain his honour.

The hidalgo of Lazarillo is the boy's third master and their relationship marks the lowest point in Lazarillo's fortune. After Lazarillo is beguiled by the hidalgo's appearance into hope that at last he will be treated well, he is shocked when the esquire asks for a portion of his bread. The man is foolishly concerned about the purity of the bread, but has no shame in taking it. Lazarillo sympathizes with him because he is deluded by his misconceived honour, his idée fixe. The esquire washes his hands religiously, but has to use the end of his cloak to dry them;[47] he marches with his cap "well cocked", though without a coin to his name;[48] he is a fusion of desperate want and refined bearing: "thinner than a greyhound of good breed."[49] Lazarillo gives the man a portion of what he begs to keep himself from starvation, but he cannot understand the hidalgo's stubborn unwillingness to face necessity. He is respectful of the man, though, and objectifies his misplaced dignity by referring to it as a fatal disease.

Quevedo's treatment of the hidalgo is much more harsh. Don Pablos

witnesses a character who is not merely ridiculous, but is almost obscenely grotesque. On the road to Segovia, Don Pablos meets a gentleman who seems to be finely attired, complete with the stiff collar of the gentry. After conversation, they decide to stop awhile and Don Pablos, about to help the man from his horse, discovers his naked, cold posterior. The man's defence betrays him as an impoverished hidalgo:

> Mr. Graduate, all is not gold that glitters: no doubt when you saw my collar and my imposing presence you imagined I looked like some Count from a romance. How many fraudulent exteriors there are in the world to posteriors such as the one you have touched![50]

This hidalgo, Don Toribio, and his fellow bankrupt noblemen aggressively raid banquets and cookshops, and they are not aloof nor stoical like Lazarillo's hidalgo. Don Toribio is defiant: "We look upon the sun as our declared enemy because he shows up our darns, stitches and patches."[51] Quevedo's hidalgos make every effort to maintain contact with the social stream; they may even become beggars. They show great agility in the roles that they take:

> If our fleas bite us in the presence of ladies, we know a trick of scratching in public without attracting notice; for if it happens to be on the thigh we tell the tale of a soldier we saw shot there, clapping our hand on the place that itches and clawing with our fingers instead of pointing. . . .[52]

Lazarillo can lift the hidalgo's cloak of false dignity and see that the skin and bones underneath are not different from his own. He can also see that the hidalgo is a dispossessed wanderer and without a true home in Spanish society as is Lazarillo himself. They are both fellow-sufferers and a tenuous bond exists between them, but it is not a picaresque

bond because the hidalgo cherishes his past and ignores the material needs of the present. Quevedo, on the other hand, sets his hidalgos in the stocks, as disgusting, squirming scoundrels.

The picaro's sharp ability to distinguish between appearance and reality and his materialistic view-point make him a good satirical agent because he sees the hypocrisy of those who maintain the shabby Spanish social structure. His suffering is a measure of the abuses in society. The distinction in satirical tone between Don Pablos and Lazarillo is significant, for it shows that the picaresque viewpoint can either condemn or sympathize with the delusion that results from ideals that ignore the actual conditions of existence.

Matters of form and style related to the whole picaresque genre were discussed in the examination of realism and satire. Now it is necessary to focus exclusively on the picaro himself. His life is a voyage from innocence to experience, and into this life the author threads a series of adventures which reveal the picaro's maturing process. The word "experience" must be qualified. A picaro's "experience" is a vulgarized savoir-faire, gained from the development of ingenuity and resourcefulness, which the picaro must have if he wishes to survive in a corrupt society.

The picaresque works to be examined differ in the points at which each of their hero's adventures begin. Don Pablos realizes the criminality of his parents. His father poses as a barber, but is really a thief while his mother hides the calculations of a procuress behind a "sweet smile".[53] The boy witnesses his father's imprisonment and becomes embarrassed and

ashamed of his family. In revenge he leaves home in search of "virtue".[54] That he only sees virtue as a dignity opposed to the degradation of his family is evident in his association of virtue with the socially desirable position of a gentleman.[55] He does not define it as a result of inward moral growth.

An awareness of criminal experience is also felt by Rinconete and Cortadillo who, after they have become acquainted with each other, confess that they have each tried petty thievery. Cortadillo is equipped with the resources of a thief. When asked if he possesses a trade, he replies that he can "run like a hare, jump like a deer, and can wield the scissors with great dexterity."[56] The boys are prepared for a greater awakening to criminal life, but have not yet met Monipodio who exposes this life to them.

Unlike Don Pablos's parents, Lazarillo's mother is essentially honest and protects Lazarillo from external evils. However, she is poor and puts the young Lazarillo into service with the blind man.[57] Lazarillo does not guess this man's real character until the boy's awakening at the bridge at Salamanca. The blind man asks Lazarillo to place his ear against a stone bull at the entrance of the bridge. Suspecting nothing, the hapless boy does so and is pummeled against the stone. He realizes immediately the hard life he has entered:

> It seemed to me that, in an instant, I awoke from my simplicity in which I had reposed from childhood. I said to myself, 'This man says truly that it behoves [sic] me to keep my eyes open, for I am alone and have to think for myself.'[58]

The blind man, because the world has forced him to be shrewd and ingenious, actually "sees" better than Lazarillo who has to be made more observant.

His connection with the blind man is a rough but very profitable schooling.

Like Don Pablos' misinterpretation of "virtue", Guzman de Alfarache oversimplifies "life" and confuses it with geography:

> ... who would thinke that the world were so large and so long as it is? I had seene it in some Maps, and me thought it was all plaine and smooth. . . without any great either difference, or distance.[59]

The confusion in both cases derives from the picaro's empirical mental outlook which prefers external concrete measurement to personal and private experience.

Naïveté is common to all these picaros. In some, such as Guzman and Don Pablos, this naïveté is caused by a misinterpretation of experience while in others, notably Lazarillo, it is the result of complete lack of experience. The growth from this naïveté usually must be very quick because society abuses the naïve. Just as Lazarillo suffers from the blind man, so does Guzman suffer from card-sharpers who strip him of the small wealth with which he left home. Early loss of fortune through a card game is a constant motif in picaresque fiction. The poor, stripped Guzman is left to nature and his pathetic loneliness is emblematic of Spanish poverty:

> The night was now shut up, and with it my imaginations, but not the teares, that trickled from mine eyes: In this melancholy humour I fell at last asleepe upon a seat without in the church-porch."[60]

The picaro's empiricism develops as he gains more experience. He learns more about human nature and how to manipulate it. He is not concerned to find why people act as they do, but simply how they act. The mental qualities, ingenuity and resourcefulness, that he must build are

those of the wits rather than of the whole mind. When he gains some command of these functions, he no longer is the child of Fortune but, rather, masters it. Lazarillo is an ungrateful graduate of the blind man's school. The boy outwits his master by persuading him to jump over an imaginary pond which stands before an actual stone pillar. The blind man jumps and smashes his head against the pillar.[61] This coup de grace leads Lazarillo to his cat and rat game with the priest, and his wits quickly sharpen. Cortadillo's ingenuity is turned from cutting cloth for his father to cutting purses for himself.[62] Very soon in Don Pablos' career, he becomes both ingenious and brave. With great zest and sword in hand, he rushes into a confectioner's shop, shouts, "You are a dead man," and stabs a box of sweetmeats which he spirits away.[63]

This zest is a direct result of the picaro's pride in his ability to outwit others. His acumen causes him to be instinctively "careless and joyous"[64] even if circumstances often cause him to be more calculating and careful. Besides developing his wits to take advantage of circumstances, he must also have a physical talent, namely dexterity. Monipodio warns the boys that, "to be a master in one's profession, there is as much need of good tools to work with as of ingenuity to learn it."[65]

With these talents the picaro can crack the limits of his social background and stand as an individual. His success adds an "ease and apparent sweetness"[66] to evil. The colour and zest of the picaro create a more tolerable world between the extremes of sin and virtue. Material gain is the only aim of the true criminal, but for the picaro the means by which he gains is just as important. His view of himself is that of a clever man

who wishes to outsmart the society with which he contends. In Don Pablos' case this desire results from the picaro's wish to retrieve the dignity lost by his family.[67] In Lazarillo's case it comes from exposure to society's ferocity. But whatever its cause, this desire, if satisfied, produces a self-confidence in the picaro which releases him from a sense of guilt. He can even imitate the manner of others. Don Quixote's picaro, Gines de Pasamonte, shows strange discretion. He warns his critics that he "will flay them where I care not at present to say."[68] Don Pablos expresses a contorted faith in Providence,[69] quite foreign to the picaro's usual wish to control Fortune. The picaro can even rationalize. Don Pablos implies that virtue is materially determined when he states that he cannot afford to be virtuous as can a rich man.[70]

Gines de Pasamonte, with the picaro's typical pride, keeps a record of his exploits which he calls The Life of Gines de Pasamonte. Don Quixote asks him if it is finished. He answers:

> How can it be finished?. . . since my life is not yet finished? What is written, is from my cradle to the moment of my being sent this last time to the galleys.[71]

His reply is typical of the picaresque character, a character that is never satisfied unless there is an adventure to satisfy it. The episode is the picaro's life, and his life is not complete until the last episode, for each contains a stage for his unbounded vitality. He responds to any setback with a wit made finer and surer by experience. The picaro's actions are not really criminal because of their peculiar motive. Lazarillo fights those who deny sympathy and sustenance for the wretched of mankind whom he represents. Colouring the picaro's acts is a picaresque spirit which

redeems him, for he is as interested in the fight as in its rewards. The "picaro implies flippancy; harassments rather than serious attacks; the trick-or-treat prankster; seduction rather than rape."[72]

Yet the heartlessness of society necessarily means that the picaro must be calculating. Sempronio aims at the possible rewards from his master's infatuation; Lazarillo measures his masters by their ability to feed him. His own need is the picaro's basic motive even if he can at times establish a bond with those who recognize the primary importance of material satisfaction. However, Don Pablos' need to be recognized as a gentleman is as strong as his material need. Although the picaro is usually immune to emotional involvement, he can be hurt if he feels that his basic identity is attacked and his birthright of normal recognition is denied.

Don Pablos witnesses a constant savagery in Spanish society. Because of the boy's early experience with his parents, the reader is inclined to think that the boy's tale is a product of a distorted sensitivity. Lazarillo's view of society, while also condemnatory, seems to be more balanced. He is concerned more with his own fortune than with social abuse even though he can sympathize with the hidalgo who is afflicted with false pride or with the pardoner's congregation who are gulled by him. There is a difference both in intention and tone in the picaresque fiction of Quevedo and Mendoza which will be reflected in English picaresque literature. Quevedo's intention is primarily satirical and his tone is harsh. Mendoza's intention is to present a sympathetic picture of the sufferings of the picaro and his tone objectively reveals the reality of Spanish life.

Sherman Eoff, writing of the picaresque element in Oliver Twist, suggests that much of Lazarillo's experience is pre-picaresque because he does not take the course of the thief or any other recognizably criminal course.[73] While his naïveté wins the reader's sympathy, Lazarillo is equipped with the "organ of computation" which is revealed in his first service to the blind man and especially in his ingenious trick to rid himself of the blind man. This "organ of computation", with its implied self-interest, is the essential spring of the picaro's actions. If its effect is violent, this violence is only symptomatic of the society that the picaro reflects. Lazarillo's ability to both shock and command sympathy testifies to the success of the picaresque writers whose intention is to awaken the social conscience.

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CHAPTER II

ELIZABETHAN PICARESQUE FICTION

1. Social and literary background. One of James Barrie's characters remarks that "circumstances alter cases". This truism often applies to a literary genre which makes the hazardous journey from one nation to another. A translation of Lazarillo by David Rouland of Anglesey was entered on the Stationers' Register in 1568-9,[1] and, through succeeding years, translations of other Spanish picaresque works became very popular in England. But English picaresque fiction, while maintaining much of the essential spirit of its Spanish progenitors, differs in some striking respects from the Spanish.

One difference is in number. Only one picaresque work written before Defoe's series of picaresque works in the early eighteenth century has lasting significance. This is Thomas Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller. The "circumstances" of English social and economic life during Elizabeth's reign showed signs of decay similar to those of Spain. But the attitude of the reading public to this decay was a greater sense of shame. The pamphlets by such writers as Thomas Dekker and Robert Greene reveal a sordid Elizabethan underworld which the public could not find amusing. The Elizabethan audience could laugh at Shakespeare's Falstaff or Autolycus because these figures were removed by their creator from actual contemporary life. However, writers found that they exposed the Elizabethan underworld better by documentary rather than by a more truly

literary approach. Nashe's removal of his picaro from England to a series of continental adventures and Henry Chettle's placing of his picaro in Greece seem to indicate the Elizabethan picaresque writers' unwillingness to deal directly with English conditions.

The concept of a moral order which Shakespeare knew and absorbed into his dramatic purpose was difficult to achieve in actual English society. The growing towns were blemished with the crimes that festered in them. An Italian writes of his visit to England:

> ... there is no country in the world where there are so many thieves and robbers as in England; insomuch that few venture to go alone in the country, excepting in the middle of the day, and fewer still in the towns at night and least of all in London.[2]

These "thieves and robbers" had from the fourteenth century formed a society which included every type of criminal. Dekker, in his Bellman of London, cites "some eighteen or nineteen several offices for men, and about seven or eight for women"[3] in an establishment resembling Monipodio's. Robert Greene writes of the plight of simple conies or country persons who in their sojourns in cities like London were bedevilled by the cony-catchers, gifted card-sharpers.

Toward the end of his life, Greene attempted to expose criminal life in fiction rather than in the documentary pamphlet. In his Groatsworth of Wit, a father who has two sons leaves all his wealth to one of them, except for one groat which he leaves to the other to purchase some wit. The neglected son, Roberto, by a clever device, gains the fortune of the other, but wastes his "groatsworth of wit" in lewd living sustained by his brother's inheritance. Roberto repents of his folly, and, in this repentance, he

may speak for Greene.[4] He does not, however, speak as a picaro, for a picaro is never conscious of a loss of wit because his resource of it is unlimited. There are few suggestions of the picaresque genre in the works of the pamphleteers.

The picaresque spirit can be preserved only where there is a margin of tolerance and a willingness to allow the picaro to go unpunished while he entertains. Consequently picaresque fiction has only a small corner of the Elizabethan pleasure dome from which to shed its light. The particular "humour" of Elizabethan picaresque fiction is comic. This fiction does not emphasize the suffering of the picaro or the social determinism behind his actions. Jack Wilton or Piers Plainness or Nicholas Breton's Dorindo are primarily observers and satirists of society.

2. Thomas Nashe's Unfortunate Traveller: the witty picaro. Thomas Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller, published in 1594, is the first work in English to fuse history with fiction in the adventures of its hero, Jack Wilton, who travels throughout Europe and meets such notable persons as Luther, More, Erasmus, and the Earl of Surrey. Nashe uses his character to observe the panorama of European events and society. Jack sometimes praises what he sees. For example, he defends the Roman Catholics: "if good workes may merite heaven, they doe them, we talke of them."[5] Sometimes he is almost splenetic in his harsh criticism. The author's presence is felt in diatribes against the ignorant and dull types that Jack meets. But most often the picaro's outlook gives comic colour to the satire.

Notable differences exist between Nashe's story and Spanish picaresque fiction. The first is that, unlike Lazarillo, the series of episodes in The Unfortunate Traveller is not based upon a cycle of master and servant relationships. In Lazarillo this cycle, which may be compared to the mediaeval wheel of fortune, provides the stimulus for Lazarillo's development of character and the focus for Lazarillo's fight with society. In The Unfortunate Traveller change is limited to change in external circumstances such as time and place. From the tale's outset, Jack is a mature man in full command of his wits. Lazarillo attaches himself to his masters through the force of circumstances, but Jack chooses to be a hanger-on to people like Surrey. In one instance Jack is caught by circumstance in the person of Zadoch, a Jew, who contrives to sell him as his bondsman to Zachary, a doctor. This doctor plans to use Jack's body in an anatomical experiment.[6] The effect of this debacle is melodrama rather than pathos. Jack has the capacity to dodge death, but how he will do it is a question.

Lazarillo usually leaves a master because of harsh treatment that he can no longer endure. Jack abandons Surrey to satisfy Jack's sheer mischief, or Juliana (a woman whose love saves him from Zadoch) because her constant sexual demands bore him. The source of Jack's actions is less dramatic than that of Lazarillo's; the pervading tone of his adventures is comic.

Lazarillo is propelled by his search for food. Jack, too, has a keen interest in his own sustenance, but he looks for drink rather than food. His plight is never as urgent as Lazarillo's, but he needs ale to make him a virile, witty picaro. At Charles V's court, he insists upon

the importance of drink: "our entertainment was everyway plentiful; carouses we had in whole galons in sted of quart pots. Not a health was given us but contained well neere a hogshead."[7] As a connoisseur he is irked by the deterioration of wine: "at the verie name of sider I can but sigh, there is so much of it in renish wine now a daies."[8]

Each episode with masters teaches Lazarillo to develop ingenuity and resourcefulness. In contrast, Jack does not seem to develop much although his shock at the rape of a chaste matron, Heraclide, toward the end of his account, contrasts with his flippancy at the beginning of it. Plot development occurs when Jack is separated from his love, Diamante, and struggles to reunite with her. The lascivious Spaniard, Esdras de Granada, who rapes Heraclide, features in two episodes separated by other material. This plot development is only rudimentary, but it brings Nashe's work closer to the modern novel than is Lazarillo.

Because of these differences with such a Spanish work as Lazarillo, Nashe produces a comic picaro who is actively interested in all whom he meets and everything that he experiences. He evaluates his observations by the same material standards as Lazarillo and, indeed, as all Spanish picaros, but because he does not suffer, like Lazarillo, from his encounters with society, he has more energy to direct his wit to less immediate concerns than food. The particular aspect of his picaresque spirit is "stimulated or high spirits".

He is chiefly interested, though, in himself. Not for him is a useless humility. When he abandons Surrey, he preserves the agreement

between them that Jack would take Surrey's name so that Surrey could observe Italy less impeded by admirers. He plays the role up to the hilt:

> Through all the cities past I by no other name but the young Earle of Surry; my pomp, my apparel, traine and expense, was nothing inferior to his, my looks were as loftie, my wordes as magnificall.[9]

Like Don Pablos, he feels that the most desirable role in life is that of a gentleman.

At one point Jack faces execution because Heraclide's husband has accused him of her murder. Like Gines de Pasamonte, he knows that the custom among imprisoned gentlemen who face execution is to write a memoir. Accordingly, he writes a ballad called, "Wiltons wontoness".[10] After his rescue from prison, he sheds comic light upon the danger that faced him when he says: "He that hath gone through many perils and returned safe from them, makes but a merriment to dilate them."[11]

He knows other values besides his own personality. Money, for instance, has great social utility: "any man is a fine fellow as long as he hath any money in his purse."[12] He steals once from Juliana and is assisted in this theft by Diamante. He is not a confirmed thief; he steals only to suit his purpose. Jack is not immoral, for he simply has no time for morality. He is also indifferent to spiritual life, because, as far as he can see, the spirit is wholly dependent upon physical nature. He turns to God only when he is threatened by Zachary:

> ... theres no such readie way to make a man a true Christian, as to persuade himselfe he is taken up for an anatomie. Ile depose I praid then more than I did in seven yeare before.[13]

This cynicism he shows whenever he encounters others who have religious

belief.

Jack's pity for Heraclide does not necessarily imply a deepening moral sensibility. He describes in detail the assaults upon her, and this description suggests not so much a revulsion as a desire that his account be complete. The grotesque torture of Zadoch is described almost phlegmatically, and Jack understates the cruelty of battle: "the French King himselfe. . . was much distressed, the brains of his owne men sprinkled in his face."[14] War for him is essentially a game, for he cannot see any real causes involved in it. He thinks "to thrust my selfe into that Faction that was strongest."[15] Although Nashe might intend to condemn war, his hero, to be comic, is a true picaro with limited emotional sensitivity.

