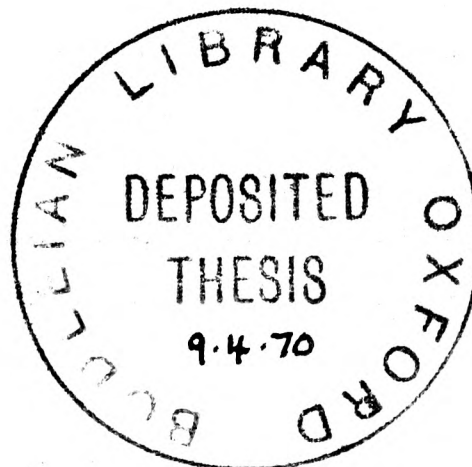


LITERARY REVIEWING IN FIVE BRITISH PERIODICALS:

1800-1808

J.H. Alexander
St Edmund Hall

1968 [2 1980] 11



PREFACE

A most curious article might be written on the secret history of reviews, both existing and extinct: almost all the requisite knowledge is at this day perhaps in the possession of ten or twelve individuals, with whom however the greater part will probably perish.

So wrote in 1813 one D. Parker, barrister-at-law.¹ Most of the knowledge has doubtless perished, but modern scholarship will hardly be satisfied with a mere article to deal even with what remains. The present study is a small contribution towards the writing of the secret history of one of the most fascinating and important of reviewing periods, when a new literature was compelling new critical attitudes, tools, and techniques.

The period chosen allows for a close consideration of literary reviewing in four prominent established Reviews during the first three years of the century before the arrival of the Edinburgh Review in October 1802, and for a comparison of their achievement with that of the Scottish Review until just before the advent of the Quarterly in 1809. The four established Reviews which I have chosen are the two acknowledged leaders in the eighteenth century, the Critical Review and the Monthly Review, and to balance these essentially liberal compilations the conservative Anti-Jacobin Review (to be

¹ Pantologia A New Cyclopaedia ed. J.M. Good, O. Gregory, and N. Bosworth, (12 vols, London, 1813). Vol. iii: s.v. 'Criticism'.

distinguished from the earlier and largely unconnected Anti-Jacobin) and the ecclesiastically controlled British Critic. The first part of the thesis sketches in the eighteenth-century background; the second and third parts estimate the achievement of the four Reviews; the fourth introduces the Edinburgh and compares its work with that of its older rivals; and the fifth offers a brief concluding estimation.

There are already two detailed studies bearing upon this investigation, both unpublished. A sound general survey of a wider period throughout the whole range of periodicals exists in W.S. Ward's Duke University thesis The Criticism of Poetry in British Periodicals 1798-1820 (1943) which is available on University of Kentucky microcards, and a more detailed study of selected reviews of major literature is to be found in Derek Roper's Oxford B. Litt. thesis The Reviewing of English Literature, c. 1789-1802 (1959). My debt to both these works will be apparent. The justification for this study lies in its being at once more detailed than Ward and more complete than Roper in its coverage of the Reviews selected. In addition, it pays particular attention to the individual reviewers and to their relationship with their editors. Its main concern is thus practical rather than theoretical, but literary theory is not neglected since Ward's failure to differentiate adequately between the various years of his wide period leaves room for a more detailed study such as that of the period 1800-1802 offered in my third part.

CONTENTSPART ONE: REVIEWING BEFORE 1790: THE GENERALBACKGROUND 1PART TWO: FOUR REVIEWS 1790-1802: THE IMMEDIATEBACKGROUND

Chapter 1. Facts and Policies	38
Chapter 2. The Reviews Compared	52
Chapter 3. Editors and Reviewers	72

PART THREE: REVIEWING PRACTICE IN THE FOUR REVIEWS:1800-2

Chapter 1. The General Critical Standpoint: the	
<u>Via Media</u>	81
Chapter 2. Attitudes to Groups and Individuals	171
Chapter 3. Individual Contributors and their reviews .	199

PART FOUR: THE EDINBURGH AND ITS RIVALS: 1803-8

Chapter 1: The <u>Edinburgh Review</u>	238
Chapter 2. The Four Reviews: 1803-8	323
Chapter 3. Reviews of Sixteen Major Works: 1803-8	342

PART FIVE: CONCLUDING EVALUATION 438

Bibliography	442
--------------------	-----

Abbreviations and Conventions

AJR Anti-Jacobin Review

BC British Critic

CR Critical Review

ER Edinburgh Review

MMir Monthly Mirror

MR Monthly Review

n.s. new series

(2) (3) second/ third series

D Drama

N Novel

P Prose

V Verse

The months are abbreviated thus: J, F, Mr, Ap, My, Je,
Jl, Ag, S, O, N, D.

review signifies an article

Review signifies a periodical

Titles of works reviewed are standardised where possible
by reference to the printed catalogue of the British
Museum.

PART ONE: REVIEWING BEFORE 1790: THE GENERAL BACKGROUND

The first number of the Edinburgh Review, for October 1802, contained a review by Francis Jeffrey of Southey's poem Thalaba.¹ Another review by Jeffrey of the same poem appeared in the Monthly Review for the following month. The two reviews -- written by the same man of the same poem at approximately the same time -- represent two very different styles of reviewing. The Monthly article is competent but a little dull. It consists largely of a summary of the poem with quotations, mostly of beauties, and a few brief critical comments. General criticism is limited to an initial paragraph (developing the opening statements: 'It is not easy either to class or to appreciate this singular performance. It has many faults and many striking beauties.') and four summarising paragraphs at the end. The most immediately striking difference in the Edinburgh article is its length: it runs to nearly 21 pages, more than double the length of the Monthly article. Most of the extra space is taken up with a long introductory section attacking this new school of poetry, the 'Lake school' as Jeffrey eventually denominated it. At the outset of Jeffrey's major reviewing Southey is thus treated not in isolation but as part of a general critical campaign:²

¹ Pp. 63-83

² Jeffrey did not, however, at first regard the Edinburgh as likely to prove popular or long-lived.

indeed the author of Thalaba is confessedly less reprehensible than 'most of his fraternity' (p.68). Yet the poem is not forgotten. True, the summary is aggressively mocking, whereas that in the Monthly had contained only a few sarcastic touches, but the beauties are given as much emphasis as in the Monthly article. Jeffrey's opinion of the work is unchanged, but his liveliness of language in the Edinburgh and his massive introduction result in the reader's taking away a less favourable impression of Thalaba. The review in the Edinburgh is a much more readable article: the construction is improved, mere summary being relegated to a single cavalier paragraph. Criticism is the richer for the rewriting, but Southey is undoubtedly the poorer.

The Monthly Review and its old-established rival the Critical Review embody the most solid achievement of eighteenth-century reviewing. The Edinburgh on the other hand is the first of the great nineteenth-century Reviews. The two articles by Jeffrey illustrate an immediately striking difference between the types. They also show that the basic elements of all reviewing -- abstracting, quotation, close and general critical comment -- appear in both with different emphases. It is the main purpose of the present study to examine the nature of the eighteenth-century critical achievement in the Reviews, especially as it survived at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and to compare it with the approach of the Edinburgh Review and assess the immediate impact of the

Edinburgh before the appearance of its Tory rival the Quarterly Review in 1809. This introductory chapter is intended to explore the nature of eighteenth-century reviewing and its place in the critical scene. Firstly it attempts to define the distinctive nature of the review article as opposed to other eighteenth-century critical genres; then after introducing the two main Reviews it will be possible to consider four main elements which go to make up the different forms of the review article at its best.

1

In the post-Restoration period and the eighteenth century criticism became for the first time a widely practised activity in England. One cause of this Augustan temper is suggested, rather unfairly, by Goldsmith:¹

...it is ten to one, that every man of learning without genius becomes a critic, therefore critics must be proportionably more numerous when learning is diffus'd through all the degrees of mankind.

IF critics, therefore, or all such as judge by rule, and not by feelings, must necessarily become more numerous in the maturity of learning, than in its beginning; and if they have been always found by experience to injure it; I may be permitted to call criticism, the natural decay of politeness.

The most formidable medium for critical discourse was the dissertation, and extension of the seventeenth-century preface or controversial pamphlet. The ideas

¹ An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe (1759) in Collected Works of Oliver Goldsmith ed. Arthur Friedman, (5 vols, Oxford, 1966), i.287-8.

debated in these often learned volumes were popularised in brief magazine articles on topics such as 'genius' or 'taste', and supremely in the literary numbers of The Spectator. When Addison turned to give an account of Pope's Essay on Criticism in No. 253 he produced an article which constitutes in effect a good review.¹ He places the work in its critical perspective, notes individual striking passages, and defines its level of merit by comparison with similar works by Wentworth Dillon, Earl of Roscommon, and John Sheffield, Duke of Buckinghamshire.

There are two main reasons for the development of the literary periodical and its prominent reviewing tradition during the eighteenth century. In the first place there was the rise of the literate middle class, with its demand for instant culture at the lowest estimation, and for thoughtful introductions to approved literature at the highest; allied with this, there was the disappearance of the noble patron and the need for some way to channel the resources of the nouveaux riches into the pockets of needy authors. These demands were in part fulfilled by the literary Review. Not all of the reviewers were desperately in need of ready cash, but many of them were, and few contributors regarded the payments as being

¹ Thursday December 20th, 1711 in The Spectator ed. Douglas F. Bush, (5 vols, Oxford, 1965), ii.481-6.

of secondary importance. The second main factor in the rise of the periodical would appear to have been that general Augustan temper noted by Goldsmith which demanded that literature should be put in order, reduced under the domain of reason and science in the manner most eloquently advocated by Johnson.

The review article takes its place among the media for the popular propagation of critical theory. It is distinguished from the dissertation and from most articles and essays by its being concerned with one recent publication. Yet it partakes of some of the characteristics of the other critical genres. At its best it incorporates something of the dissertation or critical article as it sets characteristic features of the work under discussion in their critical perspective, while its main debt to the single-essay periodical is that suggested by Walter Graham:¹

It cannot be denied that before the eighteenth century, periodical literature was produced by inferior pens; nor is it less apparent that from the beginning of this century onward the periodical was the nursery of literary genius. Defoe, Addison, Steele and Swift, on the one hand, elevated the hitherto crude essays in the public journals to a point where they were recognised as writing of permanent value and significance; on the other hand, these writers revealed to the

¹ English Literary Periodicals, (New York, 1930), p. 13.

world of letters the importance of the public journals as vehicles of literary enterprise. Since the reign of Queen Anne, English authors have found it advantageous to associate themselves with periodicals.

The literary essay made possible the socially significant and acceptable status acquired by the miscellanies and the Reviews in the second half of the century; it also contributed to the stress which later periodicals laid on pleasing the reader while presenting useful information.

Review articles were found both in miscellaneous magazines, such as the long-lived and popular Gentleman's Magazine founded in 1731, and in the Review proper devoted wholly to reviewing. On the whole, the magazines can be ignored in a survey such as this. The review articles there are generally few and tend to be very brief.¹ The real centre of eighteenth-century reviewing is to be found in the Reviews proper and primarily in the only two to survive for more than a few years, the Monthly Review and the Critical Review.

These publications have been seriously neglected by scholars. The view of them expressed in 1899 by Lewis

¹ Walter Graham finds the newspaper criticism of that time entirely derivative from serials of literature and entertainment: The Beginnings of English Literary Periodicals, (New York, 1926), p. 59.

E. Gates in his otherwise excellent article on Francis Jeffrey in Three Studies in Literature (New York) has survived almost to the present day:¹

They were merely booksellers' organs, under the strict supervision of booksellers, and often edited by booksellers. ... They were written for the most part by drudges and penny-a-liners, who worked under the orders of the bookseller like slaves under the lash of the slave-driver. ...

As a result, review-writing became purely hack-work. The reviewer had no voice of his own in his criticism; what little individuality he might, in his feebleness, have put into his work, had he been left to himself, disappeared under the eye of his taskmaster. He became a mere machine, praising and blaming perfunctorily and conventionally, at the bidding of the editor-publisher. Mawkish adulation or random abuse became the staple of critical articles; and in neither kind of work did the critic rise above the dead level of hopeless mediocrity.

Only recently have B.C. Nangle and Derek Roper disputed this view.² This preliminary survey of the eighteenth-

¹ Pp. 46-7, 50-1. Cf. John Wain ed., Contemporary Reviews of Romantic Poetry, (London, 1953), pp. 13-4.

² B.C. Nangle, The Monthly Review: First Series, 1749-1789, (Oxford, 1934), and The Monthly Review: Second Series, 1790-1815, (Oxford, 1955). Derek Roper, 'The Reviewing of English Literature, c. 1789-1802', (January, 1959): Bodleian MS. B. Litt. d 720.

century scene is therefore inevitably tentative and is based on selective reading of articles by major critics, reviews of important works, and specimen numbers.

2

The Monthly Review began its long career with the number for May 1749.¹ The idea of the Review may have originated with the club centred on Edward Cave, editor of the Gentleman's Magazine,² but its founder and leading spirit throughout the century was the pugnacious dissenter Ralph Griffiths.³ His control over the Review was unique in its strictness until the development of the Edinburgh Review in the early years of the following century.⁴

At first the monthly numbers contained 80 or 96 pages, but this was increased in September 1756 to 112, probably as a response to the advent of the rival Critical.⁵

¹ It was the custom for numbers to appear on the first weekday of the following month.

² C.L. Carlson, 'Edward Cave's Club, and its Project for a Literary Review' PQ 17 (1938). 115-20.

³ Lewis M. Knapp, 'Ralph Griffiths, Author and Publisher, 1746-1750' Library (4) 20 (1939). 197-213.

⁴ Claude E. Jones, Smollett Studies, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1952), p. 80.

⁵ R.D. Spector, 'The Monthly and its Rival' BNYPL 64 (1960). 159-61.

One of the innovations of the Monthly which was widely copied was the monthly catalogue of books treated more briefly than those selected for major reviews: the catalogue was introduced in the July number with very brief characterisations such as this:¹

14. A familiar epistle to the celebrated Mrs. Con. Phillips, on her apology; by a gentleman of the Inner Temple, octavo, 22 pages; price 6d. What view the author of this pamphlet had in writing it, we cannot discover; the little that he has obliged the publick with in it, consisting only of a few weak and rambling remarks on what he takes to be Mrs. Phillip's motives for publishing her numbers, and on the folly and wickedness of a life of licentious pleasures; with some low and loose puns and witticisms.

The quality of the criticism and the ratio of criticism to abstract depended entirely on the individual reviewer, apart from Griffiths' choice of staff and a few small alterations and additions that he made to the scripts submitted. At first there were only four contributors including the editor, but the staff grew rapidly in size and fame. Griffiths was willing to pay well for difficult work requiring much thought and research or special qualifications.² Among the most accomplished

¹ p. 240.

² Roger Lonsdale, 'Dr. Burney and the Monthly Review' RES n.s. 14 (1963). 348.

reviewers during the first series of the Monthly, that is until 1790, were Goldsmith, Smollett, and Cleland.

The Critical Review first appeared with the number for January 1756. It was a close copy of the Monthly with additional coverage of foreign items. Smollett saw it at first as part of a scheme for an academy of belles lettres.¹ Impartiality was claimed, though the Review soon came to be regarded as a Tory vehicle. The Preface to the first volume also stresses that the reviewers lay no claim to critical infallibility: 'They have delivered their sentiments as opinions only, and these they have supported with reasons on which every reader may exercise his own understanding.' Also:

As variety is the soul of such entertainment, and the confined nature of the plan would not admit of minute investigation; they have endeavoured to discover and disclose that criterion by which the character of a work may at once be distinguished, without dragging the reader through a tedious, cold, inanimated disquisition, which may be termed a languid paraphrase rather than a spirited criticism.

These last two points suggest what was to be one of the main characteristics of the new Review. It saw itself and was seen as a counterblast to the alleged dullness of the Monthly. It was in intention such an enfant terrible

¹ The Letters of Tobias Smollett, M.D. ed. Edward S. Noyes, (Cambridge Mass., 1926), p. 39: 3 Ag 1756, to Dr John Moore.

as the Edinburgh Review was in fact to be fifty years later. The Monthly was 'patched up by obscure Hackney Writers, accidentally enlisted in the Service of an undistinguishing Bookseller,' whereas the Critical was to be 'executed by a Set of Gentlemen whose Characters and Capacities have been universally approved and acknowledged by the Public ...'.¹ To those who were uncharmed by the breezy style, such as Thomas Birch, the Review was full of 'Ignorance, Absurdity, Impudence, partiality and malignity',² and Pantologia comments: 'It was conducted by <Smollett> himself, with some ability, but with violent ill-temper, extreme insolence, and sometimes with glaring partiality, till he went abroad in 1763.'³ Matters were not helped by the reputation which the Critical had acquired as a 'Scotch Tribunal' a decade after the forty-five.⁴ In any event it was nothing if not provocative: the list of reactions in print given by Jones in his Smollett Studies extends to 78 items in the period 1756-71.⁵

¹ Advertisement in the Public Advertiser for 30 December 1775, quoted in L.M. Knapp, Tobias Smollett Doctor of Men and Manners, (Princeton, 1949), p. 171.

² L.M. Knapp, 'Comments on Smollett by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Birch' N & Q 210 (1956). 220.

³ Vol. 3: s.v. 'Criticism'.

⁴ The Letters of Tobias Smollett, p. 51: 2 January 1758, to Moore.

⁵ Pp. 107-10.

The Critical began its life with 'four gentlemen of approved abilities' ¹ besides the editor. The quartet have been identified by Derek Roper from marked copies of the first two volumes in the library of the University of Oregon. ² They were: Thomas Francklin, Professor of Greek at Cambridge; Smauel Derrick, an Irish hack and later 'King' at Bath; John Armstrong, poet and physician; and Patrick Murdoch, clergyman and tutor, the biographer of James Thomson. Over these and later contributors Smollett exercised a much looser control than did Griffiths over the staff of the Monthly. Thus during his editorship he writes to Richardson on 10 August 1756: ³

I was extremely concerned to find myself suspected of a Silly, mean Insinuation against Mr. Richardson's Writings, which appeared some time ago in the Critical Review: and I desired my friend Mr. Millar to assure you in my name that it was inserted without my privity or Concurrence.

This looseness in control, which continued after Smollett's resignation of the editorial chair, is held responsible

¹ Letters, p. 39.

² 'Smollett's 'Four Gentlemen': The First Contributors to the Critical Review' RES n.s. 10 (1959). 38-44.

³ Letters, p. 40; cf. p. 51.

by Pantologia for a wavering in standards which makes the Critical less impressive than the Monthly with 'the grossest violations of consistency.'¹

3

Four main elements may be isolated as accounting for the distinctive nature of the articles in these two Reviews: abstract, criticism, prose style, and individual reviewing talent. These four features are essential for evaluating literary reviewing throughout the whole period, and in the case of the first two elements an understanding of the evolution of the review article is especially important.

The review article began as an abstract, and the element of abstract remained of central importance throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth. Walter Graham dryly notes in a footnote on page 4 of his study The Beginnings of English Literary Periodicals:

Of course the idea of abstracting books was not original with Denis de Sallo. Photius of Greece, cir. 890 A.D., wrote in his Myriobiblion summaries of the works he read.

Passons au déluge! Graham cites the book notices of the mid seventeenth century as the most remote direct ancestors of the modern review article, but he accepts the traditional

¹ Loc. cit.

view that the most significant of the headwaters was the French abstract serial. In Pantologia the first of the Reviews is listed as the Journal des Scavans begun in 1665, and the first English imitation as Weekly Memorials for the Ingenious of 1683. These conclusions have since been generally accepted. The Preface to Weekly Memorials indicates the earnest tone of the work:

I Cannot doubt but this Weekly Paper will find a candid and cheerful acceptance amongst all Ingenious persons; the design of it being to present them with a short view of the worthy Labours daily set forth by the Learned. The bare Titles of Books yearly Printed in our Common Catalogues, are somewhat dry things, scarce able to raise in men that gust and appetite to Learning, which we may hope these brief Accounts will give them. I shall not confine my self in my Undertaking onely to Authors of our own Nation, but shall likewise give Accounts of most Books transmitted to us from all other parts; and shall transcribe from the Paris Journal des Scavans all that I conceive will be lookt upon here as most valuable, as well in reference to Accounts of Books, as to other curious Novelties therein contained ...

In the event, the Weekly Memorials provide pure accounts of the matter of their chosen publications, and there is no criticism. The Preface to a similar publication, The Universal Historical Bibliothek of 1687, suggests why this should be so:

It were to be wished, there could have been added an impartial Censure of every Book, and that the Faults of them might have been as freely exposed as their Beauties and Excellencies; but this is thought too great a Province for any one man to be trusted with, and will certainly require more Time than a Month, and more Impartiality ~~to~~ than is to be expected in the divided State of Christendom at this day.

As a result of this caution the nearest that the Bibliothèque comes to criticism is in a remark such as this:¹

If this Collection were not designed for the General use of English men, the Works of Rapin might have been named, and so left without any other recommendation of them, they having already had the general Applause of those that have read them ...

The abstract became the basis of most later reviewing. Thus the full title of the Monthly Review connects it with the earlier publications noted: The Monthly Review. A PERIODICAL WORK, GIVING An Account, with proper Abstracts of, and Extracts from, the New BOOKS, PAMPHLETS, &c. as they come out. The Advertisement expands:

When the abuse of title-pages is obviously come to such a pass, that few readers care to take in a book, any more than a servant, without a recommendation; to acquaint the public that a summary review of the productions of the press, as they occur to notice, was perhaps never more necessary than now, would be superfluous and vain.

The cure then for this general complaint is evidently, and only, to be found in a periodical work, whose sole object should be to give a compendious account of those productions of the press, as they come out, that are worth notice; an account, in short, which should, in virtue of its candour, and justness of distinction, obtain authority enough for its representations to be serviceable to such as would choose to have some idea of a book before they lay out their money or time on it.

In its early stages the Monthly carried on directly where La Roche had left off. This is seen most clearly in a

¹ P. 11.

notice by the editor himself of Aaron Hill's epic poem Gideon in the first number:¹

But herein we shall not, in the language of critics, pretend to describe, in terms of the art, the beauties or imperfections ... of the production before us. No, but we shall take, what we believe our readers will think a much more agreeable and useful method; we shall extract from the work itself a few of such passages as we shall judge proper to give a tolerably adequate idea of the whole.

Usually the pure abstract would be enlivened by quotations of beauties deserving notice. One of the main appeals of the Reviews was that they could provide instant knowledge without the necessity of tedious reading in the original works. This was acknowledged in 1807 by John Ring, with special reference to the Edinburgh Review:²

They fondly hope to find in these periodical publications, a succinct account of their contents and merits; and a selection of the most interesting passages which they contain; and thus to avoid the necessity of purchasing the works themselves.

Ring was, however, merely repeating a point made over a century earlier in the Preface to volume i (1699) of The History of the Works of the Learned; or, An Impartial Account of Books lately Printed in All Parts of Europe:

The Usefulness of a Work of this Nature, is so obvious, that it's needless to insist upon it,

¹ Pp. 66-7.

² John Ring, The Beauties of the Edinburgh Review, alias the Stinkpot of Literature, (London, 1807), p. 24.

any further than to acquaint those who are less conversant with Books, that hereby they may inform themselves of the state of Learning in the world, and be enabled to maintain Conversation with the Learned upon any subject, at a small Expence of Money and Time.

It would be wrong to object to the abstracting element in eighteenth-century reviewing -- a reviewer should always give a clear account of the argument of a book -- but the abstract by itself, though rare, is unsatisfactory as a review article. Both the Monthly and the Critical merely abstract works of such merit as Gerard's Essay on Taste and Young's Conjectures on Original Composition.¹

That abstracting was often regarded as the most important part of a reviewer's activity towards the end of the century is confirmed by the title of the Analytical Review (1788-99). The rare Preface to the first volume of 1788 in which the motive behind the title (meaning 'abstracting') is made clear is quoted by Roper:²

The true design of a Literary Journal is, in our opinion, to give such an account of new publications, as may enable the reader to judge of them for himself. Whether the writers ought to add to this their own judgement, is with us a doubtful point. If their account be sufficiently full and

¹ MR 20 (Je 59). 533-45, 501-7; CR 7 (My 59). 440-7, (Je 59). 483-5.

² The Reviewing of English Literature, p. 37.

impartial, it seems to supersede the necessity of any addition of their own.¹

The abstract tradition, then, yields the first main review form -- the abstract, usually with quotations, and varying from brief notice to full analysis. For the review article to develop the remaining three elements -- criticism, a good style, and individual talent -- were essential.

The abstract had been developed to deal with works of scholarship, and it was only slowly that imaginative literature came to be deemed worthy of treatment in periodicals. To some extent, this attitude persisted into the early nineteenth century, but occasional hints of a serious critical treatment of literature may be seen at the end of the seventeenth. The Gentleman's Journal ran from 1692 to 1694 and was conducted by Motteux, one of the three Huguenots (the others being La Crose and La Roche) who brought periodicals to England and developed them there. Criticism is not prominent in the magazine, but the reviews of Dryden's Cleomenes in February and May 1692 are remarkable for the rigour of their approach. The May number combines a dissertation ('A Discourse of Dramatic Poetry') with 'Some Observations on Mr. Dryden's Cleomenes'

¹ The Analytical however must be regarded as a minor episode in the history of literary reviewing. Its analytical and selective plan, its code signatures, and a few excellent reviews by Fuseli, Cowper, and Mary Wollstonecraft constitute its claim to interest.

to produce in effect an article resembling in construction Jeffrey's review of Thalaba in the Edinburgh. Two extracts will suggest the quality of the criticism:¹

Among those of later time, none seems to have copied Nature with a finer Pencil than Mr. Dryden, whose Judgment seems to have been perfected by Age, which hath cut off that luxuriency of Style and Invention of unriper years, without abatement of his Wit and Vigor.

I thought to have gone further, but find my self stinted for want of room; besides, to particularize the Beauties of this Play would be vain, as it would be endless. Its height and boldness of thought, its spirit, force and pomp of Expression, its manly and masterly Passions, and those numberless Graces, which being diffus'd throughout it, make up one perfect Beauty, are easily comprehended by Men of Wit, and no words of mine can render them discernable to those who want it. A Man must be something inspir'd, who is capable of contemplating supreme and immaterial Beauties.

As a result of enthusiastic and competent criticism such as this the literary review became accepted as an occasional element in periodical publications. At its inception the Monthly Review was partly an abstracting journal, but critical articles appear from the first, those by Cleland on Smollett's The Regicide² and Peregrine Pickle³ being especially noteworthy. The main innovation

¹ Pp. 19, 21.

² MR 1 (My 49). 72-9.

³ MR 4 (Mr 51). 355-64.

of the Monthly Review was its consistency: reviews of literature appeared regularly in every number and usually contained some critical elements.

The second characteristic review form, then, is the critical account, usually with a long abstract attached. The amount of criticism appears to have been dependent on the individual reviewer.

Between the dry style of La Crose and Addison's polished ease there is a great gulf: La Crose wrote solely to inform, Addison to attract and please so as to be able to instruct the greatest possible number of a new class of reader. The new elegance may be seen developing, with a characteristic quotation, in the February review of Cleomenes in The Gentleman's Journal:¹

This Hero, and the last Scene of his Life, has our best Tragic Poet chose for his fruitful Subject; fruitful indeed may that be called, whereof every single action (without more than circumstantial graces) not only affords matter for the sublimest Poem, but bears almost force enough to create a Poet, as Mr. Waller in his fine way tells us,
Illustrious acts high raptures do infuse,
And every Conqueror creates a Muse.

It is worth recalling that Dunton wished this early populariser of learning and precursor of Addison and Steele to 'lye for common chat and entertainment in every coffee-house board'.²

¹ P. 27.

² Graham, The Beginnings, p. 21.

The Monthly Review and the Critical could be as dry as La Crose or attain something of the elegance of Addison under their own stylists. They could also draw on something of the tartness of the seventeenth-century polemical tract as strained through the politer periodicals at the turn of that century. A significant review of Langbain's An Account of the Dramatick Poets in the short-lived periodical The Moderator of 1692 had run in part thus:¹

There is nothing for example so Courtly writ; or which expresses so much the conversation of a Gentleman, as Sir John Suckling; nothing so even, sweet and flowing, as Mr. Waller; nothing so majestick, so correct, as Sir John Denham; nothing so elevated, so copious and full of spirit as Mr. Cowley, &c. They have each their proper graces; and which makes every one appear that individual Poet He is. But now how has this forc'd-critic in His homespun characters (which He seems to have wrote like blank Tickets, and to have adapted the names of Authors to 'em, as they came first to hand) murdered the memory of these great Men: Sir John Suckling, He tells us, was a Gentleman whose admirable parts made Him sufficiently famous in the reign of King Charles the First: That he was born at Witham, in the County of Middlesex, in the year 1631, and which was extraordinary (according to His mother's reckoning) in the beginning of the eleventh month. A most admirable account!

When elegance and tartness combined in the following century the result was banter, a method especially useful

¹ No. 1: 23 June 1692.

for brief notices and dismissals in the monthly catalogue. Thus from the first number of the Monthly Review:¹

X. A poetical epistle to Miss Ch---y, (MS. note: 'By R. Shiels.') on her appearing in the character of Iphigenia at the Venetian ball. ... This is one of those productions of which it is impossible to say anything more explicit than in the words of Mr. Pope, viz. that the author

Has wrote about it, Goddess! and about it!
Or, in the words of the author himself:

'I mean no satire and I mean no praise!

As the extracts were chosen to divert the reader, so the varied style of the two Reviews, a legacy of the previous hundred years, helps to account for their popularity. A third type of review article thus emerges -- the witty brief notice for the catalogue. Further, the lively or polished style and treatment are especially important in the development of the abstract-critical article, making it readable as well as critically interesting.

For major reviewing one thing more was needed: a writer of major proportions, or at any rate one talented in the art of reviewing and with a broad critical outlook. By the middle of the eighteenth century the review article had developed into a vehicle which major writers could profitably employ and the Monthly and Critical Reviews owe much of their early distinction to the articles which Smollett and Goldsmith wrote for each of them in turn. A comparison of the two reviewers is instructive: Smollett

¹ P. 319.

is an interesting occasional critic, but Goldsmith's constant attention to basic critical principles makes him far more impressive.

Smollett contributed only one literary review during his brief career as a Monthly contributor, a succinct treatment of Cleland's novel Memoirs of a Coxcomb. The article is interesting chiefly for his remarks on style and for his own use of English. Thus he writes of the author:¹

... certain French idioms have crept into the language; a trespass for which the author is the less excusable, because he seems to be master of the English tongue, which is as well adapted as any other, for all the purposes of writing; nor is the performance free from stiff, compounded epithets, quaint terms of expression, that debase the stile, and new words affectedly coined.

Smollett's own distinctively lively use of language appears at the beginning of the review:²

He must either have depended upon that itch of curiosity, that thirst after novelty which can never be satisfied; or considered it as a matter of conscience to contribute his efforts towards the vindication of taste, howsoever fruitless they might be; else he would have desisted from such an undertaking, in despair of being read, and reposed in the shade of obscurity, rather than run the risque of being seen and confounded with those who are condemned by the lump, to the gulph of oblivion.

¹ MR 5 (O 51). 387.

² P. 385.

In his own Review this style makes the driest dismissal readable and gives a definitive air to his few general pronouncements. His most important article is the review of Joseph Warton's An Essay on the writings and Genius of Pope in the first volume. Here his main concern is to praise the maintaining of true criticism against frenetic emotionalism, and to associate his Review with the high critical standards found in Warton, in what amounts almost to a second statement of policy:¹

The man of taste must expend his labours in reforming the judgment and enlightening the understanding of these pretenders, and other novices of sensibility, before they are qualified to maintain the character they assume. This charitable task of improvement, the learned, who enjoy their ease, ought to undertake for the benefit of mankind. This is the professed aim of us, who publish our monthly lucubrations in the Critical Review; and we cannot help looking upon the author of the Essay now before us, as one of our coadjutors in the laudable scheme we have projected. ... It breathes the spirit of true criticism, unbiassed by sordid prejudice or partiality. -- It abounds in judicious remarks, delivered with an air of candor and liberality.

Smollett's only adverse criticism is that Warton has been too petty in some of his cavillings at Pope. A similar vigour and robustness is evident in Smollett's assertion later in the first volume that the notion of a literature in decay since the death of Pope is nonsense:²

¹ CR 1 (Ap 56). 227.

² CR 1 (Ap 56). 276.