Jack's language startles the reader. It is far from the bland photographic style of Lazarillo or Rinconete and Cortadillo. It is almost self-motivating; constantly growing clusters of simile and metaphor describe objects, movement, and character. Jack's free-wheeling wit passes rapidly from one suggestion to another and, in this process, reworks and amplifies old clichés:

> Much companie, much knavery, as true as that olde adage, Much curtesie, much subtiltie. Those companies, lyke a greate deale of corne, do yeeld some chaffe; the corne are cormorants, the chaffe are good fellowes, which are quickly blowen to nothing wyth bearing a light heart in a lyght purse. Amongest this chaffe was I winnowing my wittes to live merrily, and by my troth so I did: the prince could but command men spend their bloud in his service, I could make them spend al the money they had for my pleasure. But povertie in the end partes friends; though I was prince of their purses, & [sic] exacted of my unthrifte subiects as much liquid alleageance as any keisar in the world could doe, yet where it is not to bee had the king must loose his right: want cannot be withstoode, men can

> doe no more than they can doe: what remained then, but the foxes case must help, when the lions skin is out at the elbowes?[16]

L.C. Knights' comment that for Nashe "the ostensible theme is merely an occasion for the performance"[17] is clearly evident in The Unfortunate Traveller.

In the picaro, Nashe finds an excellent vehicle for his metaphorical power. The picaro is witty not only to exist, but also to make his view of the world identifiable. He proudly presents his experience to those who have an ear for a good story told with rich detail which emanates as much from his imagination as from his observations. All subjects come within the beam of Jack's attention, and he is eager to express himself with a complete arsenal of literary devices. Nashe gives his picaro a fund of knowledge which is used as grist for his mill of wit. A good portion of the imagery is drawn from literary sources as well as from observations of daily life.[18]

This daily life is often low life and, hence, provides suitable material for a picaro. As thorough a knowledge of gambling, drinking and wenching as Greene has, Nashe has. The muscularity and vigour of the prose is immediately apparent in the invocation to "gallant squires" to "straight crie Sic respondeo, and give him the stockado" if they should meet anyone who criticizes the work.[19] It is intended primarily for masculine ears.

Jack has free rein for his picaresque forcibleness and directness. Don Pablos often ridicules an abstract phrase by a concrete interpretation

of it.[20] Jack, too, forces our attention to a concrete expression which contrasts ironically to an abstract one. This is done often by a sharp elliptical phrase: "I, beeing by nature inclined to Mercie (for in deede I knewe two or three good wenches of that name)," [21] and "God be mercifull to our pandor (and that were for God to worke a miracle)." [22] Comments like these exemplify the rigorous criticism of any sign of cant which comes within Nashe's purview.

Closely related to an insistence upon concrete expression is the emphasis of the physical aspect in intellectual and spiritual matters. Jack uses this emphasis to ridicule whoever he thinks seems pretentious. Henri Bergson suggests that it would only take a deformity like a crooked nose or an obvious wart to make a character such as Hamlet seem ridiculous.[23] Similar accentuation of the physical nature of famous persons becomes a satirical and comic device in The Unfortunate Traveller. The debate between Luther and Carolostadius is described by Jack in this way: "Luther had the louder voyce, Carolostadius went beyond him in beating and bounsing with his fists." [24] Each contender is backed by his academic and clerical supporters:

> One peckt with his fore-finger at everie halfe sillable hee brought forth, and nodded with his nose like an olde singing man teaching a yong querister to keepe time. Another woulde be sure to wipe his mouth with his handkercher at ye ende of every ful point. . . .[25]

This separation of manner from matter compares with Don Pablos' observation of the nuns' lovers.[26] V.S. Pritchett says that both Lazarillo and The Unfortunate Traveller have "an overpowering sense of the body; over-

powering in the sense that the body alone exists, that it is the body (not the mind or the soul) which is brought into history to be knocked about."[27] This one dimensional viewpoint is obvious when Jack is the eye-witness to historic events.

The literary task itself is described in physical terms. Jack tells of Heraclide's rape until "my words sticke fast in the myre and are cleane tyred."[28] Jack's enthusiasm for digression must be checked continually: "My principall subject pluckes me by the elbowe."[29]

The distance between the physical and the crude is short in Jack's descriptions. To balance the involved metaphors, he makes blunt statements fit only for the hardiest of ears. He tells of his affairs in Rome: "I was at Pontius Pilates [sic] house and pist against it."[30] This kind of expression is an integral part of his speech. Jack does not say that a play was badly acted, but that it was "filthily acted".[31]

Nashe states that he had read Euphues at Cambridge, but, after he matured, he turned against Lyly's style. He criticizes those who follow in Lyly's direction. But, as if to show that he could adopt euphuism as well as any man, he interpolates, amid more candid writing, rich praise of Surrey's beloved Geraldine. Jack observes that when Surrey

> ... came to the chamber where his Geraldines [sic] cleere Sunbeames first thrust themselves into this cloud of flesh, and acquainted mortalitie with the purity of Angels, then did his mouth overflow with magnificats. . . .[32]

This comment mixes strangely the sublime and the physical. Jack thinks that a lover responds to beauty only physically; the aesthetic element in

Surrey's praise is tempered by the operation of speech. The mouth and the tongue react almost before the heart. In another passage Jack recalls Sempronio as he suggests that Surrey:

> ... was more in love with his own curious forming fancie than her face; and truth it is, many become passionate lovers only to winne praise to theyr wits.[33]

That Jack, as a picaro, can recognize beauty is significant, however. This recognition encourages him to love Diamante, and, hence, he becomes more directly concerned with life. Lazarillo marries at the end of his tale, but this marriage is more a sign of the crowning success of his life than something he attempts to gain for itself. Jack finds a more convincing interest in Diamante as a person with a similar outlook to his own. A picaresque bond exists between them even if Nashe understates its significance and uses it primarily as a device to end the tale.

Jack is satirical as well as comic. His satire is shown not only in exaggeration, but also in subtler effects. Jack's comic satire is seen first when he meets the cider merchant who is the supplier of the English army to which Jack is attached. Jack tricks the merchant into thinking that he is suspected of subterfuge by the king and his lords. He advises the merchant to be liberal with his cider in order to dispel this suspicion. Jack's friends benefit from this trick, and, until the plot is discovered, they all have a roaring party at the merchant's expense. The trick reflects the influence of the jest books by Scoggin and Skelton which were widely read in the period, but there is true picaresque ingenuity in the act.

The merchant is immediately shocked by Jack's mention "of some

dangers that have beset you and your barrels."[34] Nashe very subtly equates the man with his "barrels", and reduces the figure for comic possibilities. Does the equation suggest that the man, too, is wooden or is shaped like a barrel? A comic juxtaposition follows in which the shocked merchant bangs upon the table. To the waiter this indicates that he wants something: "At the name of dangers hee start up, and bounst with his fist on the board so hard that his tapster overhearing him, cried, anone, anone, sir, by and by. . . ."[35] The seeming indifference of the waiter gives a humorous foil to the merchant's bombast. Jack's manipulation of the merchant is assisted by a knowledge of what motivates the man. Jack bellows into the merchant's ear to bring him out of his shock: "Hoe, hoste, whats to pay? will no man looke to the reckoning here?"[36] To be ingenious, Jack, as a picaro, must know how men operate. The satire here develops from comic reduction of the figure; it is not invective.

Harsher criticism is reserved for the pedantic clerics of Wittenburg. They are as bad as court fops in their servility to the Duke of Saxony who has helped them against the Pope. They meet him "in their hooded hypocrisie and doctorly accoustrements"[37], and their oration to him is "by patch and by peecemeale stolne out of Tully."[38] The disparity between their supposed spiritual dedication and their physical needs is exposed during the play performed for the Duke: "The onely thing they did well was the prodigall childs hunger, most of their schollers being hungerly kept. . . ."[39] Hunger is made to appear grotesque as in Don Pablos' description of his schoolmaster.[40] What is most damning in these men is their lack of wit. Jack finds that their heads are crammed with "learned lumber", but that

they have "no wit to make use of it."[41] In their pretentiousness, they make an ideal target for picaresque satire.

Doctor Zachary is the wizard figure of Nashe's work. An obvious difference between him and Celestina is the monstrous scatological picture he presents:

> Of the ashie parings of his bread, he would make conserve of chippings. Out of bones, after the meate was eaten off, hee would alchumize an oyle, that hee sold for a shilling a dram. His snot and spittle a hundred times hee hath put over to his Apothecarie for snow water.[42]

Doctor Zachary, as a wizard, is a useful figure in Jack's tale. His genius for the manipulation of physical nature gives colour and variety to Jack's own concentration upon the physical aspect of experience. At the same time Jack satirizes Zachary's dishonesty in falsifying the things that he sells.

Jack does not suffer as does Lazarillo, but he does share the viewpoint of the Spanish picaros. This viewpoint, of course, is characterized by its strong emphasis upon the physical measurement of experience. To the picaro only the body and "things" count, not the spirit and "essences". Jack uses the satirical advantage that such a view gives him, as does Don Pablos. They both drastically separate manner from intention in the figures whom they satirize and hold the physical appearance of these figures under their microscopes designed to ridicule. But the emphasis on "things" also simplifies experience for Jack and assists his comic purpose. He can be extremely witty in his observations because he does not become emotionally involved in what he observes. His most effective wit is a product of his keen observation of society, and he is eager to reveal this wit to

society.

Nashe's characterization of his picaro may be criticized because Jack's activities and interests are too varied and numerous to give him clear outline. For example, Jack displays enthusiastically a wide book knowledge that a picaro would not normally have. This is, however, a criticism of Nashe's style, and in this case it is even more true than usual to say that style makes the man. In his own terms, his work is a success, for Nashe says: "That no winde that blowes strong but is boystrous, no speech or wordes of any power or force to confute or perswade but must bee swelling and boystrous."[43] The essence of the picaro Nashe has caught. Jack Wilton bounds before our eyes as an energetic, keen-witted picaro, indifferent to moral scruples, but an enemy of pretence.

3. Henry Chettle's Piers Plainness: Seven Years' Prenticeship: the cynical picaro. Henry Chettle's picaresque work, Piers Plainness: Seven Years' Prenticeship, hereafter referred to as Piers, was published in 1595, just a year after The Unfortunate Traveller's publication. Like Jack Wilton, Piers witnesses significant events, but these events are of fantasy rather than of history because he inhabits a real country, Greece, but observes people and situations strictly of Chettle's invention. Moreover, Piers' attitude is more cynical and condemnatory, quite unlike Jack's witty satire. Piers stands apart, disengaged from the events he relates. This disengagement helps to maintain his unprejudiced viewpoint and to keep him innocent of the corruption he describes. But his observations lack

sharpness chiefly because he himself lacks energy. He has little of Jack's metaphorical flourish. Unlike Jack, he never attempts to direct events, but is passed as a piece of property from one master to another. After one dire event he finds that "my selfe (as a moveable) was solde, and Flavius quondam [former] Baylie the Customer became my master."[44]

A particular misfortune of Piers is its attempt to combine too many different modes. Its brief introduction, leading to Pier's account of his experiences, has a pastoral setting. Piers chooses to live in pastoral quietude after encounters with the noise of conflicting ambitions in the court of Thrace. His account consists of two stories: one tells of the corruption and chicanery of Thracian politics, and the other of an Arcadian romance on the island of Crete. Intertwined with these two is Piers' own experience with a series of masters. The Arcadian romance will not be examined because it has nothing to do with the picaresque aspect of the work aside from Piers' narration of it.

Piers is closer to Lazarillo in its basic structure than is The Unfortunate Traveller. Both Lazarillo and Piers endure seven masters who are at times very much alike. For example, Piers suggests to Flavius, his second master, who steeps himself in political intrigue, that he should work after he has been despoiled by his borrowings from money lenders. But Flavius is too proud: "that was too base, hee swore no small oaths, hee could neither beg nor worke. . . ."[45] In his scorn for the middle class virtue of work, Flavius is like Lazarillo's hidalgo. Piers' life with his masters is continually disturbed by hunger as is Lazarillo's. Ulpian, the

usurer, is so sparing with food that "not Niggardize her selfe can well expresse."[46] He makes his daughter Ursula's sickness the excuse for "a long Lent."[47] However, this hunger is not a motivating impulse in Piers' relation with society as it is in Lazarillo's. Piers acts passively even though he observes keenly. He shows some opportunism in his talk with Menalcas and Corydon, his shepherd audience, to whom he relates his experiences at court in return for food and drink. But during his life in Thrace, Piers exhibits little determination.

Chettle uses his picaro primarily for his own satirical observation, and Piers' masters represent certain faults which Chettle wishes to condemn. In the political tale, action springs from the usurpation of Hylenus' throne by Celinus and Celydon. Piers' first master is Thrasilio, the jester of Flavius, one of Celydon's retainers. Thrasilio is described on the eve of the plot:

> . . . he that had seene the pitifull plight my master was in, when these tidings of fighting came, might well have gest his valour by his visage: yet he bragd it out, saying the palenes of his colour came from the anger of his heart, and swore the quaking of hys joynts onely presaged his impatience.[48]

As a true picaro, Piers shows that behind the false professions of loyalty by her subjects, Thrace is really composed of very small men who would prefer not to endanger their lives. Piers, like a valet, sees his masters in their physical and moral underclothes before they don their armour. Piers is happy enough when he is sold by Thrasilio to Flavius. Thrasilio represents the very worst of the courtier kind, for "he was ever begging, still beggarly, prying, complaining, soothing, swearing, bold to accuse,

fearefull to continue accusations."[49]

Lazarillo's corrupt masters are very often clerics, but Piers' are either politicians or merchants. The focus for satire has become secularized. Chettle likely has in mind distinct abuses among the merchant class when he draws the condemning picture of the usurer, Ulpian. Piers overhears Ulpian one day while he makes his "orizons":

> O gold, adored gold, my soules cheefe soveraigne, my lives best Genius, for whom the needy vassaile toyles, the Souldier fightes, the Scholler studieth, howe doth thy divine essence comfort my troubled spirite, against whose opulencie the envious beggars of the earth repine. O bee thou resident with me in spite of all their rage: for where thou art there envy cannot hurt. Close up my senses from all other thoughts than of thy exelence. . . .[50]

His prayer has an almost diabolical tone, for it closely parodies the rhythm and language of a true religious prayer. It reflects the dominating mercenary outlook that is at the centre of the political corruption in Thrace.

Piers does not only witness this corruption, but also, when he can, judges it. He does not act against the court life while he is in it, but his seven years' experience with it produce a sour taste and a wish to adopt the pastoral life when circumstances make this life available to him. In Tempe, the "Paradice of Greece,"[51] he observes the friendship of twenty years between Corydon and Menalcas and fittingly contrasts it to the life that he has known:

> . . . in Thrace and Creete have I seven yeares beene a prentice. . . but in al that time could I never be acquainted with any man so happie, that had a true friend of tenne dayes standing.[52]

Throughout his experience, Piers keeps untainted. He does not even share

the guilt of his masters by association with them, because court society does not make a true community, and in it few bonds exist between men. His masters' actions mean little to Piers, and he remains cynical and aloof in his outlook, even if physically bound to service.

Piers seems at first almost alien to the pastoral life. Menalcas describes him as: "of body strong, of wit prompt, of speech not altogether rude, but exceeding Satyrical."[53] When Menalcas introduces them to each other, Piers immediately defends himself from Corydon's hint that he is lax in his duty as a shepherd. He cannot help the bluntness of his defence, since he confesses that he is "plaine by name and nature."[54]

His "plaine" nature does not make him aggressive when he is in Thrace although he does make an initial move from one order of society to another. After experimenting with many trades, he finds that "they had no small delight in goodness."[55] He does not reject the tradesman's life for the same reason as does Flavius. The corruption of this life, not its work is what he rejects. However, because he is then drawn by the false glow of the court, he is still unsuccessful in finding any "goodness" in society.

His succeeding movement is from master to master and finally from Thrace to Crete. It is movement only in social and geographical breadth, not in personal depth. By simplifying his picaro, Chettle makes him a mirror held up to debased society, and this mirror remains unclouded by any peculiar characteristics of its own. It continually reflects reality behind appearance. In explaining the craft of brokerage as a mystery, Piers tells Menalcas:

> . . . the terme was not much a misse, for there are more mysts used therein, than in anie Trade beside. They cover their craft with charitie, pietie, pitie, neighborhood, friendship, equitie, and what not that good is, although in it there be no one poynt of goodnes.[56]

Play upon words in this passage -- "mystery", "misse", "mysts" -- is common throughout the tale and helps to keep the mirror from becoming dull.

Self-preservation is at all times the picaro's prime concern, and Piers clearly indicates this concern. As an inevitable result of the political plot, Celinus wishes to escape from the domineering Celydon. Celinus arranges with Piers' master Petrusio to escape Thrace by boat. When all three are out to sea, Celinus, thinking that Petrusio intends to betray him to Celydon, murders him and turns next upon Piers with a choice of being his servant or of sharing Petrusio's fate. Piers explains his reaction:

> I that was acquainted with Petrusioes trecherie, pitying his [Celinus'] youth, remembring his royall progenie, and in plaine tearmes fearing my owne tragedie, quicklie resolvd to provide for his escape. . . .[57]

The real reason makes the others seem facetious. At such a point, the picaro's polite regard for others is outweighed by his self-regard.

In the first scene, Piers, the worldly sage, is granted the "preheminence of the middle place"[58] between the two simple shepherds so that he can tell of his seven years' experience with the world. But he has not earned his bardic superiority because he has not actively involved himself in his relationship with society. This detachment is like Jack Wilton's, but where Jack is witty and anxious to show his wit, Piers is merely cynical. This cynicism is Chettle's cynicism, and, hence, his

picaro does not live. Almost everyone in Thrace is totally corrupt, and the morality by which Piers condemns them is Chettle's morality. Tension between self-concern and pity for others produces a dramatic, if elementary, social consciousness in Lazarillo when he shares his bread with the hidalgo. Chettle does not complicate his picaro by subjecting him to such tension. Piers is given his morality, and it serves to cut him off from society as it turns into an easy cynicism. In its satirical force, Piers stands closer to the condemnatory attitude of Don Pablos than to the drama of Lazarillo. Piers' comedy differs from that of The Unfortunate Traveller because it arises only from the characters that Piers sees rather than a witty interpretation of these characters.

4. Nicholas Breton's A Mad World My Masters: the enlightened picaro. An Elizabethan writer who uses the picaresque spirit in his portrait of the life and manners of his time is Nicholas Breton. His A Mad World My Masters, published in 1603, has the form of a dialogue between two symbolic characters.

Lorenzo, the "mistaker", misinterprets, at first, the manners of society and thinks that people are what they seem. In his gradual discovery of reality behind appearance, he uncovers an alarming society of shallow, conniving sinners who pretend to be the roles that they assume. A merchant poses as a good Samaritan but remains mercenary while a "fine mistresse" uses her beauty as a veil for covetousness. His discovery of society's deception is similar to the evolution from naïveté to experience in the typical picaro, but his discovery of fraud does not lead to a

development of wit.

Dorindo, "the taker", is more truly the picaro of the two. He, too, has seen the deception of the world, but he has sharpened his wits to "take" life as it is. He has feigned many roles to profit from society and has outwitted many shrewd criminals. However, his conclusion is a judgment against the life he has led.

These figures tell, from contrasting viewpoints, a series of encounters that they have had with society. An indication of these contrasting viewpoints comes early in the dialogue:

> Lorenzo: Indeed sometime the joy of taking helpes the miserie of mistaking.
>
> Dorindo: Yea, but when the theefe that hath taken a purse, if he be overtaken in the high way, and so take the gallowes for his Inne, that joyfull taking in the beginning brings a sorrowfull mistaking in the end.[59]

Before this wisdom is again expressed in Dorindo's advice at the end of his tale, he sketches his encounters with deftness and comic skill. His portrait of society is imbued with merriment, and he embodies this merriment in his own activity. Ursula Kentish-Wright compares Breton's portrait of society with Greene's and finds a difference in spirit between them: "to compare Breton's writing with Greene's is like comparing a gentle May breeze, laden with the scent of flowers, to a rude March wind blowing grit into one's face."[60] Dorindo is so subtle a character that he is continually misinterpreted, or, as he says: "taken up, and taken downe so many waies."[61] This misinterpretation does nothing for his reputation:

> If I but courted a wench, I was taken for a wencher; if I talked merily, I was taken for a jester; if I looked sadly, I was taken for a spie; if I were liberal, for a prodigall; if thriftie, for a snudge[miser]; if valiant, for a quarreller; if patient, a coward; if rich, wise; if poore, a foole. . . .[62]

Dorindo seems to have so much zest in his various activities that he becomes a comic victim of his own success. He is led to question his own identity: "I was taken so many waies, that I knew not well which way to take my selfe."[63]

This last statement indicates a limitation in the picaro's versatility. He is often thoroughly adept at disguise and at turning social manner to his own ends, but no matter how sure a knowledge he has of his social context, he cannot completely escape the effect of his role-playing upon himself. He may become confused with the roles that he takes or that he is thought to be by those to whom he exhibits the nuances of his character.