Nothing is more unjust, than the common observation that genius no longer blooms in this degenerate age; that science expired with Newton, and poetry perished with Pope. Nature is as vigorous as ever, and will be always uniform in her productions; but, the fairest flower will blow unregarded among people who have no faculties of feeling, and no ideas of beauty.

That this assertion leads to a eulogy of Mrs Brooke's tragedy Virginia is unfortunate and points to one of the main defects of much reviewing of the period, in which the dead weight of minor works of little merit tended to dull the critical faculties. Smollett's main failing is that, apart from inspiring statements such as those quoted, there is little sense of unity or basic principles in his criticism. He makes some good isolated points, but one misses the coherence of Johnson's occasional criticism, or that found in the work of Jeffrey or even of John Ferriar later in the Monthly Review.

For an early example of such coherence we have to turn to Goldsmith who wrote literary reviews (with increasing reluctance) for Griffiths' 1757 volumes (16 and 17) after his European tour when he was more than usually penurious. After his quarrel with Griffiths he contributed to the 1759 and 1760 volumes of the Critical.¹

Goldsmith's articles in the two Reviews vary in standard, but at their best they are exceptionally

¹ For identification of the articles in the Critical see Arthur Friedman, 'Goldsmith's Contributions to the Critical Review' MP 44 (1946). 23-52.

interesting. He shows a concern for the establishment of critical standards which anticipated the work of reviewers such as Jeffrey and Ferriar in the following century:

'To direct our taste, and conduct the Poet up to perfection, has ever been the true Critic's province'.¹ The resulting criticism of Home's Douglas in the Monthly suggests that it was totally unworthy of the exaggerated panegyrics which it had been receiving, and Goldsmith stresses the need for breadth of vision in judging literary works of the moment:²

With respect to his present tragedy, we could, indeed, enter on a particular examen of the beauties or faults discoverable in the diction, sentiment, plot, or characters; but, in works of this nature, general observation often characterizes more strongly than a particular criticism could do; for it were an easy task to point out those passages in any indifferent Author, where he has excelled himself, and yet these comparative beauties, if we may be allowed the expression, may have no real merit at all.

In the Critical reviews of Langhorne's translation of Bion's The Death of Adonis³ and Ward's A System of Oratory⁴ Goldsmith again secures a wide critical perspective, this time by drawing on articles in the French Encyclopédie.⁵

¹ MR 16 (My 57). 427.

² Pp. 427-8.

³ CR 7 (Mr 59). 260-3.

⁴ CR 7 (Ap 59). 367-9.

⁵ R.S. Crane and Arthur Friedman, 'Goldsmith and the Encyclopédie' TLS 11 May 1933, p. 331.

In the Langhorne article approximately half the review is translated fairly closely from the French, though Goldsmith's style is much livelier, and it is interspersed with quotation from and occasional reference to the work under review. The result is interesting, if not entirely satisfactory. The argument is lacking in smoothness, but the lack of direct connection between theory and quotation means that the reader has to do some thinking for himself.

The review of Douglas shows Goldsmith occupying an intelligent position in the liberal ranks with regard to the observation of dramatic rules:¹

A mechanically exact adherence to all the rules of the Drama, is more the business of industry than of genius. Theatrical lawgivers rather teach the ignorant where to censure, than the Poet how to write. If sublimity, sentiment, and passion, give warmth, and life, and expression to the whole, we can the more easily dispense with the rules of the Stagyrte; but if languor, affectation, and the false sublime, are substituted for these, and observance of all the precepts of the antients, will prove but a poor compensation.

Goldsmith is here putting into practice his demand in An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe of two years later for a criticism whose 'rules should be taken from among the inhabitants, and adapted to the genius and temper of the country it attempts to

¹ MR 16 (My 57). 427.

refine.'¹ It is because he maintains that Gray's odes do not take account of English ignorance of the conventions governing the Pindaric ode that Goldsmith condemns them as insufficiently original, too pedantic.² In the Enquiry he sees most critics as discouraging originality in writers³ and he is determined not to appear among their number.

The most notable of Goldsmith's reviews, and one which displays his reviewing ability to full advantage, is that of Barrett's translation of Ovid's Epistles.⁴ Beginning with an analysis of the earlier translations, he finds them inadequate since the unscholarly Dryden, being either pedantic or debauched as schoolmasterly or feminine influence had prevailed. He thus puts the Barrett translation in perspective in a manner which conforms with his own demand for wide critical horizons. His castigation of Barrett's translation is often amusing as well as informative.⁵

The reader may have already observed one or two instances of our translator's skill, in parenthetically clapping one sentence within another. This contributes not a little to obscurity; and obscurity, we all know, is nearly allied to admiration. Thus, when the reader begins a sentence which he finds pregnant with another,

¹ Works, i. 295.

² MR 17 (S 57). 239.

³ Pp. 317-8.

⁴ CR 7 (Ja 59). 31-9.

⁵ P. 34.

which still teems with a third, and so on, he feels the same surprize which a countryman does at Bartholomew-fair. Hocus shews a bag, in appearance empty; flap, and out come a dozen new-laid eggs; flap again, and the number is doubled: but what is his amazement, when it swells with the hen that laid them!

This liveliness is Goldsmith's answer to his own change in the Enquiry:¹

The most diminutive son of fame, or of famine, has his we and his us, his firstlys and his secondlys as methodical, as if bound in cow-hide, and closed with clasps of brass. Were these Monthly Reviews and Magazines frothy, pert, or absurd, they might find some pardon; but to be dull and dronish, is an encroachment on the prerogative of a folio.

The review continues with a parody of Barrett's verse, and then stresses that the mediocre should curb their inclination to write: 'Let such as have not got a passport from nature be content with happiness, and leave the poet the unrivalled possession of his misery, his garret, and his fame.'² The relevance of this to Goldsmith's own circumstances at the time needs no stressing and lends passion to his bitterness. He continues thus:³

Criticism at present is different from what it was upon the revival of taste in Europe; all its rules are now well known; the only art at present is, to exhibit them in such lights, as contribute to keep the attention alive and excite a favourable audience.

¹ P. 319.

² Pp. 37-8.

³ P. 38.

This last point is at the root of Goldsmith's scepticism about criticism which seems to him to be incapable of further progress. Compare his wider pessimism in the Enquiry:¹

It is indeed a misfortune for a fine writer to be born in a period so enlightened as ours. The harvest of wit is gathered in, and little is left for him, except to glean what others have thought unworthy their bringing away.

It is ironic that one so sceptical about the value of criticism should have been so promising a periodical reviewer. His concern for critical standards and wide critical horizons, his recognition of the need for flexibility in the application of principles, his personal involvement, and his lively style make him the model reviewer. Further, he is a rare technical innovator with his parody, his thought-provoking use of quotations in the Langhorne review, and his relegation of his comments to footnotes during a summary of Burke's Philosophical Enquiry.² All this from the author of these tart comments in the Enquiry:³

IF there be any; however, among these writers, who being bred gentlemen and scholars, are obliged to have recourse to such an employment for subsistence, I wish them one more suited to their inclinations ...

<Of bookseller and writer> It is in the interest of the one to allow as little for writing, and of

¹ P. 300.

² MR 16 (My 57). 473-80.

³ Works i. 289, 316, 317.

the other to write as much as possible; accordingly, tedious compilations, and periodical magazines, are the result of their joint endeavours.

Write what you think, regardless of the critics.

... I have assumed the critic only to dissuade from criticism.

THERE is scarce an error of which our present writers are guilty, that does not arise from this source. From this proceeds the affected obscurity of our odes, the tuneless flow of our blank verse, the pompous epithet, laboured diction, and every other deviation from common sense, which produces the poet the applause of the connoisseur; he is praised by all, read by a few, and soon forgotten.

It might be thought that Goldsmith's anger was aroused chiefly by the dullness of his task, but even the briefest of his reviews show some mark of unusual attention. One can only conclude that he was too intelligent to remain a repetitive reviewer and not sufficiently familiar with the criticism of such German critics as Lessing to make the sort of breakthrough which was effected by Wordsworth and Coleridge. His articles nevertheless set a standard by which most subsequent eighteenth-century reviewing must be judged.¹

The main complaint which was levelled against the Monthly was that it was dull. This is the verdict not only of those associated with the Critical such as Percival

¹ See W. Vaughan Reynolds, 'Goldsmith's Critical Outlook' RES 14 (1938). 155-72.

Stockdale¹ and Johnson,² but also of the author of the anonymous The Battle of the Reviews <1760> in which the chief weapon of the Monthly in its epic encounter with its rival is dullness. It is true that many of the minor reviews are tedious when the witty style is not forthcoming: the reviews by the unidentified 'N', for example, make penitential reading and it has been noted how inadequately the abstracting technique deals with Gerard and Young, while Tristram Shandy is treated with heavy and inappropriate moralising by one of its reviewers.³ Nevertheless one continually comes across reviews other than those already dealt with which are interesting and readable, and usually just: Smollett and Goldsmith were not the only reviewers of merit in this first flowering of a Review which according to Pantologia was 'at various periods in the course of its continuance, the ablest work of the kind in Europe.'⁴

Cleland's reviewing in the early Monthly shows to best advantage in his articles on two works of Smollett. In the first number he has a very flattering review of the long-preserved tragedy The Regicide, the criticism

¹ The Memoirs of the Life, and Writings of Percival Stockdale, (2 vols, London, 1809), ii. 59.

² Boswell, Life of Johnson ed. G.B. Hill, rev. Powell, (6 vols, C.U.P., 1934-50), iii.32.

³ Ruffhead in MR 24 (Ja 61). 101-116.

⁴ Loc. cit.

being noteworthy for a concern for the preservation of standards in a wide critical setting which is akin to that of Goldsmith. The criticism, in the fourth volume, of Peregrine Pickle is pleasantly written with an effective use of imagery, and finely defends the comparatively naturalistic work of Smollett against the popular flood of unreal romances:¹

Serious and useful works are scarce~~d~~ read, and hardly any thing of morality goes down, unless ticketed with the label of amusement. Thence that flood of novels, tales, romances, and other monsters of the imagination, which have been either wretchedly translated, or even more unhappily imitated, from the French, whose literary levity we have not been ashamed to adopt, and encourage the propagation of so depraved a taste.

Another regular supplier of good material is the testy William Kenrick, later editor of the London Review, who writes thoughtful articles in a pleasantly embellished style: he is able to apply the rules of just criticism liberally and intelligently. Further, reviews by such eminences as Dr Burney and John Aikin are by no means negligible. Samuel Badcock's claim in one of his numerous letters to Ralph Griffiths is not an idle one:²

We may each have our peculiarities:- but I think we are act~~i~~vated by one general Principle:- & that Principle I always hope to see, the governing Spirit of the Monthly Review. It is Liberality of Sentiment, united with good Sense, elegant Taste & solid Learning.

¹ MR 4 (Mr 51). 355.

² Bodleian MS. Add. C 90, fol. 81^r: 2 August 1782.

The sales of the Review suggest a gradual but firm response to merit as they swell from the 1,000 copies printed of the first number to 3,500 in 1776.¹

Not all of the reviewing in the Critical was up to the standard of Smollett, let alone that of Goldsmith. Most of the literary articles in the first two volumes are by Derrick. His work is not contemptible. Its chief virtue, a caustic or bantering dismissive tone, is fully in line with the prickly image cultivated by the Review in its early volumes. Further, he has no major reviewing to do: Smollett described him as 'a Trash reader'.² But the signs are not hopeful, for his favourable criticism is weakly general. He fills his place well enough, but the dullness of generality takes over much of the Critical after the departure of Smollett and Goldsmith. Hume's celebrated article on the second edition of Wilkie's The Epigoniad³ and Johnson's review of The Traveller⁴ consist almost entirely of general praise, though Johnson's treatment of James Grainger's poem The Sugar-Cane makes it sound most attractive: 'A new creation is offered, of which an European has scarce any conception'.⁵

¹ Lewis M. Knapp, 'Griffiths's "Monthly Review" as Printed by Strahan' N & Q 203 (1958). 216-7.

² Letters, p. 46: 12 May 1757, to Moore.

³ CR 7 (Ap 59). 323-34.

⁴ CR 18 (D 64). 458-62.

⁵ CR 18 (O 64). 271.

It is the tendency to abstract rather than criticise, as much as really bad criticism, such as that meted out to Tristram Shandy, which accounts for the dullness of the Critical during the later years of the first series. The criticism is often promising enough, but its span is too restricted. There are only one and a half pages of criticism in the seven page review of Humphry Clinker, for example, and the promise of the opening is unfulfilled:¹

From the wild excursions of fancy, invention is brought home to range through the probable occurrences of life; but, however, it may have impressed in point of credibility, it is certainly too often deficient with regard to variety of adventure. With many, an adherence to simplicity has produced the effects of dulness; and, with most, too close an imitation of their predecessors has excluded the pleasure of novelty.

There is justification for Badcock's repeated claims that the Critical was shirking its responsibilities:²

I know the M: Rev: is looked up to for something more than an Abstract of Books. It professes Criticism; & when the Object is worthy of it, the public sh.^d not be disappointed. ... The Critical Review, as usual, only transcribes & timidly acquiesces, by a few general Remarks which mean nothing. The Monthly Review must speak out. -- & it can speak boldly. Trust me, my Friend, it can speak very boldly.

Badcock also accuses the Critical of copying the Monthly's accounts of books:³

¹ CR 32 (Ag 71). 81.

² Bodleian MS. Add. C 90, fol. 105^r: 9 May <1783>.

³ Fol. 74^r: 14 January 1782.

I will enquire about the Novels. The Critical Reviewers always adopt my Ideas of the Novels -- if they chance to review them a Month or two afterwards. I really believe that they form their general Opinion from the M: Review without reading the Books ...

It is possible that the general inferiority of Critical to Monthly reviewing was due in part to the fact that the Critical paid less than its rival and hence could hardly expect as much pure criticism: in 1770-1 Percival Stockdale received only two guineas a sheet from Hamilton, while Griffiths was normally giving his reviewers four guineas for their 'dark, and inhuman assassinations'.¹ To the credit of the Critical reviewers it must be pointed out that while the standard of their criticism is not high during most of the first series they were willing to accept new works and their attitude is generally as liberal as that of their colleagues in the Monthly.²

4

The nature of the review article as it developed into the second half of the eighteenth century has now been established -- firmly based on the abstract or analysis, capable of great variety both critical and stylistic, and displaying at its best important reviewing as in the work

¹ Memoirs, ii. 58.

² See E.N. Hooker, 'The Reviewers and the New Criticism; 1754-1770' PQ 13 (1934). 189-202, and 'The Reviewers and the New Trends in Poetry, 1754-1770' MLN 51 (1936). 207-14.

of Goldsmith. The dangers of the genre have become equally obvious: a pure abstract is evasive; criticism may be encouraged to become fragmentary and to abandon consistency or take refuge in critical cant terms; it may be overwhelmed by the flood of worthless publications.

By the 1790s the two main Reviews were favourably inclined towards most significant literature displaying innovation, but the high point of their careers had been reached and passed in their first years. Part of the falling off may be due to the lack of first-class literature during the years between 1770 and 1790, and it is true that literary reviewing after the early volumes was not generally undertaken by professional literary men. However, good articles appeared from time to time, especially in the Monthly, applying late neoclassical criteria liberally. During the last decade of the century, some important works were published: the next part of the study will note how the Reviews dealt with these seminal works of the nineties, while the third will examine in detail their state on the eve of the Edinburgh's appearance, during the years 1800-02.

It should be clear at any rate that Gates's wholesale condemnation cannot stand. At its best, eighteenth-century reviewing is both a fulfilment in itself and a base for future critical forays.

PART TWO: FOUR REVIEWS 1790-1802: THE IMMEDIATE BACKGROUND

Chapter 1: Facts and Policies

a) The Individual Reviews

The Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal, Enlarged

So from the commencement of its second series in 1790 ran the title of the eldest Review proper, still under the care, albeit increasingly nominal, of its original founder in 1749, Ralph Griffiths. During the 1790s his less able son, G.E. Griffiths, was coming more to the fore in editorial matters.¹

Each volume covered four months and consisted of 544 pages made up of four monthly numbers of three and a half sheets each, totalling 112 pages, and one foreign appendix of three sheets or 96 pages. The monthly numbers comprised about 10 to 15 main articles (numbered in Roman numerals) dealing with important publications and occupying about 90 pages, and a Monthly Catalogue of less important books reviewed in perhaps 40 shorter articles (numbered in Arabic numerals). The foreign appendix contained from 10 to 20 articles (Roman numerals) on important foreign publications. The 1790 enlargement was necessitated by the steadily increasing volume of new publications which characterised the end of the century with its expanding economy. With each volume was supplied

¹ The Review did not make official statements of policy during the second series.

a 'Table of the titles, authors' names, &c. of the Publications reviewed in this Volume' and a very selective index. In 1801 the price was increased from 2/- to 2/6 per number.¹

Along with the Critical Review and the Analytical Review, the Monthly Review was one of the politically liberal trio attacked by the Anti-Jacobin Review: Ralph Griffiths was 'An old Whig, and consistent Protestant.'² The contributors whom he chose can fortunately be identified almost completely from the office copies now in the Bodleian, and this task has been definitively executed by B.C. Nangle. This study is concerned only with those contributors who reviewed literary work: these included clergymen of the Church of England (Christopher Moody and William Tooke), dissenting clergymen (Jabez Hiron and probably James Bannister), a Roman Catholic priest of dubious credentials (Alexander Geddes), several lawyers (Francis Jeffrey, Samuel Rose, Thomas Wallace, and Ollyett Woodhouse), Doctors of Music and Medicine (Charles Burney and John Ferriar), a classical scholar and a sea captain (Charles Burney the younger and Captain Burney), an oriental scholar (Alexander Hamilton), and a mathematician, fellow of Caius College, Cambridge (Robert Woodhouse). The liberality of the editorial policy could hardly be better illustrated than by this list.

¹ Slip dated 23 May 1801 in vol. 30 (My-Ag 01).

² Bodleian MS. Add. C. 89, fol. 287^v.

The Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature, extended and improved. By a society of gentlemen. A New Arrangement

So runs the title page of the second series of the Critical Review which was introduced (presumably in imitation of the Monthly) in 1791. The identification of editors and contributors is incomplete, but we know that after the death in 1793 of Archibald Hamilton, who had owned and edited it for a long period, his interest passed to his grandson, also Archibald Hamilton, and after 1801 to his other grandson Samuel Hamilton who apparently became editor.¹ About 1774 the radical bookseller George Robinson acquired an interest,² and he was presumably succeeded in 1801 by his son George and brother John,³ since on 3 January 1805 William Taylor wrote to Southey that the Robinsons and Hamilton had failed.⁴ The original Archibald Hamilton had apparently been succeeded by Dr George Gregory,⁵ and between 1797 and 1804 John Mason Good, a physician of liberal opinions who also contributed to the Analytical Review, was editor for a period.⁶

¹ Roper, The Reviewing of English Literature, p. 3.

² Ib., p. 4.

³ DNB: s.v. George Robinson (1737-1801).

⁴ J.W. Robberds, A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich, (2 vols, London, 1843), ii. 68.

⁵ D. Roper, 'The Politics of the 'Critical Review', 1756-1817' Durham University Journal 53 (1960-1). 117-22.

⁶ Olinthus Gregory, Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Character ... of the Late John Mason Good, M.D., (London, 1828), p. 81.

William Taylor reported that after the failure of the Robinsons and Hamilton the Review was expected to pass to Philips and turn anti-Pittite, but by March 1805 Hunt, 'an orthodox, conceited, preferment-hunting Cambridge fellow', had outbid him.¹ Finally, in 1808 Taylor was informed by the Unitarian philanthropist Robert Fellowes, who became editor in that year,² that 'when Hunt changed the politics of the Review the sale declined, and that the Unitarians are helping it up again.'³ At any rate from well before the period under consideration until Hunt's arrival in 1805 the Critical was a liberal Review.

The Critical was more forthcoming than the Monthly in its answers to correspondents during the 1790s, and from these we gather that it attempted to be impartial and kindly in so far as that was reconcileable with justice. So, on the point of impartiality, in 1793 the Review replies to J.C. of Birmingham:⁴

Much as we respect the civil and religious constitution of this country, the publication which is PROFESSEDLY PARTIAL is not a REVIEW. -- It may be a PARTY JOURNAL, and may class well enough with many party newspapers, &c. which are avowedly sold to either the opposition or the

¹ Robberds, loc. cit. The Life and Correspondence of the Late Robert Southey, ed. C.C. Southey, (6 vols, London, 1849-50), ii. 320. John Higgs Hunt (1780-1859) was a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge during this period (DNB).

² See Roper's article and also <Josiah Conder> Reviewers Reviewed, (Oxford, 1811), p. 40.

³ Robberds, ii. 223.

⁴ CR (2) 8 (J1 93). 360.

ministry; but such a publication can never be the proper vehicle for truth, and never can be permanently respectable. ... We shall, however, continue to treat every liberal and ingenious adversary with candour and decency; and if we attempt to repel his objections, it will be by argument and not by abuse. Presuming ignorance, obtrusive dulness, indecency, irreligion, and immorality, are the proper objects of castigation in a literary Journal; and we will add, that in such a publication, we think, politics and controversy should never be suffered to occupy the foreground.

The desire to be kind is maintained in a rejoinder to the Review's misunderstood criticism of The Mysteries of Udolpho:¹

Whatever men may think of the severity and sourness of professed critics; we beg leave to assure our readers, that when we do err, we wish it always to be on the side of liberality and candour. Far be from us the base and malignant gratification of giving pain to any writer whatever!

Yet justice must be done:²

We are always sorry to hurt the feelings of any author; but our duty to the public is paramount to every obligation. If authors will not submit their works, previously to their publication, to the inspection of judicious friends, and follow their advice, they cannot expect that the Critical Tribunals will be unjust to the public in order to be favourable to them. We insert this in reply to An Old Soldier, but the answer will apply to many similar complaints.

¹ CR (2) 12 (N 94). 360.

² CR (2) 13 (Mr 95). 360.

As with the Monthly Review, four monthly issues made up a volume, each issue of 120 pages consisting of seven and a half sheets. There was also a foreign appendix of some sixty or seventy pages and a short general retrospect of foreign literature. At the beginning of 1801 the short Political Register was omitted and a review of maps and charts substituted for four volumes. The monthly numbers exhibited approximately the same arrangement of main articles and monthly catalogue as did the Monthly, though in the Critical they were unnumbered before 1801. In 1802 the price was increased from 2/6, presumably to 2/6.

Of the few literary contributors whose identity has so far been established, John Mason Good was a physician, and William Taylor and Southey were professional literary men.

The British Critic

The genesis of the British Critic is closer to the period under consideration and therefore demands more detailed treatment. It was founded in 1793 by a group of established clergymen, William Beloe and Robert Nares being joint editors until 1813.¹ Its purpose was made clear in A Proposal for a Reformation of Principles² and A Sequel to the Proposal inserted at the beginning of the first

¹ Walter Graham, English Literary Periodicals, p. 221.

² For an account of the Society for the Reformation of Principles see F.E. Mineka, The Dissidence of Dissent, (Chapel Hill, 1944), pp. 51-2.

volume in the Bodleian. The Monthly Review was regarded as especially dangerous in its attacks on 'the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England': the British Critic therefore would concentrate on the impartial reviewing on sound principles of works of Divinity, Literature, and Politics:¹

THE late institution of Sunday Schools having been so well supported by the rich and honourable of this kingdom, and so well received by the poor, we are encouraged to hope, that some similar plan will be adopted, for preventing the corruption, which prevails among scholars, and persons of the higher orders of life, from evil principles, and what may be called a monopoly of the press. ... If false accounts are given of authors and their works, to deceive the public, let a true account be given, to undeceive them.

Several remarks in the Prospectus and Sequel and in the prefaces to the various volumes of the British Critic give a good picture of its official attitude to the reviewing of literature. In the first place, the general standard of contemporary literature was conceived of as being pleasantly mediocre:²

It is sufficient to support the credit of a people in this point, if the general form of its ordinary poetry be stamped with good taste, if its young writers promise improvement, and they, who cannot write sublimely, write at least ingeniously. The times of general polish, when the artifices of versification are unknown to few, are not, indeed, most favourable to the

¹ A Proposal, pp. 1, 2.

² Preface to vol. 2 (S-D 93), p. xi; cf. Preface to vol. 13 (Ja-Je 99), pp. xiii, xvi; Preface to vol. 16 (Jl-D 00), p. xv.

highest flights of fancy; but the lower regions of Parnassus will be, at the same period, most highly cultivated, and praise may justly be bestowed, where immortality cannot be promised.

The reviewers might indeed wish to select from works presented to them, 'but such is not the custom of the country'.¹

Censure would sometimes be given, but with reluctance and often with delicacy, and works of conservative principles would for once be given a fair hearing;² silence rather than an Index Expurgatorius would be the heaviest censure.³

The reference to poetry in the last major quotation is significant: the British Critic paid little attention to plays or novels. However in the Preface to volume 3 (Ja-Je 94) the novels were allotted a section of their own as their number increased: they were placed 'after books of a poetical kind, to which, as works of invention, they are nearly allied.'⁴ In volume 18 (Jl-D 01) the class was dropped 'till we shall find something in it that may be truly worthy of report.'⁵

Six monthly issues formed a volume and the usual length of a number was 120 pages (seven and a half sheets),

¹ Preface to vol. 8 (Jl-D 96), p. i.

² Preface to vol. 1 (My-Ag 93), p. iii.

³ Preface to vol. 17 (Ja-Je 01), p. i.

⁴ P. vx.

⁵ P. xxii.

though some were slightly shorter. The arrangement was similar to that of the Monthly Review except that the monthly catalogue contained a short section of reviews of foreign publications: there was no foreign appendix. An important feature of the British Critic was the Preface to each volume which contained a retrospective survey of the most important works in each field during the six months covered by the volume. Of the literary reviewers little is known; they included, in the Review's phrase, 'Gentlemen of the first Character':¹ Sir James Mackintosh, the distinguished lawyer, John Stoddart, and Francis Wrangham were among their number during the period under consideration.

The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine; or, Monthly Political and Literary Censor

If the British Critic sprang primarily from ecclesiastical conservatism, the Anti-Jacobin Review was a product of the political right. The name derives from the lively but short-lived Anti-Jacobin, as does its political complexion but very little else. The Review was edited by 'John Gifford', to be distinguished more carefully than 'Peter Pindar' did from William Gifford of Baviad and Maeviad fame. Really called John Richards Green, he was a prominent pro-government writer during the French Revolution and author of many tory pamphlets.

¹ BC vol. 1: A Sequel.

² See R.B. Clark, William Gifford Tory Satirist, Critic, and Editor, (New York, 1930), pp. 18-21.

The Anti-Jacobin Review left its readers in no doubt as to its intentions and policies. The Prospectus and Prefatory Address were even more specific in defining the adversary than the British Critic had been. The Prefatory Address was written at the end of the first six months, July to December 1798:¹

Of the utility of our past labours, (and, we must observe, that our ambition is not to shine, but to be useful,) a full conviction may be acquired by a careful comparison of the late numbers of the Monthly and Critical Reviews, with any of those that were published previous to the month of August last, when our first number appeared. The other object of our immediate attacks, the Analytical Review, has received its death-blow, and we have more reason to congratulate ourselves upon the share which we have had in producing its dissolution, than it would be expedient here to unfold. But neither the destruction of the one, nor the affected moderation of the other, shall occasion the smallest diminution of our vigilance or exertion.

Many of its prefaces and much of its correspondence columns were devoted to this campaign against the liberal Reviews.

The Anti-Jacobin Review made at any rate the motions of impartiality by declaring that its rivals had allowed faction to interfere with their literary judgments:²

...that the Reviewers, sinking the critic in the partisan, have insidiously contributed to favour the designs of those writers who labour to

¹ Pp. iv-v.

² Prospectus, p. 2.

undermine our civil and religious establishments, and, by a shameful dereliction of duty, to cast an odium on their opponents, is a fact which may easily be established by an attentive perusal of their works since the year 1788.

The Anti-Jacobin Review would 'restore criticism to its original standard'.¹ An important part of this task would relate to the theatre on account of the wretched state of dramatic criticism and the importance of the drama for public morality.² Children's books would be examined for Jacobinical tendencies,³ and the new Foreign Appendix added in 1799 was directed against the 'regular importation of exotic poison from the envenomed crucibles of the literary and political alchemists of the new German school.'⁴ Wieland and Goethe are later named as notable offenders.⁵

The Review had four monthly numbers to the volume, of 120 pages each, seven and a half sheets, with an added foreign appendix. The main reviewing section 'Original Criticism' followed the usual pattern, but then came a section headed 'Reviewers Reviewed' in which original criticism was mingled with strictures on the approaches of the three, and later two, recognised rival publications. A short miscellaneous section consisting chiefly of letters concluded each number.

¹ Ib., p. 3.

² Ib., pp. 3-4.

³ Preface to vol. 2 (Ja-Ap 99), pp. ii-iii.

⁴ Preface to vol. 4 (Ag-D 99), p. vii.

⁵ Ib., pp. xi, xiv.

The contributors included William Heath and Richard Polwhele (both clergymen), Francis Blagdon and 'John Gifford' (professional tory pamphleteers), and John Taylor who was most likely the editor of the Morning Post and another prominent tory writer.

b) General Evidence of Circulation

The Reviews were an important element in early nineteenth-century English literary life. In 1800 we may generously estimate that 150,000 people were literate in Britain.¹ According to Timperley the Monthly Review sold 5,000 copies in 1797.² If one reckons three readers to the copy one may be certain that at least 10% of the reading population were acquainted with that Review. The figure might easily be as high as 25%. Furthermore, the Critical Review sold 3,500 copies, as did the British Critic, not to mention the Monthly Magazine's 5,000, the Gentleman's Magazine's 4,550, the European Magazine's 3,250, and the Universal Magazine's 1,750.³

Some copies found their way into libraries: in 1793 there was an attempt by Yarmouth conservatives to prevent the continuance of the Monthly Review in a circulating library,⁴ and much later, in 1849, the public

¹ Cf. F.W. Bateson, A Guide to English Literature, (London, 1965), pp. 148-9.

² C.H. Timperley, Encyclopaedia of Literary and Typographical Anecdote, (London, 1842), p. 795 col. 2.

³ Timperley, loc. cit.

⁴ Bodleian MS. Add. C. 89, fols 71^v-72^r. See also Paul Kaufman, Borrowings from the Bristol Library 1773-1784, (Charlottesville Va, 1960), pp. 114-9.

librarian at Chatham objected to requests by frivolous people for the Edinburgh and Quarterly Reviews and the Gentleman's Magazine.¹ Book clubs also took in the Reviews. In 1798 a correspondent (identified in manuscript in the British Museum copy as the Revd Kennedy) wrote to the Anti-Jacobin Review:²

We were ourselves present at a Book Club in the country, not long since, which was attended by seven ministers of the established church, all, but one, men of sound principles, when a work was proposed to be purchased, and a reference actually made to a Jacobin Review, in order to ascertain its merits.

Certainly the Bishop of Salisbury took the Critical Review, for his set is now in the Bodleian. Roper's research has shown that the owners of sets of Reviews ranged from a small Lancashire landowner to the Bishops of Durham and Salisbury and has demonstrated that copies were given to or acquired by most of the universities and several learned societies.³ One man's reason for buying the Monthly Review is explained to the Anti-Jacobin Review by 'D.G.':⁴

Of the Analytical and Critical I know nothing; but I have been in the habit of perusing the Monthly Review for some years, both on account

¹ R.D. Altick, The English Common Reader, (Chicago, 1957), p. 215.

² AJR 1 (1798). 475. See also Paul Kaufman, 'A Bookseller's Record of Eighteenth-Century Bookclubs' The Library (5) 15 (1960). 278-87.

³ Pp. 10-12.

⁴ AJR 1 (1798). 380. Cf. for a similar view p. 697.

of its superiority in literary criticism -- and also with the view (in common with many others, I believe,) of gaining a general knowledge of what is passing in the world of letters, without incurring the great expence attached to the purchase of books.

The audience expected by the reviewers was miscellaneous: it ranged from readers of novels, apparently mostly ladies, to those who were familiar with Horace in the original¹ and who had a minute interest in the older English poets,² and the Anti-Jacobin Review claimed that it numbered among its subscribers 'some of the most distinguished ornaments of the Established Church, and of the first Legal Characters in the country'.³

Review articles were cited then as now by booksellers as evidence of the quality of their wares. Moore's Anacreon has bound in the back of the Bodleian copy⁴ an advertisement by John Stockdale of Piccadilly dated June 1800 and lauding Dr Anderson's British Poets which were being remaindered: 'For the high character of this work, see the British Critic and Monthly Reviews.'

The importance of the Reviews for society in general and literature in particular is unquestionable: they were for much of the literate public the main intellectual vehicles of their age.

¹ BC 15 (My 00). 570: Horace tr. Lavroche, De L'Art Poétique, (c. 1799), V.

² MR ns 32 (J1 00). 331-2: Phillips (ed. Brydges), Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum, (1800).

³ 'Prefatory Address' to AJR 1 (1798), p. iv.

⁴ CC 135 Art. Seld.

Chapter 2: The Reviews Compared

a) Direct Cross-References

Most of the direct cross-references are to be found in the Anti-Jacobin Review. The impulse for its 'Reviewers Reviewed' section in which the comments on other Reviews appear is outlined in the Prospectus:¹

The daily and weekly vehicles of JACOBINISM have, for some time past, been subjected to an examination, the beneficial effects of which have been universally felt and acknowledged. Our object is to subject its monthly and annual publications to similar process; and to those who have attended to the principles and conduct of modern critics, during the course of the last ten years, few arguments will be requisite to demonstrate the utility, and even the necessity, of such an undertaking. ... For this purpose, we shall frequently review the Monthly, criticise the Critical, and analyse the Analytical, Reviews, on the principle already adopted by the WEEKLY EXAMINER, in its comments on the daily prints.

A large cartoon facing page 115 of the first volume shows a mob worshipping Justice, Philanthropy, and Sensibility: they are displaying, inter alia, 'Joan of Arc' and 'Coleridge's Bactylic', 'Southey's Saphics', 'Zoonomia, or Jacobin Plants', the Morning Post and the Morning Chronicle, while a 'Cornucopia of Ignorance' containing the Analytical Review, the Monthly Review, and the Critical Review is being emptied.

In the event the 'Reviewers Reviewed' section is somewhat disappointing. Most of the criticisms of the

¹ Pp. 2, 3.

two rival Reviews are political rather than literary, and often the only difference between this section and the original criticism is a few lines of general and unsupported abuse attached to the end of a critical article.¹ The resulting attack is often weak or unfair: a typical combination of politics, aesthetics, and abuse occurs in the notice of Pye's Carmen Seculare:²

The Reviewer begins his remarks upon Mr. Pye's Ode, with an observation that at once shews the cloven foot of malignant democracy. He observes that Annual Odes "are secured by their brevity and their insignificance from public criticism." But why must they necessarily be brief or insignificant? It is surely in the power of genius to expand the subject, and to treat that subject in such a way as to render it interesting and important. The truth would, we doubt not, be really acknowledged if an Annual Ode were dedicated to the Genius of Democracy. ... But to the Ode. The Critical Reviewers' first objection is to the image of "the Stream of Time," and no wonder, for his own labours are never likely to float along that stream, but to sail into the gulph of oblivion.

¹ The review of Pratt's Gleanings in England was originally intended for the Original Criticism section, but was altered and transferred when 'the Arch-critics, like the Arch-fiend of old, equal in malice, though inferior in wisdom, poured forth their usual collection of ignorant abuse, the toad-like accumulation of monthly venom, which, with hereditary spite, they are accustomed to throw over the fairest works of genius and science.' (AJR 5 (Ja 00). 75)

² AJR 6 (My 00). 100-1.

Valid literary criticism of the reviewing practice in the two liberal Reviews does occur occasionally. In a long letter to the editor (which, on the analogy of those in volumes 1-6, was probably written by a member of the staff) the criticisms levelled by the Monthly Review at Hurdis's poem The Favourite Village are well disposed of in a scholarly manner: the charge of plagiarism from Thomson is disposed of by a reference to Virgil, and the transposed accent of súperb is defended by citations of similar licence in Shakespeare.¹ Similarly, 'Scipio' accuses the Monthly Review of promoting 'the philosophical system to which they have devoted themselves, in the department of taste as well as that of science.' He explains further:²

In general, they seem to have no notion of that elegant simplicity, either in language or imagery, which confers grace on good writing; but to have promoted, by means of their early and extensive circulation, the pompous turgidity and false glitter that have of late, so much infested both the prose and poetry of English writers.

He goes on to cite examples of the sort of prose and poetry to which he is referring and which the Monthly Review sanctions. The prose examples are the more interesting:³

Unity of character or homogeneousness of parts can only be redeemed from the chances of conjecture by physiognomy.

¹ AJR 8 (Ja 01). 82-4.

² AJR 9 (My 01). 88.

³ Ib. 89.

In general the Monthly Review is accused of substituting panegyric for criticism,¹ of being impious,² and of using violent language such as 'by one volcanic effort'.³

b) Implicit Differences

While the value of statistics in literary studies is limited they can be an essential element in countering excessive impressionism. In the period 1800-1802 there were treated in the four Reviews under consideration an approximate total of 814 literary works, the vast majority of them contemporary.⁴ No Review came anywhere near dealing with all of them. The Critical reviewed 452, the Monthly 435, the British Critic 428, and the Anti-Jacobin Review 234. The majority of the reviews dealt with poetry, up to two-thirds in the British Critic. The Critical treated by far the largest number of novels, 139, followed by the Monthly with 82, the British Critic with 73, and the Anti-Jacobin Review with 61. Thus one-third of the works reviewed in the Critical were novels, only one-sixth in the British Critic. Of the novels published by Lane the Critical reviewed 32, the Anti-Jacobin Review 7,

¹ AJR 5 (Ja 00). 72: <S. Rogers> An Epistle to a Friend, (1798), V; (Polwhele).

² AJR 5 (Ap 00). 455: R.P. Knight, The Progress of Civil Society, (1796), V; (Polwhele).

³ AJR 5 (F 00). 151: Godwin, St. Leon, (1799); (Heath).

⁴ It is impossible to define 'Literary' works objectively, so these figures must be taken as approximate.

the British Critic one, and the Monthly none at all. As for plays, the Critical reviewed 71, the British Critic 65, the Monthly 62, and the Anti-Jacobin Review 23. Only one-tenth of the Anti-Jacobin Review's works were plays.

The following table gives the number of major reviews of each literary genre in each Review during the period 1800-1802:

	<u>MR</u>	<u>CR</u>	<u>BC</u>	<u>AJR</u>
Verse	56	51	41	21
Novels	11	6	1	6
Plays	4	8	6	3
Prose	11	11	4	8
Miscellaneous	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	83	77	54	38

The most interesting figures here are: the total for the British Critic, which shows that the high total of reviews does not necessarily involve completeness of treatment; the extreme predominance of poetry in the major reviews; and the British Critic's scorning of the novel as a genre.

The conclusions which can be drawn from the articles themselves about the differences between the Reviews are not striking and do little more than bear out what has already been learnt. The political line-up is maintained with complete consistency, liberal facing Anti-Jacobin across a wide gulf. The moral ranks are less stereotyped. The Critical and the Monthly are both philosophically and morally liberal, and yet they can be anxious and cautious at times. The Critical tends to be lenient with romance and farce, whereas the Monthly is more severe, especially when Jeffrey or Ferriar is the reviewer. The Monthly and

the Critical are the most learned and weighty of the four Reviews. When all the Reviews agree the work ^{is} praised is likely to be mildly correct: when they all condemn a work it is usually of small significance. When the study turns in the next chapter to consider terms and concepts which the reviewers use, the agreement there evident will suggest the reason for the general lack of fundamental disagreement except on political and moral issues.

c) Reviewing in the 1790s

Part I of the study traced briefly the development of the Reviews proper from their origins in the Journal des Sçavans to the end of the first series of the Monthly and Critical Reviews in 1789. Reviewing in the 1790s is also important for this study, but it has already been extensively treated by Derek Roper in his thesis. In this section therefore I shall summarize some of Roper's main conclusions and add some comments on the individual Reviews and reviewers so as to give an idea of what was happening in the reviewing world immediately prior to the period with which the thesis is mainly concerned. In effect this survey is restricted to three Reviews, the Monthly and Critical and the British Critic. The Analytical Review has already been noted as a backwater, and the Anti-Jacobin Review did not commence publication until 1798.

Roper is concerned to evaluate reviews of the most significant works during his period, and he judges each review as effective or ineffective, primarily on the basis of its conformity with modern views of the work

under consideration. This is a useful device to ensure some sort of evaluation, and its influence will be apparent in the fourth part especially of the present study. However, an 'effective' review may well be a dull one, and an 'ineffective' review may be of the greatest interest. In any event, Roper concludes that about half the reviews (often of new types of works) were effective and thus stresses that the criticism of the period was by and large liberal and competent. Poets as diverse as Thomas Warton, Smart, Burns, Rogers, Campbell, Moore, Wordsworth, and Coleridge were all favourably received, even if the Della Cruscans found equal favour in the sight of most reviewers. Romances and novels of purpose were liberally treated. Indeed, only Landor among the more important poets was generally found obscure with Caleb Williams and Castle Rackrent largely unappreciated among the important novels, while most of the modest successes of the nineties were patiently and sympathetically chronicled. Close criticism suffered from a worn vocabulary, but as will be suggested hints of a terminological breakthrough can be seen in reviews by William Taylor of Norwich. There was little puffing and little moral distortion.

The Reviews, Roper concludes, did not differ greatly in effectiveness among themselves. What is clear, however, is that one of the most interesting features of the reviewing of this key decade is to be found in the different techniques and responses of the individual reviewers and their publications. This section is concerned to discover where intelligent reviewing is to be found, who was responsible for it, and how it looks forward to the early years of the next century.

The Monthly Review had four particularly interesting contributors during the nineties: John Aikin, Christopher Moody, Charles Burney the elder, and William Taylor of Norwich. Unfortunately both Aikin and Taylor stopped writing for the Review in 1799, though Taylor resumed in 1808.

Aikin's work is seen at its best in his reviews of the two editions of Southey's Joan of Arc. A certain breadth of approach is evident in his recalling of Chapelain's and Voltaire's treatments of the subject,¹ and his remarks on the novel style of versification show a brand of liberality which was to become increasingly rare in the Reviews:²

As to the 'occasional harshness of versification,' since it is the result of system, and not of negligence, we have nothing to remark. It certainly is not our system, any farther than as such harshness may occasionally prove an echo to the sense: but we do not pretend to make our taste a standard, in a matter which can only be decided by the feelings of individuals.

Moody is not a perceptive reviewer: he comes out of Roper's study particularly badly on account of his indiscriminating championship of the Della Cruscans. But he writes unusually well: his political praise of Fears in Solitude is especially impressive in its call for reason to be enthroned on the summit of Parnassus. His

¹ MR n.s. 19 (Ap 96). 361: Joan of Arc, (1796).

² MR n.s. 28 (Ja 99). 58: Joan of Arc 2 edn, (1798).

suspicion of Coleridge's prosaic verse is ominous in view of the attacks to come, but on this occasion Coleridge unfortunately agreed with him and revised the line:¹

Much as we admire the poetic spirit of this bard, we are forced to censure some of his lines as very prosaic. In his choice of words, also, he is not always sufficiently nice. The last line

'As thou would'st fly for very eagerness,' is extremely flat, and gives the idea of an exhausted muse. Small poems, like those before us, should be highly finished. Neither coarseness nor negligence should be seen in cabinet pictures.

Charles Burney's best-known review is that of the Lyrical Ballads (1798). Its notoreity is not altogether deserved. True, Burney is less than enthusiastic, but he does recognise the genius inherent in the work. His qualifications look forward to the attitude adopted by Jeffrey in the Edinburgh Review. He objects on two grounds. Firstly, style and subject matter are too common:²

Would it not be degrading poetry, as well as the English language, to go back to the barbarous and uncouth numbers of Chaucer? ... The elevation of soul, when it is lifted into the higher regions of imagination, affords us a delight of a different kind from the sensation which is produced by the detail of common incidents.

Secondly, Wordsworth is evidently unsociable. So of 'Tintern Abbey' (p. 210):

The reflectionsof no common mind; poetical, beautiful, and philosophical: but somewhat tinctured with gloomy, narrow, and unsociable ideas

¹ MR n.s. 29 (My 99). 47.

² MR n.s. 29 (Je 99). 202-3.

of seclusion from the commerce of the world:
as if men were born to live in woods and wilds,
unconnected with each other!

Both these objections are to be central in Jeffrey's attack and should make us beware of regarding him as eccentric. Burney's comments on the individual poems are, these reservations apart, appreciative. His concluding sentence is not the absurdity which it might seem if taken in isolation (p. 210):

So much genius and originality are discovered in this publication, that we wish to see another from the same hand, written on more elevated subjects and in a more cheerful disposition.

Burney is seen to still better advantage in his treatment of a subject with whom he was almost entirely in sympathy, Thomas Warton. The quality of the reviewing may be summed up in a passage which shows both Burney's admiration and appreciation of Warton's merits and his ability to place him adequately in the literary scene of the time:¹

On the whole, if we were obliged solemnly to give our opinion on oath concerning the degree of originality in our four poets of the present age, Gray, Mason, Smart, and Warton, -- we should place Smart at the head of all for invention, and Warton the last. The works of Gray and Mason are highly finished and original, as far as perpetual classic imitations and allusions will allow. Poor Smart, careless, hasty, and needy, was never solicitous, nor at leisure, to polish. Warton's taste in poetry was truly classical and elegant; his versification was nervous and correct; his reading was extensive; and his knowledge of rural nature was seemingly acquired from an actual survey of her works: -- but there is an original

¹ MR n.s. 10 (Mr 93). 278.

and appropriate stamp impressed on the best productions of Smart, Mason, and Gray, which instantly informs a reader of taste to whom they severally belong. There are, however, poems by the late Laureat, though of considerable length and excellence, that might have been written by others; and which would never, when seen or heard for the first time, excite the exclamation "this is TOM WARTON!"

The most interesting of these four reviewers is William Taylor. When his work fails to catch fire it can be dull. Thus, the review of Holcroft's Love's Frailties consists merely of an anecdotal opening paragraph, some conventional criticism, and much quotation.¹ He is capable of vapid comments such as that on one of William Preston's odes: 'Of the odes, Myrrha is the most conspicuous; it is certainly full of sound and fury, and is not destitute of sublimity and pathos; the story and its catastrophe are truly terrible.'² This critical weakness is apparent also in Taylor's inability to discriminate: he often overpraises absurdly. The following comment is at first sight impressive:³

They partake much of the grave and lofty spirit of Milton, which always cherishes the great in moral sentiment and action, and which, though delighting perhaps to excess in habitual pomp of diction, knows how to throw aside occasionally metaphor and rhyme itself, and to intrust a sublime thought to plain and simple words.

¹ MR n.s. 13 (Ap 94). 446-9.

² MR n.s. 16 (F 95). 168.

³ MR n.s. 14 (Jl 94). 319-20.

But the function of the passage is to place John Whitehouse's Odes Moral and Descriptive (1794) on a Miltonic level.

Taylor's criticism displays three forward-looking virtues, all of which show him reacting in a lively and unprejudiced manner to the works under review.

In the first place, a lively style added to an ability to capture the essence of an author enables him to give brief sketches in a manner akin to that of Hazlitt. So in his outline of Herder, the work under review being the Zerstreute Blätter:¹

In these miscellanies, M. HERDER displays a benevolent temper, considerable erudition, and much imagination. He thinks like a poet, vividly, and in metaphor; seldom like a philosopher, calmly and abstractedly: he excels, therefore, in decoration rather than in inquiry; and even his eloquence borders on excess. It is studiously gorgeous, rarely neat, -- the style of an energumen, not of a sage. His trains of idea, like gliding fenfires, are seen to shine, but not to illuminate. His style is harsh, quaint, and innovative. He is oftener affected than original; oftener obscure than deep; he wants arguments frequently, illustrations never, and his favourite illustrations are mythological allegories and allusions. Yet his poetry is as remarkable for simplicity as his prose is for ornament.

There is a similarly brilliant sketch of Wieland at the beginning of a series of reviews of the Sämmtliche Werke,² and one may compare the brief characterisation of Schiller's dramatic style in Don Carlos: 'All his characters have a colossal dignity, proportioned to the grandeur of the

¹ MR n.s. 20 (My-Ag 96). 523.

² MR n.s. 19 (Ja-Ap 96). 481.

interests which they involve. It is truly an heroic drama, an assemblage of no common men.'¹ This originality of language can at times degenerate into unidiomatic obscurity as in a remark on Schiller's Fiesco: 'The varieties of ethnic peculiarity and of conflicting passion proportion themselves to the complication of the business of the scene'.² But in general his individual style is creatively revolutionary, looking forward to the memorable periods of Coleridge and Hazlitt.

Allied with this flair for the sketch is Taylor's ability to place a work in its total literary context. Sometimes he effects this by throwing off a lively aperçu on a related topic. Thus in the review of Whitehouse's Odes Moral and Descriptive he criticises the pedantry and adds: 'The pedantry of Milton's style is its fault, not its merit.'³ He is continually pointing out the sources of works under review: thus he traces the hero in Bage's Hermesprong to Holcroft and Voltaire.⁴ He places works in their literary context by comparisons well thought through and definitively expressed. This is evident in his first article for the Monthly Review, a treatment of Sayers' Dramatic Sketches of the Ancient Northern Mythology, in which

¹ MR n.s. 29 (F 99). 144.

² MR n.s. 22 (Ja-Ap 97). 205.

³ MR n.s. 14 (Jl 94). 322.

⁴ MR n.s. 21 (S 96). 21.

he compares Sayers' dramatic procedure with neoclassical drama from Milton to Mason:¹

The pieces which we are now to notice, distinguish themselves by a much greater simplicity of language; by a studied rejection of all supernumerary interlocutors; and by a loftier lyric tone in the odes of the chorus. ... Moina verges nearest to the chastity of the Greek theatre: its chorusses want the ornament of rhyme, and even the anxious metrical precision of those in Glover. They possess, however, that arrangement of syllables, which irresistibly disposes to the use of the cantilena in reading; and it is difficult to ascertain what other charm is requisite to distinguish verse from prose.

This tendency towards the dissertation is of special importance for Taylor's third innovation, the critical introduction of German literature to the English public. Taylor's early speciality had been ancient British literature in the various collections of the early nineties.² But from volume 15 (S-D 94) onwards he began to deal extensively with German literature. During his first spell of reviewing for the Monthly Review he dealt with works by Herder, Kotzebue, Schiller, and Wieland. His ability to summarise acutely a period of literary history was especially valuable in this pioneering work. An example is the introductory survey for his treatment of Schiller's Cabal and Love:³

¹ MR n.s. 3 (O 90). 141.

² See especially MR n.s. 11 (My-Ag 93). 72-7: Pieces of Ancient Popular Poetry; 172-6: Scottish Poems Ed. Pinkerton (1792).

³ MR n.s. 17 (Jl 95). 310.

Among the critics of Germany, Schiller passes for the AEschylus, Lessing for the Sophocles, and Goethe for the Euripides of their national theatre: the first being distinguished by his daring energy; the second by his studious completeness; and the third by his heart-felt tenderness.

In the case of the Critical Review and the British Critic it is more difficult to be illuminating in a general survey. Reviews of major works are easily picked out, but there are few identified contributions, and hence interesting reviews of minor works such as many of those just considered are difficult to find, short of a complete reading. It is true that the Critical tended to abstract more than did the Monthly, and hence that less pure criticism is available. It is also true that some of the reviews on which Roper bases his generally favourable judgment are uninspired even though they happen to arrive at a just estimate of the works treated.¹ Nevertheless good reviews are not rare among those of important works and the contributions of Coleridge and Southey.

Among the reviews of major works by contributors as yet unidentified, those of Wordsworth's An Evening Walk² and Thomas Warton's Poems (1791)³ are particularly competent.

¹ E.g. Dyer's review of Coleridge's Poems on Various Subjects of 1796: CR (2) 17 (Je 96). 209-12, and the treatment of Landor's Poems (1795): CR (2) 19 (Ap 97). 403-5.

² CR (2) 8 (J1 93). 347-8.

³ CR (2) 10 (Ja 94). 20-5.

Roper finds the first ineffective, but the recognition of Langhorne's influence is particularly perceptive,¹ and the summary of the total impression is just and penetrating (p. 347): 'Local description is seldom without a degree of obscurity, which is here increased by a harshness both in the construction and the versification; but we are compensated by that merit which a poetical taste most values, new and picturesque imagery.' The review of Warton is similar in its modest late neoclassical virtues to Burney's.

There is only one literary review by Coleridge in the Critical whose authenticity is beyond any question, that of Lewis's The Monk,² but it is an excellent article. Like Taylor, Coleridge sets the work in its literary context and suggests that a love of horror characterises both the rise and the decline of literature. 'The same phaenomenon, therefore, which we hail as a favourable omen in the belles lettres of Germany, impresses a degree of gloom in the compositions of our countrymen.' (p. 194) He does object to the work on moral grounds, but not primarily because it is prurient, rather because in an atmosphere of the totally marvellous no serious moral concern is possible: 'Let him work physical wonders only,

¹ See Mary Moorman, William Wordsworth A Biography The Early Years, (O.U.P., 1957, corr. 1965), pp. 101-2.

² CR (2) 19 (F 97). 194-200. For the latest contribution to the debate see Roper's article 'Coleridge and the Critical Review' MLR 55 (1960). 11-16.

and we will be content to dream with him for a while; but the first moral miracle which he attempts, he disgusts and awakens us.' (p. 196) This reinterpretation of a hackneyed term and concept is further evident in the stimulating originality of the language which makes meaningful another potentially vague comment: 'Figures that shock the imagination, and narratives that mangle the feelings, rarely discover genius, and always betray a low and vulgar taste.' (p. 195)

Southey's reviewing can occasionally be disappointing: his treatment of Landor's Gebir, for example, though liberal and just in its estimation is too much of a pure abstract to show any real penetration.¹ His two best reviews of the nineties are those of Anderson's compilation The Works of the British Poets² and the Lyrical Ballads.³ The Anderson review was used by Southey as the basis of his Preface to Specimens of the Later English Poets (1807). It consists of a brief history of English poetry with briefer comments on Anderson's choice of poets. The account is notable for its breadth and discrimination, seeing Chaucer and the Elizabethans as high points, and the fifteenth and late seventeenth centuries as nadirs: the breadth finds expression in a fine image of the stream of poetry (pp. 41-2):

Under Elizabeth our poetry was like a mountain brook, rough indeed and broken, but delighting

¹ CR (2) 27 (S 99). 29-39.

² CR (2) 25 (Ja 99). 40-50.

³ CR (2) 24 (O 98). 197-204.

the traveller with whatever is great, magnificent, and sublime. After the Restoration, it was the stream that passes by a city and receives its filth. With Pope it became like his own Thames, smooth, beautiful, and majestic.

The taste, however, which Pope introduced, was calculated rather to make mediocrity tolerable than to produce excellence. We were sinking to the tame and tiresome regularity of French poetry; the stream began to stagnate like a Dutch canal. Young, Thomson, and Akenside, rose to excellence; but a sad rabble of versifiers appear in the collection at this period. The Wartons led us back to a better school. The pupils of that school are now the candidates for fame; and it is for the next age to decide upon the present.

Southey's famous review of the Lyrical Ballads which so offended their authors is a fascinating document. In it one sees him basing his criticism on the tried late neoclassical principle which was accepted by the most staid reviewers of the time and which is best summed up in his article on Goodwin's Rising Castle where he criticises the author for copying Wordsworth (though Wordsworth is not actually named):¹ 'The Muses should not be tricked out in meretricious finery, nor should they be in the coarse dress of housemaids.' Southey's objection here and in the Lyrical Ballads article is not to the low style -- he thoroughly approves of that -- but to the inanity of the ballad stories upon which so much attention has been lavished. His review of the Lyrical Ballads is a clear statement dividing the volume into 'serious pieces', such as 'The Female Vagrant' and 'Tintern Abbey', and the ballads

¹ CR (2) 25 (Mr 99). 317.

which he finds trivial. He makes this clear at the end of the review (p. 204):

The 'experiment,' we think, has failed, not because the language of conversation is little adapted to 'the purposes of poetic pleasure,' but because it has been tried upon uninteresting subjects. Yet every piece discovers genius; and, ill as the author has frequently employed his talents, they certainly rank him with the best of living poets.

When one recalls his contempt for the 'Dutch canal', and the exotic subjects of his own epics the force of his reluctantt condemnation of 'The Idiot Boy' becomes the greater (p. 200):

No tale less deserved the labour that appears to have been bestowed upon this. It resembles a Flemish picture in the worthlessness of its design and the excellence of its execution. From Flemish artists we are satisfied with such pieces: who would not have lamented, if Corregio or Rafaelle had wasted their talents in painting Dutch boors or the humours of a Flemish wake?

Southey does not mention Rembrandt and fails totally to grasp the importance of 'The Ancient Mariner', another 'Dutch attempt', this time at 'German sublimity' (p. 201). He is puzzled by the contrast between 'Tintern Abbey', unsurpassed in 'the whole range of English poetry', and the ballads proper. The incomprehension is ominous, though stylistic objections were to be taken upon equal measure in the years ahead.

The main contribution made to reviewing by the British Critic during the nineties was in its championship of the novel as an important genre, a championship

surprising in so conservative a publication and destined to be short-lived, though it is careful to criticise Fielding's libertinism while praising his technique.¹ The estimation of the genre in a review of Cumberland's Henry is particularly impressive:²

THOSE severe critics who in a novel can see nothing worthy of attention, or serious examination, are of too sublime a cast for us to emulate. In our opinion it is a species of composition the laws and appropriate merits of which it might become an Aristotle to investigate and pronounce.

The ideal which the British Critic sought in the novel is clearly defined in its characterisation of The Mysteries of Udolpho:³

A tale, regularly told, neither offending probability by its extravagance, nor fatiguing by want of its vivacity or incident, has ever been esteemed among those labours of the mind which the critic cannot disdain to commend, nor genius to introduce, and when it is further embellished by the charms of good writing, is the vehicle of ingenuous sentiments, and inculcates the purest morality, it eminently takes the lead in that class of writings, which is professedly designed for entertainment.

The general state of major reviewing at the close of the eighteenth century was, then, promising. The interesting works of the nineties were generally sympathetically and intelligently received, and individual

¹ BC 5 (Je 95). 479-80.

² BC 5 (Je 95). 478.

³ BC 4 (Ag 94). 110.

reviewers of note offer outstanding articles, with a hint of the dissertation to be developed in the Edinburgh Review. The critical terminology can drag reviewers down, as can the abstracting tradition, but there are suggestions of fresh terminological developments and a breadth of vision in the review article. There are also premonitions of a hostility towards the new poetry in as yet ambiguous treatments by Moody and Burney, in the Critical's review of Southey's Joan of Arc,¹ in the distrust of Landor, and even in the incomprehension of Southey himself.

Chapter 3: Editors and Reviewers

a) Reviewers' Opinions

The reviewer's trade was not always felt to be a dignified employment for a gentleman: William Enfield wrote to Ralph Griffiths in 1793: 'I know no Orientalist but M^r Wakefield, and I suppose he would as soon go upon the road, as turn reviewer.'² On the other hand William Beloe states that during the eighteenth century the status of being a reviewer for the Monthly Review 'conferred a sort of local dignity and importance' on a gentleman living in a country town.³ The Monthly Review at least commanded the services of many eminent scholars, and the complaints

¹ CR (2) 17 (Je 96). 187.

² Bodleian MS. Add. C. 89, fol. 73^v.

³ <William Beloe,> The Sexagenarian, (2 vols, 1817), i.142.

of reviewers relate mainly to the tedium of their task. The insipidity of most contemporary literature is a frequent complaint in the pages of the Reviews,¹ and Southey in his letters constantly harps upon the tedium of reviewing when his true vocation has to be suspended.² Novels were regarded by William Enfield as being especially liable to be tedious though he would do his share:³

... I shall be glad, now and then, when it may be worth while, to bestow some pains upon a good novel: nor will, I ask to decline my share of the trash: but, at my time of life, moderate novels are very tedious reading ...

The reviewer conceived of his function as that of a guardian of public taste. On occasion he cannot but be at one with the opinion of the public, as when Burns sweeps him along on a current of strong passion.⁴ More often he is the guardian or director of public taste,⁵ repelling barbarians from the 'fortress of Taste'.⁶ With his grey hairs he and his fellow-jurors⁷ censure

¹ CR (2) 35 (My 02). 67: R. Bloomfield, Rural Tales, (1802); (Southey).
BC 15 (My 00). 512: <Mrs Montolieu,> The Enchanted Plants, (1800), V.

² Life and Correspondence ii. 200, 250, 260.

³ Bodleian MS. Add. C. 89, fol. 86^{v-r}: 7 Ja 1795.

⁴ CR (2) 30 (N 00). 306.

⁵ BC 20 (D 02). 691: Gessner, Works, (1802), V.

⁶ CR (2) 39 (S 03). 28: Juvenal tr. Rhodes, Satires, (1801).

⁷ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 321: G.D. Harley, Ballad Stories, (1799), V.

the insipid tastes of young ladies.¹ Examples must be made:²

Should our observations on this production appear rigorous to some readers, we must request them to look round, and contemplate the numbers of indifferent poets that are encouraged by the lenity of the public. Critical justice demands examples; and though we must be truly sorry if the weight of the blow should fall, in any instance, on individuals of private worth, and undoubted respectability, yet these considerations are of no avail in a court of literature.

The two images of court and citedal tell much about the attitude of the reviewers.

b) Relationship between Editor and Reviewer: the Choice and Treatment of Books

The method of choosing books to be reviewed and of deciding which were to go in the main section and which in the catalogue is to a large extent obscure. The functions of the Review, other than as a mentor for public taste and a substitute for reading the original works, would appear to have been thought of as the providing of a permanent history of contemporary literature: one of the Monthly Review's motives for beginning a new series was that people were deterred from becoming purchasers of the old series because of the difficulty of completing sets.³

¹ CR (2) 33 (D 01). 461: Adamina, (c. 1801), N; cf. CR (2) 31 (Mr 01). 355: The Cavern of Strozzi, (1800), N.

² MR n.s. 37 (Mr 02). 291: Burges, Richard the First, (1801), V; (Ferriar).

³ 'To the Literary World': MR n.s. 1 (Ja-Ap 90), p. iv.

In 1793 William Enfield, one of Griffiths' closest associates, claimed that the Monthly Review alone 'noticed all publications',¹ but this is unlikely and certainly, as has been seen, far from true at the turn of the century, when not more than half the publications treated altogether in the four Reviews were noticed by the Monthly. In March 1796 Bryan Edwards, who had just joined the staff as an occasional member, wrote to Griffiths saying that he could make nothing of Dr Valpy's play, '"a thing of shreds and patches" and therefore not the subject of criticism. I do not think It should be noticed in the Review.'²

If one takes those works which received extended treatment in the main reviewing section of most of the Reviews one finds that most of them can be divided into clearly recognisable categories. Works afforded three or four major reviews include major editions of classical English authors (the works of Dryden, Ramsay, Goldsmith, and Burns, the Ellis Specimens of the Early English Poets, and the Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border); translations of the classics (Moore's Anacreon, Gifford's Juvenal, Sotheby's Georgics); works of literary scholarship (Berdmore's Literary Resemblances, Dunster on Milton's reading, and Meen on the Cassandra of Lycophron); epic poems (by Burges, Cottle, Mrs Cowley, Ogilvie, Pye, and Southey); collections of verse (the Annual Anthology and Metrical Miscellany); and smaller poems or collections

¹ Bodleian MS. Add. C. 89, fol. 75^r.

² Ib., fol. 49^r.

of poems by standard and established authors (Boscawen, Delille, Huddesford, Maurice, Moore, and Penn inter alia). Two unusual works in this category are Joanna Baillie's plays and Godwin's St. Leon.

These are works reckoned at the time to be of supreme importance, if not always of supreme merit: sometimes the impulse behind the elevation of a work to the main review section must have been that of the Critical with Ogilvie's Britannia: 'A poem so respectable in its appearance must be analysed at length.'¹ Of Moore's Mordaunt the only Review not to place it in the major section, the British Critic, comments ruefully that it finds the work lacking in the spirit of Zeluco and hence 'It is with some concern that we do not feel ourselves authorised to place the account we are about to give, of a publication from the pen of Dr. Moore, among the principal articles of our Review.'²

Among works receiving two major reviews editions and translations again figure very prominently (Jonathan Scott's Bahar-Danush, Hindley's Persian Lyrics, Leyden's Complaynt of Scotland, Ellis's Way's Fables, editions of Euripides, Gessner's works, and Todd's Milton). Most of the remaining works are contemporary English poems reckoned to be important, but works by Goethe, Schiller, Metastasio, and the inevitable Kotzebue also appear.