Dorindo's adventures show his quick-witted opportunism and sprightliness. At first he profits almost accidentally, for he is taken as a card-sharper, a "fine fin-gred companion," when he does not intend to be. Some players who have watched him give him money to gamble for them, but he finds more advantage in quitting their company and making off to Rouen with the money. Here he becomes a physician to profit from the plague which ravages the town: "I made a shew with a little Allume and Copresse, to perswade such wonders of my Art or studie; that who would not give me a good fee for a sore finger?"[64] But he soon loses this profit -- "ill gotten, ill spent"[65] --, some to a pirate and the rest to a doxy. Such profit and loss is really a game, though, and is matched by the constant alliterative play of Dorindo's language: "Oh, I was not onely so taken but so overtaken with this taking-mistresse, that she brought me into such a taking, as is scarce worth talking of."[66] His relationship with the doxy is only an affair, for, like Jack Wilton's

encounter with Juliana, he soon becomes bored with her.

In some of his adventures, Dorindo exposes the professions. Wit is essential in the legal profession, and Dorindo finds easy profit in it:

> When having gotten acquaintance with some setters (instigators) for Clients, rubbing over my poore French, having Litleton before me, and a booke of notes I know not of whose writing, I would set on such a conselling countenance, as if I had bin at the barre, before I knew the hall: when, what with a multitude of Clients and golden fees, I made such a game of my dissembling, that nere a Lawyer of my standing, but I carried it cleane from him, man and matter and all.[67]

Dorindo repents his conscienceless life, but he does not bemoan any loss of wit as does Greene's Roberto. He insists that, if one is to make his way in society, wits have to be sharp. His characteristic advice is for those who, like Lorenzo, mistake the world's intentions: "Oh, take heed of a wolfe in a lambes skinne, and talke not of hawking, till you have bene a Faulconer: for if a man have not his five wits, he may be a foole in foure of them."[68]

Both Piers and A Mad World My Masters set a pattern which Moll Flanders will also follow: that of the "experienced" life which leads to a retreat from society and advice for others. Breton's work is superior to Chettle's, however, because his picaro, Dorindo, displays a more original wit and sprightliness than does Piers. Dorindo's observations are lit with a comic spark. His comment upon false church men is typical: "But those may rather be called lurch-men pilferers then [sic] church-men, who as they are not troubled with much learning, so they have no more honesty, then they may well away withall."[69] The result of Dorindo's satirical observation and Lorenzo's social education is a common enlightenment.

They have seen the wiles of the world and both prefer the simple life with few entanglements, for the men whom they have met are most often perverse. Their advice is straightforward: "take good notice of every man you have to deale withall, and have to doe with as few as you can."[70]

In Elizabethan picaresque fiction, the picaro and the society in which he moves are clearly separated. He does not represent society, and his realistic outlook often opposes the pretentiousness of the characters that he meets. Jack Wilton and Dorindo move with great sprightliness, but they move only from place to place. Piers does not move even this much, for, as he says, he is often passed from one master to another. Their adventures are strongly episodic, for these picaros have no real ambition to integrate their lives. In fact, Piers and Dorindo find contentment when they can withdraw from society. All three remain disengaged from society, and this disengagement is the basis of the comic nature of their adventures and observations. Satire also is a natural result of this disengagement, and this satire can be broadly comic as in Jack's encounter with the victualler or more harsh as in Piers' observation of Thrasilio.

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2 A.V. Judges, editor, The Elizabethan Underworld (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1930), p. xv.

3 Thomas Dekker, "The Bellman of London" (Judges, op. cit.), p. 308.

4 Robert Greene, Groats-Worth of Witte and The Repentance of Robert Greene (G.B. Harrison, editor, London: Bodley Head, 1923), 34 pp.

5 Thomas Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller" (Robert B. McKerrow, editor, The Works of Thomas Nashe, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958), II, p. 285.

6 Ibid., pp. 303-306.

7 Ibid., p. 253.

8 Ibid., p. 210.

9 Ibid., p. 267.

10 Ibid., p. 295.

11 Loc. cit.

12 Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller" (McKerrow, op. cit.), p. 218.

13 Ibid., p. 305.

14 Ibid., p. 231.

15 Loc. cit.

16 Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller" (McKerrow, editor, op. cit.), p. 210.

17 L.C. Knights, Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson (London: Chatto & Windus), p. 312.

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18 A.K. Croston, "The Use of Imagery in Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller", The Review of English Studies, XXIV (April, 1948), 98.

19 Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller" (McKerrow, op. cit.), p. 207.

20 Cf. ante p. 17.

21 Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller", (McKerrow, op. cit.), p. 213.

22 Ibid., p. 260.

23 Henri Bergson, Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic (Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell, translators, London: Macmillan and Company, 1911), p. 23.

24 Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller", (McKerrow, op. cit.), p. 250.

25 Loc. cit.

26 Cf. ante p. 14.

27 V.S. Pritchett, "Books in General", New Statesman and Nation, XXXV (April 10, 1948), 297.

28 Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller", (McKerrow, op.cit.), p. 292.

29 Ibid., p. 266.

30 Ibid., p. 280.

31 Ibid., p. 241.

32 Ibid., p. 270.

33 Ibid., p. 262.

34 Ibid., p. 212.

35 Loc. cit.

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36 Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller", (McKerrow, editor, op. cit.), p. 214.

37 Ibid., p. 246.

38 Loc. cit.

39 Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller", (McKerrow, op. cit.), p. 250.

40 Cf. ante p. 12.

41 Nashe, "The Unfortunate Traveller", (McKerrow, op. cit.), p. 251.

42 Ibid., p. 306.

43 Thomas Nashe, "Christs Teares Over Jerusalem" (Robert B. McKerrow, op. cit.), II, p. 184.

44 Henry Chettle, "Piers Plainness: Seven Years' Prenticeship" (James Winny, editor, The Descent of Euphues, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957, p. 160.

45 Ibid., p. 143.

46 Ibid., p. 157.

47 Ibid., p. 158.

48 Ibid., p. 128.

49 Ibid., p. 132.

50 Ibid., p. 159.

51 Ibid., p. 122.

52 Ibid., p. 125.

53 Ibid., p. 123.

54 Ibid., p. 124.

55 Ibid., p. 127.

56 Ibid., p. 144.

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57 Ibid., p. 166.

58 Ibid., p. 125.

59 Nicholas Breton, "A Mad World My Masters" (Ursula Kentish-Wright, editor, A Mad World My Masters and Other Prose Works, London: The Cresset Press, 1929), I, pp. 115-16.

60 Ibid., p. xxiv.

61 Ibid., p. 133.

62 Ibid., p. 134.

63 Loc. cit.

64 Breton, op. cit., p. 135.

65 Ibid., p. 136.

66 Ibid., p. 137.

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68 Breton, op. cit., p. 132.

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CHAPTER III

DANIEL DEFOE

1. Social and literary background. Studies in the development of the novel have usually pointed to the close relationship between the novel and the society that it both serves and reveals. The English middle class created by the commercial revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries patronized literature that revealed real events and probable characters. Ian Watt, in his The Rise of the Novel, indicates that middle class demands produced the increasing number of realistic novels of the early eighteenth century. Especially significant, because of John Locke's influence on Daniel Defoe, is the middle-class reader's expectation that the empirical realism of current philosophical thought be matched by realism of plot, character and convention in the novel.[1] Picaresque fiction grew to help meet this expectation.

During the seventeenth century the picaresque genre generally slumbered with the rest of English prose fiction although a few writers such as John Bunyan, in his The Life and Death of Mr. Badman, used its form.[2] Richard Head's The English Rogue purported to be a major contribution to English picaresque fiction, but it succeeds in being a major bore since it is only a compilation of the tricks that Head found in earlier rogue literature. However, the picaresque mode became more closely associated with the main stream of the novel in the eighteenth century. Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, and Tobias Smollett gave the picaresque spirit much greater berth than it had ever had in English fiction.

A curious inspiration for this revitalization of picaresque fiction came from the growing interest in science. The typical Royal Society member's concern with specific problems to be solved in isolation from one another parallels the picaro's concern with isolated episodes of experience. Moll Flanders, for example, skips from one encounter to the next and avoids complications like babies with a shrug and a "by-the-way". Defoe's awareness of this scientific outlook helped to produce his own sociological approach to his fiction.

Defoe's personal experience, of course, also affected his narrative art. Defoe was influenced chiefly by his father's passion for business and religion, and so the ledger and the Bible played strong parts in Defoe's life. The simple structure of a novel like Moll Flanders bears the marks of the Calvinistic life-stream: that of a transition from innocence through sin to redemption. Moll's vitality dims the significance of this pattern, but Defoe states clearly in the book's preface his intention to develop such a pattern:

> ... it is to be hoped that such readers will be much more pleased with the moral than the fable, with the application than with the relation, and with the end of the writer than with the life of the person written of.[3]

The "fable" however, is the real life of the book, and in the fable, the picaresque spirit blends with other materials to produce a vital account of the heroine's activities.

The ledger makes a stronger impact than the Bible on character and plot in Defoe's works. His life-long experience with the political and economic thought of his time is revealed in his novels. His attitude to

economic concerns is expressed in his efforts as editor of his Review and in his numerous other writings. His regard for the "laisses-faire" virtues of aggressiveness and independence is almost passionate:

> But Trade knows no Friends [sic], in Commerce there is Correspondence of Nations, but no Confederacy; he is my Friend in Trade, who [sic] I can Trade with, that is, can get by; but he that would get from me, is my Mortal Enemy in Trade, tho' he were my Father, Brother, Friend or Confederate.[4]

Continual naturalistic struggle, whether it be between man and nature as in Robinson Crusoe or between picaro and social environment as in Moll Flanders and Colonel Jack is a central motif in Defoe's novels. Such struggle generated a competitive impulse that became an integral aspect of a changed image of man:

> The Law of Nature, which in the Middle Ages had been a check on unregenerate impulse, had now been transformed into a sanction for laissez-faire, and free competition for the spoils of the world.[5]

The Spanish picaresque writers had seen this new image in the streets of Spanish cities; now it would be glorified in Defoe's view of eighteenth century society. His picaresque works are a product of this new image of man.

2. Moll Flanders: the realistic picara. Defoe was strongly influenced by contemporary philosophical and scientific currents and particularly by the epistemological theory of John Locke. Defoe's novels, such as Moll Flanders, published in 1722, are narrated from the point of view of their protagonists, and each protagonist is like a tabula rasa upon which the experience of the novel is recorded and organized. The growth

of each picaro is conditioned by his environment. The picaro learns of this environment in Locke's fashion -- that is, by imitation and adaptation. Moll Flanders describes her efforts to learn in company with the daughters of her first patroness: "I learned by imitation and enquiry all that they learned by instruction and direction."[6]

Defoe's novels trace his hero's or heroine's history from naïveté through the development of ingenuity by adaptation to society, and, finally, to material success. In intellectual terms the picaro begins as an incarnate tabula rasa and then learns to protect himself with a developing "organ of computation", gained from experience, until he attains worldly knowledge. The picaro's failures, so often financial failures, are in essence due to mental insufficiency.

Extra-empirical elements exist in Defoe's works.[7] Moll has an elemental ambition, an a priori drive, which adds an important dimension to her character. At one point Defoe introduces his own interest in the supernatural by creating a telepathic understanding between Moll and her lover, Jemmy, which brings them together again after separation. But the underlying fabric of Moll Flanders derives from her receiving sensations, synthesizing these sensations and directing the resultant generalizations into action. The close resemblance between this concept of knowledge and the kind of knowledge gained by picaros such as Lazarillo is evident.

Most critics have acknowledged Moll Flanders as a revelation of English realism. Paul Dottin, for example, calls it "le premier grand roman realiste de la litterature anglaise."[8] Most of these same critics

have found little evidence of picaresque influence in it. Indeed, A.W. Secord concludes in his Studies in the Narrative Method of Defoe that the picaresque form is one of the least significant influences upon Defoe's art, and that his own journalistic background affected it more. However, Secord does not deny the possibility of some picaresque influence because he asserts that the theory of its influence is "erroneous on the whole, though certain details of that theory are open to further investigation."[9]

These "certain details" will be examined in this chapter, but picaresque influence goes beyond these. One reason given to deny picaresque influence has been that Defoe could not acknowledge the humour of the picaro's ingenuity because he considered it patently immoral.[10] Yet Moll's adventures do have the winsome quality of a picara's, and Defoe wished her vitality to express itself fully. Of great assistance to Defoe's purpose was a social environment so cold and mercenary that he could use it to relieve much of the guilt from his characters. Their activities could be relatively free from conscience, for they were no more sinful than the society with which they struggled. The picaresque spirit thrives in a social atmosphere which is callous and hypocritical; it is not surprising, therefore, that Defoe should introduce this spirit onto his social stage.

Many characteristics of Moll Flanders could as easily have been drawn from Defoe's close acquaintance with criminals both at Whitefriars prison where he had been thrown for his Shortest Way With the Dessenters or at Newgate where he worked as a journalist. But while Moll's character

gains from the fact that she is a portrait from life, her character and career strongly resemble those of a picara.

The Calvinistic pattern already noted is perceived only at the end of Moll's account when she is supposedly spiritually redeemed. She never shifts her basic attitude to the material order in which she lives. The episodic pattern of the fable dominates and gives Moll her elasticity; she starts each action afresh as does the traditional picaro. In its first few episodes Moll's story has an especially picaresque colour. She describes herself as "left a poor desolate girl without friends, without clothes, without help or helper as was my fate."[11] This material nakedness is naturally accompanied by naïveté. Her affirmation that she will be a gentlewoman "by her fingers' ends"[12] is comic irony, for she will rise in society partly by a criminal use of her fingers as a thief, not by using them in needlecraft as is her stated intention. This naked state is the primary condition of the picaro, and Moll's growth from it is as quick as the picaro's. Defoe, like other writers of picaresque fiction, finds little worth in normal childhood, for it is at best an imitation of maturity. Moll exhibits the precocity that results from this view of childhood: before she is twelve she buys her own clothes, pays a nurse for her keeping, and starts building her characteristic financial reserves.[13]

Many critics think that Moll is a more complex character than Defoe usually created. Her problems are more complicated than, for example, Robinson Crusoe's. But Moll has a basic simplicity despite her development of ingenuity. Self-preservation is her primary motive although this is

significantly modified by her love for Jemmy. She usually dodges emotional entanglements and is not burdened by a sense of responsibility for her acts.

Two examples point to this simplicity. After her first theft, Moll describes the "horror of soul"[14] [italics not in the original] that the act produced in her. But a little later she states that "the horror of the fact [italics not in the original] was upon my mind."[15] The "fact" is the ominous threat of Newgate, and it is this material danger that frightens Moll despite the conventional religious language which Defoe gives her to use. Never does Moll really understand her situation in moral or religious terms. She confesses as much: "The moral, indeed, of all my history is left to be gathered by the senses and judgment of the reader; I am not qualified to preach to them."[16] When she assesses her situation in the words "I knew not what to do; it was all fear without and dark within,"[17] the word "dark" does not necessarily have a moral implication. It can easily allude to her sheer inability to see very far into her own nature. She has the limited view of the picaro; she is fully able to measure an external world of things, but little able to comprehend an internal world of the spirit. Her picaresque view is reinforced by the commercial view of the middle class which she reflects.

The second memorable incident which indicates her simplicity is comic. Simply as a reaction to opportunity, she steals a horse which is of no practical use to her. She does not realize that the horse is a nuisance until she takes it home to her governess. Her mind may be quick,

her wits sharp, but she is careless enough not to realize that some immediate gains are extraneous to her purpose. This incident exemplifies the simplicity of reaction common in picaros who are conditioned to grasp the opportunities that society gives them. This simplicity humanizes Moll by making her less calculating than she usually is.

Moll sees life in bold outline. She knows what she would like to gain and what she must avoid. Self-preservation is a stronger motive in her character than in a comic picaro's like Jack Wilton or Dorindo because she is more aware of society's threat to her. Like Lazarillo's fear of hunger, she has as deep a fear of the law. She admonishes her fellow thieves who take unnecessary risks and refuses to take part in their reckless gambits. In her view, the jest of the game is not worth the hanging. She dismisses such reckless criminals with brutal brevity: "In short, they robbed together, lay together, were taken together, and at last were hanged together."[18]

Moll's ambition follows logically from this urge to preserve herself. Security, independence, marriage to a tradesman who could bear himself like a gentleman -- these are her desiderata. Her continual thrift shows that not things, but status chiefly interests her. Jack Wilton plays the gentleman's role when he poses as Surrey; Moll wants <u>to be</u> the gentlewoman because, as one, she will be secure from the law. She may measure the gentlewoman's status by material standards rather than by standards of behaviour, but she is far from being an Emma Bovary, fascinated by the glow of worldly things in themselves. Her language often

exposes an indifference to mere luxury. When her draper husband proposes "to look like quality"[19] on their trip to Oxford, she comments:

> 'Hum,' says I, 'my dear, 'tis a frolic; but if you have a mind to it, I don't care.' Well, the time was appointed; we had a rich coach, very good horses, a coachman, postilion, and two footmen in very good liveries.[20]

As a picara, Moll is too honest to confuse appearance with reality. Her flat language can be attributed to Defoe's lack of a poetic sense, but he no doubt meant Moll to speak with these downright, sturdy, middle-class words. They are happily fitted to undercut the false glamour that Moll meets in her adventures.

Moll's honesty results from her refusal to deceive herself about real motives. One of her affairs is with a Bath gentleman who in their first acquaintance asserts that he only wishes companionship with her. Priding himself on his ability to maintain a close companionship without sexual indulgence, he persuades Moll to lie with him without breaking the continence that he swears that they should religiously preserve. Moll recognizes that such a situation is not a test of religious faith, as the man asserts, but is merely absurd. She admits that she is "much wickeder than he,"[21] and persuades him to succumb to temptation. His false moralistic ritual disregards Moll's life, the life of fact. His statement of repentance, which Moll interprets as a means to get himself out of a ticklish situation, is likewise accounted dishonest. He pays for such dishonesty when Moll gains fifty pounds from him.

A picaro is not the hardest of criminals, but he usually has a

phlegmatic disposition. Circumstances dictate that he should not waste feelings. Moll's experience with society soon restricts her emotional freedom. From her first affair in which she is confused by the rival claims of two brothers and finally is forced into a marriage in which her real sentiment must be kept private, she learns to hide her feelings. She discovers that emotional sensations are mutable and to be suspected. The older brother, whose "whore" she becomes, convinces her that her marriage to the younger would best suit them both. He thus dodges his responsibility so that he can climb further up the social ladder. Her comment is succinct and disenchanted: "So naturally do men give up honour and justice, and even Christianity, to secure themselves."[22] Like Lazarillo, her motivation rapidly becomes need rather than emotion. Defoe uses the religious term, "devil", to describe this need as when Moll describes her first theft: "as the devil carried me out, and laid his bait for me, so he brought me, to be sure, to the place, for I knew not whither I was going, or what I did."[23]

Although she will become emotionally involved with Jemmy, her first association with him is as dispassionate as her other affairs generally are. She has a justified pride in her coquetry: "I played with this lover as an angler does with a trout: I found I had him fast on the hook; so I jested with his new proposal, and put him off."[24] Security of tenure significantly precedes the jest, but Moll is winsome enough to enjoy it. Even if Moll must be calculating and refuses to act recklessly, she too, is instinctively "careless and joyous",[25] providing she is also secure.

Moll is capable of sympathy, but she rarely considers this emotion significant enough to express it forcibly. She tells us of her feelings without exposing them. For example, of her nursing the Bath gentleman, she says:

> I was indeed sensibly affected with his condition, and with the apprehension of losing such a friend as he was, and was like to be to me, and I used to sit and cry by him many hours together.[26]

Moll is considerate of the gentleman, but her honesty slips through her statement — "and was like to be to me" -- to indicate her material interest in the man's life.