The relationship between editors and reviewers in the choice of books is obscure, due to lack of evidence,

¹ CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 392.

² BC 15 (Mr 00). 318-9.

but it would seem from Ralph Griffiths' correspondence that in the case of the Monthly Review the editor was firmly in command, though the staff were free to make suggestions. William Enfield explains to Griffiths why he has adopted different lengths for his articles, but he accepts Griffiths' power to abridge or revise his contributions and has confidence in his judgment.¹ He makes the suggestion that in order to avoid excessive length contributors should be paid by the article rather than by length,² and that William Taylor's style may be pruned.³ On the same subject Sir John Leslie writes in 1795:⁴

It was my leading principle to proportion my articles to what I deemed their novelty, their interest or their importance; & to seize the suitable occasions for delivering original conceptions & views.

Furthermore, in 1794 Leslie had suggested a list of books which he might review and Griffiths had accepted them.⁵ Reviewers sometimes suggested friends whom they felt to be suitable candidates for the society. Enfield suggested Taylor, Sayers, and Wakefield, who were accepted;⁶ Leslie suggested Dr Maclaine and Snowden, who do not appear among the contributors.⁷

¹ Bodleian MS. Add. C. 89, fols 87^r (1 F 95), 66^r (6 D 92), 80^r (5 F 94).

² Fol. 87^v.

³ Fol. 86^r (7 Ja 95).

⁴ Fol. 204^r (8 Ag 95).

⁵ Fol. 106^r (4 D 94).

⁶ Nangle, The Monthly Review: Second Series, p. 20.

⁷ MS. cit., fol. 205^r (8 Ag 95).

William Enfield did not always read through the books which he was given to review, but he stresses that he is willing to read a deserving book twice through and abridge it.¹ Bryan Edwards had also taken a great deal of care over the abridgement in his critique of Mrs Robinson's Sicilian Lover and requested that if his critique were adopted (he was a new recruit) it should be printed nearly in his own words.²

That alteration which Enfield accepted willingly annoyed William Taylor greatly. In his case the revisions were of two sorts. Griffiths was anxious firstly that unanimity of opinion should be preserved in his Review and thus altered Taylor's articles.³ He had to justify these alterations to Taylor who had written on his joining the society: 'When my opinion happens not to coincide with your wishes I shall simply decline transmitting it. To conform, is not in me.'⁴ The other type of revision was directed at removing the peculiarities of Taylor's style.⁵

The same need for consistency was evidently felt

¹ Fol. 56^v (17 Ap 89).

² Fol. 49^v (8 Mr 96).

³ Robberds, i. 135 (1795); 196 (1799); ii. 351 (1811). Inconsistencies could occur, however. A MS. note in the Bodleian MR n.s. 37 (Ja 02). 99 on a review of J.N. Bouilly's play The Deaf and Dumb reads: 'See a contrary opinion of this play, in the original, Rev. Vol. 32. p. 537.'

⁴ Robberds, i. 124 (12 J1 93).

⁵ Ib., i. 199 (1799); ii. 321 (1810).

in the Critical Review. Fellowes explained to Southey that consistency could not suddenly be abandoned, but promised that the Review would gradually become milder towards him.¹ After his quarrel with G.E. Griffiths and consequent absence from the Monthly Review Taylor wrote for the Critical from 1803 onwards, but he found the editorial demands for consistency constricting. His apprehensions about his review of Thalaba were not justified but the fear is significant:²

I do not know if Hamilton has the impertinence to curtail; I shall be angry if he has omitted the sally against the Edinburgh Reviewers ...

In dealing with Turner's Welsh Remains, however, he was influenced by editorial demands, apparently against his will:³

Hamilton also sent them, with a prayer that I would preserve so much consistency with the declarations of a now absent reviewer as to call them forgeries. I have been trying to pick holes, and am become a convert to scepticism ...

There is thus perhaps something to be set against Anna Seward's view expressed in 1807 to Scott on the subject of Wordsworth's 1807 volumes:⁴

And thus the public, imposed upon by the plural we, persist in being haunted by the phantom of a literary council-board, where, in reality, sits one solitary coxcomb, deciding upon claims he knows not how to appreciate.

¹ Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey ed. J.W. Warter, (4 vols, London, 1856), ii. 23: 26 O 07.

² Robberds, i. 477: 5 Ja 04.

³ Ib., i. 492: 27 Mr 04.

⁴ Letters of Anna Seward, (6 vols, Edinburgh, 1811), vi.389.

The editors of both the Monthly Review and the Critical were firmly in command; although the reviewers had the freedom to make suggestions they might not be adopted, and the editor exercised his power in altering contributions as he thought fit. Of this last process there are no manuscript examples, but in the office copy of the Monthly editorial additions are indicated, and none is of any great importance, though how complete the record is it is impossible to say.

PART THREE: REVIEWING PRACTICE IN THE FOUR REVIEWS: 1800-2

Chapter 1: The General Critical Standpoint: the Via Media

a) The Critical Background

Few fields of research have been so thoroughly ploughed this century as that of eighteenth-century critical theory. The result, as far as the English and Scottish critics are concerned, is for the most part depressingly barren. Critical theory can become the antiquarian theology of literary study, involving its devotees in a life of a fourth dimension wholly divorced from mortal concerns. The present study hopes in some measure to avoid the excesses of the discipline by concentrating on the practical criticism of a small group of the leading reviewers over a limited period and by attempting to relate their criticism to their literary and social environment. Some understanding of the theoretical background is however essential, and here a central almost all-governing concept is traceable. This is the middle way defined by R.S. Crane in his important essay 'English Neoclassical Criticism: An Outline Sketch'.¹ The standard of good literature to which author and work

¹ In Critics and Criticism Ancient and Modern ed. Crane, (Chicago, 1952), ii. 372-88. The essay is reprinted from The Dictionary of World Literature ed. J.P. Shipley, (New York, 1943). See also (ii. 157-75) Crane's important review of Atkins, English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries reprinted from UTQ 22 (1953) as 'On Writing the History of Criticism in England 1650-1800'.

should conform was conceived of as a via media:¹

Viewed in relation to the work, artistic excellence was invariably found to consist, like moral excellence, in a mean between two extremes or, what amounts to the same thing, in a just mixture, relative to the kind of work, or the nature of the audience addressed, of opposite qualities; and faults, conversely, were identified with excesses or defects in any of the traits determined as virtues or with an exclusive emphasis on one extreme of style or treatment to the neglect of its corresponding opposite.

Here no Coleridgean synthesis is effected; opposite qualities are combined mechanically or averaged out: correctness and energy, affectations of simplicity and over-elaboration, judgment and fancy, to name only three of the opposites popular in eighteenth-century critical theory.

To understand the background to this emergence of the via media it will be necessary to summarise the main arguments employed in neoclassical criticism as it developed in England. It will then be possible to set the reviewers' critical premises in their context.

In the seventeenth century French critics had become uneasy at the licence or baroque quality² which they saw in the world of art, and seeking for a system of rules which could be applied logically and without right of

¹ P. 380.

² See René Wellek, 'The Concept of Baroque in Literary Scholarship' in Concepts of Criticism, (New Haven and London, 1963), pp. 69-127.

appeal they found it in the Poetics of Aristotle, or rather in the version of Aristotle's pronouncements which had been developed in Italy during the previous century. The result was arbitrary, mandatory, and far from the pragmatic spirit of Aristotle himself. According to the theory thus developed, the ultimate aim of poetry was moral instruction, and while genius was undoubtedly necessary for success art by rule tended to push genius very much into second place. The rules of art were derived from a contemplation of the ancients, and especially of the Aristotelean codification of tragedy and the epic, and from 'Nature' in accordance with Aristotle's precepts. The French critics demanded probability of incident, decorum (which sometimes meant merely decency) in action, speech, and character, and the expression of general rather than particular truth. They raised the epic to the pinnacle of literary aspiration, demanded strict observance of the three unities in tragedy, and scorned tragicomedy.

It is true that a rigid system of arbitrary rules was never accepted universally, even in France itself. There were always critics of the Académie, from Corneille, whose Cid had borne the brunt of the original onslaught, to Saint-Évremond, who insisted that art was not conformable to reason and whose protests had a considerable effect in limiting the spread of the system among English critics.

In England a reaction similar to that in France had taken place at the Restoration against licence in art and the eclectic in criticism. Hobbes, who as a fugitive royalist had spent some time in France, insisted in his

Epistle to D'Avenant on Gondibert of 1651 on the need for rational judgment in all artistic creation. The newly-founded Royal Society even considered the reform of the language on rational principles and enlisted for the task Evelyn, Waller, and Dryden.

As the century drew to its close, it seemed that French dogmatism might get the better of English pragmatism even in England. Thomas Rymer was an obstreperous supporter of the neoclassical system, attacking Spenser and Shakespeare in the name of common sense. In the event, a milder form of the infection took, and this was largely due to the work of three major critical forces -- Dryden, Addison, and Johnson. All of these critics were too individual and too conscious of the nature of man and of art to subscribe fully to French dogma, though they recognised the necessity for some system in critical practice. A large part of their decisive influence must also be attributed to the fact that they wrote an exceptionally attractive prose.

Dryden welcomed the refinement which he saw as characteristic of the Restoration era, and as typified in the sweetness and smoothness of Waller, but the French pursuit of a niggling decorum appeared fussy to him. As a result he conceived of imitations as being a matter of the spirit rather than of the letter, and rejected unnecessary rules such as the mandatory observation of the unities of time and space. Dryden's respectful but far from subservient attitude to the French set the tone of English criticism for the ensuing century, and his free-

ranging, sympathetic criticism did much to save England from the straitjacket of dogmatic neoclassical theory.

With the Spectator essayists, we encounter a dominant characteristic of eighteenth-century criticism in England -- the accommodation of aristocratic French dogma to pragmatic middle-class susceptibilities.¹ In general Addison relies on 'good taste' rather than on preconceptions. This 'good taste' was what the nouveaux riches were hoping to acquire from his work, and may be defined as informed good sense resulting in instinctively 'right' reactions. Addison may not be among the most profound of critics, but his moderation established good taste as the guiding principle of much subsequent English criticism.

The last of the three supremely influential figures, Samuel Johnson, distrusted the elusive concept of taste, his primary concern being to establish criticism on a rational basis. This led, as with the French critics of the seventeenth century, to narrowness of sympathy at times, but, added to a clear vision and an understanding

¹ Steele sums up the distrust of rigidity in theory when he talks in Tatler 29 of the contemporary critic as 'a sort of Puritan in the polite world' who quotes his authorities as the enthusiast quotes Scripture. (The Tatler ed. G.A. Aitken, (4 vols, London, 1898-9), i. 242) An age whose main objective was to avoid the excesses which had torn England apart in the recent past would readily understand his implication.

of humanity, it avoided the judgment by mere rule of thumb imposed by the Dick Minims. His rationalism was seldom unqualified by a recognition of the nature of his subject:¹

... Johnson, while not at all abandoning his effort to introduce into criticism as much certainty as the subject will permit, or his conviction that human nature and external nature possess certain common features which, when discovered or revealed by the passage of time, will provide the basis for reasoned statement, nevertheless abandons the pretense to certainty made by his predecessors and casts aside the principles and distinctions they have formulated.

For blind adherence to rules Johnson sought to substitute principles derived from the general nature of mankind. Most of his shortcomings arise from his considering too small a sample of mankind for its judgment to be representative of all peoples and ages. Johnson was nevertheless a conservative critic and his severe concern with rationality was not reflected in much of the practice of Gray or of Sterne, or the theory of Burke. He is essentially the embodiment of late English neoclassicism, liberal only up to a point, but as opposed to narrow dogmatism as his great predecessors had been, a determined and consistent advocate of the middle way.

By Johnson's time, however, various factors had contributed to weaken even the moderate hold that neoclassicism had on English literary theorists, and the Doctor's conservatism

¹ W.R. Keast, 'The Theoretical Foundations of Johnson's Criticism' in Crane ed., Critics and Criticism, p. 398.

was only a stout post in an ever-swelling torrent of liberalisation. It will be helpful to note here five tributary streams, while remembering that this torrent was frequently restrained by the moderating influence of the via media: extreme enthusiasm for any of the five main areas of development is rare.

In the first place that interest in human psychology which had begun with Hobbes was extensively developed, particularly in Scotland by Hume and Kames. Hume tried to show that taste could be more than a vague subjective impression, and stressed the necessity for repeated study of works to be evaluated, the ultimate test of a great work being its universal and permanent appeal, and also for comparison of works, both points taken up by Johnson. Good taste was the product of reason and feeling employing historical and comparative methods. Kames, seeking a science of criticism grounded in the nature of man's mind, as Coleridge was to do (though then not primarily in the rational mind), rejected the rigid definition of kinds which he saw as blurring into one another at the edges and stressed the operation of the general through the particular. Hume and Kames show at its most distinguished a practical psychological interest which informs much of the talk about sensibility and sentiment in the latter part of the century. Attention is turned not on the author obeying a set of rules, but rather on the effect of his work on the sensitive reader and generally on the reader's intelligent approach to the work, and finally back to the psychological process of creation.

A second, closely linked, characteristic of the liberalising process evident during the eighteenth century was the increased emphasis on key words common to all the arts, such as taste, sublime, originality, and genius, which are discussed in detail in the following chapter.

A third factor in the modification of neoclassical ideals was the continued appreciation of Shakespeare in England. Evidently in contravention of the rules, he was almost universally admired, particularly effectively in the enthusiastic essays of Dryden and Johnson. In Kames's Elements of Criticism (1762) and Morgann's Essay on the Character of Falstaff (1777) psychological character study and perception of the methods by which character is revealed take a stride forward.

When Shakespeare was condemned, it was often for grossness. Conventional middle-class morality came, after Collier's 1698 attack on the Restoration stage, to be a fourth main factor in the domestication of foreign thought, and one which is to be of particular importance in the succeeding chapters of this study: Johnson was only one of many to demand careful moral as well as aesthetic selection of materials in art.

Finally, historical investigation led to a perception of the relativity of standards. Temple had already recognised the need to allow for the age in which an author lived, but it was with the work of Joseph Warton on Pope, and Thomas Warton on Spenser and the History of English Poetry, together with Hurd's essay on chivalry and romance,

that it became possible to assert that Pope's achievement, however admirable, was not the supreme height of English poetry, and that medieval and renaissance works might need to be judged by standards altogether different, a conception far more extreme and radical than anything in Johnson's thought in this direction.

Thus towards the end of the eighteenth century an uneasy orthodoxy prevailed where refinement had absorbed a good deal of the sublime and the terrible, where progress along the lines suggested was possible without total disruption of the loosely neoclassical framework. Holding the precarious structure together was an insistence on middle-class decency and morality and on general intelligibility and good taste demanding the middle way in all art. Johnson was slightly old-fashioned and Wordsworth had not yet raised the whole of eighteenth-century speculation to a higher level and realised its forward-looking potential. It was in this uneasy calm that the Reviews which form the basis of this study had to work.

b) Terminology and Attitudes

i -- Introductory

In spite of those differences in emphasis which have been noted between several of the Reviews there is general agreement on the terminology employed, and where no contradictions are noted in this section it may be assumed that none has been found. Often this terminology is so colourless as to be impossible of analysis. Words such as amusing,

humorous, interesting, mediocre, pleasing, and striking take on specific meaning only in conjunction with more definite words and will therefore not be treated separately here. Furthermore, even the words which are here dealt with are often used so generally as to become mere 'purr' or 'growl' words, part of a critical cant or jargon which makes it possible for the reviewer to avoid any direct contact with the text. Such reviews as the following are no more illuminating than those noted in the dawn of reviewing:¹

This performance is by the same author, whose poetry is noticed in the preceding article. It deserves much commendation, and exhibits considerable taste and talent. Mr. Case, we doubt not, will write other and still better things.

This poem possesses considerable merit. The versification is generally easy and harmonious, and the imagery is lively and spirited. The following description of Psyche discovering Cupid is animated and poetical: ...

The generally mediocre standard of works presented for review inevitably provoked a good deal of this vague and unrewarding criticism. Nevertheless, there are few reviews which do not yield some hint of the reviewer's meaning in using his chosen terminology. The reviews quoted above do at least show that taste and talent, easy and harmonious

¹ BC 20 (0 02). 431: W. Case jun., The Minstrel Youth, (1802); MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 432: Cupid and Psyche, (1799) : (Ollivet Woodhouse: a quotation of over a page completes the review).

versification, lively and spirited imagery, and animated and poetical descriptions were considered commendable.

Further evidence as to reviewers' meanings may be gleaned in three main ways:

1. By careful examination of the terms which they use: words frequently linked with or opposed to one another are a help, and so are phrases which help the reader to understand words contained in them;
2. By examining the works to which the terms are applied;
3. Still more usefully, by considering passages in several of the reviews which afford a vantage point from which to survey the general critical plain in that they define terms and comment on the contexts in which they may or may not be usefully employed or otherwise help to set the terms in their critical context.

ii -- Terms Relating to Style

Correct, easy, elegant, harmonious, smooth¹

These five terms are most commonly used to describe verse which meets with the reviewers' approval. They are

¹ The form of these words is altered freely (noun to adjective and vice versa) to incorporate them most easily into the text.

frequently linked together, and, far more significant for the purpose of differentiation, hardly ever contrasted. Nevertheless, the occasional contrasting of the terms makes it impossible to take them as entirely synonymous. In each case it will be noted that a 'mild' quality is recognised to be incomplete without a 'severe' opposing or complementary quality: thus correctness needs animation, easiness vigour, and so on.

Correctness is most frequently also described as smooth¹ or elegant.² The loose but mannered heroic couplets of Elizabeth Scot will serve as an example of correct and smooth verse:³

The king with equal love the youth survey'd,
By nature's hand in every grace array'd.
His form the towering cedar of the grove;
His eyes the radiance of the star of love:
His cheeks th'unsullied rose of youth display;
Round his fair front his ébon tresses play:
Her finest polish culture's hand bestow'd,
And the full piece with perfect beauty glow'd.

The term correct is applied specifically to rhymes⁴ and

¹ CR (2) 31 (Ja 01). 112: M. Chamberlin, Equanimity, (1800), V; AJR 10 (S 01). 78: E. Scot, Alonzo and Cora, (1801), V.

² CR (2) 35 (My 02). 115: Opie, The Father and Daughter, (1801), NV.

³ Op. cit., p. 69.

⁴ MR n.s. 35 (Jl 01). 320: J. Bidlake, The Summer's Eve, (1800), V; (O. Woodhouse).

diction.¹ Qualities lacking at times in correct verse are an animated or sublime tone.² So in Johnson a correct and regular writer is regarded as inferior to Shakespeare, though more reliable.³

Easy verse is also often familiar⁴ or sprightly:⁵ it can also be agreeable (a colourless word),⁶ elegant,⁷ harmonious,⁸ and natural and sentimental.⁹ Easiness is

¹ CR (2) 31 (Ja 01). 112: Chamberlin, Equanimity, V.

² MR n.s. 37 (F 02). 171: W.T. Fitzgerald, Miscellaneous Poems, (1801); (Ferriar). AJR 5 (Ap 00). 432: T. Gisborne, Poems, Sacred and Moral, (1798); (Polwhele).

³ Preface to Shakespeare (1765) in Johnson on Shakespeare ed. Raleigh, (O.U.P., 1908), p. 34.

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 319: J. Bisset, A Poetic Survey Round Birmingham, (1800); (Moody).

⁵ CR (2) 29 (Je 00). 233: <Mrs Montolieu,> The Enchanted Plants, (1800), V.

⁶ CR (2) 29 (Je 00). 233.

⁷ MR n.s. 36 (D 01). 350: Mary Robinson, Memoirs, (1800), PV; (Moody).

⁸ BC 18 (D 01). 663: Scot, Alonso and Cora.

⁹ MR n.s. 38 (Je 02). 209: Lyrical Ballads, (1800).

found both in rhyme¹ and in versification.² Vigour may be lacking in easy verse,³ and one review notes that an example of easy verse is 'easy, and yet correct' which suggests that this can be an opposed quality.⁴ Johnson's definition sums up the ideal of easiness indicated by these usages:⁵

Easy poetry is that in which natural thoughts are expressed without violence to the language. ... Where any artifice appears in the construction of the verse, that verse is no longer easy. Any epithet which can be ejected without diminution of the sense, any curious iteration of the same word, and all unusual, tho' not ungrammatical structure of speech, destroy the grace of easy poetry.

The third term in this group of 'mild' words is elegance. At the beginning of a review in the largely dramatic periodical the Monthly Mirror of William Holloway's poem The Peasant's Fate a statement by Vicesimus Knox is approvingly cited:⁶

¹ AJR 7 (0 00). 222: Two Metrical Romances, (1799).

² MR n.s. 31 (F 00). 205: Tansillo, The Nurse, (1800), V.
CR (2) 30 (D 00). 426: The Annual Anthology vol. 2, (1800).

³ CR (2) 36 (S 01). 109: A. Thomson, Sonnets, Odes, and Elegies, (1801).

⁴ BC 18 (0 01). 346: Delille tr. Maunde, The Rural Philosopher, (1801), V.

⁵ The Idler 77 (6 6 59): The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson ii, (New Haven and London, 1963), 239.

⁶ M Mir 13 (F 02). 97. Knox's Elegant Extracts (1800) was widely used in girls' schools. See R.D. Altick, The English Common Reader, p. 176.

Well has it been observed, by our moral and ingenious Knox, that 'Poetry is not one of the necessities of life: the information it conveys might be conveyed in prose: it is sought only as an excellence, a refinement, an elegance: if, therefore, it is not excellent, refined, and elegant, it may be dispensed with ...'

Here in mechanical theory with a vengeance is the basis of the critical demand for elegance, a quality sometimes described as classical¹ and most frequently as harmonious² but also as easy,³ correct,⁴ simple,⁵ sweet,⁶ and tender.⁷ Knox's statement is supported by John Ferriar writing in the Monthly Review: 'If poetry be deprived of its elevation, its elegance, and even its mechanical decorations, it must

¹ BC 17 (My 01). 515: W. Boscawen, Poems, (1801). AJR 7 (N 00). 317: W. Collier, Poems on Various Occasions, (1800).

² MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 311: <Mrs Montolieu> The Enchanted Plants, (1800), V; (Turner). Cf. BC 15 (My 00). 514: Ibid.: '... the language, sentiment, and verse, are almost invariably elegant, chaste, and melodious.'

³ BC 16 (S 00). 319: J.A. Knight, Poems on Religious Subjects, (1800).

⁴ CR (2) 36 (N 02). 349: Sotheby, A Poetical Epistle to Sir George Beaumont, (1801), V.

⁵ BC 17 (F 01). 187: Mary Queen of Scots, (1800), V.

⁶ BC 16 (J1 00). 96: R.R. Castel, Les Plantes, (1799), V.

⁷ CR (2) 31 (F 01). 196: Collier, Op. cit..

sink beneath the level of tolerable prose.'¹ The opposition of elegance and sublimity leads to a major statement which occurs in the review by the British Critic of Currie's Burns, apropos of 'Bannockburn':²

But those who regard the power of inspiring passion as the noblest excellence of an ode; who know that passion has no leisure for elegance; that it is hardly reconcileable with that refinement of thought, or profusion of imagery, which are the principal causes of obscurity; that impassioned language is simple, negligent, abrupt, vehement, full of repetition, confined to its object, and, though often disorderly, yet more than clear, because peculiarly significant; those who have formed such a taste, and adopted such a standard of excellence in lyric poetry, will perhaps not blame us for saying, that we think this song scarcely inferior in spirit and energy to any English Ode that has appeared since Alexander's Feast.

This contempt for the merely elegant has in it all the eighteenth century's moderated enthusiasm for the sublime and is the critic's way of acknowledging a poet outstanding above the mediocre level of the writers with whom he usually has to deal. Here the reviewer's conception of the limitations of elegance is similar to that summed up by Johnson in his Dictionary definition: 'Beauty of art; rather soothing than striking; beauty without grandeur.'

¹ MR n.s. 34 (Ap 01). 438: J... Chandler, Sir Hubert, (1800), V.

² BC 17 (Ap 01). 419.

Harmony was expected in rhythm¹ and versification.² Most frequently it was linked with ease³ and strength,⁴ but also with animated,⁵ forceful,⁶ or spirited qualities.⁷ The usual qualification stressed that verse might be harmonious and yet lack finish or vigour.⁸

-
- ¹ BC 18 (N 01). 542: G. Walker, Poems, on Various Subjects, (1801).
 - ² AJR 12 (J1 02). 299: The Dream, (1802), V. BC 18 (Ag 01). 194: Persian Lyrics, (1800), V.
 - ³ (Of versification) MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 432: Cupid and Psyche, (1799), V; (O. Woodhouse). MR n.s. 36 (N 01). 323: The Genius of France, (1801), V; (Moody). (And chaste) CR 52) 31 (Ja-ap 01). 513: Delille, L'Homme des Champs, (1800), V.
 - ⁴ AJR 10 (D 01). 422: T. Dermody, Peace, (1801), V. MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 419: A. Murphy, Addisoni Epistola, (1799), V; (Bannister).
 - ⁵ BC 17 (My 01). 538: Chandler, Sir Hubert, (1800), V.
 - ⁶ AJR 9 (Je 01). 185: R.S. Sharpe, Matilda, (1801), V.
 - ⁷ MR 37 (Mr 02). 326: Ovid, Leander and Hero, (1800), V; (O. Woodhouse).
 - ⁸ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 439: Recreations at Ramsgate, (c. 1801), V. BC 20 (Ag 02). 122: G. Dyer, Poems, (1801), V.

For the last of these five main interlinked 'mild' terms, smoothness, it is necessary to return to the Burns review. Towards the end of this enthusiastic and extensive essay the critic comments on 'Here's a Health to Ane I Lo'e Dear':¹

The full merit of this excellent Song will be most felt by those who have had the misfortune to load their memory with tasteless unfeeling common places, which, by the help of smooth versification, have usurped the title of amorous poetry. Let any passage of the most tolerable of these cold triflers be compared with the third and fourth lines of this Song, the comparison will assuredly leave no doubt of the great superiority of Burns.

Smoothness, like elegance, does not by itself make great poetry. Smoothness alone may make verse tame.² Nevertheless, it is desirable and is nearly always commended. Linked with flowing,³ agreeable⁴ qualities, it is opposed to vivacity.⁵ The Burns review well illustrates what has been suggested, that for such a vague term to be really meaningful it must be set among more unusual critical terms.

Several less important terms of approbation for verse may be linked with these five. Chaste and classical verse is noted in a way which suggests that the writers

¹ BC 17 (Ap 01). 422.

² CR (2) 34 (Ap 02). 474: The Methodist, (1802), V.

³ BC 18 (N 01). 541: Hunt, Juvenilia, (1801).

⁴ BC 18 (D 01). 664: J. Fisher, The Valley of Llanherne, (1801), V.

⁵ BC 18 (Ag 01). 196: Parodies on Gay, (1800), V.

are looking back to the classics and their strictly neoclassical followers as bulwarks against modern stylistic degeneracy.¹ The suspicion is confirmed when one turns to a chaste and classical work, William Thomas Fitz Gerald's The Tears of Hibernia! Dispelled by the Union (1802). On pages 6 and 7 Hibernia addresses her Ireland thus:

"Ill-fated Isle! dear object of my care,
 "Whose sons are valiant, and whose daughters fair!
 "How often have I mourn'd the feuds that drove
 "Thy vocal harp from mountain, lake, and grove;
 "Where oft the rustic dance and harmless jest
 "Have cheer'd the cabin of the poor oppress'd;
 "Made him forget the weight of laws severe,
 "And smile through eyes accustom'd to a tear;
 "Of laws which for two hundred years had stood
 "A frowning barrier to the public good!
 "Such laws of Erin's son, by Nature brave,
 "Or made a rebel, or debas'd a slave! ..."

Cottle's polished poetry is also commended,² and Moody makes the comment:³

Strokes of genius and profundity of thought may be displayed, without polish and elegance; and though the want of grace cannot deprive them of their value, their attractions must ever be diminished by this deficiency.

¹ BC 16 (Ag 00). 251: Metastasio, Dramas, (1800).

² CR (2) 35 (J1 02). 353: Cottle, John the Baptist, (1802), V.

³ MR n.s. 40 (Ap 03). 368: J. Penn, Poems, (1801); (Moody).

Adverse criticism of poetry involved pointing out the absence of the desirable qualities.¹ It also necessitated the use of 'growl' words such as ruggedness² and harshness.³ Such verse might be allowed to genius on occasion, however, and Bowles's deliberate harshness is praised by the British Critic.⁴ A brief extract from the 'Song of the Battle of the Nile' (pp. 8-9) will illustrate this permitted harshness, which would not have been approved by all reviewers:

But now the mingl'd fight
 Begins its awful strife again!
 Through the dun shades of night
 Along the darkly-heaving main
 Is seen the frequent flash:
 And many a tow'ring mast with dreadful crash
 Rings falling: Is the scene of slaughter o'er?
 Is the death-cry heard no more?
 Lo! where the East a glimm'ring freckle streaks,
 Slow o'er the shadowy wave the grey dawn breaks.

In any event for the mediocre poets with whom the critics

¹ Harmony: BC 18 (S 01). 310: J. Boaden, A Rainy Day, (1801), V. Smoothness: BC 19 (F 02). 189: The Lamentation, (1801), V. Polish: BC 17 (Mr 01). 311: Trotter, Suspira Oceani, (1800), V. Finish: MR n.s. 39 (S 02). 70: M.M. Clifford, Egypt, (1802), V; (Moody). Perspicuity and strength: MR n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 377: H. Brand, Plays and Poems, (1798), DV. Melody: CR (2) 30 (S 02). 110: P. Courtier, The Pleasures of Solitude, (1800), V.

² MR n.s. 34 (Ja 01). 30: J. Burton tr. Warren, The Parish Priest, (1800), V; (R. Woodhouse).

³ CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 228: <G. Houghton,> Eliza, (1800), V.

⁴ BC 18 (Ag 01). 147: Bowles, Poems vol. 2, (1801), V.

usually had to deal absolute correctness, ease, elegance, harmony, and smoothness ²ad~~ad~~joined with the appropriate stronger qualities were the highest feasible aim.

The words in this 'mild' group were less frequently applied to novels, but they were still the chief means of commending the style. Elegance was linked with pure diction and correct language,¹ the language of the 'old school' once more,² while ease went hand in hand with natural and unaffected qualities.³ Bad style in novels was harsh or affected.⁴

Good drama might again be described as correct, elegant, and easy, bad dramatic writing as lacking in classical elegance. As in the case of verse, a play might be correct and still lack tragic fire.⁵ Correctness was felt by Ferriar in reviewing Ireland's Mutius Scaevola to be a refinement of the modern age:⁶

¹ AJR 7 (S-D 00). 504: Azala's et le Gentil Aimar, (1798), N.

² CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 231: Humbert Castle, (1800), N.

³ MR n.s. 33 (O 00). 206: Helena Wells, Constantia Neville, (1800), N. AJR 12 (J1 02). 301: Jealousy, (1802), N.

⁴ MR n.s. 34 (Mr 01). 321: Knigge, The History of the Amtsrath Gutman, (1799), N. BC 20 (D 02). 678: H.S.H. the M <arquis> of A <nsbach>, The Soldier of Dierenstein, (1802), N.

⁵ MR n.s. 35 (J1 01). 325: Earl of Carlisle, The Step-Mother, (1800), D; (Ferriar).

⁶ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 436.

It has evidently been the wish of Mr. Ireland to assume the noble irregularity and overpowering enthusiasm of our antient dramatists: but in this attempt he has totally failed, and has shewn that he is equally remote from the fervid genius of the older and the classical correctness of more recent writers.

Ferriar would probably have agreed with the British Critic's reviewer who finds the true neoclassical ideal in the recent past:¹

〈The translations〉 are written in sound and classical English, which, in a period of innovation and affectation, is no small claim to praise. This translator is of the old and regular school, which considers our language as something formed and fixed, not an imperfect dialect, which every pretender is at liberty to change and torture, according to his ideas of improvement.

Thus in all three genres the same ideal of correctness embracing all the terms dealt with so far is demanded, yet correctness is not by itself enough. It is often felt that the great age of classical and pure English has passed away and is being replaced by an inferior method of composition, and so when Wordsworth's mind as seen in the Lyrical Ballads is described as classic it is an indication that one reviewer conceives of him as continuing the great tradition.² On the critical side, the reviewers were maintaining their own branch of this tradition.