Fear is Moll's strongest emotion. It may be generalized as a fear of all the social forces that endanger her. But its most dramatic form is the ominous shadow that Newgate casts upon her life. In her own terms, Moll is as sensitive to the corroding odour and atmosphere of Newgate as Clarissa is to Lovelace's threat. Her revulsion to Newgate, after her first theft, has been noted. From that point she becomes increasingly aware of the prison until she is finally immured in it:

> My very blood chills at the mention of its name; the place where so many of my comrades had been locked up, and from whence they went to the fatal tree; the place where my mother suffered so deeply, where I was brought into the world, and from whence I expected no redemption, but by an infamous death: to conclude, the place that had so long expected me, and which with so much art and success I had so long avoided.[27]

Newgate is a splendid example of that kind of awesome hell which sharpens the picaro's wits and makes his fight more urgent. Hunger is a similar spectre in Lazarillo's life.

This fear of Newgate prompts her to use many means to protect herself,

and one of these means is the picaro's usual inclination to play a role. Most often Moll is herself, but she knows how to use a guise to assist her social advance. Because she knows that society is impressed by appearances, she poses as a woman of fortune and virtue to trap a husband:

> . . . you may see how necessary it is for all women who expect anything in the world, to preserve the character of their virtue, even when perhaps they may have sacrificed the thing itself.[28]

Moll poses as a gentlewoman to add more length to her casting line throughout her experience with society rather than in particular situations.

Moll blends role-playing with a picara's ingenuity in some of her thefts. For example, when she sees a burning house, she rushes into the house and tells the maid that her lady has sent Moll to help evacuate. She takes a child whom she passes off to a by-stander and a bundle of silver plate which she keeps.[29] Hence opportunism combines the traditional arts of the picaro, as Moll, the thief, becomes the public servant.

Defoe gives an episodic structure to his picara's life, and this gift is not arbitrary, for Moll is the essence of the episodic character. Her energy pushes her from husband to husband or from theft to theft. When she finds her brother, whom she married unknowingly, alone and almost helpless in America, she pities him, but can do nothing for him. An unnecessarily long lament is profitless:

> In this distress I did not know what to do, as his life was apparently declining, and I might perhaps have married again there, very much to my advantage, had it been my business to have stayed in the country; but my mind was restless too; I hankered after coming to England, and nothing would satisfy me without it.[30]

Moll's urge to move continually is compounded by the need, shared as she thinks with all women of her kind, to take advantage of men. She feels that she is a pawn of fortune:

> When a woman is thus left desolate and void of counsel, she is just like a bag of money or a jewel dropt on the highway, which is a prey to the next comer; if a man of virtue and upright principles happens to find it, he will have it cried, and the owner may come to hear of it again; but how many times shall such a thing fall into hands that will make no scruple of seizing it for their own, to once that it shall [sic] come into good hands?[31]

Moll's husbands and lovers compare to the traditional picaro's masters because she values them chiefly by the security and material advantage that they can give her.

One of the tasks that Moll Flanders gives to a reader is to determine the extent to which moral statement is part of Moll's personal view of her activities. At times, Defoe intrudes his own morality into Moll's account and also confuses the reader about the timing of Moll's reflections. Do they occur as an immediate result of conscience or are they the later reflections of a secure, supposedly contrite, Moll?[32] More important than moral reflections are expressions of sensitivity, love and generosity which she usually has to stifle, but which occur in moments of security. Fresh springs of good nature continually stimulate her actions and modify her calculations. Paul Dottin observes this good nature when he suggests:

> Ce qui sauve cette femme réaliste c'est qu'en dépit de ses efforts pour se discipliner elle-même, elle est impulsive et cède generalement à ses bons instincts.[33]

These "bons sentiments" are dramatically revealed in the midst of Moll's criminal acts. For example, when she leads a child into a dark alley

to take her necklace, the "devil" prompts her to kill the child, but Moll resists this urge. When she sees her illegitimate son with his blind, senile father, Moll's brother, she secretly kisses the ground on which the boy has trod. But this admiration is more of maternal pride than of maternal love. He embodies her own ambition for herself, for he is "a handsome, comely young gentleman in flourishing circumstances."[35] Darkness and secrecy in these acts ensure to Moll that protection from society that a picaro desires.

The most significant experience for Moll is her association with Jemmy, the former highwayman turned Lancashire gentleman. They are brought together by deceit. Each, thinking that the other has a fortune, seeks a profitable marriage. They soon learn of their mutual poverty, but neither condemns the other. Honesty and good humour result in companionship and love. Moll can take a disappointment on the chin, and she sees Jemmy as "a gallant spirit."[36] When both are confined to Newgate, she manages to see her man at some risk to herself, and they sit together "to compare our sorrows."[37] Their lives have run in similar streams and a comparison is apt. On parting the first time, Jemmy gives Moll some financial help, and this assistance impresses her:

> The truth is. . . the kind, gentlemanly treatment I had from him in all the affair, with the concern he showed for me in it, his manner of parting with that large share which he gave me of his little stock left -- all these had joined to make such impressions on me, that I could not bear the thoughts of parting with him.[38]

Her love may be quickened by this generosity, but she loves the giver, not only the gift.

Such devotion would be undramatic and also uncharacteristic of Moll if there were no threat to it. A climactic moment comes when Jemmy returns to her after leaving his farewell note:

> I was in the greatest confusion imaginable, and so was he too. I could not imagine what should be the occasion of it, and began to be at odds with myself whether to be glad or sorry; but my affection biased all the rest, and it was impossible to conceal my joy. . . .39

Her "organ of computation" leads her to doubt the advantage of emotional commitment, but her trust promotes her "bons sentiments". From this point Moll's episodic life with its continual fresh starts is qualified by the possibility of a lasting, secure relationship with Jemmy. In America she wins fortune and freedom, and she wonders if it would profit her to cut the ties with Jemmy, but immediately disregards the suggestion.[40] She values companionship, "a bosom friend with whom we may communicate the joy. . . or the grief," and realizes that she can trust Jemmy.

This relationship with Jemmy is an excellent example of the picaresque bond. Material causation impresses itself upon the lives of both, and they are honest enough to admit its force. Moll knows that she must have money to keep her from the law's penalty. She even finds the possible material advantage of a rupture of the bond a real danger to it. But both characters have to face the same difficult laws of society, and so they find strength in each other. Their relationship evinces that leap from self-interest to shared interest which dramatizes the picaro's experience.

Two aspects of the picaresque mode are greatly modified in Moll Flanders. It has little direct satire, even if Moll expresses a quiet

cynicism about her affairs with men. Secondly, these affairs also differ greatly from the picaro's relationships with masters.

An effective satirist must have a developed standard of values and a desire to enforce these values with his satirical weapons. Moll may at times express ethical ideas which are as often Defoe's as her own, but, in the true empiricist fashion, she is much more impressed with fact and incident than with generalization. Her view of men such as the elder brother and the Bath gentleman is, in the most basic sense, a protest against their false pretensions. But these men are not expressly satirized, for Moll has no time to waste upon them. She treats them with a quiet cynicism and simply strikes them off her mental ledger. With this cynicism she often understates the significance which others give to events. To relieve her husband-brother of his shock when she tells him her identity, she gives him "a little glass of rum (which is the usual dram of the country)."[41] This factual insistence suggests that the shock should have been less than the man exhibited.

Moll is much less of a satirist than the Elizabethan comic picaros for yet another reason. Unlike these comic picaros, Moll is motivated to climb socially, for she knows that only a gentlewoman's position gives her the security that she demands. Because the comic picaro remains socially static, he is a better satirist, for he has the time to observe society. But Moll knocks at the door of comfortable security while the heat of the law presses at her heels, and she must continually watch for the proper man to open that door for her.

Moll is too much the individualist to consider that her men are in any way masters. She knows that man is superior, and that women like herself must use their beauty to survive, but any one man is valued only in terms of his financial utility to her, and she easily eludes them if they are not assets to her. Even when she at last marries Jemmy and sets out with him to America, she makes the arrangements for their voyage and settlement. The only specific superior to her is the law and its symbol, Newgate. Her personal power is clear in her ability to at last escape this law to the freedom of America.

Moll is herself a symbol of the competitive urge which dominates the society with which she contends. She is not, however, condemned by this association. Her "bons instincts", her vitality, and, above all, her awareness of reality, which may be described as honesty, save her from common immorality. Like Lazarillo, Moll fights with society, and her fight is a comment upon society. Her repentance comes only after she has won her fight and the door to the comfortable estate of the gentlewoman has opened to her.

3. Colonel Jack: the good picaro. Defoe suggests that the law of competitive society requires Moll to hide her sympathies and sharpen her wits. Her criminality results, then, from her need to exist in society. Defoe carries further this idea of society's influence upon the picaro in Colonel Jack which also appeared in 1722. Whereas Moll's honesty distinguishes her from the corrupting influence of her environment, Colonel Jack's goodness distinguishes him. Other parallels exist between the

books. Both Moll and Colonel Jack succeed away from the immediate English environment when they go to Virginia. There Moll settles with a former husband and Colonel Jack with a former wife. But while Moll Flanders has an enduring vitality which lasts to current popular editions, Colonel Jack's tale suffers from Defoe's imposition of a heavy moral tone. Especially wearisome are arguments like that against slavery which Colonel Jack observes in Virginia. Although Defoe's view that social injustice helps to create the criminal corresponds to modern criminology, the tone of Colonel Jack condemns it to a dusty corner of the modern reader's library. Unfortunately the feminine vitality that envelops the morality of Moll Flanders is not adequately substituted in Colonel Jack. The bones of the moral skeleton protrude through the flesh of personal adventure.

Yet points of interest exist in the book, chiefly in the first third which is the most picaresque section of it. Colonel Jack adapts himself to society as a young picaro usually does, and preserves a primitive moral sense in the midst of corruption. He gains the friendship of two boys who, like him, are charges of a nurse employed to rear the "sons of shame" of the middle and upper classes. The boys are convinced that their illegitimate birth does not limit their inherent importance. They therefore adopt military names: one, who calls himself Captain Jack, is a bully and becomes the leader in crime; another calls himself Major Jack and becomes noted for his gay manner and "off-hand wit". Colonel Jack grows from the same roots as these two, but continues to withstand their influence by preserving secret "bon sentiments". The major at first seems closest to the picaro

type, for he combines wit and courage. However, Colonel Jack's growth from naïveté to close awareness of his social environment clearly follows the picaro's odyssey from innocence to experience.

When Colonel Jack takes a share of the profits from his first theft, he indicates the picaro's usual confusion in his first criminal act. He does not know what to do with his five pounds share; he particularly fears his companions who would confiscate the money if they knew of it. Like Defoe himself, he realizes an immediate alienation from those who "would get from"[42] him. Not only is Colonel Jack friendless, he also has no home or personal storage, and his pockets are full of holes. He spends a sleepless night guarding his treasure when he could have slept on "a Heap of Brickbats, Stones, or Cinders, or anywhere"[43] without it. Finally he finds a tree in the country, in a high hole of which he places the money wrapped in a rag. Distress is immediate as he feels the money slip down through the hollow of the tree. Not realizing that there could be an opening at the bottom of the tree, he cries in anguish at his foolishness until he finds the opening.[44] Like Moll, he realizes that money alone does not bring security, for he knows that he is a prey to society's greed.

Colonel Jack also realizes that wit can often save his limited physical strength. Like a typical picaro, he becomes dexterous in the art of picking pockets. His social horizon stretches as he learns more of his environment. At fourteen he is conversant with British commerical life and, for example, learns the names of all the ships in the Royal Navy and their captains.[45]

As his horizons extend, his moral principle grows. Surrounded by vicious temptations and drawn into thievery, Colonel Jack nevertheless indicates that he is capable of goodness. This goodness is represented a little clumsily by Defoe when he has the boy refuse to swear or drink.[46] The hand of Colonel Jack's non-conformist creator is evident. But a real capacity for pity is shown when he returns money that the ruthless Captain Jack commanded him to steal from a forlorn widow.[47] In Virginia his growing humanity prompts him to treat justly the Negroes in his control.

Although his growing ability quickens his ambition, Colonel Jack learns to concentrate his enthusiasm. Like Jack Wilton, he sees no significance in war, but becomes a soldier for financial gain.[48] As Moll is indifferent to husbands and lovers, so Colonel Jack usually is to women. However, his marital relations show less caution than Moll's. He consents to one marriage while drunk, and when it becomes inconvenient, for a while he knows "not what to do with this new Clog."[49] She is the kind of responsibility that can only burden the picaro's love of freedom.

The commercial life of English society strongly attracts Colonel Jack and he becomes more involved in it after he comes home from Virginia. When he thinks of returning to Virginia, he fears that he will miss the bustling activity of London. Like any English business man, he cannot tolerate old news and the prospect of being cut off from the main stream of English commercial life. His gift for role-playing ensures his stay in England. Military experience in France has given him knowledge of her language, and he can pass as a Frenchman among Englishmen and as an Englishman among Frenchmen. Thus he meets many people without their meddling in his affairs.

Noble birth stimulates the colonel's ambition to regain the position that he might have had if this birth were legitimate. He confesses his ambition early in his narrative: "so universally is Ambition seated in the Minds of Men, that not a Beggar-boy but has his share of it."[50] Ambition becomes the thread upon which the various episodes of Colonel Jack's life are strung. At first he interprets very simply the gentleman's position to which he aspires. In a restaurant where he spends money that Major Jack gives him from the major's own thievery, he is elated when the maid calls him a gentleman. He is too naïve to realize that only as he is a customer is he also a gentleman.[51]

However, as his moral sense grows, his concept of the gentleman's role matures. He defines this role in terms of virtue, and, unlike Don Pablos, he describes virtue in terms of positive right conduct rather than as a reaction to degradation.[52] In a discussion with Captain Jack upon the desirability of becoming gentlemen, he spurns the bully's idea that to gain the gentleman's part they have to be ruthless and money-grubbing. Colonel Jack insists that their seizure of the widow's meagre twenty-two shillings is not a gentleman's conduct, and he maintains this belief in virtue even though he is often tempted to follow "the high road to the Devil."[53] His pure motive is tempered by the spectre of the gallows which stands at the end of this high road.[54] He realizes as much as does Moll the threat of the law.

Colonel Jack extends the point of Moll Flanders that a picaro's criminality is a reaction to society. Its morality is more evident and

formally developed and consequently far less dramatic than is that of Moll Flanders. The picaresque spirit, however, is shown in a young picaro's courageous fight to preserve a primitive goodness against the oppressive corruption of his social environment.

NOTES

1 A much fuller discussion of the connection between philosophy and the novel in the eighteenth century may be found in Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1957), 301 pp.

2 Walter Allen, The English Novel (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1958), p. 18.

3 Daniel Defoe, The Fortunes & [sic] Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders (London: J.M. Dent and Sons, 1930), p. 2.

4 Daniel Defoe, Review, VII, p. 210, cited by H. H. Andersen, "Paradox of Trade and Morality in Defoe," Modern Philology, 39:36, August, 1941.

5 Basil Willey, Eighteenth Century Background (London: Chatto and Windus, 1940), p. 17.

6 Defoe, Moll Flanders, op. cit., p. 16.

7 Jonathan Bishop, "Knowledge, Action and Interpretation in Defoe's Novels", Journal of the History of Ideas, 13:3-16, January, 1952.

8 Paul Dottin, Daniel DeFoe et Ses Romans (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1924), III, p. 686.

9 A.W. Secord, Studies in the Narrative Method of Defoe (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1924), p. 17.

10 Alan D. McKillop, The Early Masters of English Fiction (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1956), p. 7.

11 Defoe, Moll Flanders, op. cit., p. 7.

12 Ibid., p. 10.

13 Ibid., p. 14.

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14 Ibid., p. 164.

15 Ibid., p. 165.

16 Ibid., p. 232.

17 Ibid., p. 166.

18 Ibid., p. 179.

19 Ibid., p. 53.

20 Loc. cit.

21 Defoe, Moll Flanders, op. cit., p. 99.

22 Ibid., p. 50.

23 Ibid., p. 164.

24 Ibid., p. 120.

25 Cf. ante p. 24.

26 Defoe, Moll Flanders, op. cit., p. 97.

27 Ibid., p. 236.

28 Ibid., p. 118.

29 Ibid., pp. 175-77.

30 Ibid., p. 89.

31 Ibid., p. 109.

32 Watt, op. cit., pp. 116-17.

33 Dottin, op. cit., p. 678.

34 Defoe, Moll Flanders, op. cit., p. 166-67.

35 Ibid., p. 277.

36 Ibid., p. 128.

37 Ibid., p. 256.

38 Ibid., p. 133.

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39 Ibid., p. 131.

40 Ibid., p. 289.

41 Ibid., p. 88.

42 Cf. ante p. 62.

43 Daniel Defoe, The History Of the most Remarkable Life, and Extra-ordinary Adventure, of the truly Honourable Colonel Jaque, vulgarly call'd Colonel Jack (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1927), I, p. 26.

44 Ibid., I, pp. 24-29.

45 Ibid., I, p. 11.

46 Ibid., I, p. 71.

47 Ibid., I, pp. 75-76.

48 Ibid., I, p. 221.

49 Ibid., II, p. 46.

50 Ibid., I, p. 3.

51 Ibid., I, pp. 16-17.

52 Cf. ante p. 21-22.

53 Defoe, Colonel Jack, I, p. 73.

54 Loc. cit.

CHAPTER IV

HENRY FIELDING

1. Social and literary background. The plasticity of picaresque episodic structure enables the picaresque spirit to fuse with other literary forms. Like Moll Flanders, Henry Fielding's The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great, which appeared in 1743, is based upon a criminal's biography. But similarity of source between Jonathan Wild and Moll Flanders is overshadowed by differences of tone and intention. Moll Flanders recalls Lazarillo in its sympathetic treatment of the picaro; Jonathan Wild recalls Don Pablos in its harsh treatment of both the picaro and society. Fielding characteristically blends comedy with his satire, but his condemnation of the false social principle that Jonathan Wild represents is clear. Twenty years after Defoe recognizes the virtue of the competitive urge in society, Fielding condemns the worship of success of "greatness" which results from this competitive urge.

Jonathan Wild throughout the book represents the "great man" which mid-eighteenth century society emulates. "Greatness" and "goodness" are the poles of the work's moral allegory[1] and they are defined thus: "For Greatness consists in bringing all Manner of Mischief on Mankind, and Goodness in removing it from them."[2] Some critics emphasize Wild's particular representation of the "greatness" of Sir Robert Walpole and his political machinery. Implicit reference to politics is certainly so strong that the book may be described as a sustained metaphor in which Newgate becomes the nation's hustings, criminals ape the manner of politicians, and criminal

bands are imbued with party rivalry.

Fielding sees Jonathan Wild as a criminal at the head of his own band of thieves. In relation to picaresque fiction Jonathan more closely resembles the criminal experience of Monipodio than the naïveté of Rinconete and Cortadillo.[3] However, to vitalize and humanize Jonathan, Fielding gives him many of the picaro's traits. The author also uses these traits, as he does his techniques of irony and burlesque, to relieve the monotony of criminal degradation.

2. Jonathan Wild: the "great" picaro. Jonathan Wild does not experience the picaro's usual growth from innocence to experience. Instead of becoming gradually tainted in his relationship with society, he seems immediately stained by an original malignity which ironically fits him "to be a Great Man."[4] Fielding carefully presents Jonathan's ancestry in mock-heroic colour replete with classical heroes and discloses that Jonathan's mother dreamed that she was visited just before his birth by Mercury, the God of Ingenuity, and Priapus, "the Terror of those who practised it."[5] This apparent contradiction foreshadows Jonathan's command of the thieves who will be his tools. Jonathan's first sound as a babe is the usually difficult "th."[6] Bizarre comedy is attained by the correspondence of the babe's actions with the "great" man's:

> . . . for tho' he was by no Means to be terrified into Compliance, yet might be by a Sugar-plumb [sic] be brought to your Purpose: Indeed, to say the Truth, he was to be bribed to anything, which made many say, he was certainly born to be a Great Man.[7]

This comic irony prepares the reader to judge Jonathan as Fielding judges him. His criminality seems predetermined, and Fielding adroitly

minimizes the influence of society upon the man. Hence Jonathan is found completely responsible for his own actions. He is more easily identified with the false principle of "greatness" in society if he is not treated as a victim of society.