¹ BC 16 (Ag 00). 251: Metastasio, Dramas, (1800), D.

² AJR 5 (Ap 00). 434: Lyrical Ballads; (Heath).

Simplicity, obscurity, prosaic

A stylistic term which is more specifically explained and which calls for extended treatment apart from the terms just discussed is simplicity. The development of this ^kkey eighteenth-century critical term has been traced by R.D. Havens in his article 'Simplicity, A Changing Concept'.¹ Like most of the key words, its use was frequently vague, a term of mere canting approval. Thus Hugh Blair in his Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres:² 'Simplicity, applied to writing, is a term very frequently used; but, like many other critical terms often used loosely, and without precision.' During the century Simplicity was deemed essential for clarity, universality of appeal, and sublimity. Rustic and vulgar simplicity was, however, not admissible to serious literature. This was true both in the time of Pope and at the beginning of the following century. Thus Pope writes in the Preface to his translation of the Iliad:³

There is a graceful and dignify'd Simplicity, as well as a bald and sordid one, which differ as much from each other as the Air of a plain Man from that of a Sloven: 'Tis one thing to be tricked up, and another not to be dress'd at all. Simplicity is the Mean between Ostentation and Rusticity.

¹ JHI 14 (1953). 3-32.

² (2 vols, London, 1783), i. 387.

³ Pope, The Iliad of Homer ed. Mack: The Twickenham Edition vii.18, (London, 1967).

Richard Mant in his poem The Simpliciad, published anonymously in 1808, echoes the same sentiments. Simplicity is:¹

not with rags defil'd,
A stamm'ring, stagg'ring, puling, puny child:
But the great mother of a noble race,
Full-shap'd, harmonious, firm in voice and pace,
Inform'd by science, and array'd by grace.

Similarly, the reviewers see simplicity as being in danger of degenerating into a false prosaic pseudo-simplicity or of being swamped by affected, inflated, and obscure stylistic bravura. The Monthly Mirror puts the position with more lucidity and breadth of vision than any of the four Reviews under consideration:²

In reviewing the recent publications of Messrs. Bloomfield and Holloway, we took occasion to warn our Heliconian voyagers against the Scylla and Charybdis of modern poësy, the shoals of Della Cruscan, and the shelves of revolutionary verse -- toward which, whoever is impelled by the gales of vanity, or the current of singularity, will be liable to founder on the quicksands of oblivion. Mr. Thompson is in no danger of literary shipwreck from pursuing such a perilous course. He is directed by the compass of critical discretion, and the chart of classical authority,

"To steer his bark through Learning's ample tide,
And touch, by turns, at every tuneful coast."

By 'revolutionary verse' here it is clear from the context that excessive simplicity is meant and is being condemned. Della Cruscan obscurity and revolutionary simplicity are

¹ L1. 24-8.

² MMir 13 (Mr 02). 177: A. Thomson, Sonnets, Odes, and Elegies, (1801), V.

equally to be eschewed. Ferriar in attacking The Annual Anthology is equally insistent on the traditional via media:¹

In whatever form this enemy of good poetry may appear, whether in over-strained refinement or in vulgar simplicity, we shall use our utmost endeavours to expose it.

Obscurity² and prosaic simplicity³ in verse are indeed very widely condemned in the Reviews as they seek the via media. A looking back to the earlier and middle years of the eighteenth century as a time of neoclassic purity has already been noted on several occasions. Simplicity was also then at its most pure -- in the works of Gay, Pope, and especially Goldsmith.⁴ It is not entirely lacking in modern verse: apart from several minor writers, Wordsworth displays it according to the perceptive reviewer of the British Critic in diction, style, feeling, and expression in the Lyrical Ballads, and this is in contrast

¹ MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 363.

² MR n.s. 31 (F 00). 208: <Landor,> Gebir, (1798), V; (Ferriar). BC 15 (F 00). 190: Ibid.

³ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 262: Southey, Poems vol. 2, (1799); (Ferriar): Southey has been seduced by Cowper to produce prose for verse. BC 17 (Mr 01). 313: Poems Written by E.S.J., (1799).

⁴ Goldsmith and Gay: MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 358: The Annual Anthology vol. i; (Ferriar). Goldsmith and Pope: CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 464: W. Dimond jun., Petrarchal Sonnets, (1800).

to his early inflated verse.¹ Thomas Moore's pseudonymous Poetical Works of 1802 elicit an explanation of what Ferriar conceives of as being genuine simplicity:²

The general character of these verses is tenderness and simplicity; -- genuine simplicity, which gives force to expression, by divesting language of every superfluous decoration.

Simple verse is also likely to be elegant,³ though it may not be vigorous.⁴

In novels and prose works also simplicity is prized, though not apparently to the same extent as in the heyday of classicism.⁵ The simplicity and sublimity of the Bible is especially commended.⁶

Energy, force, strength

It has been seen that both correctness and simplicity can by themselves become insipid and prosaic. Something more is needed for a really satisfactory work, stylistically

¹ BC 17 (F301). 125-31.

² MR n.s. 39 (O 02). 176.

³ MR n.s. 38 (Ag 02). 437: Bowles, Poems vol. 2, (1801), V; (Moody).

⁴ BC 18 (J1001). 81: C. Hood, Remonstrance, (1801), V.

⁵ BC 15 (Je 00). 675: C. Lloyd, Edmund and Oliver, (1798), N: here simplicity refers mainly to naturalness of character and action, but also to speech.

⁶ BC 17 (Je 01). 667: W.H. Hall, The Creation, (1801), P.

considered: this may be generally characterised as energy, force, or strength, though once again various terms group themselves around the central 'severe' concept. The best poetry is spirited¹ and strong² as well as being energetic,³ nervous,⁴ and sprightly.⁵ Ideally the vigour of Dryden and the harmony of Pope will be united as in Beddoes' Verses.⁶ It is noteworthy that force, as well as correctness and polish, is to be laboured after.⁷

The absence of spirit and energy is frequently noted: resulting compositions are dull and prosaic,⁸

¹ BC 16 (N 00). 541: Earl of Carlisle, The Father's Revenge, (1800), V.

² BC 20 (O 02). 410: Mrs J. Hunter, Poems, (1802),.

³ BC 16 (Ag 00). 193: <W. Gifford,> Epistle to Peter Pindar, (1800), V.

⁴ CR (2) 30 (O 02). 226: Soame, Epistle, in Rhyme, to M.G. Lewis, (1799), V.

⁵ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 194: Mrs Hale, Poetical Attempts, (1800); (Moody).

⁶ CR (2) 28 (Ja 00). 89: The Annual Anthology vol. 1, (1799).

⁷ MR n.s. 34 (Ap 01). 440: Clericus, Tintern Abbey, V.

⁸ BC 20 (D 02). 675: W. Cockburn, Saint Peter's Denial of Christ, (1802), V.

tedious and insipid,¹ feeble,² and languid.³ The failure of modern epics is ascribed by Ferriar to a lack rather of 'poetical energy' than of machinery.⁴ It is noted, however, that the indiscriminate pursuit of force without the gentler qualities may lead to harshness.⁵

The same demands are made of the drama, and the same terminology is used. As modern epics lack energy, so Ferriar notes that modern drama, however correct, fails through lack of tragic fire.⁶

Terms relating to diction, grammar, and versification

The more general stylistic terms just considered lead to a consideration of the requirements and vocabulary of the reviewers related to three specific aspects of style -- diction, grammar, and versification. Pure poetic diction

¹ CR (2) 31 (F 01). 195: W. Collier, Poems on Various Occasions, (1800),

² BC 20 (Ag 02). 198: J. Cottle, A New Version of the Psalms of David, (1801), V.

³ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 312: H.F.R. Soame, Epistle in Rhyme to M.G. Lewis, (1799); (Ferriar).

⁴ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 359: Ogilvie, Britannia, (1801), V; (Ferriar).

⁵ BC 18 (O 01). 415: Bowles, The Sorrows of Switzerland, (1801), V: the reviewer later withdrew this censure: supra p. 100.

⁶ MR n.s. 35 (J1 01). 325: Earl of Carlisle, The Step-Mother, (1800), D; (Ferriar).

was envisaged as one neither clogged with affected and pompous words and phrases nor descending to excessive familiarity, such a diction as Johnson believed that Dryden had introduced, a 'system of words at once refined from the grossness of domestick use and free from the harshness of terms appropriated to particular arts.'¹

The first excess, of pomposity, led to the gaudy and alliterative² styles current at the end of the century in the Darwinian school.³ The second involved vulgarisms⁴ and low phraseology: thus Ferriar seizes on the word shards in 'To the Burnie Bee' in the first volume of the Annual Anthology and condemns it as unpoetical: it is in fact effective in its context.⁵ Especially severely condemned was the use of dialect words and expressions in serious poems, Scotticisms being among the chief

¹ Lives of the Poets ed. G.B. Hill, (3 vols, Oxford, 1905), i. 420.

² MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 433: R. Polwhele, Grecian Prospects, V; (O. Woodhouse).

³ BC 19 (Mr 02). 303: F.A. Rowden, A Poetical Introduction to the Study of Botany, (1801), V. AJR 10 (D 01). 356: Ibid.

⁴ MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 92: R.F. Cheetham, Poems, (1798); (Bannister). The word whetstone in one of his earlier poems is found too vulgar for poetry.

⁵ MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 359.

culprits.¹ Dialect could however be interesting: furthermore, the language of the common people had a beneficial influence not only on Wordsworth but also on Bürger who selected from it words suitable for poetic use.² Neologisms were often singled out for censure, creations such as storm-wind from the German,³ God-abandoned,⁴ a verb affectionate and the word tireless.⁵

In novel writing a middle way with diction was again recommended. Low words to be avoided included vulgarisms, those too plain for romance, those drawn from dialect speech, or words too poetic for the novel. Thus Ferriar notes as vulgarisms in the translation by Wennington of Miltenberg's (La Fontaine's) The Man of Nature: 'his lordship was struck a little on a heap' and 'the parson's

¹ BC 17 (Ap 01). 417: Burns, Works, (1800): Scotticisms are suitable only for comic verse. CR (2) 34 (Mr 02). 293: H. Macneill, Poetical Works, (1801). False dialect rhymes: CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 230: T. Sanderson, Original Poems, (1800). Provincialisms: BC 19 (Ap 02). 394: Science Revived, (1802), V.

² AJR 9 (My-Ag 01). 508: Gottfried August Bürger's Sämmtliche Schriften ed. Reinhard, (1796-8).

³ CR (2) 28 (Ja 00). 85: The Annual Anthology vol. 1.

⁴ BC 18 (D 01). 662: T. Dermody, Peace, (1801), V.

⁵ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 319: W. Dimond jun., Petrarchal Sonnets, (1800); (Ferriar).

wig twittered with amazement at seeing such a troop of folks galloping higgledy-piggledy;' and comments: 'They prove that Mr. W.'s eagerness to alter the English idiom proceeds from his ignorance of its real beauties.'¹

In reviewing G. Walker's novel The Three Spaniards Harrall states: 'Our author's language is not the language of romance', though here it is possible that language may mean merely the general method of treatment.² Maria Edgeworth is censured for using 'the dialect of the ton', that is of the fashionable world, which is insufficient for what she has to say.³ Moody condemns as provincialisms and colloquialisms 'motioning his father from him,' and 'spiritless and exhausted of an evening'. Mrs Moody writes of W.H. Ireland's Rimualdo that the language violates 'those principles of harmonious congruity which form the basis of a correct and uncontaminated diction.' Among other examples from Ireland when he 'deals too profusely in poetic description' Mrs Moody cites:⁵

The sun never rises but 'as the imperial charioteer of day, hast'ning his car of blazing light towards green ocean's occidental flood-gate.'

As in the case of poetry, neologisms are also condemned,

¹ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 146.

² AJR 6 (My 00). 52-3: G. Walker, The Three Spaniards, N.

³ CR (2) 34 (F 02). 236: Edgeworth, Belinda, (1801), N.

⁴ MR n.s. 38 (Jl 02). 331-2: Harriet Lee, Canterbury Tales vol. 4, (1801), N; (Moody).

⁵ MR n.s. 34 (F 01). 203-4: W.H. Ireland, Rimualdo, (1800), N.

again by Ferriar in his La Fontaine review:¹

If we supposed that his efforts were capable of affecting the structure of the language, we should enter into a full exposure of their impropriety:-- but, when we consider how quickly the innovations of very popular writers, such as Johnson and Gibbon, have been discredited, we shall content ourselves with remarking that the language of Fielding, Sterne, or Goldsmith, (though not writers of first-rate reputation in point of style,) might surely have sufficed for a performance like the present.

Unsuitable low diction is the chief complaint in this field with regard to drama. Obsolete words² and Scottish expressions³ are both condemned.

Errors in grammar and versification were frequently noted, and often these are responsible for the only criticism in reviews which is closely related to the text under consideration. The rise of the most unrelenting demand for regularity in prosody has been definitively traced by Paul Fussell jr in his study Theory of Prosody in Eighteenth-Century England.⁴ He shows how the regular metre of the decasyllabic heroic couplet came to be

¹ P. 145.

² AJR 12 (My 02). 21: W. Richardson, The Maid of Lochlin, (1808), D.

³ MR n.s. 31 (F 00). 211: Pizarro; ... By a North-Briton, D; (Ferriar): Scotticisms here seem barely tolerated.

⁴ (New London, Connecticut, 1954).

regarded as part of the Augustan triumph over barbarism, notably in Edward Bysshe's influential study The Art of English Poetry (1702), destined to be attacked by Scott when its turn had been served. Johnson admitted only one variation from strict iambic accents in each line, and that only because the monotony of endless iambs would have become intolerable, as it does in Richard Glover's epic Leonidas. Lyttelton wanted Thomson to replace the licentious line 42 in Autumn:

Unbounded, tossing in a flood of corn
with:

O'er waving golden fields of ripened corn.

Further, metrical and moral regularity were linked in a manner paralleled in the Reviews, as will be suggested when morality comes under discussion later in this chapter. Johnson was conservative in his adherence to a standard definitely tarnished by the latter part of the century, when accentual scansion was becoming widely accepted, but his scrupulosity is shared by many of the reviewers during the period under discussion.

As the reviewers deal with poetry, false rhymes are often criticised. Thus, the Critical notes name--again, moon--dawn, and ran--clang as bad rhymes in Morcar and Elfina.¹ Sometimes these rhymes may be due to regional variation and here the censure parallels that of dialect words: Ollivet Woodhouse notes of the 1799 Lucretius translation that it is full of apparently Irish rhymes such

¹ CR (2) 28 (Ja 00). 109:

as frame--theme, pertain--seen, partake--break, appear--dissimilar, state--complete.¹ The prosody of verse also came in for censure on the conservative lines established during the previous century, and words were sometimes found wrongly accented or contracted for the sake of the metre. Thus James Hurdis' 'The sight of winter's superb ocean left.' is found unworthy of a Professor of Poetry.² There are many instances of the criticism of ungrammatical phrases. The Monthly Review object 'as grammarians' to the phrase numbers numberless,³ while other phrases found faulty are:

In nameless grandeur, many a glorious thing,
('certainly a very meagre style of expression in a performance which aims at sublimity'),

Who left a blissful for a world of pain,⁴

and:

Smile, if he laughs: and if he frowns, they tremble.⁵

¹ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 209.

² MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 286: J. Hurdis, The Favourite Village, (1800), V; (Ferriar).

³ MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 92: R.F. Cheetham, Poems, (1798); (Bannister).

⁴ AJR 12 (My 02). 82: Cottle, John the Baptist, (1802), V.

⁵ CR (2) 33 (S 01). 58: Delille tr. Maunde, The Rural Philosopher, (1801), V: This is not the only example of 'unclassical phraseology' in this translation. The mixture of thy and your, the substitution of that for who in the relative, and the disyllabic power are three other instances.

This detailed criticism of points of versification and grammar is in the tradition of Johnsonian criticism which had accustomed its ear to distinguish niceties of emphasis within a very limited range of versification.

References to ungrammatical usage in novels and the drama are less frequent. The most interesting statement in this connection occurs in the Anti-Jacobin Review's treatment of Anne Ker's novel Adeline St. Julian (1800):¹

We are not vain enough to suppose that this lady writes with an intention of pleasing the Reviewers, yet we cannot refrain from offering a piece of friendly advice. Let her peruse Dilworth, Dyche, Fenning, or some other of our minor grammarians, with some little attention: it may prevent her from being perfectly unintelligible.

From a single number of the Anti-Jacobin Review with its censorious tone come examples of one reviewer's attitude to grammatical infelicities:²

... we wish the author to abstain from such faults as -- faintened -- hoarsened -- an horn -- an heart, &c.

The pages before us are disfigured by a variety of grammatical errors, such as follow:
"by degrees my mind assumed its tone, from reflecting, that the same power which had hitherto, might continue to protect me" -- "each being willing in the confusion to take care of themselves"
...

¹ AJR 7 (0 00). 202.

² AJR 6 (My 00). 55: J.N. Brewer, A Winter's Tale, (1800), N; (Harrall); 53: G. Walker, The Three Spaniards, N; (Harrall).

The basic nature of these criticisms is painful evidence of the quality of many of the novels which the reviewers had to endure.

On the dramatic side, the continual running together of lines in Bidlake's Virginia aroused the wrath of most of the reviewers. Examples given by the Critical include:¹

Without the sense of true desert 'twill give
Thee no delight ;..

and:

Why then he dies! Some way I'll find to rid
Me of his hated life, unles's thou deign'st to hear.

The British Critic, distressed by Godwin's irregular versification in his tragedy Antonio, offers him an ironical lesson in versifying, which will at least enable him to put ten syllables in each line, thus maintaining the strict syllabic tradition which has been noted.² This is the unquestioning superiority of reviewer to author at its most autocratic, pointing out that in grammar and versification the author might at least be expected to obey the rules. The review is however also extremely lively and very well written.

iii-- Arrangement, characterisation, images

Before the study passes to consider qualities which should be possessed by the author, these three topics call for

¹ CR (2) 31 (Mr 01). 350. Cf. BC 16 (S 00). 319.

² BC 17 (Ap 01). 367-8: Godwin, Antonio, (1800), D.

attention: their only common factor is that they are elements in a work considered as a whole and to some extent determine its individual quality.

As regards arrangement, most of the comments concern the novel and the drama. Those on poetry are of limited interest: a good poem should as Pope maintained not be overloaded with description,¹ it should be regularly and logically constructed with classical taste and correct judgment,² and the parts should be carefully linked.³ The plots of novels ought to be artfully developed,⁴ and the Critical once again reminds the reader that this used to be the practice in the good old days when novelists were careful:⁵

It is true that it might have been rendered more perfect, in many parts, if the author had bestowed upon it a little after-consideration: but there is nevertheless a strong smack of the old school in its form and construction, and the correctness of the language entitles it to much commendation.

Bad plots were likely to be bare of incident⁶ and insipid.⁷

¹ MR n.s. 35 (My 01). 110: The Vale of Trent, (1801), V.

² BC 18 (J1 01). 28: Pye, Alfred, (1801).

³ CR (2) 35 (My 02). 52: Science Revived, (1802), V.

⁴ CR (2) 33 (D 01). 460: The Microcosm, (1801), N.

⁵ CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 231: Humbert Castle, (1800), N.

⁶ AJR 8 (Ja-Ap 01). 516: Mme E. T---, Lettres de la Vendée, (1800), N: incident is replaced by sentiments and tiresome repetition of ideas.

⁷ CR (2) 28 (Ap 00). 477: Mrs Robinson, The Natural Daughter, (1799), N: 'plotless insipidity'.

In this area of the via media the extremes of bareness and over-complexity were to be avoided. One unusual statement calls for attention: the anonymous reviewer of Castle Rackrent in the Monthly Review was able to recognise the merit of the work, and made an unusual comment on its organic structure:¹

The Memoirs of the Rackrents are not of a nature to admit of extracts, without injury to the whole; the structure of which is of so peculiar and singular a cast, that the reader, to be himself pleased, and to do justice to the author, must be enabled to judge of the connection and dependencies of the several parts.

The demands made of dramatic plots were similar: barrenness of incident and excessive complexity were both to be eschewed,² as were irregularity³ and abrupt transitions. These last were attributed to German influence.⁴ An unusual point is made by the Anti-Jacobin Review -- that American dramas have little to boast of in the way of plot. This statement occurs in a survey of American literature

¹ MR n.s. 32 (My 00). 91: <Maria Edgeworth,> Castle Rackrent, (1800).

² BC 17 (Je 01). 615: The Conspiracy of Gowrie, (1800), D.
BC 19 (My 02). 537: F. Reynolds, Folly as it Flies, (1802), D.

³ AJR 7 (S 00). 61: J. Cobb, Ramah Droog, (1800), D: the reviewer probably objects to the mixture of tragedy, comedy, and farce noted by CR (2) 30 (O 00). 229.

⁴ BC 16 (O 00). 438: Mariana Starke, The Tournament, (1800), D.

to the time of writing.¹

The requirements of characterisation were seen to be virtually the same in the novel and the drama. Good characterisation was well-sustained,² discriminated,³ diversified,⁴ well bound together,⁵ and with an element of novelty.⁶ Bad characterisation was inconsistent,⁷

¹ AJR 9 (Ag 01). 348: C.J. Ingersoll, Edwy and Elgiva, (1800), D.

² BC 17 (Mr 01). 316: Adonia, (1801), N. MR n.s. 35 (J1 01). 325: Earl of Carlisle, The Step-Mother, (1800), D.

³ CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 470: Clara, (1801), N.

⁴ CR (2) 31 (F 01). 236: Mrs Croffts, Ankerwick Castle, (1800), N. MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 152: J.M. Mason, Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, (1798), P; (Ferriar).

⁵ CR (2) 29 (Ag 00). 472: Miss A.A. Hutchinson, Exhibitions of the Heart, (1799), N.

⁶ MR n.s. 33 (O 00). 210: <James Sands,> Count di Novini, (1799), N; (Capt. Burney).

⁷ MR n.s. 36 (O 01). 187: Mme de Genlis, The Rival Mothers, (1801), N; (Mrs Moody).

ill-contrasted,¹ unoriginal,² and ill-motivated.³ This is unexciting enough. Several more interesting comments do however appear in the pages of the Reviews. The theme of probability is elaborated: Ollyet Woodhouse uses an interesting phrase in his review of R.C. Dallas's novel Percival which he accuses of 'a casual want of poetical truth in the conception of character'⁴ which I presume to mean a lack of inner consistency and probability. Caricature is frowned upon as denying the strict demands of probability,⁵ but the same article in the British Critic notes with approval that 'The good characters are given with admirable skill, and form a useful and a striking contrast to the bad.'⁶ Finally, Ferriar adopts the well-tried doctrine of generality when he notes that the fashionable portraits of Beaumont and Fletcher have aged more than the general characters of Shakespeare.⁷

¹ AJR 6 (My 00). 53: G. Walker, The Three Spaniards, N.

² CR (2) 28 (Ap 00). 477: Elizabeth Helme, Albert, (1799), N.

³ MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 427: Thomas Morton, Speed the Plough, (1800), D.

⁴ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 425.

⁵ BC 16 (O 00). 439: Elizabeth Namilton, Memoirs of Modern Philosophers, (1800), N.

⁶ Loc. cit.

⁷ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 152-3: J.M. Mason, Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, (1798), P.

On imagery the reviewers have little of real interest to say. Their main demand was for novelty, as Johnson's had been,¹ and this novelty might consist in the combination of images.² Considerable praise was given to lively and spirited³ and sublime images.⁴ One demand for correctness of imagery in a novel is strange: the Critical says of The Wise Men of Gosmanthorpe that the story itself does not possess much correctness of imagery.⁵ A hint of what is meant here may be gathered from Robert Woodhouse's comment on the poem The Caldron:⁶

... we wonder that the author should not have been more attentive to the propriety of imagery in his first four lines:

'Mid Scotia's wilds, unknowing and unknown,
On silent wing my noon of life has flown,
And evening bears me with declining light
To the dread confines of sepulchral night.'

Why does the noon of life fly on silent wing? If this

¹ CR (2) 36 (S 02). 113: W.L. Bowles, The Sorrows of Switzerland, (1801), V.

² AJR 5 (Ap 00). 432: T. Gisborne, Poems, Sacred and Moral, (1798), V; (Polwhele).

³ MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 432: Cupid and Psyche, (1799), V; (O. Woodhouse).

⁴ AJR 7 (N 00). 317: W. Collier, Poems on Various Occasions, (1800), V.

⁵ CR (2) 33 (S 01). 114: The Wise Men of Gosmanthorpe, (1801), N.

⁶ MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 431-2: The Caldron, V; (R. Woodhouse).

image could be justified by classical or other authority, the next line would be objectionable, 'And evening bears me,' &c.

Imagery was regarded as a decoration which could be added to a poem at will, and it was expected to be logically consistent rather than subliminal.

iv -- Qualities of the Author: Judgment and Taste, Genius and Imagination, Wit

Judgment stands in much the same situation with regard to genius and imagination as correctness and its terminological satellites do to force and its. Fancy¹ and imagination² lacking judgment must both become undisciplined. On the other hand, Jeffrey states firmly that Diligence, judgment, and good sense are of small avail without the true poetic fire, the mens divini³. Judgment is the steadying faculty which can coolly estimate the value of things. It may be applied to moral solidity⁴ or (with taste) to typographical layout.⁵ Since youth is to be taught sound

¹ AJR 7 (O 00). 173: 'A. Geresteo', Sassandra Psegdomantis, (1800), V.

² MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 93: R.F. Cheetham, Poems, (1798); (Bannister).

³ MR n.s. 39 (D 02). 435: W. Boscawen, Poems, (1801); (Jeffrey).

⁴ MR n.s. 32 (Ag 02). 438: Frederic Latimer, (1799), N; (Wallace). AJR 5 (F 00). 201: R. Polwhele, The Influence of Local Attachment, (1798), V; (J. Gifford).

⁵ BC 16 (N 00). 540: Earl of Carlisle, The Father's Revenge, (1800), V.

judgment¹ one presumes that, like understanding, it may be cultivated.² In their stress on judgment as the controlling factor in literary matters the reviewers stand in the tradition extending from Hobbes through most of the following century's theorists and disciplining the unruly imagination.³ It is not, however, the most frequently invoked faculty, and this places the reviewers in the lighter critical atmosphere of that fin de siècle.

Taste is very closely related to judgment and is used about four times as frequently in these Reviews. The unexciting eighteenth-century norm Blair defines taste as 'The power of receiving pleasure from the beauties of nature and art.'⁴ The concept of taste had appeared already

¹ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 334: Maria Edgeworth, Moral Tales for Young People, N.

² MR n.s. 33 (B 00). 101: Mme de Genlis, The Young Exiles, (1799), N; (Mrs Moody).

³ M.H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, (1953: 1958 printing, New York), pp. 164-6.

⁴ Cited in Gordon Mackenzie, Critical Responsiveness A Study of the Psychological Current in Later Eighteenth-Century Criticism, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949), p. 91. Other important studies of taste are to be found in the following discussions:

A. Aronson, 'The Anatomy of Taste A Note of Eighteenth-Century Periodical Literature' MLN 61 (1946). 228-236.

Atkins, Op. Cit., Ch. 1.

R.W. Babcock, 'The Idea of Taste in the Eighteenth Century' PMLA 50 (1935). 922-6. /ctd

4 ctd

W.J. Bate, From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England, (Cambridge, Mass., 1946), especially Ch. II.

A. Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson, (Groningen, Djakarta, 2 edn 1953), Part III.

R.L. Brett, 'The Aesthetic Sense and Taste in the Literary Criticism of the Early Eighteenth Century' RES 20 (1944). 199-213.

S.G. Brown, 'Observations on Hume's Theory of Taste' English Studies 20 (1938). 193-8.

Wilson O. Clough, 'Reason and Genius -- an Eighteenth Century Dilemma (Hogarth, Hume, Burke, Reynolds)' PQ 23 (1944). 33-54.

Marjorie Grene, 'Gerard's Essay on Taste' MP 41 (1943-4). 45-58.

E.N. Hooker, 'The Discussion of Taste, from 1750 to 1770, and the New Trends in Literary Criticism' PMLA 49 (1934). 577-92.

Martin Kallich, 'The Meaning of Archibald Alison's Essays on Taste' PQ 27 (1948). 314-24.

John Steegman, The Rule of Taste from George I to George IV, (London, 1936).

René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950 vol. i, (London, 1955), Ch. 6.

in the *Précieuses* but it had become something of a rallying point for those who objected to neoclassic rigour: in 1688 La Bruyère had suggested that the je ne sais quoi was rationally justifiable in that there was only one exactly correct way of expressing each thought. The reviewers' conception of taste reflects the many eighteenth-century attempts to rationalise a potentially disruptive faculty, attempts which Johnson rightly saw as futile. All such attempts, even that of Hume, presuppose the common taste which they are trying to prove. Taste might be referred to the common opinion with all the ambiguities

which that involved, as in Hume; it might be regarded as an internal sense akin to the moral, as in Shaftesbury and Gerard; it might in traditional faculty psychology be controlled by judgment, as in Burke; it might finally be grounded in the new associational psychology, as in Alison. The only broadening force to be set against these restricting tendencies was the development of a degree of historical relativity, opening up quite different tastes to challenge the Augustan norm. By and large, taste was the quality which the nouveaux riches sought, just as they sought standards of middle-class moral behaviour, as the limitations of the new rationalism were felt. It was this traditional taste which the reviewers sought to preserve: the conflicts between taste and judgment, taste at birth and cultivation of taste, like the basic reason-emotion dichotomy could be resolved only by Coleridge's dynamic organicism.

The comments of the reviewers are detailed and interesting, showing a unanimity of attitude possible only in a conservative setting. The term taste is used indiscriminately of author and reader. The principles of taste are immutable, though fashions may change in literature.¹ Good taste may be generally lacking as in contemporary drama:²

¹ AJR 5 (Mr 00). 252: Lucretius ed. Wakefield, Works, (1796-7); (Polwhele).

² MR n.s. 32 (J1 02). 322: J.G. Holman, The Red-Cross Knights, (1799), D; (Ferriar).

We should imagine, indeed, that our dramatists were deprived both of invention and judgment, by some intellectual palsy, if we were to judge of the power of production by the plays actually brought forwards: but we suppose that no writer of good taste will attempt to succeed on the stage, till the present barbarous exhibitions shall be discouraged. While the public taste is childish and capricious, no one would trust a precious manuscript within its reach.

Also, the national taste has altered, in drama, the Anti-Jacobin Review agrees, for the worse.¹ Modern German assaults are amusingly repelled by Ferriar from the citidal of taste.² It is Ferriar too who welcomes Eastern poetic conventions as an antidote to 'the late prevailing Gothic taste'.³ Dramatic taste may have declined, but past ages had ~~their~~ defects in taste too: it was against prevalent bad taste that Claudian had fought.⁴

Good or just taste appears to have been thought of as the ability to perceive that middle way which poetry ought to adopt. This is most clearly illustrated by the

¹ AJR 6 (My 00). 57: F. Reynolds, Management, (1799), D; (Harrall).

² MR n.s. 32 (Jl 00). 323: Iffland tr. Lloyd, The Nephews, (1799), D; (Ferriar).

³ MR n.s. 38 (Je 02). 206: Selim and Zaida, V. Gothic here signifies barbarous and unclassical. See Alfred E. Longueil, 'The Word "Gothic" in Eighteenth Century Literary Criticism' MLN 38 (1923). 453-60.

⁴ BC 16 (Jl 00). 97: Claudian, Oeuvres Completttes, (1798), V.

Critical's remark on Anne Bannerman's Poems:¹

Her effusions are the genuine offspring of a lively and excursive imagination, regulated by the principles of just taste, equally removed from the uninteresting dullness of common-place on one hand, and the false glitter of extravagance and ambitious ornament on the other.

It is the via media between the prosaic and the Darwinian which has already been stressed, the educated man's yardstick against the Della Cruscan² and against prosaic verse.³

When good taste is not present we are likely to be faced with 'far-fetched thoughts and tawdry words and phrases' instead of the linguistic simplicity of Goldsmith and Pope,⁴ or with extravagance and obscurity.⁵ Taste is

¹ CR (2) 31 (Ap 01). 455: Anne Bannerman, Poems, (1800), V.

² BC 18 (N 01). 523: Hannah Cowley, The Siege of Acre, (1801), V: 'We are however compelled to say, that the taste of the writer seems extremely vitiated; and, we greatly fear that the acute author of the Daviad would not be induced, on perusal of this Poem, to retract an item of his former severity.'