Forcible aggressiveness and vigilant self-interest, habitual qualities of the mature picaro, drive Jonathan to rebel against the order which he feels the upper class places arbitrarily upon society. Vivid dramatization of this rebellion is presented early in the book and acts as a touchstone for Jonathan's future. His patron, La Ruse, tells Wild to use his ability upon a higher stage because the risks are far greater within the lower orders than within the higher: "there is a Crowd oftener in one Year at Tyburn, than on Tower-Hill in a century."[8] Jonathan protests that death is much easier for the low criminal. Infamy is not heaped upon his name as it is upon the powerful culprit. Supposed class advantage is meaningless to him, for, as a true picaro, he interprets life as wholly material and society as an accumulation of aggressive individuals. He is close to Milton's Satan when he says: "I had rather stand on the Summit of a Dunghil, than at the bottom of a Hill in Paradise. . . ."[9] Unlike Moll Flanders, he does not see that the higher class at least gives security; he trusts to his own powers of ingenuity and unscrupulousness to be secure.

Jonathan's pride requires an adequate medium, which for him is action. Like Jack Wilton, he does not recognize any significance in intellect; in fact, he misinterprets its nature. He rhetorically proclaims, but his proclamations continually reveal intellectual weakness. While drunk in a tavern, he characteristically confuses thought and action:

> Why then should any Man wish to be a Prig, or where is his Greatness? I answer, in his Mind: 'Tis the inward Glory, the secret Consciousness of doing great and wonderful Actions, which can alone support the truly Great Man, whether he be a Conqueror, a Tyrant, a Minister, or a Prig.[10]

Jonathan never has the stage to himself, for Fielding continually reduces the bombast of the man's statements by placing them in a comic perspective. In this scene Jonathan soliloquizes at length upon his ambition and the magnificence of bold action, but when he finds that he has not enough money to pay for his drink, "cocking his Hat fiercely,"[11] he marches out of the tavern.

The current of the picaro's satire is often directed against the pretentiousness of society. In the tavern scene Fielding turns this satire against the picaro himself, for Jonathan represents: "that 'bombast greatness' which he [Fielding] endeavoured to expose -- of that unrestrained egotism which pushes on through thick and thin to achieve its ends."[12]

Moll's empiricism is an integral part of her honesty. She recognizes the pretense of her lovers and their refusal to acknowledge facts.[13] In contrast, Jonathan's empiricism assists him as leader of his gang. The excellent chapter entitled "Of Hats" satirizes those who mistake the shadow for the substance when they consider the distinctions among men. Jonathan finds his gang split into two "principles i.e. [sic] hats":[14] "those who wore Hats fiercely cocked, and those who preferr'd the Nab or Trencher Hat, with the Brim flapping over their Eyes. . . . "[15] To Jonathan this argument is simply an obstacle in the gang's advance. He reminds them that argument over ephemeral distinctions is fine if it is used to distract the public while robbing them, but distinctions should not be considered seriously by

the gang itself. The only real difference among hats is in their capacity to "contain the largest Booty."[16] This appeal to their material interest reunites the gang.

Empiricism never becomes a doctrine for Jonathan, however, because he is even more fundamentally a manipulator. He knows how men operate as well as does Jack Wilton.[17] If his men like badges of honour, he is not averse to awarding them. His gang is a shabby replica of political society, and, as such, it has a place for the status symbol. When one of his "tools", Blueskin, proves troublesome, Jonathan reminds him of past favours:

> And surely there is none in the whole Gang, who hath less Reason to complain than you; you have tasted of my Favours: witness that Piece of Ribbon you wear in your Hat, with which I dubbed you Captain. -- Therefore pray, Captain, deliver the Watch. --D--n your cajoling, says Blueskin: Do you think I value myself on this Bit of Ribband, which I could have bought myself for six-pence, and wore without your Leave?[18]

Bernard Shea says that Fielding condemns Jonathan for his excessive empiricism.[19] From an examination of his own heart, Jonathan finds no sign "of that pitiful low Quality called Honesty."[20] He generalizes upon this narrow fact to deny any honesty at all in the world. This kind of observation is typically the picaro's who is sensitive to the competitive selfishness of society. But Fielding is not sympathetic to this attitude even if he recognizes that it is held throughout society. There are characters like Heartfree who represents "goodness" in the book and who lives honestly and expects honesty in others. Men like Socrates have faced execution bravely and with resignation. Jonathan, in contrast, prepares for his trial by employing a "good Number of false Witnesses."[21] Philosophy is too nebulous for him; he must place his faith in the immediate lie.

This desire for false witnesses is difficult to reconcile with Jonathan's supposed courage. Allan Wendt attributes "courage" to Jonathan's "greatness" in contrast to the passivity of Heartfree's "goodness."[22] Naturally, courage has invested Jonathan with the ambition to rise to his full rebellious stature as head of his gang. He certainly adopts a brave front to maintain the crowd's sympathy as his sentence draws near: "being asked, whether he was afraid to die, he answered, D--n me, it is only a Dance without Music."[23] However, the desperate clutching at any chance by which he might avoid his inevitable demise makes such a statement seem like mere bravado and the adoption of a role. His need for false witnesses is a need for a buffer to fend off the questioning judgment of his real identity. He lacks the basic courage to live without a mask.

Fielding's comic techniques of formalization and irony make Jonathan appear absurd. Because Jonathan is "great", he must be described with elevated language. This language actually applies stroke upon stroke of ridicule that is inherent in the initial irony of Jonathan's "greatness". The book is suffused with constant formalization. One of the best examples occurs after Wild, adrift in a boat at sea, dramatically condemns the futility of life by jumping into the sea. Fielding adopts a Shandean indifference to the reader as he intercepts the result of this action with two chapters, one of which is a table of proverbs. At the end of the second chapter he suggests that Nature intends Jonathan for another "exaltation":

> She therefore no sooner spied him in the Water, than she softly whispered in his Ear to attempt the Recovery of his Boat; which Call he immediately obeyed, and being a good Swimmer with great Facility accomplished it.[24]

Jonathan's scramble into his boat is an act of picaresque spirit, an unwillingness to surrender to futility. But his resilience comes from his "unrestrained egotism" rather than from pure courage. The act is ludicrous rather than heroic. He has the picaro's basic urge to preserve himself.

Goodness suffers from Jonathan's predatory force, and, for the greater part of the book, this force is invincible. He has the picaro's manipulative ability which, in Jonathan, gains Machiavellian dimensions.[25] Fielding sums up the standards by which Jonathan has lived in a table of maxims attributed to the hero. These maxims for the "great man" compare to Machiavelli's maxims for his prince. The "great man" must feign a virtuous disposition, and Jonathan has done so in his relationship with Heartfree. Jonathan suggests: "That the Heart was the proper Seat of Hatred, and the Countenance of Affection and Friendship".[26]

Jonathan's manipulation of the Ordinary of Newgate shows the picaro's ability to turn his knowledge of men to his own advantage. The Ordinary usually condemns prisoners to Hell's furnace, but Jonathan subtly persuades him to share punch and pseudo-philosophic discussion. Their conversation is a burlesque of diplomacy, and its humour arises in part from Jonathan's manipulative prowess:

> Jonathan
>
> You are more unmerciful to me than the Judge, Doctor. He recommended my Soul to Heaven; and it is your Office to shew me the Way thither.
>
> Ordinary
>
> No: The Gates are barred against all Revilers of the Clergy.
>
> Jonathan
>
> I revile only the wicked ones, if any such are, which cannot affect you, who, if Men were preferred in the Church by Merit only, would have long since been a Bishop. . . .

Ordinary

Why, it must be confest [sic] , that there are bad Men in all Orders; but you should not censure too generally. I must own, I might have expected higher Promotion. . . . . whoever commits Murther [sic] is happy in suffering for it; if therefore a Man who commits Murther is so happy in dying for it, how much better must it be for you, who have committed a less crime.

Jonathan

All this is very true; but let us take a Bottle of Wine to cheer our Spirits.

Ordinary

Why Wine? Let me tell you, Mr. Wild, there is nothing so deceitful as the Spirits given us by Wine. If you must drink, let us have a Bowl of Punch; a Liquor I the rather prefer, as it is no where spoken against in Scripture, and as it is more wholsome [sic] for the Gravel; a Distemper with which I am grievously afflicted.

Jonathan

I ask your Pardon, Doctor, I should have remembered, that Punch was your favourite Liquor.[27]

Jonathan, like a true picaro, reduces the man's pretension and reaches his real interest. Throughout his life, Jonathan plays upon men's vanity or simple credulity and raises smoke-screens to cloud his sinister intentions. This ability vitalizes Jonathan's villainy.

To ensure that his satirical goal is achieved, Fielding makes Jonathan a human villain. In the preliminary discussion of his work, Fielding indicates that Wild is a mixed character and that his villainy is not "absolutely pure and without Allay. [sic]"[28] In one episode Jonathan shows some sign of conscience. His prey, Heartfree, is about to be hanged for a theft that Jonathan has committed. For a brief period, after he has witnessed the pathetic parting of Heartfree from his children and has heard Heartfree's name read from the Dead-Warrant, Jonathan is conscience-stricken. For an

instant he is united with his victim before the fact of death. But the bond is tenuous. He is incapable of sacrificing self-interest even to the degree of Lazarillo's compassion for the hidalgo because Jonathan's pity stops far short of action. He is haunted by "Fantoms too dreadful to be described,"[29] but he chooses to live up to his personal legend: "What is the life of a single Man? Have not whole Armies and Nations been sacrificed to the Humour of One Great Man?"[30]

The possibility of morality in Jonathan's character is, in effect, a simply formal question. Fielding's purpose is to condemn all that is involved in "greatness," even the delusion that the "great" have a basic, effective conscience. Fielding's comment upon Jonathan's "Good-nature" is ironic: "for he carried Good-nature to that wonderful and uncommon Height, that he never did a single Injury to Man or Woman, by which he himself did not expect to reap some Advantage."[31] Jonathan's most self-revealing statement is his advice to a young thief: "Take my word for it, you had better be an honest man than half a Rogue."[32]

Like a picaro, Jonathan assumes many roles. His basic self-interest denies him any true morality, but he can play the moralist. His relationship with his gang makes ridiculous the "honour-among-thieves" code, but he professes belief in it. When Jonathan finds that Fireblood, a hench-man, holds back most of the returns from a theft, he sells these returns to their owner and pockets the "reward". He chastizes Fireblood:

> He said, he was sorry to see any of his Gang guilty of a Breach of Honour; that without Honour Priggery was at an End; that if a Prig had but Honour, he would overlook every Vice in the World.[33]

Jonathan's egotism prevents him from seeing any real difference between

social classes, but he can appropriate the gentleman's manner. He appears like a gentleman when he promises to marry his love, Laetitia:

> . . . he never offered any Violence to a young Lady without the most earnest Promises of that kind, being, he said, a Ceremonial due to their Modesty, and which was so easily performed, that the Omission could arise from nothing but the mere Wantonness of Brutality.[34]

This easy appropriation of the gentleman's manner to cover his lust indicates that Jonathan has the picaro's limited vision. He does not see that manner has meaning only in so far as it expresses sincere intention. In Don Pablos' observation of the nuns' lovers, he separates manner and intention and, in so doing, becomes a satirical agent.[35] But Jonathan himself is the object of satire since he cannot realize that his own behaviour is a false appropriation of manner. This behaviour, amplified by the hero's vanity and histrionic tendency, becomes the burlesque of the satire. Fielding says that burlesque is

> . . . the exhibition of what is monstrous and unnatural, and where our delight, if we examine it, arises from the surprising absurdity, as in appropriating the manners of the highest to the lowest, or e converso.[36]

The picaro's gift for role-playing is assisted by Fielding's use of burlesque in his comic treatment of Jonathan.

In one of the many clashes with his hench-men, the debate turns upon the question of leadership. The argument is spiced with political allusion as Blueskin becomes Locke's social contract man and Jonathan, Hobbes' monarchist:

> I know not who put you at the Head of it, cries Blueskin; but those who did, certainly did it for their own Good, that you might conduct them the better in their Robberies, inform them of the richest Booties, prevent Surprize, pack Juries, bribe Evidence, and so contribute to their Benefit and Safety. . . .

Wild answers:

> . . . in an illegal Society or Gang, as this of ours, it is otherwise, for who would be at the Head of a Gang, unless for his own Interest. . . ? Nothing but a Head, and Obedience to that Head, can preserve a Gang a Moment from Destruction.[37]

Not always is the satire controlled by Fielding's natural affinity for the comic. Condemnation is at times searing and pungent. Jonathan, after one failure, thinks of forming his gang:

> Now, suppose a Prig had as many Tools as any Prime Minister ever had, would he not be as Great as any Prime Minister whatsoever? Undoubtedly he would. What then have I to do in the Pursuit of Greatness, but to procure a Gang, and to make the Use of this Gang center in myself.[38]

Jonathan's unscrupulous ambition represents the urge of all power-seekers and quite possibly of Sir Robert Walpole himself.

Fielding's treatment of Jonathan Wild as a picaro is paradoxical. Jonathan's role-playing or his manipulative ability produce comedy which is very often burlesque. However, that Jonathan is a criminal who uses the picaro's talents for his sinister ends is evident. For example, he may assume a role when he speaks to his gang, but his rhetoric is cheap since he uses it simply to control his gang. For Jonathan the game is never as important as the victory. Since Jonathan represents the thirst for power in society, his attitude has its own logic, and he becomes both a satirical agent and an object of satire.

Fielding succeeds in identifying Jonathan with society's false principle of "greatness", but comic art demands that comic techniques such as burlesque, formalization and irony be used in the identification. Jonathan's character has sustained comic power. To the moment of his death, he expresses

the simplicity of the picaro as he robs the parson's pocket of his bottle-screw. It is the kind of illogical reflex action that recalls Moll's theft of the horse. Fielding's intention to condemn is understood, however, and as the hero's denouement draws near, he allows his irony to relax: "Jonathan Wild the Great was, what so few Great Men are, though all in propriety ought to be -- hanged by the Neck till he was dead."[39]

NOTES

1 Allan Wendt, "Moral Allegory of Jonathan Wild," E.L.H., 24:306-320, March, 1957.

2 Henry Fielding, The Life of Jonathan Wild (London: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 11.

3 Cf. ante pp. 13, 22.

4 Fielding, op. cit., p. 17.

5 Ibid., p. 16.

6 Ibid., p. 17.

7 Loc. cit.

8 Fielding, op. cit., p. 28.

9 Ibid., p. 25.

10 Ibid., p. 85.

11 Ibid., p. 86.

12 F. Homes Dudden, Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), I, p. 493.

13 Cf. ante pp. 68-69.

14 Fielding, op. cit., p. 93.

15 Loc. cit.

16 Fielding, op. cit., p. 95.

17 Cf. ante pp. 42-43.

18 Fielding, op. cit., p. 177.

19 Bernard Shea, "Machiavelli and Fielding's Jonathan Wild," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, LXXII, (March, 1957), 60.

20 Fielding, op. cit., p. 161.

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21 Ibid., p. 240.

22 Wendt, op. cit., p. 306.

23 Fielding, op. cit., p. 252.

24 Ibid., p. 119.

25 Shea, op. cit., 55-73.

26 Fielding, op. cit., p. 259.

27 Ibid., pp. 246-48.

28 Ibid., p. 10.

29 Ibid., p. 198.

30 Ibid., p. 199.

31 Fielding, op. cit., p. 46.

32 Ibid., p. 134.

33 Ibid., p. 143.

34 Ibid., p. 42.

35 Cf. ante pp. 14-15.

36 E.M. Thornbury, Henry Fielding's Theory of the Comic Prose Epic (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1931), p. 153.

37 Fielding, op. cit., p. 176.

38 Ibid., p. 63.

CHAPTER V

TOBIAS SMOLLETT

1. Social and Literary background. Tobias Smollett was, perhaps, the best equipped of all eighteenth century novelists to capture the picaresque spirit in his work. Like a picaro, for many years he was an outsider to society, for he was a Scot in a London society which was not especially hospitable to Scotsmen. Wishing to reform and instruct the society he met, he was frustrated by lack of recognition. Although he denied association with his character, Roderick Random, Roderick's position at the outset of his adventures compares with Smollett's venture to London with his play, The Regicide, which London society refused to acknowledge.

The influence of the picaresque genre upon Smollett has a literary as well as a biographical source. Even while Fielding was moulding the novel into a more integrated form in such "comic epics in prose" as Tom Jones, and Joseph Andrews, Smollett adhered to a more primitive concept of the novel which absorbed the picaresque inspiration of both Le Sage's Gil Blas and the Spanish picaresque works. Although he does not make an explicit statement of this concept until he writes Ferdinand Count Fathom in 1753, it is implicit in all his novels dating from Roderick Rondom, published in 1748. This concept reflects a typically panoramic view of society and of experience itself:

> A novel is a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups, and exhibited in various attitudes, for the purposes of an uniform plan, and general occurrence, to which every individual figure is subservient. But this plan cannot be executed with propriety, probability, or success, without a principal personage to attract the attention, unite the incidents, unwind the clue of the labyrinth, and at last close the scene,

by virtue of his own importance.[1]

Many critics have found that, in a novel like Roderick Random, Smollett emphasizes the "large diffused picture" rather than the "principal personage." David Hannay, for example, sees Roderick as only "the central figure of a whirl of adventures," and confesses that, "If he had been hanged, I, for my part, should have heard the tidings unmoved. . . . For Roderick himself no human being can ever have been glad or sorry."[2] Such a comment has validity in terms of the power of Roderick as a character, but it ignores Smollett's use of Roderick as a symbol. Rocerick's Christian name identifies him as a rugged Scot who, like Smollett himself, is proud of his heritage. His surname suggests this Scot's life which is filled with adventures, many of which can be described as "random shots" at an entry into genteel society. Roderick, with picaresque spirit, earnestly tries to gain an honest living in a corrupt society.

Smollett states, in the preface to Roderick Random, that he plans his work after Le Sage's Gil Blas, but that he intends to develop his hero in a different manner.[3] Gil Blas is flippant in his excursions with society. For example, like Dorindo,[4] he meets a charlatan and participates in the fraud of the charlatan by becoming one himself. When Roderick meets pretence in society, he expresses "that generous indignation which ought to animate the reader against the sordid and vicious disposition of the world."[5] He represents "modest merit struggling with every difficulty to which a friendless orphan is exposed, from his own want of experience, as well as from the selfishness, envy, malice, and base indifference of mankind."[6] He is far from a comic picaro, and his efforts to further himself unveil the pretence of society. His "want of experience" makes him fair game for a

deceiver until he learns that he must either become a deceiver himself or withdraw from society.

Smollett sees English society as not only morally corrupt, but also physically corrupt. His satirical temperament takes easily to scatology which recalls not only Swift, but also Spanish picaresque fiction. In commenting on Rowlandson's drawings of Smollett's characters, V.S. Pritchett observes that they "are not human beings. They are lumps of animal horror or stupidity."[7] Smollett uses caricature, however, to help correct English society which in the eighteenth century was "excessively rough and coarse."[8] Like Don Quixote, Roderick denies that the monsters are only windmills. But Roderick cannot hope to slay these monsters, for they are as stubborn in their perversity as Roderick is stubborn in his earnestness.

Smollett's picaro is an observer as well as an adventurer. Smollett uses Roderick to uncover the blots of society. The difference between Jonathan Wild and Roderick Random is clear. While Fielding focuses upon Jonathan as a representative of social corruption, Smollett's Roderick struggles against social corruption. Ronald Paulson, in a study of Smollett's novels as a development of satire, finds this difference between Fielding's work and Smollett's:

> The satire in a picaresque novel like Fielding's Jonathan Wild is singleminded, a straight line in which intensity of gaze makes up for variety. . . . But if the movement of Fielding's satire is centripetal, that of Smollett's is centrifugal, away from the hero and toward the people who react to him, away from a thesis and toward a general exploration.[9]

The moral nature of the society that Roderick explores is most often hidden by a mask of pretence. This mask is worn chiefly in London society, however, where Roderick is most often deceived. In the episodes at sea,

Roderick sees genuine cruelty or genuine benevolence. Captain Oakum of the Thunder compares to Jonathan Wild in his tyranny, although he is blunt rather than rhetorically deceptive. In contrast, the ship's surgeon is generous and helpful to Roderick. Even upon land, a seaman can help the victims of circumstance. Lieutenant Bowling, Roderick's uncle, for example, assists Roderick after his grandfather dies. But Roderick finds that cruelty usually rules at sea and duplicity upon land, and he suffers from both until, like Piers and Dorindo, he can withdraw from society.