³ MR n.s. 39 (D 02). 389-90: Goethe tr. Holcroft, Herman and Dorothea, (1801), V; (Jeffrey).

⁴ CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 464: W. Dimond jun., Petrarchal Sonnets, (1800), V.

⁵ BC 19 (Ja 02). 82: T. Noble, The Dawn of Peace, (1801), V.

seldom perfect when innate,¹ and Burns's correctness of taste surprised the Critical's reviewer:² most people have to cultivate taste.³ As a result, good taste is discerned most frequently by the reviewers in worthy but dull poems such as Anne Bannerman's Poems ('true poetic taste'),⁴ Champion's Miscellanies ('elegance of taste'),⁵ Poems Chiefly Sonnets ('classical taste')⁶ and the work of Rogers (refined taste).⁷ Taste is usually opposed to the more fiery poetic qualities such as imagination⁸ and genius.⁹

¹ So too in Addison's influential Spectator No. 409 (iii. 527-31), where birth and cultivation are equally important.

² CR (2) 30 (N 00). 307: Burns, Works ed. Currie, (1800), V.

³ AJR 13 (S&D 02). 459: Mme de Genlis, A Series of Novels, (1802), N. MR n.s. 39 (O 02). 179: 'T. Little' <Thomas Moore>, Poetical Works, (1801); (Ferriar).

⁴ BC 16 (Ag 00). 141: Anne Bannerman, Poems, (1800), V.

⁵ MR n.s. 38 (Je 02). 186: A. Champion, Miscellanies, (1801), PV; (Ferriar).

⁶ BC 18 (D 01). 661: Poems Chiefly Sonnets.

⁷ AJR 5 (Ja 00). 71: <S. Rogers> An Epistle to a Friend, (1798), V; (Polwhele).

⁸ MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 93: R.F. Cheetham, Poems, (1798), V; (Bannister).

⁹ CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 464: W. Dimond jun., Petrarchal Sonnets, (1800).

This leads to the final aspect of taste to be considered -- that inherent in the reader. The reviewers criticise from the basis of cultivated taste:¹ as the reviewer recognised the faults of William Dimond, so the reader of good taste will recognise the obscurities of Shakespeare's sonnets and dismiss his poems as generally inferior to the plays.²

Taste thus appears as that quality in the author which produces, or in the reader which recognises, the more formal concepts of correctness and its associated terms and which perceives the via media. It is very closely linked with judgment,³ and is opposed to those fiercer qualities of genius and imagination to which the discussion now turns.

The term genius was so widely applied that it often meant little more than natural talents. This had been common practice since the seventeenth century with the abandonment of the earlier vatic connotations.⁴ Johnson's

¹ AJR 7 (S 00). 27: Ann Radcliffe, The Italian, (1797), N.

² MR n.s. 31 (F 01). 189-90: George Chalmers, A Supplemental Apology, (1799), P; (Ferriar).

³ A quotation from Lloyd's Edmund Oliver contrasting the laudable quality of judgment with the false sophisticated taste instilled by hated education is condemned: BC 15 (Je 00). 675: C. Lloyd, Edmund Oliver, (1798), N.

⁴ See Paul Kaufman, 'Heralds of Original Genius' in Essays in Memory of Barrett Wendell, (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), pp. 191-217.

Dictionary had included the varying definitions: '2. A man endowed with superior faculties. ... 3. Mental power or faculties. ... 4. Disposition of nature by which any one is qualified for some peculiar employment ...' and in the Life of Cowley he writes: 'The true Genius is a mind of large general powers, accidentally determined to some particular direction.'¹ Johnson had seen nothing new in Young's Conjectures on Original Composition of 1759 with its enthusiastic championing of original genius, but by the end of the century after the essays of Duff (1767) and Gerard (1774) on Original Genius and Genius respectively William Jackson of Exeter had, unlike Addison in the 166th Spectator, no doubts that genius was innate rather than developed. The reviewers confine themselves almost entirely to the lower level, avoiding such dangerous kindlings.

Thus in the course of an admiring and very lengthy abstract of Laharpe's Lycée, Charles Burney writes:

The antients, who personified every thing, assigned to all human beings an attendant spirit; a good or evil genius. In later times, genius was confined to mental powers of invention, combination, penetration, &c.: but, in the present day, it seems to be vulgarly applied in saying that a man of talents, of any odd or peculiar kind, is a genius.

Ferriar notes an abuse of the term in English criticism by 'those who consider the power of writing passable

¹ Lives of the Poets, i. 2.

² MR n.s. 33 (1800). 451: J.F. Laharpe, Lycée, (1799 etc.), P.

comedies as a mark of extraordinary genius¹ but when he writes: 'Like several other writers of the present day, however, Mr. Fitzgerald appears to have mistaken the bent of his genius, in attempting serious poetry' and then goes on to reproach him with an excessive rationality typical of modern versifying, he is clearly not intending anything more than 'natural talents'. He is not being ironical.² Nevertheless, the term is not restricted to this level. It often involves a certain carelessness of the rules which only great writers can allow themselves. Ferriar writes again of Schiller:³

... we are glad to see any thing void of absurdity and extravagance from an author whose bold genius has so completely defied all rules.

In lesser writers, too, genius may, to some extent at least, atone for the concomitant crudities.⁴

¹ MR n.s. 34 (Je 01). 78: Kotzebue tr. Plumptre, Sketch of Life, (1800), P; (Ferriar).

² MR n.s. 37 (F 02). 171: W.T. Fitzgerald, Miscellaneous Poems, (1801), V; (Ferriar).

³ MR n.s. 33 (O 00). 131: Schiller tr. Coleridge, Wallenstein, (1800); (Ferriar).

⁴ CR (2) 37 (Ja 03). 49: T. Dermody, Poems on Various Subjects, (1802),

The use of fancy and imagination is confused. In the majority of cases they seem to have the same range of meanings.¹ It was common in the eighteenth century for

¹ Studies of the eighteenth-century view of the imagination include:

W.J. Bate, From Classic to Romantic: Ch. III. 'The Sympathetic Imagination in Eighteenth-Century English Criticism' ELH 12 (1945). 144-64.

Donald F. Bond, '"Distrust" of Imagination in English Neo-Classicism' PQ 14 (1935). 54-69.

'The NeopClassical Psychology of the Imagination' ELH 4 (1937). 245-64.

A. Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson, p. 30 et seq.

John Bullitt and W.J. Bate, 'Distinctions between Fancy and Imagination in Eighteenth-Century English Criticism' MLN 60 (1945). 8-15.

Wilma L. Kennedy, The English Heritage of Coleridge of Bristol 1798 The Basis in Eighteenth-Century English Thought for his Distinction between Imagination and Fancy, (New Haven, 1947).

Harold Taylor, 'Hume's Theory of Imagination' UTQ 12 (1943). 180-90.

Clarence De Witt Thorpe, 'Addison and Hutcheson on the Imagination' ELH 2 (1935). 215-34.

Hoyt Trowbridge, 'Joseph Warton on the Imagination' MP 35 (1937-8). 73-87.

W.B.C. Watkins, 'Dr. Johnson on the Imagination: A Note' RES 22 (1946). 131-4.

E.R. Wasserman, 'Another Eighteenth-Century Distinction between Fancy and Imagination' MLN 64 (1949). 23-5.

George G. Watson, 'Contributions to a Dictionary of Critical Terms: Imagination and Fancy' EC 3 (1953). 201-14.

René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism 1750-1950 vol. i: especially Ch. 6.

imagination and fancy to be treated as synonymous. Addison uses the terms 'promiscuously' in Spectator 411, while Johnson defines 'imagination' as 'fancy' and vice-versa in his Dictionary. Little of Coleridge's organic and dynamic imagination is visible before Gerard: even then for most theorists as for Dryden the imagination merely rearranged the material accumulated by the memory, while for Addison and Joseph Warton its operation was primarily visual and Addison's 'primary' and 'secondary' distinction has not been generally admired. It was frequently stressed that judgment should keep the imagination under control, and even Hume who placed imagination higher than the wilful fancy retreated to rationalism in the last resort. Distinctions setting the imagination above the fancy are often found late in the century as well as in Hume: for Reynolds Raphael had 'more taste and fancy' and Michelangelo 'more genius and imagination'. Similarly Mrs Piozzi in her British Synonymy (1794) distinguished between the boundless imagination of Paradise Lost and the exquisite fancy of The Rape of the Lock. The importance of the imagination was further augmented by the dawning conception of 'the essential truth of its conception as contrasted with the fallibility of reason'.¹ The whole eighteenth-century development is well summarised by Wilma Kennedy:²

By uncovering and reasserting for his century a self-directing power in mind superior to the reasoning, George Berkeley offered a basis for

¹ Bate, 'The Sympathetic Imagination', p. 144.

² Op. Cit., pp. 91-2.

recognition of an autonomous faculty of imagination associated with reason. By asserting the proneness of the understanding to error and noting the laboriousness of its operations as compared with those of the intuitive reason, David Hume challenged the right of the understanding to dominate imagination. William Collins made the important association of imagination with truth and revealed unmistakably that creativeness is more than combination of images. Though it is obvious that Joshua Reynolds did not meet the five conditions fully, to recognize as he did "a kind of intuition" by which the man of imagination is guided, to understand the creativeness of Michael Angelo, to know imagination as "residence of truth," and therefore autonomous, was to recognize in a measure all five.

For the reviewers the least elevated of the synonymous meanings of fancy and imagination is simply 'an ingenuity in invention'. Thus a tale of imagination exhibits luxuriant fancy,¹ while an unbridled use of fancy in a novel leads to a sense of improbability.² On a higher level the imagination 'elevates the mind' and 'agitates the feelings',³ while the higher regions of fancy are attained by melodious verse and the ardour of poetical enthusiasm.⁴ A hint of the distinction noted in the later eighteenth century is perceptible in the Critical's observation that the heart (possibly meaning 'sympathetic

¹ AJR 7 (D 00). 415: Humbert Castle, (1800), N.

² MR n.s. 32 (My 00). 93: Mrs Robinson, The Natural Daughter, (1799), N; (Capt. Burney).

³ CR (2) 34 (Ap 02). 369: Pye, Alfred, (1801).

⁴ CR (2) 30 (S 00). 110: P. Courtier, The Pleasures of Solitude, (1800), V.

imagination') as well as fancy is essential if a work is to attain immortality.¹ But for the most part the reviewers are conservative for their period: both fancy and imagination are to be restrained by judgment.² Like genius they are dangerous and are to be kept strictly under control.

Three kinds of wit and humour are lucidly outlined by Ollyet Woodhouse in discussing the Beattie miscellany of 1799:³

Of Mr. B.'s ludicrous verses, we cannot much commend either the humour or the wit; the latter is not remarkable for brilliancy, delicacy, or point; and the former is neither of the broad and palpable kind which, by its caricatured features, forces sudden and instantaneous laughter, nor of that refined and corrected species which, under the disguise of simplicity, and by means of a chaste sobriety of manner, insinuates itself into the mind, and steals the smile of approbation.

Wit is the quality which Anstey had possessed but which is lacking in a modern imitator of the celebrated Bath satirist.⁴ Once again the golden age is prominent in the reviewers' thoughts. Learning is too heavy for the delicacy necessary for wit in the Cassandra Pseudomantis,⁵

¹ CR (2) 34 (Mr 02). 289: H. Macneill, Poetical Works, (1801).

² Supra p. 122.

³ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 66.

⁴ MR n.s. 35 (Je 01). 210: G. Orchestikos, Convivialia et Saltatoria, V; (Moody). CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 227: Ibid. BC 17 (F 01). 190: Ibid.

⁵ AJR 7 (O 00). 173.

and modern drama tends to lack wit.¹ Humour is censured for buffoonery² while ideal humour is light without trifling.³

v -- Picturesque, Sensibility, Sublimity

Three types of feeling for situation or character are here treated in one section. Of the first, the picturesque, there is little to say as it occurs very rarely indeed in these reviews. Hamilton comments on his fellow-countryman Macneill's The Links o' Forth:⁴

It abounds with picturesque delineations of the romantic scenery adjacent to the town and castle of Stirling; where the remains of antique grandeur have shed a pensive charm over the author's Doric verse.

Bürger excels in the picturesque as well as in the terrible, the jovial, and the pathetic,⁵ while Chamberlin's Ocean has neither animated nor picturesque elements in its descriptions.⁶ Romantic undertones and a certain gentleness are the two elements of the picturesque most clearly expected in these comments. They show that the recently developed concept of a rough visual beauty midway between

¹ BC 17 (Ap 01). 433: J. Cobb, Ramah Droog, (1800), D.

² BC 16 (O 00). 437: A. Franklin, The Egyptian Festival, (1800), D.

³ BC 17 (Ap 01). 436: <Mrs Martin,> The Enchantress, (1801), N.

⁴ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 324.

⁵ AJR 9 (My-Ag 01). 508: Bürger ed. Reinhard, Sämmtliche Schriften, (1796-8), V.

⁶ CR (2) 34 (Mr 02). 354: Chamberlin, Ocean, V.

the beautiful proper and the sublime and with an especial affection for rugged ancient buildings soon fulfilled an important function in the language of popular aesthetics.¹

The cult of sensibility, being a peculiarity of the pre-romantic period, inevitably finds its reflection in the pages of these Reviews. In general they approve of the movement though it can lead to excess and the dangers are frequently pointed out.

Sensibility, tenderness, the feeling mind, and above all pathos, are the qualities most frequently noted by the reviewers in the truly sentimental author. Sensibility is often coupled with taste in approving reviews, presumably implying that it is to be held in check.² As sensibility requires taste, so the feeling mind is, at its best, also regulated by taste,³ while devoid of artifice and affectation.⁴ The term pathos is more frequently used than any other. It would appear to signify 'sympathetic compassionate feeling' in the majority of cases. Thus, in Pye's Verses the pathos is a feeling of pity for the author's situation, driven by ambition to leave his native vale for the battlefield.⁵

¹ See Christopher Hussey, The Picturesque, (London, 1927).

² BC 16 (Ag 00). 141: Anne Bannerman, Poems, (1800).

³ BC 18 (D 01). 662: T. Dermody, Peace, (1801), V.

⁴ BC 20 (Ag 02). 410: J. Hunter, Poems, (1802).

⁵ BC 20 (J1 02). 69-70: Pye, Verses written in the Vicinity of Stoke Poges, (1802).

Pathos is opposed to sublimity in scale, so that, according to the British Critic, sublimity cannot exist in a sonnet whereas pathos and elegance can.¹

These qualities affect the sensitive reader: the heart is softened² and affected by truth, simplicity, and pathos,³ and the bosom is spoken to.⁴ Sympathy is inspired by the exposure of social wrongs such as the slave trade.⁵

It was of course possible for sympathy to be elicited for the wrong cause. Ferriar complains that Southey's 'The Complaints of the Poor', besides being prosaic, is strange in an era of poor help.⁶ This is related to a wider and more general cause which the reviewers found for complaint, that false sensibility

¹ BC 18 (Ag 01). 145: W.L. Bowles, Poems vol. 2, (1801).

² CR (2) 31 (F 01). 234: 'John Beaufort' <i.e. John Thelwall,> The Daughter of Adoption, (1801), N.

³ CR (2) 34 (Mr 02). 290: H. Macneill, Poetical works, (1801).

⁴ CR (2) 32 (My 01). 39: Charlotte Smith, Letters of a Solitary Wanderer, (1800), N.

⁵ MR n.s. 38 (My 02). 100: J.H. Collins, Ode to Peace, V.
MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 111-2: W. Butler tr., Zimao, the African, (1800), D.

⁶ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 263: Southey, Poems vol. 2, (1799).

could be injurious to the young who needed fortification to meet the demands of life.¹ Really bad sentimentality or pathos was most often found in the works of Kotzebue.² Again, the middle way is approved: sensibility can be excellent, but it can easily degenerate into the mawkish in the 'feeling' stage of the sentimental movement.³

The term sublime most frequently occurs with reference to poetry. S.H. Monk has traced in detail the progress of this term from Boileau's rationalising translation of Longinus, through its popularisation by Addison and its development by the theoreticians of the century to the celebrated treatise in which Burke added vagueness and terror as a necessary part of the sublime and thus completed its opposition to the beautiful and contributed to the increase in the subjective element in the perception of beauty. For the reviewers it is another of those graces -- such as force and genius -- which are in the last resort above elegance⁵ and opposed to the

¹ BC 20 (Ag 02). 200: The Paternal Present, (1802), N.

² MR n.s. 34 (Ja 01). 80: Kotzebue tr. Plumptre, Sketch of Life, (1800), P; (Ferriar). AJR 9 (My 01). 78: Kotzebue tr. Porter, Lovers' Vows, (1798), D.

³ See E. Erämatsä, A Study of the Word 'Sentimental' and of Other Linguistic Characteristics of Eighteenth Century Sentimentalism in England, (Helsinki, 1951).

⁴ S.H. Monk, The Sublime: A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England, (New York, 1935).

⁵ BC 16 (O 00). 377: Burns ed. Currie, Works, (1800).

merely correct and pleasing,¹ though the frequently concomitant lack of polish is to be regretted.² Sublimity may be prevented by the over-minuteness of scientific poetry,³ by the use of insufficiently elevated terms to describe nature,⁴ or by too much local detail in natural description:⁵ some measure of generalisation is essential to sublimity. The British Critic, it has been noted, maintains that since sonnets are a minor genre sublimity cannot be found in them, and in another place it states that blank verse and rhymed verse may both be sublime.⁶

Dangers much graver than lack of polish attend sublime attempts. Mock sublimity, like false simplicity, is always lying in wait for the inadequate,⁷ while

¹ AJR 5 (Ap 00). 432: T. Gisborne, Poems, Sacred and Moral, (1798); (Polwhele).

² AJR 12 (My 02). 20: W. Richardson, The Maid of Lochlin, (1801), D.

³ BC 17 (Ja 01). 13: Delille, L'Homme des Champs, (1800), V; (Mackintosh).

⁴ CR (2) 30 (S 00). 110: Epistle from the Marquis de la Fayette to General Washington, (1800), V: 'It is surely high treason against the sublime to style meteors, earthquakes, and comets, Nature's baubles.'

⁵ BC 20 (O 02). 410: J. Hunter, Poems, (1802).

⁶ BC 20 (Ag 02). 124: G. Dyer, Poems, (1801).

⁷ MR n.s. 35 (Jl 01). 319: T. Sanderson, Original Poems, (1800).

obscurity¹ and turgidity² are the more specific results of fainting on the way.

vi -- Probability, the Natural, and the Supernatural

The terms probable and natural are often interchangeable and designate a quality desirable in works of literature for an age which took the mimetic function of literature for granted.³ An illusion of reality is helpful (and the intrusion of the author in propria persona therefore undesirable),⁴ while it is the 'genuine traits of nature' which interest the reader's heart.⁵ The characters in novels and plays are expected to be probable and natural,⁶ as are the incidents.⁷ Unnatural characters and caricatures

¹ CR (2) 30 (O 00). 185: Schiller tr. Coleridge, Wallenstein, (1800), D.

² CR (2) 31 (Mr 01). 348: An Ode on the Victory of the Nile, (1800).

³ Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, pp. 11-12.

⁴ AJR 13 (N 02). 247: <Sir S.E. Brydges,> Le Forester, (1802), V.

⁵ CR (2) 34 (Ap 02). 447: Selim and Zaïda, V.

⁶ Probable: BC 15 (F 00). 192: <James Grahame,> A Piece of Family Biography, (1799), N. BC 19 (F 02). 192: Mary Stewart, (1801), a play also by Grahame. Natural: MR n.s. 34 (Ja-Ap 01). 531: J. F<i>é<i>vée</i></i>, Frédéric, (1799), N; (Mrs Moody). MR n.s. 34 (Ap 01). 441: J.G. Holman, What a Blunder!, (1800) D; (Ferriar).

⁷ AJR 8 (Ap 01). 399-400: Adonia, (1801) N. BC 16 (O 00). 437; Franklin, The Egyptian Festival, (1800) D. For eighteenth-century reviewing antecedents see Robert D. Mayo, The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815, (Evanston, 1962).

are often condemned¹ and evidence of modern extravagance,² and gloomy, horrid, unnatural German writing³ indignantly noted. When probability is absent the result is often referred to as romance or romantic. On one occasion this term is used in the criticism of a poem resembling a novel. R.J. Thorn's Lodon and Miranda is said by Bannister to be 'a novel in verse, of that sort which delights rather in romantic incidents than in just representations of human life'.⁴ This reference, like most of those involving romance, is unfavourable. The objection is partly moral. Thus, Mrs Moody writes of Madame de Genlis' The Rival Mothers:⁵

The narrative of the novel is pleasing and interesting. The characters, indeed, are delineated à la française; and exceptions consequently arise against a few occasional tints of unnatural colouring; which, by overstepping the modesty of nature, gives too much the semblance of romance

¹ BC 16 (N 00). 556: M.A. Hanway, Andrew Stuart, (1800), N; but see BC 19 (Je 02). 648: Farther Excursions of the Observant Pedestrian for caricature fulfilling a useful social function.

² BC 15 (Je 00). 675: C. Lloyd, Edmund Oliver, (1798), N.

³ MR n.s. 38 (J1 02). 331: Harriet Lee, Canterbury Tales, vol. 4, (1801), N; (Moody).

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 105: R.J. Thorn, Lodon and Miranda, (1799), V; (Bannister).

⁵ MR n.s. 36 (O 01). 187: Mme de Genlis, The Rival Mothers, (1801), N; (Mrs Moody).

to the work, and is not adapted to that species of writing in which, the author tells us, the story is meant as a vehicle to convey the principles of sound and pure morality.

It is also partly more general. The criticism of romance often involves condemnation of supernatural elements, but the moral basis of the criticism is seldom far away and becomes clear at the end of this critical outburst in the British Critic:¹

〈The author〉 never deviates from the path of sense, and the sphere of nature, into wild and extravagant fictions, and the unnatural machinery of enchantment; the haunted castle, the midnight spectre, the self-tolled bell, and other mummeries, which astonish us in the page of modern romance, and violate the chastity of the modern drama; as if the authors wished to plunge us again in barbarism, and revive the horrors of superstitious darkness. His plot is formed with judgment; his characters are founded in reason and probability. The incidents throughout the piece take place in natural and progressive order; and where an excursion is occasionally made into the world of fancy, or the field of science, either increased gratification, or enlarged knowledge, is the constant result. In those excursions the reader is neither insulted by improbabilities, nor disgusted by pedantry, and never loses sight of the great objects and ends of the narration; the former intended to delineate real life, and the latter to improve it.

Accuracy in the reproduction of manners is also

¹ BC 15 (F 00). 192-3: A Piece of Family Biography, (1799), N.

demanding, whether the subject be a modern fisherman¹ or events in the past. Historical details are treated in different ways. The Critical points to an error of fact in Burges's Richard the First: the attendance of Richard's queen in Normandy is unsanctioned by history.² On the other hand the British Critic finds that Schiller's Mary Stuart is sufficiently probable not to inspire disgust³ while the Critical declares that attempts to correct Shakespeare's history are useless,⁴ and the Anti-Jacobin Review that poetry is written for the pleasure of the general reader and not for the information of the antiquary.⁵ In the same article on Richard the First it is stressed that the period is a happy one for poetry since it is such 'as to admit of those variations which the poet may judge necessary without insulting the testimony of our own senses or recollection.'⁶ The period of King Alfred

¹ CR (2) 34 (Mr 02). 354: Chamberlin, Ocean, V. Cf. CR (2) 36 (D 02). 416: Mrs Opie, Poems, (1802); (Southey): the negro boy's thoughts are too poetical for his language.

² CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 128-9: Sir J.B. Burges, Richard the First, (1801), V.

³ BC 18 (D 01). 665-6: Schiller tr. J.C. M<ellish>, Mary Stuart, (1801).

⁴ CR (2) 35 (Ag 02). 476: Shakespeare <adap. Valpy>, 2 Henry IV, (1801).

⁵ AJR 9 (J1 01). 232-3: Pye, Alfred, (1801).

⁶ CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 121.

was similarly useful.¹ An insistence on correct reproduction of the manners and mode of thinking of past ages is much more frequent. The intrusion² of the manners² and philosophy³ of past ages is condemned. Scanty⁴ or inaccurate⁵ delineation of the details of medieval life is attacked, careful investigation commended.⁶ Ferriar notes anachronisms in Corneille's Maximian with the comment that 'our theatrical exhibitions are so much more correct than formerly, that even mistakes like these demand notice.'⁷ Probability is demanded in the past as well as in the present as antiquarian endeavour makes the readers and reviewers more discriminating.

¹ CR (2) 31 (F 02). 160: Cottle, Alfred, (1800), V. Too recent events, such as the French Revolution, might be unsuitable for dramatic fiction: MR n.s. 37 (Ja-Ap 02). 499: La Mort de Robespierre, (1801), D; (Jones). It was too recent for melancholy pleasure: MR n.s. 34 (Ja 01). 97: Viscomte D---, Marie Antoinette, (1800), D; (Dr Burney).

² CR (2) 31 (F 01). 235: A. Kendall, Tales of the Abbey, (1800), N.

³ CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 127.

⁴ CR (2) 32 (My 01). 107: Midsummer Eve, (1800), N.

⁵ BC 15 (Ja 00). 47: Godwin, St. Leon, (1799), N.

⁶ BC 20 (Ag 02). 188: Joanna Baillie, A Series of Plays, vol. 2, (1800).

⁷ MR n.s. 33 (O 00). 222: T. Corneille tr. Lady Burrell, Maximian, (1800), D; (Ferriar).

The general attitude to the reviewers towards the frequent use of supernatural machinery in novels and the drama is extremely unfavourable. Their objections are not profoundly religious as were Johnson's: they have little cause to castigate pogo-Christian mélanges in the ghostly realm. They simply protest that they are tired of supernatural effects such as ghosts¹ and an excess of the marvellous in general.² A revival of the dark ages is evidently being planned and must be combatted.³ Southey's 'monkish trash' should be abandoned for 'the classic models' while his ghost stories are fit only to frighten little children.⁴ The full horror of the situation is made clear by the Critical's review of the Tales of Wonder:⁵

Instead of advancing in the glorious procession of truth and science, whose beams are daily gaining strength in our island, they turn with avidity to the errors of nations left far behind as in the gloom and darkness of barbarism, and are actually,

¹ CR (2) 31 (Ja 01). 114: The Spirit of Turretville, (1800), N. A German origin is ascribed to absurd ghosts in CR (2) 34 (F 02). 232: M.G. Lewis, Adelmorn, (1801), D.

² AJR 7 (S-D 00). 504: Azlaïs et le Gentil Aimar, (1798), N.

³ CR (2) 28 (Ja 00). 89: The Annual Anthology, vol. i, (1799).

⁴ MR n.s. 31 (Fr 00). 267, 266: Southey, Poems vol. 2, (1799); (Ferriar).

⁵ CR (2) 34 (Ja 02). 111-2: M.G. Lewis ed., Tales of Wonder, (1801), V.

in the nineteenth century, translating works from the northern languages, which, in the sixteenth, our better-informed ancestors would have been ashamed to have seen written in English.

Even Greek legend has become tiresome to some: Wallace finds the poem Atys 'encumbered with the stale mythology of old Greece',¹ and the Critical is tired of nymphs.²

One of the objections to the excessive use of the supernatural is that it diverts the readers' attention from the proper function of literature, the study of mankind. Jeffrey attacks Thalaba for its machinery and consequent diminution of character interest,³ and the Critical remarks that 'the more of supernatural agency is employed in a novel, the farther is the idea of its truth removed from the mind of its readers.'⁴

Frequent objections are made to inaccurate machinery. A Roman Catholic Druid⁵ and Fatal Sisters in Poland⁶ are

¹ MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 428: J.M., Atys, (1799), V; (Wallace).

² CR (2) 37 (Ap 02). 437: Susannah Watts, Original Poems, (1802).

³ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 250: Southey, Thalaba the Destroyer, (1801).

⁴ CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 470: The Mysterious Penitent, (1801), N.

⁵ CR (2) 34 (Ja 02). 116: W. Earle jun., The Welshman, (1801), N.

⁶ MR n.s. 35 (Jl 01). 325: Earl of Carlisle, The Step-Mother, (1800), D; (Ferriar).

pointed out. Pagan machinery in the Christian period is strongly condemned,¹ as is Jewish sentiment in a pagan society,² while the mingling of pagan and Christian elements in one mythology displeases Ferriar.³

In spite of these numerous and varied criticisms, the supernatural has still some defenders when it is properly used. In a tale of an age of prejudice, romance has the right to a modest use of the marvellous and it may be said that 'the author has not abused the privilege of romance in the exhibition of supernatural horrors, but has rendered them of great effect in the prosecution of his story'.⁴ Suitability to the age in which the story is set can be a justification here and elsewhere.⁵ The use of Hindu mythology is certainly poetically rewarding, although the lack of associations makes it less rich for the modern reader,⁶ and the contrast between Scandinavian

¹ AJR 12 (Jl 02). 299: The Dream, (1802), V. AJR 9 (Ag 01). 345: Pye, Alfred, (1801).

² CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 403: Ogilvie, Britannia, (1801), V. Cf. MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 359-60 for Ferriar's condemnation of the use in this work of the now discredited Guardian Angels of Dryden.

³ MR n.s. 35 (My 01). 2: Cottle, Alfred, (1800).

⁴ AJR 6 (My 00). 54: J.N. Brewer, A Winter's Tale, (1800), N.

⁵ CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 125: J.B. Burges, Richard the First, (1801), V.

⁶ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 136: Sir Wm Jones, works, (1799), PV; (Hamilton).

belief and Ossianic superstition is a rewarding field to explore in drama.¹ It is in Southey's criticism of De Escorquiz's Mexico Conquistada that the supernatural is by implication assigned the widest role in poetry. Southey objects that De Escorquiz 'has caught only a few names from a mythology which would have supplied him with abundant images of beauty and of terror.'²

vii -- Originality and Authority

Of originality there is little to say except that it was welcomed by the critics in every sphere both of thought and of expression, while the commonplace was found poor, though daring originality was too often branded as perverse.³ The tradition of the eighteenth century culminating in Johnson had visualised true originality in traditional terms. An article, possibly by Goldsmith, in the Critical Review for January 1760 refers to this limited originality

¹ CR (2) 34 (F 02). 164: W. Richardson, The Maid of Lochlin, (1801), D.

² CR (2) 32 (My-Ap 01). 520:

³ See on the problem of originality:

Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp, Ch. 2.

R.S. Crane, 'A Neglected Mid-Eighteenth-Century Plea for Originality and its Author' PQ 13 (1934). 21-9.

Elizabeth L. Mann, 'The Problem of Originality in English Literary Criticism, 1750-1800' PQ 18 (1939). 97-118.

offered by the diversity of nature:¹

In short, we could wish to excite men to leave those paths which have been already too much worn, and to strike out after nature, which is ever appearing in circumstances of variety.

It was Young's failure to balance originality against imitation that made his essay unusual. His outburst finds little reflection in the moderation of the reviewers. To cite examples of their expectation of limited originality would be tedious and uninformative.² Only in a matter such as reckless innovation in diction is originality condemned, a hint of the via media once more, but even here it is more a question of the poet's following the barbarous fashions of the time.³ It would be strange if Johnson had been so far forgotten that familiar thoughts were never commended. But such commendations are rare: the reflections in Memoirs of a Family in Switzerland are well-appropriated

¹ CR 9 (Ja 60). 19: R. Redington, Critical Dissertations upon the Iliad of Homer.

² A few examples are, however, cited here to avoid a general passim. Novels: (character) MR n.s. 33 (O 00). 210: James Sands, Count di Novini, (1799); (Capt. Burney). (moral sentiments) MR n.s. 38 (J1 02). 313: H. Ventum, Justina; (Manning). Poetry: (imagery) MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 131: Jones, Works, (1799), PV; (Hamilton). Drama: (character) CR (2) 30 (O 00). 228: T. Dibdin, The Jew and the Doctor, (1800), D. (character and plot) MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 107: Ibid.

³ MR n.s. 36 (S 01). 96: P. Courtier, The Pleasures of Solitude, (1800), V; (Ferriar).

if not new,¹ and a common tale modestly told can be approved.²

Plagiarism was occasionally noted -- too close a resemblance to Lewis³ or Fielding⁴ for instance. Bona fide imitation of authors was of course permitted and many influences, both for better and for worse, were traced, especially by Ferriar whose speciality this line of investigation was. Prose writers exerting a good influence included Fielding,⁵ while in poetry an excellent example was given by Goldsmith.⁶ Other important influences to combat the degeneracy which had succeeded the Augustan and post-Augustan golden age included Swift for humour,⁷ Churchill for an energy and strength lacking in Pope, though without his harmony,⁸ and, most interestingly, Wordsworth. This last addition to the list comes from the

¹ CR (2) 36 (O 02). 236: Memoirs of a Family in Swisserland, (1802), N.

² CR (2) 35 (My 02). 112: T.S. Surr, Splendid Misery, (1801), N.

³ BC 19 (Je 02). 644: E. Smith, Poetical Works, (1802).

⁴ BC 15 (Mr 00). 319: R. Bisset, Douglas, (1800), N.

⁵ BC 16 (J1 00). 83: The Neighbourhood, (1800), N.

⁶ NR n.s. 34 (Ap 01). 440: F.L. Stolberg, Hymn to the Earth, (1800), V.

⁷ BC 16 (J1 00). 78: Contentment, (1800), V.

⁸ BC 18 (O 01). 389: Jacobinism, (1801), V.

British Critic's review of the Holloway poem just referred to: Holloway 'has cultivated the simple style so studiously exemplified by Mr. Wordsworth, and used with such propriety by Robert Bloomfield'.¹

With such high standards to maintain it is not surprising that comparisons were often invidious. Those who were rash enough to recall great writers without being able to match their splendours incurred critical rebuke. Thus Anne Bannerman's 'Nun' suffers in comparison with Eloisa to Abelard,² while an Evil Genius scene in Britain Preserved is inappropriate and greatly inferior to the Miltonic original;³ more generally, Goldsmith and Burns can be dangerous models for a minor writer,⁴ while Cowper's vigour and originality is not easily imitated.⁵

Some of the authors chosen as models are condemned outright for their bad influence. The Metaphysicals produced an awkward style: Moore was accused by Ferriar of sometimes copying Donne 'the merit of whose fine thoughts is obscured to most readers by the affected closeness of

¹ BC 19 (My 02). 533.

² CR (2) 31 (Ap 01). 438: Anne Bannerman, Poems, (1800).

³ MR n.s. 32 (Jl 00). 304: Britain Preserved, (1800), V; (Capt. Burney).

⁴ CR (2) 34 (Ja 02). 81-4: Pratt, Bread; or The Poor, (1801), V.

⁵ BC 19 (Ap 02). 414: W. Fox, La Bagatella, (1801), V.

his style',¹ and Cowley was the cause of singular figures.² Swift and Sterne were both condemned for their alleged obscenity.³ Ossian was inferior and not to be copied,⁴ and Ferriar carried on a full-scale personal campaign against Johnson as a model for verse and prose.⁵

On more general questions of authority there is a certain amount of variation between the Reviews, the Critical being the most liberal. Some rules were generally thought unnecessary, and the Anti-Jacobin Review found Godwin's St. Leon in its main scheme 'almost as invulnerable to criticism as the Arabian Tales, or any other eastern romance -- that which professes in the outset not to be bound by human regulations cannot with propriety be censured for exceeding them.'⁶ Works such as St. Leon

¹ MR n.s. 39 (O 02). 178: 'T. Little' <Thomas Moore>, Poetical Works, (1801); (Ferriar).

² MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 287: J. Hurdis, The Favourite Village, (1800), V; (Ferriar).

³ BC 20 (O 02). 431: George Colman jun., Broad Grins, (1802), V. Cf. CR (2) 34 (Ap 02). 452: <E. Dubois>, Old Nick, (1801), N.

⁴ BC 18 (O 01). 416: W.L. Bowles, The Sorrows of Switzerland, (1801), V.

⁵ MR n.s. 36 (O 01). 118: William Hayley, An Essay on Sculpture, (1800), V; (Ferriar): Pope would have been preferable to the clumsy Johnson as a model. MR n.s. 31 (F 00). 190: George Chalmers, A Supplemental Apology, (1799), P; (Ferriar).

⁶ AJR 5 (F 00). 151: Godwin, St. Leon, (1799); (Heath).

were regarded as a threat to the stability of literature, a threat which was usually seen as continental in origin. The British Critic quotes with approval Wordsworth's statement in the 1800 Preface that 'the invaluable works of our elder writers are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse.'¹ As with the novel and verse, so too with drama: Ferriar comments on J.G. Holman's play The Red-Cross Knights(1799):²

We should have been extremely pleased, if Mr. H. had been equally successful in reverting to the old energy and correctness of the Drama, as by critical law established; the permanence of which has been so seriously threatened by the modern rage for German innovation ...

The hearkening back to the Augustan golden age and the great English classical writers has already been noted on several occasions. Classical and neoclassical authority was also very powerful. The eighteenth-century dictum that modern writers should copy the ancients as they had copied nature was still current.³ Horace's maxim regarding the intolerability of 'middling' poetry was becoming less observed with the increasing production of

¹ BC 17 (F 01). 125-6: Lyrical Ballads.

² MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 322. Cf. AJR 7 (S 00). 61: James Cobb, Ramah Droog, (1800), D.

³ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 131-2: Jones, Works, (1799), PV; (Hamilton).

books.¹ In spite of the demand for 'classical or other authority'² doctrinaire authoritarianism was not encouraged. Milton's example might be rejected in respect of metrical or rhyming practice.³ Similarly, a Grecian simplicity of plot might appear too artless in modern conditions:⁴ a warm but not superstitious admiration of the ancients was to be commended.⁵ In this liberal attitude the reviewers are at one with their age.⁶ Although the

¹ MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 352: The Annual Anthology vol. i, (1799); (Ferriar).

² MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 432: The Caldron, V; (R. Woodhouse).

³ MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 405: Anacreon tr. Moore, Odes, (1800); (Dr Burney).

⁴ CR (2) 33 (N 01). 329: Sotheby, Julian and Agnes, (1801), D.

⁵ AJR 11 (Ja-Ap 02). 477: Laharpe, Lycée, (1799 etc.), 1.

⁶ See on imitation:

Ashur Baizer, 'The Theory of Imitation in English Neo-Classical Criticism' DA 21 (1960-1). 194.

W.J. Bate, 'The English Poet and the Burden of the Past, 1660-1820' in Aspects of the Eighteenth Century ed. Earl R. Wasserman, (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 245-64.

J.W. Draper, 'Aristotelean 'Mimesis' in Eighteenth Century England' PMLA 36 (1921). 372-400.

Elizabeth Nitchie, 'Longinus and the Theory of Poetic Imitation in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century England' SP 32 (1935). 580-97.

identification of the imitation of the ancients with that of nature was a partial solution of the eighteenth-century dilemma, it was widely felt that something was lacking in mid-century literary practice and increasingly the emphasis shifted from nature in the ancients to nature as directly observed, accepting Young's version of Longinus, 'a sort of noble contagion', as the best imitation. Something of the earlier timidity still hangs about the Reviews in spite of their basic liberalism.

Early eighteenth-century neoclassical literary theory had stressed the importance of the three unities, though there were always dissenters.¹ It is Johnson who is usually credited with dealing the death-blow to the unities of time and place in his Preface to Shakespeare and certainly with Blair and Beattie following his example the orthodox late eighteenth-century view of the subject was liberal.² Sometimes the reviewers felt that the unities might reasonably be violated, for example in a comic opera with many varied short scenes and a complex sub-plot structure³ or in an historical

¹ See L.S. Friedland, 'The Dramatic Unities in England' JEGP 10 (1911). 56-89, 280-99, 453-67.

² T.M. Raysor, 'The Downfall of the Three Unities' MLN 42 (1927). 1-9.

³ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 318: A. Franklin, The Egyptian Festival, (1800), D; (Dr Burney).

play.¹ In ordinary plays, however, the observation of the unities was often important.² One critic noted that it was well to observe the unity of action even in the novel,³ and thus attempted to keep the unities alive for the most significant genre of the nineteenth century.

viii -- Moral Considerations

A considerable proportion of many reviews, especially those dealing with novels, is devoted to moral approval or condemnation, and sometimes the moral is the only point which can be commended.⁴

In reviewing novels the moral tendency was to be examined first: so much was due to the fair readers. The moral should be obvious and salutary, and the author was

¹ CR (2) 36 (D 02). 451: <James Grahame> Mary Stewart, (1801), D: time and place. Cf. BC 20 (Ag 02). 187: Joanna Baillie, A Series of Plays, vol. 2, (1802), D, where the action is rushed. Walker in the AJR however finds that Schiller breaks the unity of place too violently in Mary Stuart: AJR 6 (My-Ag 00). 498: Schiller tr. J.C. M<ellish>, Mary Stuart, (1801).

² CR (2) 30 (S 00). 112: <Sophia Lady Burrell> Theodora, (1800), D.

³ CR (2) 35 (My 02). 112: T.S. Surr, Splendid Misery, (1801), N.

⁴ CR (2) 33 (N 02). 353: Brian Hill, Henry and Acasto, (1798), N.

expected to arrange his plot so as to make it clear. Thus the Anti-Jacobin Review proposes a rewriting of the ~~Anti-Jacobin Review~~ proposes a rewriting of the conclusion of J.N. Brewer's A Winter's Tale:¹

The catastrophe would have been less pleasing, but perhaps the moral would have been more forcibly inculcated, had Selina fallen a sacrifice. She is not vicious herself, but being the primary cause of error, in those who deviate ~~from~~ the path of virtue, her death would render the warning more awful.

The Critical, while making a similar suggestion in its review of Mrs Burke's Elliott, nevertheless commends it in that 'Vicious characters are but sparingly introduced into the book, and are never suffered to remain triumphant.'²

In a morally commendable novel, the tendency should be generally pure³ and respectable,⁴ the moral should be useful,⁵ and the attitude of the author to the events in his story should be clear and in accordance with accepted morality: the defence of elopement is wrong⁶

¹ AJR 6 (My 00). 55: J.N. Brewer, A Winter's Tale, (1800), N; (Harrall).

² CR (2) 31 (Mr 01). 354: Mrs Burke, Elliott, (1800), N.

³ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 425: Dallas, Percival, (1801), N; (O. Woodhouse).

⁴ CR (2) 28 (Ap 00). 477: Elizabeth Helme, Albert, (1799), N.

⁵ CR (2) 34 (F 02). 236: Maria Edgeworth, Belinda, (1801), N.

⁶ CR (2) 33 (N 01). 353: Gabrielli <i.e. Mary Meeke>, The Mysterious Husband, (1801), N.

and the duties owed to parents must be stressed for the benefit of young readers.¹ Great importance is attached to the sentiments expressed by the author in the course of the novel: proper expressions of thoughtful consideration elicit such adjectives as just² and judicious.³

The handling of bad characters demands vigilance on the author's part. Dissolute manners described with spirit but without that voluptuousness which might endanger the innocence of young readers are approved by the liberal Critical,⁴ while the more rigid Anti-Jacobin Review commends the translator of a French novel for censoring its indelicacies.⁵ In all things reason is to be the guide. The novel should provide rational amusement,⁶ and love and esteem should be bestowed only with the approval of reason.⁷

¹ MR n.s. 34 (Ja 01). 103: The History of Jack and his Eleven Brothers, (1799), N; (Hirons).

² MR n.s. 38 (Jl 02). 314: Belmour, (1801), N.

³ MR n.s. 38 (Jl 02). 331: Harriet Lee, Canterbury Tales, vol. iv, (1801), N; (Moody).

⁴ CR (2) 28 (Ja 00). 116: <Mrs Sarah Green,> Court Intrigue, (1799), N.

⁵ AJR 8 (Mr 01). 322: Pigault-Lebrun, My Uncle Thomas, (1801), N.

⁶ BC 20 (D 02). 678: The Moral Legacy, (1801), N.

⁷ MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 429: The Microcosm, (1801), N.

Wallace sums up the situation neatly in his treatment of Lamb's Rosamund Gray:¹

In the perusal of this pathetic and interesting story, the reader, who has a mind capable of enjoying rational and moral sentiment, will find much gratification. Mr. Lamb has here proved himself skilful in touching the nicest feelings of the heart, and in affording great pleasure to the imagination, by exhibiting events and situations which, in the hands of a writer less conversant with the springs and energies of the moral sense, would have made a very "sorry figure."

The reviewers felt that their moral verdicts were a duty owed to the public. A work was judged as fit or unfit for children² or the working class,³ and a good moral could cover a multitude of artistic sins.⁴

Apart from faults which are the direct converse of the virtues already treated, three chief causes of condemnation stand out in the reviews of novels. The most important is the blurring of the distinction between virtue and vice, especially in one character.⁵ A dissipated or vile character should not be made to appear amiable

¹ MR n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 447.

² BC 20 (D 02). 677-8: The Moral Legacy, (1801), N.

³ MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 446: <J.H. Pestalozzi,> Leonard and Gertrude, (1800), N; (Ferriar).

⁴ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 425: Dallas, Percival, (1801), N.

⁵ CR (2) 34 (F 02). 235-6: Maria Edgeworth, Belinda, (1801), N.

or seductively glossed over.¹ In The Italian the pictures of virtue and innocence fail because of the romantic haze in which the work is enveloped.²

Whether or not the conduct of the characters is commented upon, it may be censured if it fails to conform to the high standards set by the reviewers: censure is passed on works in which filial duties are outraged by the hero,³ private vengeance is taken,⁴ oaths are uttered,⁵ a clergyman is portrayed taking part in a duel (admittedly a real-life situation),⁶ or, on a lighter level, a marital relationship fails to comply with a Scriptural injunction jocularly considered.⁷ The liberal Critical considers that one author has, through excess of virtue, overcensured his characters, but this is a unique statement.⁸ The author's

¹ AJR 13 (S-D 02). 467-8: Mme de Genlis, A Series of Novels, (1802).

² AJR 7 (S 00). 28: Radcliffe, The Italian.

³ AJR 7 (D 00). 416: Sophia King, The Victim of Friendship, (1801), N.

⁴ AJR 6 (My 00). 55: H. Summerson, The Mad Man of the Mountain, (1799), N.

⁵ CR (2) 33 (S 01). 112: H. Summerson, Martyn of Fenrose, N.

⁶ CR (2) 28 (Ja 00). 117: Westbrook Village, (1799), N.

⁷ CR (2) 33 (S 01). 114: The Wise Men of Gosmanthorpe, (1801), N.

⁸ CR (2) 33 (N 01). 354: The Moral Legacy, (1801), N.

own moral outlook can be offensive: one holds Godwinian principles and despises marriage;¹ another lauds suicide and is branded as a 'pragmatic enthusiast' and a 'mad-headed metaphysician';² a third again has loose ideas on the subject of marriage, and that at the age of twenty.³

The emphasis noted on rationality is confirmed by a condemnation of characters who yield to impulse,⁴ and of the exaltation of love at the expense of the regulations of society,⁵ which has an enervating effect.⁶

All these admonitions to authors and readers alike apparently had little effect: the Anti-Jacobin Review wearily comments:⁷

... we, grave Reviewers, very seldom look into novels or romances for any other purpose, than to discover and point out their moral tendency, and offer to the sex our serious admonitions; which, we fear, are, for the most part, unavailing.

¹ MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 356: J. Beaufort <i.e. John Thelwall>, The Daughter of Adoption, (1801), N; (O. Woodhouse).

² AJR 6 (Ag 00). 451: Ormond, (1800), N.

³ CR (2) 34 (Ja 00). 117: W. Earle, jun., The Welshman, (1801), N.

⁴ BC 15 (Je 00). 675: C. Lloyd, Edmund Oliver, (1798), N.

⁵ MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 82: Mary Hays, The Victim of Prejudice, (1799), N; (Moody).

⁶ BC 16 (Ag 00). 203: A Short Story, (1800), N.

⁷ AJR 7 (S 00). 27: Radcliffe, The Italian.

Poetry should, like the novel, profit the reader while affording him pleasure:¹ the clearest statement of this demand comes in the British Critic's comment on Gessner's Works:²

With the exception of the Death of Abel, they inculcate no maxims of moral virtue, no precepts of political sagacity, no rules for the conduct of life, which entitle them to particular recommendation from the guardians or directors of public taste.

The manly and just poem³ should give no cause for moral offence:⁴ more specifically, it should eschew German lewdness and impiety,⁵ and an obscenity indefensible by reference to the example of Swift and Sterne.⁶ The moral sentiments in which the poet indulges are sometimes extracted for the edification of the reader,⁷ and it is to be recalled that in the Dissenting academies beauties⁸ of different authors were often used for moral reading. The British Critic censures Burns's moral character and

¹ BC 19 (Ap 02). 393: Science Revived, (1802), V.

² BC 20 (D 02). 691: Gessner, Works, (1802), V.

³ BC 15 (F 00). 190: J. Black, Poems, (1799).

⁴ CR (2) 29 (Je 00). 169: L. Booker, The Hop Garden, (1799), V.

⁵ BC 20 (D 02). 676: J. Lawrence, Love, (1802), V.

⁶ BC 20 (O 02). 431: G. Colman jun., Broad Grins, (1802), V.

⁷ AJR 11 (Mr 02). 277: Ogilvie, Britannia, (1801), V.

⁸ R.D. Altick, The English Common Reader, pp. 43-4.

vindicates his patrons from the charges brought against them.¹ Any false humanity is rigorously condemned in the poetic radicals, whether Peter Pindar is pitying animals² or the Annual Anthology is ascribing to the state of society ills really due to personal indolence:³

There are a set of writers in this country who have usurped the name of Poets, and who endeavour, by giving an importance to the most trifling and familiar objects, and by an appeal to the pity of the vulgar and unenlightened, to bring odium upon every political, moral, and religious establishment, and consequently to prepare the way for the new system introduced by republican France.

Several of the remarks on the drama made from a moral standpoint are of unusual interest. The basic demands are the same as in the case of novels and verse: a moral tendency is approved,⁴ while uncensored immorality is condemned.⁵ Unusually, it is objected that Mariana Starke's drama The Tournament has had its action twisted for the sake of moral instruction.⁶ The violence of German

¹ BC 16 (O 00). 378: Burns ed. Currie, Works, (1800).

² CR (2) 36 (O 02). 233: P. Pindar, The Island of Innocence, (1802), v. BC 20 (S 02). 319: Ibid.

³ AJR 8 (Ap 01). 411: The Annual Anthology vol. ii, (1800).

⁴ CR (2) 30 (O 00). 181: Schiller tr. Coleridge, Wallenstein, (1800), D.

⁵ BC 18 (J1 01). 84: Julian and Agnes, (1801), D.

⁶ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 317: Mariana Starke, The Tournament, (1800), D; (Moody). Cf. CR (2) 28 (Mr 00). 354: Ibid.

writing for the stage in Iffland is criticised by the Critical,¹ and Kotzebue is accused by the same Review of imagining extreme cases and thus placing feelings in opposition to the received ideas of right and wrong.² As for the effect of plays on the audience, Ferriar makes the strange comment that a love for the theatre is bad for the young since it extinguishes their desirable natural diffidence,³ and the British Critic finds Bidlake's Virginia morally bad for a Christian audience.⁴

In their rigorous and to us often crude moralising the Reviews are the heirs of Johnson's vigorous championship of la belle nature in the moral sphere and of poetic justice as the norm. It is true that from Addison onwards more morally sensitive voices had been heard, but the reviewers are not among these. Only in Wordsworth, when aesthetic pleasure and moral edification are synonymous, is the split between moral precept and aesthetic effect healed and the concept of instruction as a sugared pill finally abandoned.

¹ CR (2) 30 (N 00). 351: Iffland tr. Ludger, The Lawyers, (1799), D.

² CR (2) 28 (F 00). 233: Kotzebue tr. Thomson, La Pérouse, (1799), D.

³ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 329: Juvenile Friendship, (1802), D; (Ferriar).

⁴ BC 16 (S 00). 319: J. Bidlake, Virginia, (1800), D.

ix -- Philosophical, Religious, and Patriotic Considerations

This final section of the analysis of critical attitudes and terminology in the Reviews which immediately preceded the advent of the Edinburgh concerns three topics frequently dealt with, though by no means so prevalent as the expression of purely moral attitudes.

The new Jacobinical philosophy is constantly being criticised by the Anti-Jacobin Review with its avowed opposition to 'the contagion of Jacobin morals, and the levelling cant of German philosophy.'¹ Its absence was duly commended,² and even children's books are scrutinised for evidence of the democratic cancer.³ The British Critic objects to German illuminism in Kotzebue.⁴

The most frequently attacked aspect of the new philosophy is its melancholy. This term is often used to mean apparently simply a sombre or gloomy quality.⁵ A formal

¹ AJR 11 (Mr 02). 290: Pratt, Bread; or The Poor, (1801), V.

² AJR 7 (D 00). 416: M. Holford, First Impressions, (1801), N. AJR 12 (J1 02). 301: Jealousy, (1802), N.

³ AJR 6 (My 00). 56: Mary Pilkington, New Tales of the Castle, (1800), N.

⁴ BC 15 (Ja 00). 77: Kotzebue, The East-Indian tr. Thomson, (1799), D.

⁵ BC 18 (Ag 01). 197: Clara, (1801), N. BC 16 (Ag 00). 141: Anne Bannerman, Poems, (1800).

link with the new philosophy occurs, however, in the most frequent castigator of the quality, the British Critic, when it deals with Bloomfield's The Farmer's Boy:¹

The Second Book ... concludes with reflections of a melancholy cast, and not altogether just; and which indicate, that the author received some impressions, probably at the debating-society, of a questionable kind.

Something of this feeling would appeal to underlie other usages of the term, such as that already cited on Chateaubriand's Atala:²

This is a pleasing but melancholy tale, which though encumbered with eccentric opinions and strong improbabilities, excited an interest which will not permit the reader to throw aside the book till the story is finished.

Melancholy is opposed to religious strength.³ Southey is among those accused of the opinion: Jeffrey finds in Thalaba a 'uniform gloominess and melancholy' which he cannot but disapprove.⁴ In the Critical Southey himself appropriately defends Mrs Opie's melancholy strain as being essential to the conveying of the poems' moral import.⁵

¹ BC 15 (Je 00). 604: R. Bloomfield, The Farmer's Boy, (1800).

² BC 20 (D 02). 691: Chateaubriand tr. Bingham, Atala, (1802), N.

³ BC 20 (S 02). 259: The Metrical Miscellany, (1802), V.

⁴ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 250:

⁵ CR (2) 36 (D 02). 413: Mrs Opie, Poems, (1802).

It goes without saying that piety and good doctrine¹ in literature win the approval of the reviewers, even if there is nothing ~~else~~ to commend.² William Boscawen's more religious version of Gray's Elegy is welcomed by the British Critic.³ Nevertheless, the use of Scriptural allusions in inappropriate contexts is often condemned, whether in a novel,⁴ in a poem,⁵ or on the stage.⁶ There are parts of the Bible too sacred for fiction -- for example the later part of the life of Moses which is exceptionally fully documented.⁷ As Johnson had pointed out, religious verse is strictly limited by the truth of its Scriptural basis.⁸

Shots are fired by the Anti-Jacobin Review and the British Critic, on the one side against atheism⁹ and on

¹ CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 231: W. Linley, Forbidden Apartments, (1800), N. AJR 5 (F 00). 201: R. Polwhele, The Influence of Local Attachment, (1798), V.

² MR n.s. 36 (D 01). 437: H. Chamberlin, Ocean, V.

³ BC 17 (My 01). 517: W. Boscawen, Poems, (1801).

⁴ AJR 12 (My 02). 80: Popular Tales of the Germans, (1801), N.

⁵ MR n.s. 34 (Ap 01). 438-9: T. Roberts, Carmen Seculare, (1801), V.

⁶ BC 17 (Je 01). 616: The Conspiracy of Gowrie, (1800), D.

⁷ BC 20 (D 02). 678: The Life of Moses, (1802), N.

⁸ AJR 5 (Ap 00). 432: T. Gisborne, Poems, Sacred and Moral, (1798); (Polwhele).

⁹ AJR 5 (Ap 00). 454-6: R.F. Knight, The Progress of Civil Society, (1796), V; (Polwhele).

the other against enthusiasm¹ and Methodism.² For true religion to be brought into comparison with superstition is dangerous;³ ghosts, however, are useful for the inculcation of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.⁴

Patriotic sentiments are likewise strongly approved in a time of national crisis.⁵ Strong patriotic elements in a work may even preclude literary censure,⁶ and certainly even a work with nothing but patriotism to offer meets with a favourable reception.⁷ A specifically English dramatic art is sought by Frederic Reynolds, and though he

¹ BC 17 (Je 01). 667: W.H. Hall, The Creation, (1801), P.

² BC 20 (Ag 02). 199: C.A. Allnatt, Poverty, (1801), V.

³ MR n.s. 35 (Jl 01). 333: Midsummer Eve, (1800), N; (O. Woodhouse).

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 105-6: E.A. Bray, Poems, (1799); (Wallace).

⁵ AJR 13 (N 02). 253: <Sir S.E. Brydges,> Le Forester, (1802), N. BC 19 (Mr 02). 307: 'Philonauticus' <i.e. L.H. Halloran,> The Female Volunteer, (1801), D.

⁶ MR n.s. 36 (D 01). 437: T. Dermody, Peace, (1801), V: most of the other reviews find signs of haste and carelessness in this celebration of Amiens.

⁷ Reviews of J. Stewart, Britons United, (1800), V: MR n.s. 35 (Je 01); (Moody); BC 17 (F 01). 190; AJR 7 (D 00). 417.

has not been successful the British Critic commends his aspirations.¹ The same review praises the patriotic impulse which has led to the British epics by Ogilvie² and Pye.³ One final stroke: the Reading School adaptation of the second part of Henry IV is praised by the Anti-Jacobin Review which considers that 'the introduction of some well written, loyal, and patriotic speeches, is highly creditable to the political principles of the author.'⁴

It may be concluded that the theoretical basis of the reviewers' criticism here outlined is obscurantist only in the moral realm: elsewhere they modify intelligently the developing concepts of late neoclassical criticism to apply to the work with which they are confronted. Their vocabulary and range of aesthetic response are limited to the traditional middle way, but hints of terminological innovation are discernible and their attitude to new works is far from rigidly unsympathetic. It is to further consideration of their practical criticism that the study now turns.

¹ BC 15 (Ap 00). 432: F. Reynolds, Management, (1799), D.

² BC 18 (D 01). 651: J. Ogilvie, Britannia, (1801), V.

³ BC 18 (J1 01). 28: Pye, Alfred, (1801), V.

⁴ AJR 11 (Ap 02). 398: Shakespeare (adap. Valpy), 2 Henry IV, (1801).

Chapter 2: Attitudes to Groups and Individuals

a) Genres and Schools

In the previous chapter those qualities which reviewers expected in the three main genres have emerged incidentally. The study now considers comments directed more specifically at genres and schools rather than at individual works. The reviewers did not feel bound to comment on poetry as a genre in itself, but different types of poems are often referred to.

The appreciation of traditional ballads had been increasing during the eighteenth century though their literary as opposed to antiquarian value was not generally rated very high. The modern, usually sentimental, ballad imitation had a vogue during the last decades of the century which did not survive into the nineteenth. A handful of perceptive and detailed reviews deal with the modern ballad: by June 1803 Ferriar notes that the taste for such productions is becoming superannuated¹ but during the opening years of the century the form would appear to have been generally admired. The Anti-Jacobin Review notes that Bürger's poems are in the English style and therefore popular:²

¹ MR n.s. 41 (Je 03). 141: The Metrical Miscellany, (1802).

² AJR 9 (My-Ag 01). 507: Bürger ed. Reinhard, Sämmtliche Schriften, (1796-8), V.

BURGER is known to English readers, by translations of some of his romantic ballads, which, being quite in the style of those of our own old Anglo-Saxon minstrels, exactly hit the popular taste of those who delight in such things in this country.

The reviewer approves of the use of words^d borrowed from rustic language and of the ignoring of low and coarse words^d in the process: this is preferable to a style founded on modern books.¹ J.W. Chandler's Sir Hubert, An Heroic Ballad calls forth two important and related comments. Ferriar attacks the production of ballads consisting merely of eight and eight or eight and six and stresses the need for sweetness of versification and ease in expression as well as the introduction of familiar words and phrases.² It is, as one would expect, in the reviews of Scott's Minstrelsy that the comments are most interesting. Here there is some difference in emphasis. Muirhead in the Monthly Review (to trespass briefly upon 1803) finds the genuine ballads uninteresting except to antiquarians: some are truly simple and pathetic but many lack elegance and depend for their charm on local association. The imitations by Leyden and Scott are by far the best for their correctness of language and smoothness of numbers.³ The Critical is less enthusiastic about the modern imitations, maintaining only that 'if

¹ Ibid. , p. 508.

² MR n.s. 34 (Ap 01). 438: J.W. Chandler, Sir Hubert, (1800), V; (Ferriar).

³ MR n.s. 42 (S 03). 26-32.

they be less simple and natural, they are more stimulant and fanciful, than the poems they imitate.'¹ The British Critic is nearer to the Monthly Review here, maintaining that Leyden's imitations are good, but that they would have been better with less of the obscurity of transition and harshness of character of Border poetry.²

At the opposite extreme from the ballad is the epic: Southey is, again predictably but no less interestingly for that, the author of the most profound comment. Reviewing De Escorquiz's Mexico Conquistada he affirms that the subject is excellent for the epic poet since 'the means are great and surprising, the end of adequate importance; the scene offers whatever is beautiful in painting; the costume is new and striking, the superstition strange and terrible. The character of the hero requires no flattery, no exaggeration, to elevate him.'³ The relevance of this to Southey's own epics needs no emphasising. Thalaba presented some difficulties of classification to reviewers intent on pigeonholing original works. Jeffrey finds in his Monthly Review article that it blends lyric, dramatic, and epic styles 'rather more copiously than the strict rules of harmonious composition will admit.'⁴ William Taylor in the Critical, on the other hand, later

¹ CR (2) 39 (N 03). 250.

² BC 19 (Je 02). 576.

³ CR (2) 32 (My-Ag 01). 513.

⁴ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 240.

terms it a lyrical romance, essentially lyrical, that is, in its succession of pictures.¹ The spate of epics by the pretentious tea-drinking public poets who now survive only in Byron's satirical web is noticed with varying emotions: the British Critic declares that epics are as common and regular as agricultural reports,² while the Anti-Jacobin Review notes (without humour):³

POSTERITY will consider it a singular phaenomenon, that at so late a period as the beginning of the 19th century, the number of candidates for epic fame should exceed, as is the case at present, those of the early and middle ages of the world; when we may suppose nature to have been more prolific in her productions, and more indulgent to her offspring, than in more modern times.

The Alfreds of Joseph Cottle (1800) and Pye (1801), the Britannia of Ogilvie, the Richard the First of Burges, and Mrs Cowley's The Siege of Acre (all of 1801) were Southey's main rivals in the vapid long poem during these years. Cottle is condemned by Ferriar for his attack on epic machinery,⁴ though the British Critic defends it here,⁵

¹ CR (2) 39 (D 03). 369. The Critical reviewer of Casti's Gli Animali Parlanti professed to find in it the new genre of mock-heroic epic fable: CR (2) 35 (My-Ag 02). 544.

² BC 18 (D 01). 641: Ogilvie, Britannia, (1801).

³ AJR 11 (Mr 02). 272: Ibid.

⁴ MR n.s. 35 (My 01). 1; (Ferriar).

⁵ BC 16 (D 00). 610.

and the Critical thinks that the poem would be better without machinery,¹ while the surviving machinery is condemned as pogo-Christian² and lacking in dignity,³ With regard to all five authors the dignity⁴ and vitality⁵ of the epic is stressed, and it is here that the moderns are found wanting, while patriotic⁶ and moral⁷ demands are strict.⁸ These opinions make most of the reviewers a little stiff for their period when the strict demarcation lines between the genres were being relaxed, machinery and the rules regarded askance. William Taylor appears the most advanced.

¹ CR (2) 31 (F 01). 161.

² MR n.s. 35 (My 01). 2; (Ferriar).

³ BC 16 (D 00). 614.

⁴ MR: loc. cit. in note 2.

⁵ MR n.s. 37 (F 02). 183: Pye; (Ferriar). MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 360-1: Ogilvie; (Ferriar).

⁶ CR (2) 31 (F 01). 160: Cottle. BC 18 (J1 01). 28: Pye. AJR 9 (J1 01). 232: Pye. CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 121: Burges. BC 18 (N 01). 523: Mrs Cowley.

⁷ MR n.s. 37 (F 02). 179: Pye; (Ferriar). AJR 11 (Mr 02). 277: Ogilvie.