2. Roderick Random: the ambitious picaro. Roderick Random, unlike Lazarillo, is privileged with a genteel education, which he gains from his grandfather who raises him. After his grandfather dies, however, Roderick faces the self-centred opposition of his relatives who had pretended to love the grandfather but had been only anxious to gain his estate. Lieutenant Bowling tries to help Roderick but can do little to secure the boy upon the estate except to condemn his oppressors and to participate with Roderick in a practical joke against his cruel schoolmaster. Although Lieutenant Bowling provides for Roderick's stay at a university, the worthy tar loses his position when he kills his captain in a duel. No longer supported by his uncle's generosity, the boy must turn to his own resources. University education as well as his gentle birth and background, however, develop a sense of pride and an awareness of social propriety.

The first test of his spirit comes in his apprenticeship to a surgeon, Launcelot Crab. Roderick rebels effectively against the man's brutality, and he not only protects his rights but also grows to control the surgeon's

business. He remains anxious to reach London, however, and willingly grasps Crab's offer to help him get there. In accepting this offer, Roderick must swallow his pride. He knows that Crab's real motive is to place the responsibility for his own adultery with his maid upon Roderick, once the boy has left for London. Roderick begins to awaken to the reality of a world wherein generosity can be mere pretence. However, like a picaro, he looks forward to the next episode of experience rather than to the tarnished reputation he will leave behind. As he leaves Scotland, he also leaves a simpler existence to meet the corrupt "experience" of London society. He is better prepared for his odyssey into experience than are most picaros.

His first venture in London is an attempt to join the Royal Navy as a surgeon's mate. This honest attempt is exploited by officials who force him to pay a series of tips to obtain his commission:

> In less than a quarter of an hour I was called in again, received my qualification sealed up, and was ordered to pay five shillings. . . . I was afterwards obliged to give three shillings and sixpence to the beadles, and a shilling to an old woman who swept the hall.[10]

Before receiving his qualification, he is passed from one official to another like an unwelcome responsibility. At his board, he is reminded of the great number of Scots who seek positions in England and who have infiltrated England "as the locusts did Egypt."[11] He is like a naked picaro who can turn to no one for assistance.

His succeeding adventures produce greater disgust with society. He finds that pretence is a principal instrument of the fashionable world. One young lady, Melinda, even cheats him at cards while pretending to favour him.[13] His disgust is only rarely mollified by relations with more humane

characters such as his loyal servant, Strap, and also by his growing devotion to a young woman of standing, Narcissa. To serve Smollett's satirical purpose, Roderick must not learn too quickly of society's deep corruption. Moll Flanders needs only one experience to realize the duplicity of the world.[13] Roderick is caught continually by the snares of society although he learns to recognize some of them. For example, he is able to warn Strap from marrying a pregnant wench.[14]

Strap's service to Roderick is quite like Sancho Panza's devotion to Don Quixote, but Roderick realizes that he cannot depend on anyone to promote his interests in London. His ambition leads him to undervalue Strap's loyalty and to cast him off in a rather heartless manner once Roderick makes a beach-head on London's rough shore. As he grows sophisticated, Roderick becomes "ashamed to see a journeyman barber inquiring after me with the familiarity of a companion."[15]

To secure himself with a group of fops, Roderick assents, at first, to their brutal joke upon a hapless and gullible doctor named Wagtail. The doctor suffers pain when a wench, who is paid by the fops to claim that the doctor has made her pregnant, bites the poor man on the cheek. He suffers indignity when Slyboot, one of the fops, sprays him with black paint, supposedly to cure the poor man's wound. Roderick is compassionate enough to have the man taken home in a carriage, but he steadfastly retains the friendship of the brutal jokers who, he thinks, will help his social advance.[16] Smollett does not seem to think of Roderick's apparently brutal actions as "anything more than ordinary sowing of wild oats, natural and pardonable enough."[17]

"Want of experience" keeps Roderick one of the deluded and, as such, an agent for Smollett's satire. On more than one occasion, he is drawn by the hope of fortune only to see this fortune possessed by ugliness. His fancy identifies "a lady of fortune, in the bloom of youth and beauty"[18] as the author of an admiring letter that he receives when his luck is at its lowest ebb. Indeed, he does see a young charmer in the window of the house of rendezvous. However, when is is invited to the house, he meets, not the young girl, but her governess, a "hoary dulcinea":

> . . . she ogled me with her dim eyes, quenched in rheum; then, as if she was ashamed of that freedom, she affected to look down, blush, and play with her fan; then toss her head, that I might not perceive a palsy that shook it, ask some childish questions with a lisping accent, giggle and grin with her mouth shut, to conceal the ravages of time upon her teeth; leer upon me again, sigh piteously, fling herself about in her chair to show her agility. . . .[19]

The woman's efforts to be presentable recall the antics of Quevedo's hidalgos.[20] She has used the appearance of Miss Sparkle to lure Roderick into the house. Roderick tries to persuade himself that he may meet Miss Sparkle if he can withstand her governess, but this delusion is exploded by a blast of garlic from the old woman who flies at him like a tigress. This revelation of grotesque ugliness is akin to the picaro's discovery of his environment. Roderick finds that in London society the desirable things such as marriage to a young woman like Miss Sparkle are enveloped in the stifling atmosphere of vested interest.

Roderick's reactions to these revelations are not those of the innocent boy who does not know better than to get involved in traps. He is the normal young adventurer who is shocked by the debased nature of society. Smollett's bent for the grotesque produces the image of this society. One

motif, that of the crab caricature, recurs comparatively often in a book in which the theatrical effects are otherwise so varied. The false generosity of Launcelot Crab has been noted already. When Roderick survives a shipwreck and lands upon the Sussex coast, he hides in a farmer's barn. When the farmer and his son find him, the son rushes from the barn and overturns the father who does not get up in his retreat but crawls "backwards like a crab, with great speed, till he had got over the threshold, mumbling exorcisms all the way."[21] A young woman, Miss Snapper, owns an estate valued at twenty thousand pounds which attracts Roderick even if her "eternal clack" of a tongue does not. She bends "sideways in the figure like an S" and has a walk like "that of a crab".[22] This crab caricature consistently represents the eccentric self-centredness of the character. Launcelot Crab is excessively bullying, the farmer excessively cold-hearted, and Miss Snapper excessively voluble. They are deprived of humanity by the caricature and become more like "humours" than persons.[23] Roderick observes them with the limited view of the picaro who can only see the external aspect of human nature.

The grotesque face of society is the appropriate exterior for its cold heart. On the continent, Roderick defends the English people for their liberal heritage and especially for their courage in overthrowing authoritaritarianism in 1689.[24] At home, however, he witnesses a social authoritarianism which the Glorious Revolution did not budge. To marry Melinda, he must show his rent-roll to her mother, and, when he has not one to show, he is refused.[25] Relations between the sexes are not based upon free affection, but are adjusted by lies and bargaining.

Roderick finds aristocrats who pretend to have power and influence, but who are really devoid of either. Roderick goes to Lord Strutwell to see if he can help get him a commission. Once he is in the lord's house, he is ignored until he realizes that the servant who pops in and out of the room seeks a tip. Negotiating with this servant, Roderick asks if he can "fall upon some method of letting the earl know that I was in the house."[26] When he finally meets Strutwell, the great man uses signs of affection and respect for a budding talent. Lord Strutwell's pretence compares to that of Lazarillo's hidalgo. He encourages Roderick to place his trust in him and to acknowledge his debt by giving him his watch. Roderick is surprised when the earl's promise of a post as secretary to an ambassador collapses and he really is proven to have no influence at court. The earl's debauched nobility (he is also a homosexual) is defended by a young fop, Straddle, who originally had recommended the earl to Roderick. Smollett sees that the institution of nobility is a sham and that hypocrites support it.

Roderick has a picaro's viewpoint that judges the objects of satire by their external manner. While he may lack "the faculty of imaginative sympathy" which would enable him to understand the "complexities of the inner life"[27] of the people he meets, his observation is sufficient to condemn them. Once he recognizes pretence, he indicates that disorder is behind it. He leaves this disorder for someone else to analyze, for, like Moll Flanders,[28] he must get on to his next episode of experience. His total view of society is gained from accumulation rather than intensity.

For a long time Roderick's ambition controls his conscience.

Frustrated by the brutality and corruption of naval life, he gives up his effort to become a naval surgeon. In London he realizes that only the deceivers succeed. He adopts the sham life of the confidence man who seeks a woman of fortune to repair his losses. Like Somerset Maugham's Gigolo who must always wear new shoes if he is to satisfy the fashionable women of the Riviera, Roderick finds more than once that he must exchange old suits for new so that he can maintain a prosperous appearance.

Roderick never loses his sense of the incongruous, however, and is not deluded by his own imitation of manner. He can adopt the dandy's manner with a picaro's ingenuity, but his heart is not in the act. As a dandy, he tries to gain attention at a theatre:

> I rose and sat down, covered and uncovered my head twenty times between the acts; pulled out my watch, slapped it to my ear, wound it up, set it, gave it the hearing again; displayed my snuff-box, affected to take snuff, that I might have an opportunity of showing my brilliant, and wiped my nose with a perfumed handkerchief; then dangled my cane, and adjusted my sword-knot, and acted many more fooleries of the same kind, in hopes of obtaining the character of a pretty fellow, in the acquiring of which I found two considerable obstructions in my disposition, namely, a natural reserve, and jealous sensibility.[29]

This "natural reserve" makes Roderick a good agent for Smollett's panoramic satire. It also helps to give the loneliness of his picaro a fairly recognizable psychological basis even if Smollett is never really concerned with psychological validity. Society is as much a character as Roderick himself and, therefore, Roderick must often be subdued so that the force of society can be recognized as it acts upon him.

Some affairs of society mean nothing to him. Like Jack Wilton, he can see very little significance in war although he does recognize the ineptitude of commanding officers. He reduces the supposed historic import

of the siege of Carthagena to the ridiculous: "A breach being made on the other side, by our land battery, large enough to admit a middle-sized baboon, provided he could find means to climb up to it. . . ."[30]

He finds a truly desirable goal, however, in his hope of marriage with Narcissa who, though of the upper class, lives on a rural estate in Sussex rather than in London. In the position of footman in Narcissa's home, he impresses the feminine household with his ingratiating manner and makes a successful leap, in their estimation, from the manner of a simple lacquey to that of a gentleman scholar who can disentangle the perplexities in a passage of Tasso.[31]

Roderick's scholarship does not make life easier for him since he is continually plagued by bad fortune. When he sees a magistrate attempting to violate Narcissa, he intervenes and cudgels the man. For this attack upon authority he must leave Sussex. He maintains a stubborn honesty throughout his experiences. Mr. Banter, whose match-making technique makes him a useful friend of Random, denies that Roderick can succeed as a confidence man: "Look ye, Random. . . I have divined your plan, and am confident it will never succeed. You are too honest, and too ignorant of the town, to practise the necessary cheats of your profession. . . ."[32] Roderick, like Colonel Jack, is aware of his own virtuous instincts, but his pride leads him to define these instincts in a social context.[33] He identifies them as the proper conduct of a gentleman. This conception is that of the picaro who looks outward to society for his terms of reference rather than inward to himself.

Roderick, however, does have sentiments other than pride. He

sympathizes with an unfortunate woman, Miss Williams, because she has suffered degradation at the hands of promising lovers who have forced her to prostitution. Both realize that they must make a way for themselves in society, but are frustrated in the attempt. A picaresque bond exists between them although it does not turn to love. They both suffer from society, and Roderick is able to compare her plight with his own and recognize hers to be the worse. Miss Williams confides:

> Had I been ugly, nobody would have tempted me; had I been ignorant, the charms of my person would not have atoned for the coarseness of my conversation; had I been giddy, my vanity would have divided my inclinations. . . .[34]

Natural worth is exploited if it is not matched with scruple. Ronald Paulson interprets Miss Williams' narrative as a symbol of social crime enacted upon the helpless and innocent rather than as a realistic picture. However, this narrative loses none of its impact, for it has "a nightmare quality."[35]

Miss Williams' solution to the decadence she must endure in London is significant. The country, not the city, provides relief. She decides "to procure, with the first money she should earn, the homely garb of a country wench, go to some village at a good distance from town, and come up in a waggon, as a fresh girl for service. . . ."[36] Smollett's symbols are simple ones: usually, the country represents purity and innocence while London represents disease. True humanity exists at the margin of genteel society. Miss Williams, the prostitute, becomes, by Smollett's juggling of incident and probability, a truly loyal servant to Narcissa. A sailor, who has had little to do with London, is Miss Williams' defender against a bailiff: " 'A fire-ship!' replied the sailor; 'more like a poor galley

in distress, that has been boarded by such a fire-ship as you. . . .' "[37] In Sussex a poor woman, suspected by the ignorant villagers of witchcraft, saves the ship-wrecked Roderick after everyone, including the local parson, leaves him to the elements. This woman advises Roderick to apply as a servant at Narcissa's home. Smollett shows that humane acts connect individuals whereas selfish acts isolate them from one another.

Opposed to the formalized pattern of human relationships among the London gentry is the comic free expression of friendship in meetings such as that of Strap and Roderick. Roderick stops at a barber shop on the road to London and there recognizes that Strap is his barber. They fly into each other's arms and Roderick records that he: "gave him back one half of the suds he had so lavishly bestowed on my countenance. . . ."[38] Roderick's meeting of an old messmate, Morgan, who has become an apothecary, is also unrestrained. Morgan "flew about my neck, hugged me affectionately, and daubed me all over with turpentine and the yoke of eggs, which he had been mixing. . . ."[39] Roderick is very often conscious of his dignity and scrupulous in his appearance, but he learns to value unaffected friendship. He begins to realize that, like Lazarillo, he wishes to be "careless and joyous."

Roderick's picaresque spirit is revealed in his unflagging efforts to advance himself in society. His "want of experience" makes him a good medium for Smollett's satire which works through each of Roderick's encounters to rebuke the degradation that the author sees. Roderick participates in this degradation in so far as his ambition motivates him toward the sham life of a confidence man. However, he plays this role only when he realizes

that society does not really want honesty. His basic position shows some similarity to Joseph Addison's who, as one of the "standers-by", can "discover blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the game."[40] But Smollett does not allow Roderick to be an aloof "spectator". He furnishes his character with strong ambition which, upon discovering the nature of society, can become strong rebuke of the sophisticated life and a desire to return to the simpler life of a country estate. This estate is furnished by his father, whom Roderick discovers in Argentina. With the aid of his father, Roderick can make a successful marriage with Narcissa.

Paulson distinguishes between Roderick Random and Jonathan Wild by observing that while Smollett provides both "an observer" and "a scene", Fielding allows Jonathan to be "himself the scene."[41] The struggle between the "observer", Roderick, and the "scene", society, provides the interest of Smollett's book.

NOTES

1 Tobias Smollett, The Adventures of Count Fathom (George Saintsbury, editor, The Works of Tobias Smollett, London: The Navarre Society, [n.d.]), I, p. 3.

2 David Hannay, Life and Writings of Tobias George Smollett (London: The Walter Scott Publishing Company [1887]), p. 76.

3 For an examination of parallels in character types and incidents between Gil Blas and Smollett's works see Alexandre Laurence, "L'Influence de Lesage sur Smollett," Revue de Litterature Comparée, 12e. Année (1932), pp. 533-45.

4 Cf. ante p. 53.

5 Tobias Smollett, The Adventures of Roderick Random (Saintsbury, op. cit.), I, p. xli.

6 Ibid., pp. xli-xlii.

7 V.S. Pritchett, "Books in General," The New Statesman and Nation, XXIII (February 28, 1942), 145.

8 Smollett, Roderick Random, op. cit., p. xxxiv.

9 Ronald Paulson, "Satire in the Early Novels of Smollett," Journal of English and German Philology, LIX (July, 1960), 384.

10 Smollett, Roderick Random, op. cit., pp. 118-19.

11 Ibid., p. 116.

12 Ibid., III, p. 6.

13 Cf. ante p. 69.

14 Smollett, Roderick Random, op. cit., pp. 1-3.

15 Ibid., I, p. 147.

16 Ibid., II, pp. 207-219.

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17 Ibid., I, p. xxiii.

18 Ibid., III, p. 31.

19 Ibid., pp. 35-36.

20 Cf. ante p. 20.

21 Smollett, Roderick Random, op. cit., II, p. 131.

22 Ibid., III, p. 74.

23 Lee Monroe Ellison shows that Smollett used some characteristics of the Elizabethan comedy of "humours" in his character portraits. See his "Elizabethan Drama and the Works of Smollett," Publications of the Modern Language Association of America, XLIV (September, 1929), pp. 842-62.

24 Smollett, Roderick Random, op. cit., II, pp. 174-76.

25 Ibid., III, p. 24.

26 Ibid., p. 41.

27 Ellison, op. cit., 855.

28 Cf. ante pp. 71-72.

29 Smollett, Roderick Random, op. cit., II, p. 191.

30 Ibid., II, p. 92.

31 Ibid., II, pp. 145-46.

32 Ibid., III, p. 10.

33 Cf. ante p. 80.

34 Smollett, Roderick Random, op. cit., II, p. 6.

35 Paulson, op. cit., 391.

36 Smollett, Roderick Random, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

37 Ibid., II, p. 24.

38 Ibid., I, p. 43.

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39 Ibid., III, p. 199.

40 Joseph Addison, The Spectator (Henry Morley, editor, London: George Routledge and Sons, 1896), p. 5.

41 Paulson, op. cit. 388.

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

1. Social and literary background. Like Jonathan Wild's representation of the false principle of "greatness", Barry Lyndon symbolizes a similar false principle, "success." Thackeray invites the reader to condemn Barry Lyndon's fanatical pursuit of success which implies selfishness. Indeed, Thackeray hankered for the freedom of Fielding's age in which he could have denunciated more explicitly Barry's view of life.[1] Before Barry Lyndon's publication in 1844, readers enjoyed the works of Harrison Ainsworth and other writers of what became known as the Newgate School of Fiction. These writers romanticized criminals like Jack Sheppard.[2] Such slurring of moral lines was irresponsible in Thackeray's view, and in Barry Lyndon he tackled the task of moral definition. He thought that a writer should be honest and realistic, and:

> not. . . foist off upon the public figures pretending to be delineations of human nature, -- gay and agreeable cut-throats, otto-of-rose [sic] murderers. . . being representatives of beings that never have or could have existed. . . if not bounden to copy nature, they are justified in trying; and hence in describing not only what is beautiful, but what is ill-favoured too. . . .[3]

Thackeray and Fielding not only share a similar moral purpose; they also portray their figures with a common irony, even though Thackeray does not create a mock-heroic framework for Barry as does Fielding for Jonathan. Barry continually exhibits complacency in his chameful acts and condemns conduct with which the reader sympathizes. His disrespect to Lady Lyndon compares to the duke's callousness toward his duchess in Browning's "My

Last Duchess":

> ...although I took no particular pains (for I am all frankness and aboveboard) to disguise my feelings in general, yet she was of such a mean spirit that she pursued me with her regard in spite of my indifference to her, and would kindle up at the smallest kind word I spoke to her.[4]

In Fielding's portrait the irony is achieved through the false decorum with which Jonathan's acts are presented; in Thackeray's portrait the irony is more subtle, arising from Barry's misinterpretation of experience because of his confirmed egotism.

Even though his double meaning is fairly evident, Thackeray was anxious that his reader would not sentimentalize Barry's actions. In his first edition of the book, Thackeray adopted the role of a commentator, Mr. Fitz-Boodle, whose foot-notes help to emphasize the moral of the book. In one foot-note, for example, he suggests that Barry's frequent recourse to the sword is not a sign of honour, but is simply an act of desperation to solve a problem which baffles his wits.[5] In these foot-notes Thackeray invites the reader to examine Barry's moral nature.

Thackeray's presence in his novel accords with a picaresque convention. In a picaresque work the fingers of the author who manipulates the strings of his characters can sometimes be seen because of his satirical purpose. Nashe equips Jack Wilton with a language that he cannot be expected to have, and yet Jack is a dynamic picaro. Thackeray's work must be tested on the same basis. If Thackeray intends to denounce Barry as a representative of the materialistic code of success, is Barry a vital character whose artistic delineation can be interesting? An examination of Barry's character shows that while the picaresque nature of this

character heightens his villainy, it also produces a vital portrait of the man.

2. Barry Lyndon: the egotistical picaro. The seeds of Barry Lyndon's egotism are sown in his childhood. Young Barry learns that an aunt betrayed his Irish family estate into the hands of Roger Lyndon, an English conqueror. His father was left with little wealth, most of which he spent in horse racing activities to impress Englishmen. His mother and Barry are left destitute after the father's death and return to Ireland where they find some comfort on Mrs. Barry's brother's estate, known as the Brady's. There they are scorned by some of the family and befriended by others. Barry's mother is especially spurned by her sister-in-law. Barry, careless of his mother's feelings, becomes enamoured of Nora, a daughter of his uncle, and determines, even though he is only fourteen and she is much older, to win her. An estrangement develops between mother and son over this affection for Nora, but while the mother swallows her pride and allows Nora to trifle with her son, Barry does not recognize her sacrifice:

> And many a time has the good soul left me to go and break her heart in her own room alone, and come back with a smiling face, so that I should know nothing of her mortification. Nor, indeed, did I take much pains to ascertain it; nor should I, I fear, have been very much touched even had I discovered it, for the commencement of manhood, I think, is the period of our extremest selfishness.[6]

Barry's affection for Nora exhibits the same kind of precocity as Moll Flanders'[7] youthful determination to be a gentlewoman. He identifies Nora chiefly as a desirable representative of the gentry to which his pride urges him to aspire. His pride springs from his feeling that he is as worthy as the gentry even if his immediate ancestry have temporarily deprived him

of his birthright. His interpretation of life is the picaro's who looks for external reference to give his life meaning. This view contrasts with his mother's whose pride is founded strictly upon self-respect and a recognition of the disrespectful conduct of her relatives. She, too, recognizes the need for her son to advance, but she is more sensitive than Barry when she tries to protect the dignity needed for a return to their original social station.

Barry's selfishness is not ameliorated with age. After many years in which he has toured the continent and during which time he has had to be prodded to write to his mother, he returns to Ireland. His mother hastens to prepare a welcome party. He does not attend and is surprised when he hears of her anger. She is silent for some time until her compassion urges her to Dublin and to the indignity of waiting outside his lodgings until he notices her. Upon finding her there, he does not realize his previous shameful behaviour, but uses the occasion to exhibit the sententious hypocrisy with which he occasionally sermonizes:

> Indeed, I have found in my experience that these are the only women who never deceive a man, and whose affection remains constant through all trials. Think of the hours that the kind soul must have passed, lonely in the street, listening to the din and merriment within my apartments, the clinking of the glasses, the laughing, the choruses, and the cheering.[8]

As a picaro he is never averse to playing the role of the moralist. The invitation to share the experience, "think of the hours," and the emphatic position of "merriment", "clinking", "laughing", and "cheering" at the end of his sentence indicate that Barry does not adequately see his own relationship to the situation.

Barry's relationship with his mother indicates that he is blinded by his own egotism. His lack of moral consciousness can be interpreted as a picaro's naïveté, but because it is the source of a completely unprincipled urge to gain "success", Barry's simplicity does not win sympathy. His casualness wounds his mother in his early life and Lady Lyndon, the woman whom he marries for personal advance, in later life. Lazarillo is naïve, but he is capable of pity in his consideration of the misled hidalgo. Eva Beach Touster's remark that Barry is not "a thorough-going scoundrel" because, if he were, "he should not experience the emotions of sympathy and grief. . . for his mother"[9] seems a little misplaced.

Barry's departure from the relative security of the Brady estate and from his mother's love is not a deeply felt experience for him. He does not feel helpless as is Lazarillo when he becomes apprentice to the blind man. He is equipped with sword and pistols that "I had known to use like a man." While his mother might cry at his departure, he muses:

> ... no lad of sixteen is very sad who has liberty for the first time, and twenty guineas in his pocket; and I rode away, thinking, I confess not so much of the kind mother left alone, and of the home behind me, as of tomorrow, and all the wonders it would bring.[10]

He, too, is "careless and joyous", but chooses the wrong time to be so. At sixteen he already has the nonchalant swagger of a Jack Wilton and, like Moll Flanders, grows rapidly into maturity.

According to picaresque convention, he is soon plucked of much of his wealth in a card game. He suffers this setback from a captain Fitzsimmons who in reality had been only a gentleman's gentleman. Barry precipitates this defeat by pretending that he has great estates and wealth. He is

shocked by the deception, but does not realize that he had provoked it.[11] Moll Flanders also recognizes deception in her first encounter with Jemmy, but she admits that she has faked the role of gentlewoman. Barry never admits his own lies because he is absorbed in the image of himself that he creates.

By the clever device of reminding the reader of Barry's youth at at least two strategic points, Thackeray indicates the unnaturalness of Barry's aggressiveness so that it will not be considered heroism. After Barry's successful but fateful duel with an English soldier, Captain Quin, in which he defends his love for Nora, Nora's brother Mick suggests: "And now, in Heaven's name, get the youngster out of the way. . . ."[12] After his first card game, Fitzsimmons demands payment. Barry's identity is discovered, but he strikes the man with his sword and is restrained by the captain's wife who tries to pacify her husband: "Fitzsimmons, you don't want the poor child's blood. Let him escape -- in Heaven's name let him go."[13] The youthful Barry is one of the most aggressive of picaros, but Thackeray uses Barry's youth to suggest that he is an upstart rather than a virile nobleman.

Barry is not dependent on masters although he receives some aid from his Brady uncle and from his cousin Ulick. He fights his own battles with Mick, Ulick's brother, and his conduct with the Bradys forces him to leave the Brady estate. He does so, as has been seen, with enthusiasm. Later in his career, he is a confidential agent to a Prussian general, but this work is a brief interlude. Barry's destiny is in his own hands, and he has little need of patrons.

His independent spirit is matched with a sense of his own importance. In a class-conscious society, Barry insists that he is a gentleman and that he should be recognized as one. Thackeray sets the novel in the eighteenth century because that century provides a better setting for the tension between the individual picaro and a class-bound society. Like Roderick Random, he is conscious of the need to claim the respect that he thinks is his due. However, he is far more self-centred and ruthless in his pursuit and incapable of the revulsion from society which Roderick experiences.

Barry's brutality toward his wife, Lady Lyndon, is rooted in the indignity that he suffers from two women early in his life. The first is his aunt's betrayal of the family estate to Roger Lyndon. This act affects Barry indirectly, but gives him a primary sense of a lost birthright. The second, Nora's refusal to treat him seriously, makes him increasingly sensitive and eager to manifest his unrecognized powers. He consents, however, to conceal these powers in the urbane nonchalance that he thinks proper to a true gentleman. While he treats his mother with careless indifference, he significantly pays for the monument erected upon his father's grave.[14]

The psychological basis for much of Barry's behavious is thus carefully laid in his feeling of wounded pride. A.A. Parker sees this same reaction to early insult in Don Pablos: "To compensate for early feeling of inferiority, the picaro builds a fantasy world. . . an over-estimation of his ability and possible future as a gentleman."[15] Although Barry is treated continually as a child and of little consequence in the Brady home, he dedicates himself to his image of a gentleman. This dedication stems from his need to compensate for the insults he suffers from the Bradys.

His self-estimation has its outward effect in his bravura that he does not think misplaced even though he realizes that it does not impress anyone:

> I had a habit of boasting in company of my birth, and the splendour of my carriages, gardens, cellars, and domestics, and this before people who were perfectly aware of my real circumstances. If it was boys, and they wanted to sneer, I would beat them, or die for it; and many's the time I've been brought home wellnigh killed by one or more of them . . . .[16]

His mother's encouragement to "support your name with your blood"[17] emphasizes the sense of inherent nobility for which the boy must fight.

Like a true picaro, Barry hides his sense of wounded pride by assuming the role of a nonchalant gentleman. When his luck is at its peak, he preens himself upon his genteel taste and abilities:

> I came into it at once, and as if I had never done anything else all my life. I had a gentleman to wait upon me, a French friseur to dress my hair of a morning: I knew the taste of chocolate as by intuition almost, and could distinguish between the right Spanish and the French before I had been a week in my new position. . . I had the finest natural taste for lace and china of any man I ever knew.[18]

His identification of possessions as the total life of a gentleman exemplifies the picaro's limited view. This identification Moll also makes, but for her the prospect of security makes this life desirable, whereas Barry sees a gentleman's position as a means of fulfilling his wish for retribution. When he pretends to have a gentleman's knowledge of political affairs, he is ridiculous:

> ... though during Mr. Edmund Burke's interminable speeches in the English House I used always to go to sleep, I yet have heard from well-informed parties that Mr. Burke was a person of considerable abilities, and even reputed to be eloquent in his more favourable moments.[19]

His sense of unrecognized superiority controls his attitude to unfortunate individuals with whom he has sometimes to associate. When he is impressed into the army he meets: "wretched creatures. . . ploughmen, poachers, pickpockets, who had taken refuge from poverty, or the law, as in truth, I had done myself. . . ."[20] He does not pity those who endure the same discomforts as he does, but, rather, is ashamed that he must be with them. He has become like the hidalgo of Lazarillo -- stubbornly unwilling to see kinship in his fellow sufferers and maintaining a misplaced sense of honour. Like the hidalgo, too, he scorns to work at a trade when he has a chance because "my honour forbade me, for as a gentleman, I could not soil my fingers by a manual occupation."[21]

Barry Lyndon's egotism, then, is the prime force in his character. He is so completely absorbed in himself that he cannot see the hypocrisy of his relations with others. He takes care to identify himself when writing to his mother: "and signed myself, as in truth I was, her affectionate son, Redmond Barry, in Captain Potzdorff's company of the Bülowisch regiment. . . ."[22] The strong loyalty of his mother should make assurances of affection unnecessary. Yet his behaviour to his mother is quite callous. Lazarillo's search is for a full stomach and, hence, his struggle is quite elemental. Barry's search for recognition is none the less elemental and he is "naked" in the sense of being spiritually barren.

Barry's "organ of computation" continually weighs each situation he is in to see its possible advantages. His calculating mind might express itself in savage bursts of cruelty as when, in a prison-waggon, he mercilessly tears a pillow from a wounded parson.[23] Barry's code is "to seize

the best when the scramble is open,"[24] and this he relentlessly does. His courtship of Lady Lyndon is oppressive in its determination: "Terror. . . is not a bad ingredient of love. A man who wills fiercely to win the heart of a weak and vapourish woman must succeed if he have opportunity enough."[25] Their honeymoon is worse. He almost suffocates her with the smoke from his pipe and humiliates her by having nightly celebrations with the landlord. He is so successful in humbling her that she asks if the landlady should not also be asked to the entertainment that Barry provides.[26] He has no sympathy for a simperer and this is what he forces Lady Lyndon to become. The child of their marriage, Bryan, becomes a copy of his father. Father and son play practical jokes on the boy's tutor, Lavender, who "would rather be kicked by a great man than not be noticed by him."[27] Before his guests, Barry burns Lavender's wig and, with Bryan, lets loose rats upon the poor man's bed. Barry is more amoral than immoral, for he has the irresponsibility of a child. Barry has the "trick-or-treat prankster"[28] aspect of the picaro, but he conducts his pranks with brutality, and they have crueller effects.

Gambling is a useful activity for a picaro not only because it may rebuild his finances, but also because he need not reveal his identity while he gambles. His ego does not suffer as it might in encounters which demand more of his character. Barry absorbs gambling into the image of himself as a gentleman with a chivalric code. He is imbued with a class consciousness useful to a satirist, even though it is based upon an overestimation of his place in society. His eulogy on gambling furnishes Barry with an opportunity to express a "tirade" against the professions:

> The broker of the Exchange who bulls and bears, and buys and sells, and dabbles with lying loans, and trades on state secrets, what is he but a gamester? The merchant who deals in teas and tallows, is he any better? His bales of dirty indigo are his dice, his cards come up every year instead of every ten minutes, and the sea is his green table. You call the profession of the law an honourable one, where a man will lie for any bidder, lie down poverty for the sake of a fee from wealth, lie down right because wrong is in his brief. You call a doctor an honourable man, a swindling quack, who does not believe in the nostrums which he prescribes, and takes your guinea for whispering in your ear that it is a fine morning; and yet, forsooth, a gallant man who sets him down before the baize and challenges all comers, his money against theirs, his fortune against theirs, is proscribed by your modern moral world. It is a conspiracy of the middle classes against gentlemen -- it is only the shopkeeper cant which is to go down nowadays. I say that play was an institution of chivalry, it has been wrecked along with other privileges of men of birth.[29]

This attack, however, is not true satire, for Barry does not have any reasonable standards with which to judge the objects of his attack. He attempts to hide his own faults behind those of others. Fitz-Boodle warns the reader that "to prove that others are rogues is by no means to disprove his own roguery."[30] Barry uses a similar evasive device as does Jonathan. But while Jonathan hides behind the fabricated truth of false witnesses,[31] Barry uses the roguery of commercial society to mask his own guilt. Both have the picaro's wish to be free from responsibility.

One positive aspect of Barry's character survives Fitz-Boodle's apt condemnation. Although Barry is sensitive of his rights as a gentleman, he does have a picaro's zest for his struggle with society. This zest has been noted in his enthusiasm when he leaves the Brady estate. For Barry this zest has a natural source in egotism. The image of his powers and possessions that he serves up to the world he so rhetorically expands that he

is easily caught in his own lie. "I talked to them about my English estates with a fluency that almost made me believe in the stories which I invented."[32] Even though he may seek revenge upon women, he relishes the attention that he received from them and the range of experience he has shared with them:

> Oh, to see the Valdez once again as on that day I met her first driving in state, with her eight mules, and her retinue of gentlemen by the side of yellow Mançaneres! Oh, for another drive with Hegenheim, in the gilded sledge, over the Saxon snow! False as Shuvaloff was, 'twas better to be jilted by her than to be adored by any other woman. I can't think of any one of them without tenderness. I have ringlets of all their hair in my poor little museum of recollections. Do you keep mine, you dear souls that survive the turmoils and troubles of near half a hundred years? How changed its colour is now, since the day Sczotarska wore it round her neck, after my duel with Count Bjernaski, at Warsaw![33]

" 'twas better to be jilted by her than to be adored by any other" adds subtlety to Barry's character. But he cannot forget himself sufficiently to keep his sentiment from appearing ridiculous. All his romances are only episodes, and he treats them as such. These women are all aristocrats and are chiefly desirable to serve Barry's egotistical conception of himself.

His zest colours his ambition:

> The great and rich are welcomed, smiling, up the grand staircase of the world; the poor but aspiring must clamber up the wall, or push and struggle up the back stair, or, <u>pardi</u>, crawl through any of the conduits of the house, never mind how foul and narrow, that lead to the top. The unambitious sluggard pretends that the eminence is not worth attaining, declines altogether the struggle, and calls himself a philosopher. I say he is a poor-spirited coward. What is life good for but for honour? and that is so indispensable, that we should attain it anyhow.[34]

The image of the house is symbolic of "success", the goal which Thackeray thinks unworthy of men because a single-minded pursuit of it can only imply moral degradation for the pursuer. The image also suggests a change from

Roderick Random's desire for an estate. In the nineteenth century the symbols of wealth have become city symbols rather than country. Roderick becomes a confidence man and wishes to gain recognition in London so that he can ultimately gain a country estate. Barry's awareness of honour and wealth to be gained in the city leads him to think of the city as the place where he can satisfy his ego.

Barry's urge to "clamber up the wall" or to "push and struggle up the back stair" reminds a modern reader of such contemporary exhibitions of this spirit in John Braine's Room at the Top. Both Joe Lampton and Barry choose devious means to gain recognition. Nora's gift of a ribbon to the young Barry stimulates his desire for even greater recognition. The significance for Barry of this sign of approval forms a sharp contrast to Jonathan's disdain for signs of recognition.

H.N. Wethered finds Barry one of the most stimulating rogues in fiction because of his effrontery before the dangers of any predicament, and Wethered sees Barry's villainy partly relieved by this effrontery.[35] Barry's "effrontery", which can be called picaresque spirit, intensifies his roguery rather than relieves it. His spirit makes his acts bolder and more aggressive. Barry speaks of his energy in terms that recall Machiavelli's simile of fortune as a woman who must be attacked boldly if she is to be subdued: "Let the man who has to make his fortune in life remember this maxim. Attacking is his only secret. Dare, and the world always yields; or, if it beat you sometimes, dare again, and it will succumb."[36] Charles Whibley's observation of Barry's character is subtler than Wethered's. Whibley suggests that Barry's "splendid unconsciousness" of his crimes promotes the picture of a zealous, amoral protagonist.[37]

This "splendid unconsciousness" gives a picaro the resiliency that he needs if he is to be free from the consequences of his actions. Barry must continually endure the browbeatings of society. As a schoolboy he suffers the schoolmaster's rod and is undaunted. At last he points out the uselessness of the master's punishment:

> 'Try some other way, sir,' said I, when he was for horsing me once more; but he wouldn't; whereon, and to defend myself, I flung a slate at him, and knocked down a Scotch usher, with a leaden inkstand.[38]

When he sees Nora hand in hand with a Captain Quin, the boy is embarrassed and is shaken by what appears to him a betrayal:

> . . . as I saw that sight my knees fell a-trembling violently under me, and such a sickness came over me, that I was fain to sink down on the grass by a tree against which I leaned, and lost almost all consciousness for a minute or two. . . .[39]

Barry lashes out at this attack upon his pride. Grasping his "silver-hilted hanger" he dashes toward the captain and challenges him to a duel which, as has been noted, leads to Barry's banishment from the Brady estate.

Later, when his ruthless courtship of Lady Lyndon has been noticed and condemned, he is spurned at a country ball. This situation is more complex than the other two, but his reaction is roughly the same. He is ostracized by the gentlewomen, but finds a kindred spirit in Sukey Capermore whose love for dancing "would make her dance at a funeral if anybody asked her."[40] They dance among "the very commonest low people at the bottom of the set -- your apothecaries, wine-merchants, attorneys, and such scum as are allowed to attend our public assemblies."[41] He would rather not associate with the bourgeois, but he is far from humbled. His picaresque spirit is stronger than his sensitivity.

Barry's language is coined in pretence and is a means by which he plays a role and tries to hide his true character. Sententiousness and euphemism are aspects of this language. He is prone to using axioms when he absolves himself from responsibilities. In a German town he wins a girl's heart only to leave her. His remark is that "a lady who sets her heart upon a lad in uniform must prepare to change lovers pretty quickly, or her life will be a sad one."[43] He uses euphemism which becomes, as in Don Pablos,[44] the inspiration for a sadistic joke. Recounting a battle in Germany, he remembers with pleasure his own role in it. "I cannot help saying that I made a very close acquaintance with the colonel of the Cravates, for I drove my bayonet into his body. . . ."[45] (Barry's enthusiasm for battle contrasts with the indifference to it of Jack Wilton, Colonel Jack, and Roderick Random. This indicates the much greater brutality of Barry). He plays a verbal game when he tells of his treatment of Bullingdon, Lady Lyndon's son. "I had never laid a whip on a lord before; but I got speedily used to the practice, and his back and my whip became so well acquainted that I warrant there was very little ceremony between us after a while."[46]

Barry is not averse to playing a less grand role than that of gentleman. When his army life becomes vexing, he hits upon the trick of playing the role of a madman to get out of the army:

> The blow on the head had disordered my brain; the doctor was ready to vouch for this fact. One night I whispered to him that I was Julius Caesar, and considered him to be my affianced wife Queen Cleopatra, which convinced him of my insanity.[47]

This comedy adds the comic picaro's ingenuity to a picaro who is comic only in the sense of his being self-centred to a ridiculous extreme. If the effect of his egotism can be ignored, Barry sometimes appears as a prototype

of General Bullmoose.

Role-playing is more natural to Barry than experience which demands more of him. He is incapable of the element of sacrifice inherent in love. His emotion never goes beyond the equation his imagination creates of his love for Nora:

> My first love was like my first gold watch . . . . I used to go into corners, and contemplate and gloat over my treasure; to take it to bed with me, and lay it under my pillow of nights, and wake of mornings with the happy consciousness that it was there.[48]

In later life he pretends great love for his son, Bryan, but his moral carelessness controls this love and leads to the boy's death when a wild horse that Barry has given him throws him to his death. Barry meets the procession carrying the dying boy from the field. The scene should produce a sense of guilt in Barry, but does not. With insensitive and misplaced objectivity, he thinks of a similar experience:

> His dear face was quite white, and he smiled as he held a hand out to me, and said, painfully, 'You won't whip me, will you, papa?' I could only burst out into tears in reply. I have seen many and many a man dying, and there's a look about the eyes which you cannot mistake. There was a little drummer-boy. . . .[49]

Hence proceeds one of Barry's comparisons that he can make from his store of experience and vacuum of understanding. The episodic aspect of the picaro's character always implies a latent callousness.

This insensitivity does not mean that Barry is totally unable to form closer bonds with others. However, an examination of certain of Barry's successful relationships reveals that they are possible because they are extensions of Barry's egotism. While he cannot love, he can admire, and he admires in others the determination and aggressiveness that he finds in

his own character. Barry emulates an uncle's courage and ability at cards. They combine to make a formidable pair of gamblers, and Barry learns ingenuity from this uncle: ". . . simplicity was our secret. Everything successful is simple. If I wiped the dust off a chair with my napkin, it was to show that the enemy was strong in diamonds. . . ."[50] When Barry returns to Ireland, he meets a faithful old servant of his family with whom he spends a night recalling former times. Their conversation has a private nature, for Barry is a chief object of it. They "talked over a thousand foolish old things that have no interest for any soul alive now; for what soul is there alive that cares for Barry Lyndon?"[51]

Barry's emulation of his uncle indicates a shared recognition of the importance of material prosperity. His conversation with the old servant is sentimental only because it centres upon memories of Barry's youth. It satisfies his ego. Barry is capable of transitory associations which become very loose picaresque bonds.

Is Thackeray successful in representing Barry as a symbol of a major fault in society? Touster says that Thackeray's portrait of his picaro is not as grim as Fielding's,[52] but while Barry's character is more subtle than Jonathan's, it is none the less damned because it centres in egotism and false material values. Thackeray clearly associates these false material values with the ruling gentry.

From his youth, Barry's life is directed toward an emulation of the gentleman's values: "mother boasted with justice that I had as good a bottle of claret by my side as any squire of the land."[53] The abnormality of this pose is accentuated when Barry's Brady uncle sputters upon the claret which

has become putrid with "considerable age". The humour of early episodes in Barry's career is gradually tempered by his unscrupulousness in later life as his materialistic interest develops.

Barry degrades his picaresque spirit when he connects it so closely with egotistical exhibition of his success. He speaks of one of his gambling victories: "when the Duke of Courland lost, he was pleased to say that we had won nobly: and so we had, and spent nobly what we won."[54] In the first sense, the word "nobly" is attributed to Barry's uncle and himself since they have shown the gusto that the aristocrat applauds. Barry uses the same word to describe his spending because, from his experience, gentlemen admire the exhibition of good luck. Barry's actions imitate closely the false values of the gentry.

The sensitivity of his Victorian readers might have influenced Thackeray to write a subtle study of Barry's character, but it is not a romantic study. Perhaps the book's lack of appeal in Thackeray's day is a testimony to this success. Thackeray meets his moral responsibility. In the person of Fitz-Boodle, he expresses his lesson:

> ...we take the moral of the story of Barry Lyndon, Esquire, to be, -- that worldly success is by no means the consequence of virtue; that if it is effected by honesty sometimes, it is attained by selfishness and roguery still oftener; and that our anger at seeing rascals prosper and good men frequently unlucky, is founded on a gross and unreasonable idea of what good fortune really is.[55]

Barry's luck is measured in the picaro's terms: material prosperity matched with "honour", the recognition that his egotism demands. He has the picaro's courage, ingenuity, resilience, and role-playing ability, but because these qualities are knit with a savage egotism, Barry is condemned.

Society cannot judge him, because his actions imitate society, but it can humiliate him. The mainspring of Barry's energy finally slackens after Lady Lyndon, by a careful stratagem, succeeds in having Barry imprisoned. His spirit sinks so low that he blacks boots for wealthier prisoners and is also detected stealing a tobacco-box.[56] Poetic justice is achieved for a man who had fought unscrupulously to be among the gentry. He ends as a common thief, the crudest position of the picaro.

NOTES

1 David Cecil, Early Victorian Novelists (London: Constable and Company, [1934]), p. 104.

2 Lewis Melville, "Thackeray and the Newgate School of Fiction," Some Aspects of Thackeray (London: Stephen Swift and Company, 1911), p. 82.

3 William Makepeace Thackeray, The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon, Esq. and the Miscellaneous Papers Written between 1843 and 1847 (George Saintsbury, editor, The Oxford Thackeray, London: Oxford University Press, [1908]), p. 310.

4 Ibid., p. 256.

5 Ibid., p. 112n.

6 Ibid., p. 28.

7 Cf. ante p. 65.

8 Thackeray, op. cit., p. 209.

9 Eva Beach Touster, "The Literary Relationship of Thackeray and Fielding", Journal of English and German Philology, XLVI (October, 1947), 390.

10 Thackeray, op. cit., p. 48.

11 Ibid., cap. III, pp. 49-62.

12 Ibid., p. 47.

13 Ibid., p. 61.

14 Ibid., p. 7.

15 A.A. Parker, "The Psychology of the 'Picaro' in El Busion", The Modern Language Review, XLII (January, 1947), 62. Also Cf. ante pp. 21-22.

16 Thackeray, op. cit., p. 17.

17 Loc. cit.

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18 Thackeray, op. cit., pp. 127-28.

19 Ibid., p. 201.

20 Ibid., p. 62.

21 Ibid., p. 104.

22 Ibid., p. 106.

23 Ibid., p. 88.

24 Ibid., p. 95.

25 Ibid., p. 218.

26 Ibid., p. 235.

27 Ibid., p. 262.

28 Cf. ante p. 26.

29 Thackeray, op. cit., p. 129.

30 Loc. cit. n.

31 Cf. ante p. 90.

32 Thackeray, op. cit., p. 79.

33 Ibid., pp. 179-80.

34 Ibid., p. 146.

35 H.N. Wethered, On the Art of Thackeray (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1938), p. 56.

36 Thackeray, op. cit., p. 191.

37 Charles Whibley, William Makepeace Thackeray (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1903), p. 61.

38 Thackeray, op. cit., p. 14.

39 Ibid., p. 31.

40 Ibid., p. 272.

41 Ibid., pp. 272-73.

42 Ibid., p. 309.

43 Ibid., p. 76.

44 Cf. ante p. 14.

45 Thackeray, op. cit., p. 70.

46 Ibid., p. 266.

47 Ibid., p. 75.

48 Ibid., p. 19.

49 Ibid., p. 282.

50 Ibid., pp. 118-19.

51 Ibid., p. 197.

52 Touster, op. cit., 390.

53 Thackeray, op. cit., p. 12.

54 Ibid., p. 130.

55 Ibid., p. 278.

56 Ibid., p. 309.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The intention of this chapter is three-fold. A brief recapitulation of the salient points in English picaresque fiction will be made to indicate the general direction taken by the picaresque spirit in English fiction up to Thackeray's Barry Lyndon. A second aim will be to summarize the distinctions between the sympathetic and the condemnatory approach to the picaro in both Spanish and English picaresque fiction. Finally, a fuller definition of the picaro than that given in the Introduction will be attempted.

Spanish picaresque fiction provides English picaresque fiction with two fundamental archetypes. One is the picaro whose lack of experience leads him to a desperate struggle with a hostile society and a recognition of the need to sharpen his wits if he is to preserve himself in society. This archetype is represented in Lazarillo de Tormes. The other is the picaro whose lack of understanding leads him to misconceive experience. This picaro seeks recognition in society as a result of his early feeling of inferiority. He seeks virtue as a reaction to the degradation of his parents, but looks outward to society and to the desirable role of the gentleman for this virtue, rather than to himself and the possibility of his own inward moral growth. This picaro is represented in Don Pablos. There is some similarity between these two picaros. For example, both identify reality as external measurement of experience rather than as absolute meaning behind external nature. Abstractions such as "love,"

"hate," and "honour", they cannot comprehend. Lazarillo, however, sympathizes with the dispossessed hidalgo whose concept of honour dominates his life, while Quevedo uses Don Pablos as an agent to ridicule the hidalgos whom he meets.

In Elizabethan English picaresque fiction, the influence of society upon the picaro is reduced. Jack Wilton, of The Unfortunate Traveller, for example, does not suffer as does Lazarillo. The Elizabethan picaros, however, do keep, in varying degrees, the sharp ingenuity and wit of the Spanish picaros, although they observe society rather than act in it. The external aspects of the genre become less significant in Elizabethan picaresque fiction. Piers Plainness: Seven Years' Prenticeship, for example, presents a picaro who endures seven masters as does Lazarillo, but who does not have the keen wit of Lazarillo.

Defoe's picaresque novels, Moll Flanders and Colonel Jack, exhibit the same struggle between the picaro and society which characterizes Lazarillo. The realism of observation found in Elizabethan picaresque fiction blends with realism of character and plot in Moll Flanders. The heavy moralizing of Colonel Jack prevents it from being as vivid a book as Moll Flanders. Both Moll Flanders and Colonel Jack introduce the element of ambition that the Elizabethan works lack. This vertical movement of the picaro in society is retained in later English picaresque works.

The similarity between Don Pablos and the English picaresque works Jonathan Wild and Barry Lyndon is evident in the misconception of values that Jonathan and Barry have. Both take a false social principle to be their goal. Jonathan is deluded by the apparent "greatness" of power.

Barry wishes recognition from society and, in this regard, his motivation compares to that of Don Pablos.

Roderick Random shares aspects of both Lazarillo and Don Pablos. His "want of experience" compares with Lazarillo's naïveté. Roderick indicates his naïveté in his search for an honest position as surgeon's mate in the Royal Navy. However, from the education that he receives with his uncle's help and from his awareness of his own genteel background, he develops a pride which prompts him to seek a place in London society. He shares this wish for recognition with Barry Lyndon, but Roderick's humane instincts and sensitivity to the corruption that he finds in London restrain him from full participation in society and lead him to the harmonious life on a country estate.

The English picaresque works become gradually more sophisticated than their Spanish prototypes. There is a growth away from the picture of a naked, naïve picaro suffering in a savage social environment, but the effect of the two main influences of Spanish picaresque literature can be recognized in the development of English picaresque fiction. A.A. Parker says that the Spanish picaresque novels "are strong meat indeed; but they are meat, not bread and milk."[1] English picaresque fiction retains some, at least, of this flavour.

The distinction between the two types of English picaresque fiction demands a fuller analysis than can be given in a historical sketch. The spectrum of the English works demands observation of its numerous rays. Throughout the thesis an attempt has been made to keep comparisons and contrasts among the different works in mind when looking at any particular

picaresque work. Some of these comparisons and contrasts will be recapitulated here to join with fresh observations of the many relationships among the works.

In chapter I the suggestion that Spanish picaresque fiction encourages sympathy for the picaro who acts with courage, perseverance and resourcefulness was made. Do the picaros of English picaresque fiction command sympathy? The answer can only be positive in respect to some of the picaros that have been examined. The plight of Moll Flanders as a lonely, unwanted girl who must keep herself from the law's penalty recalls the position of Lazarillo who must keep himself from starvation. They both act in a manner that might be considered criminal, but which, nevertheless, has a natural logic, for they must contend with a ruthless social environment. Roderick Random claims at least some of the sympathy which Smollett, no doubt, thought was due his picaro. Roderick unveils a society which is grasping and repugnant as well as often physically grotesque.

In contrast, Jonathan Wild and Barry Lyndon cannot claim pity, and their creators did not wish them to do so. They both, like Don Pablos, misinterpret life. Jonathan grasps after "greatness," while Barry grasps after "success" as ends in themselves. While the physical demand of hunger erodes Lazarillo's morality, the egotistical demand for "success" erodes Barry's. His disrespect to his mother indicates a misplaced pomposity. Fielding treats Jonathan's shallowness in a comic fashion when Jonathan confuses action and thought, but a condemnation of this shallowness is nonetheless implicit.

The picaro who is to be sympathetically treated often appears naïve. He must awaken himself to the reality of life, and he learns by the simplest

means, that is, by imitation. The blind man takes advantage of Lazarillo's naïveté when he pummels the boy's head against the stone at the bridge at Salamanca. The boy imitates this action when he tricks the man into jumping and smashing his head against a pillar. Moll Flanders also learns by imitation although she is never as naïve as Lazarillo. Defoe portrays naïveté in Colonel Jack's effort to hide his bag of money.

In contrast to this naïveté in Defoe's characters, is Fielding's comic suggestion of Jonathan's almost intuitive evil. He is not corrupted by society, but, rather, aggressively preys upon it. The naïveté of a picaro like Lazarillo is accentuated when he leaves mother and home. However, Barry Lyndon is insensitively pleased when he leaves his mother to go forward in his quest for recognition.

If some of the responsibility for the picaro's actions can be passed on to his environment, a natural logic may be seen in his acts. His wish to be free from responsibility can be interpreted as a consequence of his zest. Moll Flanders' disposal of her many children into the hands of governesses indicates this wish to be free from responsibilities, and, as this wish indicates a rare energy, her irresponsibility paradoxically adds to her attractiveness. Barry Lyndon and Jonathan Wild hide themselves behind either apparent "rogues" such as lawyers and merchants or false witnesses to escape responsibility for their acts. When they do so, they appear cowardly rather than energetic.

The adventures of some picaros indicate that they would wish to escape the social environment which promotes their own corruption. Moll Flanders finds freedom in Virginia and gains enough fortune there to return

to live securely in England. Dorindo is pleased to withdraw from society, as is Piers, even if Piers is not really suited to a pastoral situation. After Roderick Random has witnessed the depravity of London society, he is pleased to take the quieter life of a country estate. This willingness to withdraw from society indicates that these picaros are by nature outsiders to society. Im contrast, Jonathan creates a criminal band which is a copy of the broader political society of his time. Barry Lyndon patterns his life upon the material standards of London society and insists that he is within its charmed circle.

The English picaros develop ambition, but differ significantly in the ends that they seek. Moll wishes to be a gentlewoman so that she can be secure from the law. Colonel Jack wishes to become a gentleman and defines the gentleman's position in terms of positive right conduct. Roderick Random's earnest desire is to gain recognition as a surgeon's mate in the Royal Navy. When he is frustrated in this attempt, he becomes a confidence man. All these aims seem reasonably worthy, or, at least, excusable owing to the picaro's position.

Like Colonel Jack, Barry Lyndon wishes to be a gentleman, but he measures the gentleman's position solely by material standards and as a means to satisfy his egotism. Jonathan Wild's goal is simply to achieve brutal, naked power. He does not recognize any inherent significance in the gentleman's manner.

All English picaros, aside from Piers, have a good deal of energy to pursue their ambitions. They are episodic characters whose energy propels them from one experience to another. But the episodic character

can be either appealing or repulsive. When Moll sees her dying brother in Virginia, she pities him, but, finding that she can be of no practical use to him, she hastens to return to England. This exhibition of the episodic character is appealing because Moll's vital energy pushes her onward. When Barry Lyndon meets his dying son Bryan, he is reminded of a past experience. Barry's mind is that of the episodic character whose awareness passes quickly from experience to experience, but whose insight does not penetrate very deeply into any one experience. His pride is awakened as he looks to his store of past experiences. He does not look forward as does Moll. Moll's zest also differs from Barry's. She enjoys her coquetry with her lover Jemmy, and she shows an appealing wit. Barry is zestful as he leaves his loyal mother behind him.

The picaro's role-playing ability can show either his wit or his shallowness. Dorindo plays so many parts in his relationship with society and is so good at them that he becomes almost confused about his own identity. Roderick Random is ingenious in his role as a dandy, but is conscious that it is only a role and nothing more. Jonathan Wild becomes the moralist who preaches the virtues of honour to his gang simply so that he can control his gang. While Roderick Random sees hypocrisy in Lord Strutwell, Jonathan Wild is himself a hypocrite. He thinks that his adoption of the gentleman's manner is enough to satisfy Laetitia and does not see that he is a fraud when he takes this manner only to secure the satisfaction of his lust.

Moll's empirical view of life closely links with her honesty. She

has no patience with those who do not face the facts of existence. Jonathan Wild's empiricism blinds him from the possibility of goodness. Barry Lyndon's childish imagination equates love with the possession of a gold watch and reveals the emotional shallowness that the picaro's limited view might imply. He never really matures from this shallowness.

The picaro's empirical view helps him to become a manipulator. Jack Wilton can jest easily with the victualler because he knows well the profit motive which governs the man's life. This manipulation is seen as a splendid example of Jack's wit. Jonathan Wild, however, becomes almost Machiavellian in his manipulative ability. He connects it with the maxim that the "great man" must keep his heart the "seat of hatred" and his countenance, the expression of affection.

The "prankster" aspect of the picaro varies from one picaro to another. Roderick Random assents to the brutal practical joke against Wagtail, the doctor, but later is sorry for his indifference. Barry Lyndon, in contrast, originates similarly brutal practical jokes against Lavender, his son's tutor.

Moll's thefts are sometimes accompanied by humour as in her theft of a horse or by an indication of finer sentiment as in her refusal to kill the child from whom she steals a necklace. Jonathan Wild is ever ruthless in his position as head of his band of thieves. His thievery is a far more deeply rooted function of his nature as evidenced in his theft of the parson's bottle screw on his way to his execution. Barry Lyndon's egotism is reduced of its fraudulent genteel manner when he becomes the common thief in prison.

The picaresque bond can only have a chance to develop in picaros like Moll and Roderick who are more open to affection than are Jonathan or Barry. Moll finds kinship with Jemmy because she knows that he will support her in her struggle with society. Barry and Jonathan stand alone in their embodiment of wrong social principles.

All of the picaros studied, except for Piers, exhibit the picaresque spirit -- an unwillingness to give into despair and an energy to persevere. However, while in Moll and Roderick this picaresque spirit is a result of their urge to progress, in Jonathan Wild this spirit becomes only a mechanism as seen in his scramble into his boat after he has thrown himself into the water in a histrionic act.

The distinction among picaros does not necessarily mean that a picaro is only a convention and not an indentifiable character. The picaro can be most easily recognized for his limitations. He has a limited view of experience by which he usually sees only the external nature of reality. He sees no meaning in abstract "essences", but only sees "things". Moll Flanders learns to love, but she realizes the meaning of love only as she herself experiences it. She does not recognize any validity in emotion itself. The picaro's empiricism is reflected in one of Graham Greene's short stories, "The Destructors." In this story a young boy, Trevor, who becomes known as T., leads a group of his friends to participate in a brutal prank to destroy a man's house. In conversation with another boy, Blackie, Trevor discusses his motivation:

> "You hate him a lot?" Blackie asked.
>
> "Of course I don't hate him," T. said. "There'd be no fun if

> I hated him." The last burning note illuminated his brooding face. "All this hate and love," he said, "it's soft, it's hooey. There's only things, Blackie. . . ."[2]

That this limited view of the picaro does not necessarily condemn him is seen in Moll Flanders' honesty which is derived from her empiricism. Smollett uses the picaro's limited view to condemn the physical sordidness of eighteenth century society. Roderick usually sees only the outward manner of the characters that he meets, but this manner is enough to condemn them. This limited view also strengthens the picaro's vitality, for his wit can move faster if it is not burdened by intellectual analysis of his observations. The strength of this limited view is especially seen in Jack Wilton's art which rapidly passes from one observation to another. The picaro's limited view also makes him a fine improviser whose knowledge of manners enables him to adopt many roles.

One "essence," a desire to escape the struggle with society, does exist for some picaros. Picaros such as Dorindo and Moll are content with such an escape. Roderick finally satisfies an Edenic wish when he enters the harmonious life of a country estate. However, while the picaro contends with society, he accepts its values. Don Pablos indicates the limitation of this position when he says at the end of his tale that "they never improve their condition who only change places without mending their life and manners."[3] The picaro's life is open to the "winds of change" in society, and he must gird himself to take advantage of these winds. His life is fascinating because he responds with spirit and energy to them.

NOTES

1 A.A. Parker, "The Psychology of the 'Picaro' in El Buscon, The Modern Language Review, XLII (January, 1947), 69.

2 Graham Greene, "The Destructors," Twenty-One Stories (London: William Heinemann, 1947), p. 230.

3 Francisco Gomez de Quevedo y Villegas, "A version of the Life of the Great Rascal" (Charles Duff, editor, The Choice Humorous and Satirical Works, London: George Routledge and Sons, [n.d.]), p. 137.

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