⁸ Three useful discussions of the epic's fortunes are:
 Donald M. Foerster, 'Critical Approval of Epic Poetry in the Age of Wordsworth' PMLA 70 (1955). 682-705.
 H.T. Swedenberg jr, 'Fable, Action, Unity, and Supernatural Machinery in English Epic Theory, 1650-1800' Englische Studien 73 (1936). 39-48.

Rules and English Critics of the Epic, 1650-1800 SP 35 (1938). 566-87.

Between the extremes of ballad and epic come other poetic genres on which there are comments from the reviewers. The pastoral did not generally meet with approval: the Anti-Jacobin Review finds the true pastoral tone in E.A. Bray's Idyls,¹ but the Critical interestingly declares that 'In this northern climate, and in the present state of society, it requires no small degree of imagination to embrace all the fabulous images of Sicilian scenery, or to relish all the simplicity of the ideas and feelings of our own rustics.'² Furthermore, the British Critic concludes that modern standards of common sense make pastoral poetry seem ridiculous.³ In reviewing Gessner's Works of 1802 the Critical finds that pastorals tend to include impossible scenes and the British Critic that the idylls are fantastical, effeminate, and absurd.⁴ These are all approaches which J.E. Congleton in his Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England 1684-1798⁵ finds characteristic of the rationalistic reaction of the period 1717-1750 rather than of the late eighteenth-century psychologising, though he finds both approaches in late eighteenth-century Reviews.⁶

Satire also receives a measure of attention: particular satire is most effective,⁷ but the Monthly Review

¹ AJR 9 (Je 01). 179.

² CR (2) 33 (N 01). 350.

³ BC 18 (D 01). 664.

⁴ BC 20 (D 02). 691.

⁵ Gainesville, Florida, 1952.

⁶ Pp. 120-1.

⁷ BC 16 (Ag 00). 193: Gifford, Epistle to Peter Rindar, (1800).

criticises Crim. Con. for speaking too freely of dignitaries.¹ Furthermore, there is always a danger of a lapse into bad taste.²

Dealing with James Hurdis's The Favourite Village of 1800 the Critical comes to the conclusion that while lyric and epic poetry are for the highly educated, descriptive poetry is appreciated by all: hence few read Gray's odes, but many tackle The Seasons which dignifies common objects.³ This basically simple genre might however be made more dignified by the logical introduction of historical, mythological, moral, and religious topics:⁴ one sees here an attempt to raise the form from its generally accepted inferior status among the genres.⁵

Polwhele has a long article on didactic poetry arising from his treatment of Wakefield's Lucretius. He accepts the validity of the genre and outlines its history in England, dividing the examples into three groups -- those dealing with business and the pleasures of life such as Mason's Garden, 'philological' works among which his own English Orator is given a high place, and philosophical poems, though the terms of philosophy have a tendency to

¹ MR n.s. 36 (D 01). 438.

² CR (2) 30 (D 00). 475: Gifford, Op. cit.

³ CR (2) 31 (Ja 01). 83.

⁴ BC 18 (Ag 01). 147: Bowles, Poems vol. ii, (1801).

⁵ See Bosker, Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson, p. 95.

be inappropriate for poetry. Darwin is here particularly condemned: the invasion of poetry by science is to be checked, lest every spark be quenched in the phlegm of philosophy.¹ This unenthusiastic approval recalls Johnson, where the classic moral-aesthetic conflict is to be found.

The remarks on the novel tend to be more general, the development of different sub-genres having had less time to become established. However, the Lane press and its associates are generally condemned: Olyett Woodhouse refers to 'that negative class of insipid and senseless productions, which we see frequently issuing from the press merely to swell the catalogues of circulating libraries.'² The Critical often adopts a mocking tone for Lane productions while the Monthly Review treats none of its works, and the charge of desultory insipidity is one of the most frequent levelled against the genre.³ Further hints of subgeneric division may be seen in Mrs Moody's observation that the modern romance with its caves, passages and monks was a substitute for the chivalric romances of her childhood.⁴

¹ AJR 5 (Mr 00). 241-58: Lucretius ed. Wakefield, Works, (1796-7); (Polwhele).

² MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 356: 'John Beaufort' <i.e. John Thelwall>, The Daughter of Adoption, (1801), N; (O. Woodhouse).

³ MR n.s. 38 (J1 02). 312: Adamina, N; (Manning).
CR (2) 31 (Ap 01). 474: Adonia, (1801), N.

⁴ MR n.s. 34 (F 01). 203: W.H. Ireland, Rimualdo, (1800), N; (Mrs Moody).

The romance was not generally highly thought of. Harrall in the Anti-Jacobin Review rebukes Walker for attempting the genre: romance is the wrong path for a man of genius. Furthermore his work is not up to the level of The Castle of Otranto and tends to become puerile.¹ These attitudes to the majority of novels are standard for the period, but in other comments the reviewers show a more sympathetic attitude.² Examples may be found in those comments which concern the function of the novel. Most frequently it is seen as a vehicle of information and instruction, partly moral, but also involving the dissemination of the author's knowledge of the world. The function may be the portrayal of unfamiliar manners³ or of historical events;⁴ or it may be the communication of the author's worldly wisdom and experience.⁵ There is some debate as to whether a novel ought to be used for the dissemination of philosophical

¹ AJR 6 (My 00). 52: G. Walker, The Three Spaniards, N; (Harrall).

² See Robert D. Mayo, The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815, (Evanston, 1962), and J.T. Taylor, Early Opposition to the English Novel The Popular Reaction from 1760 to 1830, (New York, 1943).

³ AJR 5 (Mr 00). 269: R. Bisset, Douglas, (1800), N; (J. Gifford).

⁴ BC 15 (F 00). 194: J.H. Campe tr. Helme, Cortez (1799) and Pizarro (1800), N.

⁵ MR n.s. 38 (J1 02). 314: Belmour, (1801), N; (Hanning). Cf. AJR 13 (S-D 02). 459: Mme de Genlis, A Series of Novels, (1802).

opinions. Moody thinks that Dorothea is justified in so doing,¹ the Critical that the process has been carried to an extreme.² There is certainly danger in the process. The Anti-Jacobin Review notes:³

AS novels are written and read by all descriptions; the sour politician and the affected philosopher have seized the opportunity of interweaving dangerous tenets and wild speculations with some interesting story.

Politics are regarded by the Critical as being out of place in the novel.⁴

Godwin's influence is primarily moral and philosophical and is to be disapproved of.⁵ A similar moral criticism is made of Mrs Robinson's The Natural Daughter whose heroine is of the Wollstonecraft school,⁶ and Heath in the Anti-Jacobin Review approves of the satirising of St. Leon and asks for the rest of the school to be included:⁷

For although we do not allow ridicule to be the only test of truth, we still are of opinion it may be applied with effect in the destruction of the

¹ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 425: Dorothea, N; (Moody).

² CR (2) 34 (F 02). 238: Ibid.

³ AJR 7 (D 00). 415: Humbert Castle, (1800), N.

⁴ CR (2) 31 (Mr 01). 354: Mrs Burke, Elliott, (1800), N.

⁵ MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 356: 'John Beaufort' <i.e. John Thelwall>, The Daughter of Adoption, (1801), N; (O. Woodhouse).

⁶ BC 16 (S 00). 320: Mrs Robinson, The Natural Daughter, (1799), N.

⁷ AJR 5 (Ap 00). 427: 'St. Leon' <i.e. Edward Dubois>, St. Godwin, (1800), N.

false malignant and sophisticated reasoning of the disciples of the Godwinian philosophy; and we, therefore, beg leave to recommend to the notice of this author, some other spawn of the same monster, such as the life of Mary Wolstonecraft, the novels of Mary Hays, Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Inchbald, &c. &c.

Two comments remain to be noted on the novel as a genre. It is sometimes felt that the modern novel is in decline, as strange fate for so young a form: the old school was preferable in form and construction,¹ and whereas nature and simplicity were once prized in novels 'now matters are reversed; and it seems to be the ambition of many novel-writers, to present to their readers whatever can be conceived that is unnatural, exaggerated, and extravagant.'² Secondly, something of the ambiguity of Pamela would appear to be lingering on in the comment on Kotzebue's The Escape:³

If it be the narrative of a real escape from the Inquisition, Kotzebue, by not announcing it as such, has deprived the reader of the chief source of interest. If, as we suspect, it be a fictitious tale, there is little merit in copying from what is here called Trenk's romance.

In spite of all the criticisms of the genre the novel was, then, by no means without advocates. But the strongest and most perceptive of all is not one of the

¹ CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 231: Humbert Castle.

² BC 15 (Je 00). 675: C. Lloyd, Edmund Oliver, (1798), N.

³ CR (2) 28 (F 00). 240: Kotzebue tr. Thompson, The Escape, (1799), N.

Reviews under consideration: the Monthly Mirror, while acknowledging that the taste of the times was not favourable to excellence, notes that a good novel is just as meritorious as a good epic, and there could be no higher praise than that.¹

Modern drama was generally thought to be in a very poor way. Large theatres, proclaims Southey, lead to an excess of rant -- farce, foolery, pantomime, and Pizarro,² and Ferriar proposes the setting up of a small theatre for pieces of a serious or elevated nature.³ The bill of fare in the large theatres is brought to life by numerous hostile delineations: a cult of the actor predominates and much of what is being written will not survive the actors for whom it is produced;⁴ spectacle, buffoonery and sing-song are stressed at the expense of

¹ MMir 13 (F 02). 102: The Follies of Fashion, (1801), N.

² CR (2) 37 (F 03). 206: Joanna Baillie, a series of Plays, vol. ii, (1802); (Southey). Mayo sums up the case for the Reviews well: Op. cit., p. 192.

³ MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 326: Kotzebue adap. Cumberland, Johanna of Montfaucon, (1800), D; (Ferriar).

⁴ BC 17 (Ap 00). 433: James Cobb, Ramah Droog, (1800), D; BC 15 (My 00). 567: A Critique on the Tragedy of Pizarro, (1799), P.

wit,¹ and the mob is pleased by bustle;² modern comic taste is vitiated, leading to a false emphasis on caricature and word-play which is necessarily of transient interest;³ five-act farces are particularly condemned by Ferriar.⁴

Much of the degeneracy of English drama is ascribed to foreign influence. If Monk Lewis will study the classics and chaste dramatic models instead of German absurdity he will become a genuine English dramatist,⁵ and this emphasis on the contrast between regular, classical drama and modern practice is frequently pointed.⁶

¹ BC 17 (Ap 01). 433: James Cobb, Op. cit. AJR 7 (S 00). 61: Ibid.: AJR refuses to review in detail a work written without attention to the rules of dramatic composition.

² CR (2) 28 (Ap 00). 475: Kotzebue adap. Cumberland, Joanna of Montfaucon, (1800), D.

³ CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 468: Lathom, The Dash of the Day, (1801), D. Cf. CR (2) 36 (S 02). 115: F. Reynolds, Folly as it Flies, (1802), D. MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 96: Reynolds, Management, (1799), D; (Moody).

⁴ MR n.s. 35 (Jl 01). 323: Reynolds, Life, (1801), D.

⁵ CR (2) 34 (F 02). 232: M.G. Lewis, Adelmorn, (1801), D.

⁶ BC 16 (Jl 00). 81: Prince Hoare, Indiscretion, (1800), D. MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 322: Reynolds, Folly as it Flies, (1802), D; (Ferriar).

Ferriar is the most energetic among the defenders of English drama against Teutonic influence,¹ and his work reaches its climax in his review of J.G. Holman's The Red-Cross Knights, an adaptation of Schiller's Die Räuber.² A year later, however, in July 1801, Ferriar could note with satisfaction that Teutonic influence seemed to be waning in any case.³ It may further be pointed out that the British Critic found Schiller's Maria Stuart the least exceptionable of all the German dramas.⁴

Tragicomedies had gradually been accepted by Johnson, but it is condemned by his friend Charles Burney in the course of his lengthy and appreciative analysis

¹ See on the whole subject:

V. Stockley, German Literature as known in England 1750-1830, (London, 1929).

Thomas Rea, Schiller's Dramas and Poems in England, (London, 1906).

G.W. Sellier, Kotzebue in England, (Leipzig, 1901).

² MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 322-3: J.G. Holman, The Red-Cross Knights, (1799), D; (Ferriar).

³ MRn.s. 35 (J1 01). 325: Earl of Carlisle, The Step-Mother, (1800), D; (Ferriar). Cf. BC 17 (Je 01). 669: The German Museum, (1800), D. For the rise and fall in popularity of German literature at this period see B.Q. Morgan and A. R. Hohlfield eds, German Literature in British Magazines 1750-1860, (Madison, Wisconsin, 1949), p. 42 ff.

⁴ BC 18 (D 01). 666: Schiller tr. J. C. M(ellish), Maria Stuart, (1801).

of La Harpe's Lycée.¹ The liberal Critical, however, cites an instance of mingled tragedy, comedy, and farce, if not with any high praise, at least without overt condemnation.² Melodrama is recognised by G.E. Griffiths as being new to the English stage, and Holcroft's essay in the genre is generally approved.³ The reviewers differ in their attitudes to horror in the drama. While it is not generally condemned, Southey has an interesting argument against the horror in one of Joanna Baillie's plays which may be linked with the concern for realism in the novel: he maintains that 'the mind instinctively makes an effort to escape from pain; and scenes, like these, force upon it the recollection that the whole is fiction.'⁴ A related neoclassical point is made by Moody when he praises Pye's tragic Adelaide for not presenting death on the stage, this being an advance upon barbarism. He more interestingly goes on to state that death is not essential to tragedy:⁵

Let us not be so barbarous as to seek amusement from sanguinary scenes, nor henceforth regard blood as essential to the essence of tragedy. Ought not all serious and soul-moving dramas,

¹ MR n.s. 33 (S-D 1800). 456:

² CR (2) 30 (O 00). 229: James Cobb, Ramah Droog, D.

³ MR n.s. 40 (Mr 03). 330: Holcroft, A Tale of Mystery, (1802), D; (G.E. Griffiths).

⁴ CR (2) 37 (F 03). 212: Joanna Baillie, A Series of Plays vol. 2, (1802), D; (Southey).

⁵ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 317: Pye, Adelaide, (1800), D.

which strongly excite out Pity and Terror, to be considered as tragedies, though Death itself stalks not over the stage?

Two types of literature cutting across generic division also call for attention: works designed for children, and literature produced in times or places remote from the reviewers.

Works for children consisted almost entirely of stories, though there was a little verse, and the most prominent writer was Mrs Pilkington. There are two main demands -- for instructive morality and for correctness and perspicuity of style.¹ We have already noticed the Anti-Jacobin Review on the prowl after nursery jacobinism and the same Review condemns The Adventures of Kamoula as illiterate, superstitious, and almost blasphemous.²

Works produced in times or places remote from the reviewers were not often reviewed, but the comments on them show an interesting variety of response, reflecting the increasing historical awareness of the post-Augustan era. There was a vogue for Arabian works during the period under discussion, and it seems to have been the most frequent opinion that they could not be expected to

¹ AJR 10 (N 01). 311-2: Adventures of Musul, (1800), N., MR n.s. 38 (J1 02). 313-4: Alciator, Phatime et Zoroe, (1802), N; (Manning). BC 19 (My 02). 538-9: Ibid.

² AJR 10 (O 01). 208-9: The Adventures of Kamoula, (1801), N.

obey the rules of western writing. The great orientalist Sir William Jones is the cause of a classic expression of the doctrine of variable taste in Hamilton's review of his Works: Arabian manners are different from those of Europe and expressions natural to them may appear turgid to us.¹ Similarly J.M. Good in the Critical's review of Persian Lyrics finds a lack of connection according to European laws, but the Persians ought not to be expected to conform with these.² Hamilton does, however, discriminate later in the same volume between the simplicity of Arabian and excessive embellishment of Persian poetry.³ Something of the same attitude occurs in a more general way in the review of M.E.A. Malek's Elegy by the British Critic which finds it Orientally obscure.⁴

Medieval poetry tends still to be valued for its antiquarian interest rather than for any literary merit. Ferriar finds extracts from Gavin Douglas 'disgusting by their harshness, or repulsive by their obscurity' but agrees that they are useful to the antiquary.⁵ Another work dealing with Scottish medieval poetry, Alexander Campbell's Introduction to the History of Poetry in Scotland,

¹ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 132.

² CR (2) 30 (N 00). 265.

³ MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 233: <'Ināyat Allāh> tr. Jonathan Scott, Bahar-Danush, (1799), P.

⁴ BC 17 (F 01). 191.

⁵ MR n.s. 31 (F 00). 187: George Chalmers, A Supplemental Apology, (1799), P.

elicits from Hamilton the comment that personal abuse in James V was the product of a crude age.¹ In the same vein, the bowdlerising of Shakespeare is generally approved,² though it is felt that the 1800 King John is too drastic.³ Apart from Shakespeare, who is commended by Charles Burney in opposition to La Harpe for 'his strong humour and support of characters in comedy, and for his original and beautiful sentiments on every subject which is interesting to human nature in tragedy',⁴ early modern authors do not fare well in these Reviews: the works of Beaumont and Fletcher are irregular and display false taste in spite of the strength of genius and variety of character manifested in them;⁵ Wyatt, Sidney, and Raleigh were not to be classed among major secondary poets: 'There are no living images, no burning words, no elegance of metaphor: the vis poetica can scarcely even be discovered in their prosaic pages.'⁶ The genuine ballads fared no

¹ MR n.s. 33 (O 00). 204.

² Reviews of 2 Henry IV (adap. R. Valpy), (1801): MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 322; BC 19 (My 02). 536.

³ Reviews of King John (adap. R. Valpy), (1800): MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 321; CR (2) 33 (O 01). 235-6; BC 18 (Ag 01). 196-7; AJR 7 (D 00). 413. Cf. CR (2) 36 (D 02). 477-8: The Merchant of Venice (adap. Valpy) (1802).

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (S-D 1800). 464: Laharpe, Lycée.

⁵ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 152: J.M. Mason, Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, (1798), P; (Ferriar).

⁶ CR (2) 30 (S 00). 70: Edward Phillips (ed. Brydges), Theatrum Poetarum Anglicanorum, (1800), PV.

better: the events were too remote to interest the reviewers and the metre was distracting;¹ their rational curiosity remained ungratified.²

When one examines reviews of those products of the classical era which were being studied and edited during the period one finds the main terms of approval noted in the last chapter. Thus Longinus displays 'profound judgment, feeling, and refined taste';³ Lucretius combines 'the correctness of Racine with the simplicity of Goldsmith',⁴ and Terence is praised by Bannister for his 'delicacy of sentiment, elegant simplicity of language, and just delineations of human life and manners'.⁵ Here we are at the very centre of the criticism in these Reviews, and no adverse comment is heard.

b) Personal Considerations

One of the most fruitful sources of information on the relationship between reviewer and author is the advice

¹ AJR 9 (Ag 01). 412-3: Thomas Rodd, Ancient Ballads, (1801).

² BC 20 (S 02). 317: Scottish Poems of the Sixteenth Century ed. J.G. Dalyell, (1801), V.

³ MR n.s. 33 (S+D 00). 458: Lahappe, Lycée; (Burney).

⁴ CR (2) 28 (Mr 00). 255: Lucretius, Book One, (1799).

⁵ MR n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 430: A Brief Account of the Life and Writings of Terence, (1799); (Bannister).

offered to the author for future improvements. Often the recipient of such advice is a young man. The young Dimond has imagination and sensibility but wants taste: he should assimilate the simplicity of language in Goldsmith and Pope and then revise his work.¹ Mrs Cowley should read more and write less,² and the Earl of Carlisle will write better if he practises more.³

Allowances were frequently made which could mitigate a severe judgment or procure a favourable one. These allowances concerned the person and circumstances of the author, his intention and character, and the respectability of the subscribers to his publication. An author might be excused the full critical rigour on grounds of youth,⁴ or his work might be specially highly praised.⁵ Admittedly, he might be severely censured: the Critical finds the loose views which William Earle the younger displayed in his novel The Welshman especially

¹ CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 464: Dimond, Petrarchal Sonnets, (1800).

² BC 18 (N 01). 523: Mrs Cowley, The Siege of Acre, (1801), V.

³ AJR 7 (O 00). 205: Earl of Carlisle, The Step-Mother, (1800), D.

⁴ CR (2) 32 (Ag 01). 470: Alphonso di Borgo, (1800), N.

⁵ MR n.s. 39 (O 02). 208: Ad Elizabetham Reginam, V; (Moody).

reprehensible for one aged twenty.¹ The uncertainty may be exemplified by two reactions to Sophia King's novel The Victim of Friendship: the Critical judges that it is unmanly in a reviewer to criticise a young lady,² whereas the Anti-Jacobin Review finds the work immoral and professes itself tired of children's work.³ A similar uncertainty is seen in the allowances made and not made for ladies who write. The British Critic proclaims that the words 'by a lady' stop criticism, but hardly mitigates its own severity, judging that the work under consideration displays 'nothing like manliness of thought, or energy of expression'.⁴ Ollyett Woodhouse is even less complimentary when he finds a novel praiseworthy in spite of its being by a female author.⁵ The author's bereavement⁶ or death⁷ are further circumstances which may elicit sympathy from the reviewer for the work in question. Finally, the poverty of the author may be taken into consideration. Ferriar cites extracts from the work of a poor clergyman

¹ CR (2) 34 (Ja 02). 117.

² CR (2) 32 (Je 01). 232.

³ AJR 7 (D 00). 416.

⁴ BC 19 (Ap 02). 419: Adamina, N.

⁵ MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 427: Adonia, (1801), N.

⁶ BC 16 (D 00). 679: W. Hayley, An Essay on Sculpture, (1800), V.

⁷ MR n.s. 36 (S 01). 26: Mary Robinson, Lyrical Tales, (1800), V.

so as to let the reader judge for himself,¹ and A. Donoughue's penury is pitied by both Monthly Review and British Critic, the subsequent criticism being mild in tone.² The Critical, however, refuses to admit poverty as a mitigating factor: the critic's job must be done³ and Southey gives Bloomfield's circumstances at the end of his review of The Farmer's Boy so as to avoid prejudice.⁴

A wide variety of attitudes is assumed with reference to the poet's intention. At one extreme, Ollyett Woodhouse can write of Dallas's novel Percival:⁵

Occasional improprieties of style, a few deviations from the strict rules of composition, a casual want of poetical truth in the conception of character, or a deficiency of art in the management of the fable, appear light faults, when weighed against the importance of the end designed.

At the other extreme, W. Cole's elegaic intentions are approved but it is made clear that he should not write verses.⁶ The intentions generally approved are the usual

¹ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 313-5: W. Collier, Poems on Various Occasions, (1800).

² MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 93: Donoughue, Essay on the Passions, (1799), V; (Burney). BC 15 (Mr 00). 315: Ibid.

³ CR (2) 31 (Mr 01). 255: P. Littlejohn, The Mistake, (1800), N.

⁴ CR (2) 29 (My 00). 74-5.

⁵ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 425.

⁶ BC 15 (F 00). 191: W. Cole, A Tear of "egret, (1799), V.

ones of patriotism,¹ piety,² and practical morality.³

Works written for charitable purposes are usually approved,⁴ even if the result is not commendable from a literary point of view,⁵ though Mrs Hale's Poetical Attempts should have been circulated only among her friends.⁶ The autocratic critic is flattered by a modest author, but this does not necessarily affect the criticism: the author's modest estimate of his own work may be accepted,⁷ or it may be merely noted with approval.⁸

¹ MR n.s. 36 (O 01). 215: Lines on the Death of the Late Sir Ralph Abercrombie; (Moody).

² AJR (My-Ag 00). 513-4: La Foi Couronnée, (1799), V; (J. Gifford).

³ MR n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 437: Contentment, (1800), V; (Moody).

⁴ AJR 13 (S 02). 84-5: The Author and the Two Comedians, N.

⁵ MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 325: H. Shepherd, The Orphans, (1800), D; (Ferriar).

⁶ CR (2) 29 (Ag 00). 464. When the BC cannot commend a good intention, it says as little as possible: 17 (Mr 01). 314: T. Corneille, Maximian, (1800).

⁷ CR (2) 28 (Ja 00). 107-8: John Black, Poems, (1799). The turning of the tables here is perhaps due in part to Black's attack on critics.

⁸ MR n.s. 34 (Ap 01). 348: J.W. Chandler, Sir Hubert, (1800), V; (Ferriar).

At the other extreme, the Critical notes that Esther Holstein's novel Ernestina has disarmed criticism by its modesty and proceeds to praise it whereas the British Critic, uncharmed, finds the same work insipid and absurd.¹

Respectable lists of subscribers are noted,² but it can be suggested that they have been actuated by a regard for the author rather than the work and the Critical attributes the Duchess of York's attention to Tales of Truth to charity.³

In all these instances, then, allowances are made at times which mollify the reviewers' strictures, while at other times the extenuating circumstances are merely noted and the criticism proceeds regardless.

Accusations of puffing or of adverse reviews due to personal spite are frequently made against the Reviews around this period. On 23 April 1809 Southey wrote to Landor:⁴

When Gifford published his Juvenal, one of the most base attacks that ever disgraced a literary journal was made upon it in the Critical Review

¹ CR (2) 33 (S 01). 113. BC 17 (My 01). 541.

² BC 15 (F 00). 190: Black, Poems.

³ CR (2) 31 (Ap 01). 475; cf. BC 17 (My 01). 541: Esther Holstein, Ernestina.

⁴ Life and Correspondence ed. C.C. Southey, iii. 230.

by some one of the heroes of his Daviad. Gifford wrote an angry reply, in which he brought forward all the offences of the Review for many years back; one of those offences was its praise of Gebir. I laughed when I heard this, guessing pretty well at the nature of Gifford's feelings; for I had been the reviewer of whose partiality he complained. Gebir came to me with a parcel of other poems, which I was to kill off. I was young in the trade, and reviewed it injudiciously, so that every body supposed it to be done by some friend of the author. For I analysed the story; studded it with as many beautiful extracts as they would allow room for; praised its merits almost up to the height of my feelings, and never thought of telling the reader that if he went to the book itself he would find any more difficulty in comprehending it than he found in that abstract.

In this statement we have not only an account of Southey's kindest reviewing practice, but also examples of actual denigration for personal reasons and of natural though unjustified suspicion. Southey was right in his diagnosis here, for Anna Seward understood from Fellowes, one of the later editors, that 'Gabor' had been reviewed by its author.

There is some evidence of puffing in all five Reviews, though the evidence is more detailed for the Monthly Review and the Critical and very slight for the British Critic. It was difficult for a reviewer to obtain the Griffiths' permission to write a puff: Samuel Parr obtained permission only with difficulty to insert 'rather a favourable account' of Bishop Bagot's Charge, and

¹ Letters of Anna Seward, v.296: 1 J1 00.

'Dr. Griffiths afterwards told me that some of his colleagues were displeased with him for granting me this permission.'¹ In 1797 Dilly suggested to John Pinkerton that Dr Gillies might be prevailed upon to review Pinkerton's History favourably in the Monthly Review:² Samuel Hamilton had been annoyed at an attempt by letter to influence the Review against Pinkerton-and had told him about it.³

On the other hand, the editor himself attempted to indicate to William Taylor that a puff was required. Ralph Griffiths asked him in 1793 to review Arthur Murphy's Arminius kindly but fairly as he was on the staff ('one of us').⁴ The stress on fairness here and the difficulty of Parr suggest that puffing was rare in the Monthly Review, but it certainly was not impossible.

Puffs were possible too in the Critical, and here there is less sense of difficulty and embarrassment in the process. Southey writes in 1801 to William Taylor:⁵

I have perhaps and probably enough interest in the Critical Review to insert any puff of decent praise and brevity, but there my interest

¹ Memoirs of ... the Rev. Samuel Parr, LL.D. by William Field, (2 vols, London, 1828), i. 333n.

² The Literary Correspondence of John Pinkerton, Esq., (2 vols, London, 1830), i. 438.

³ Loc. cit.

⁴ J.W. Robberds, Op. cit., i.122; cf. i.139 (1798), and also ii. 319 (1810) for the continuation of the habit in father and son.

⁵ Ibid., i. 383.

ends. Once I attempted to introduce a friend there, who would have been a very Goliath or Samson, but no notice was taken of my application. One might infer from the tone of the remark that Southey is suggesting that his friend might have been a friendly puffer too, but this is only a conjecture. Taylor reviewed Thalaba enthusiastically, though Southey stresses his ability and by implication his essential fairness¹ -- Southey was no victim of excessive modesty -- and in 1805 when Hunt has driven Taylor from the Review he anticipates that Madoc will fare less happily.² Writing to Taylor himself Southey compares the Critical account with the attack in the British Critic and cries: 'Oh, William Taylor, how do these things of criticism depend upon private feeling!'³ Taylor in reply shows his understanding of the reviewing scene: 'I thought the poem could be helped more by making certain allowances to the slanderers than by mere puff.'⁴ The implications of this and other remarks in this paragraph are not exactly clear, but the general conclusion is inescapable: the Critical Review was more open to puffing than its main rival and Southey detected a 'puff superlative' of Browne's meagre Travels.⁵

¹ Life and Correspondence, ii. 249: 9 Ja 04 to Bedford.

² Ibid., ii. 320; cf. Robberds i. 502 (My 04).

³ Robberds, Op. cit., i. 502.

⁴ Ibid., i. 506: 20 My 04.

⁵ Ibid., i. 301: 22 6 99.

Of the other three Reviews, much less can be said: we have to rely mainly on circumstantial evidence. As for the British Critic, Anna Seward thought that Miss Bannerman had been puffed in it,¹ though she was wrong with reference to Gebir. It must be noted however that the same Review paid less attention than the Critical to the second edition of Courtier's The Pleasures of Solitude published by their own Rivington's.² Furthermore Landor's Gebir, also published by Rivington's, was overlooked and a copy was lent for the reviewer's use. The review is hostile.³ In the Anti-Jacobin Review we have noticed the activities of Polwhele. Other associates of the Review were also praised in its pages: Bisset's novel Douglas received higher commendation than in any other Review, and in a major article,⁴ while on a less purely literary level another contributor, Jonathan Boucher, received the reviewer's sympathy because of his lack of preferment.⁵

On the basis of this evidence it would seem reasonable to conclude that puffing has been proved to be normal practice only in two Reviews, the Critical and the Anti-Jacobin Review. It rarely occurred in the Monthly. The British Critic must be conditionally discharged.

¹ Letters, v. 341: 5 Ja 01.

² BC 20 (O 02). 432; ct. CR (2) 36 (O 02). 233-4.

³ BC 15 (F 00). 190; ~~Shapp is also published 1844.~~

⁴ AJR 5 (Mr 00). 269-77.

⁵ AJR 10 (S 01). 81-2: T. Sanderson, Original Poems, (1800).

Chapter 3: Individual Contributors and their reviews

The study turns from surveying the general conditions of reviewing to the characterisation of the individual reviewers. Separate treatment will be given in this section only to the more important contributors to each Review. Minor reviewers will be considered briefly together at the end of each Review, and there will be an attempt to survey the relationship between editorial policy and individual reviewing practice in the Review as a whole.

Anti-Jacobin Review

The first six volumes of the Review in the British Museum have most of the contributors marked in. The only volumes of direct concern here are 5 and 6 (January-August 1800) and the following notes are based on these volumes.

1. BLAGDON, Francis William (1779-1819) (5 reviews: 0 major)

Blagdon taught modern languages and later edited Flowers of Literature with the Revd F. Brevost and wrote anti-liberal propaganda.¹ His five identified reviews in the period under consideration are all of foreign works. He shows an interest in style, preferring simplicity to

¹ DNB: first supplement.

inflated language¹ and stresses the moral² and common sense criteria³ for novels. As a watchdog against the Continent he barks to form.

2. 'GIFFORD, John' i.e. GREEN, John Richards (1758-1818)

(8:2)

'John Gifford' was a tory pamphleteer and historian. It is said that 100,000 copies of his Address to Members of Loyal Associations were sold. His reviews are miscellaneous. As editor of the Review he puffed Polwhele and Robert Bisset, both contributors.⁴ He supported sound religious and political principles⁵ and the defence of the Church⁶ against youthful melancholy⁷ and Peter Pindarian obscenity.⁸

¹ AJR 5 (Ja-Ap 00). 562: J.F. Dognon, Un Mois d'Hiver, N; 564: Le Chateau Noir, N.

² Ibid., 564: J.P. Nougaret, Les Dangers de la Seduction, N.

³ Ibid., 562-4: J. Goebel, Correza der Franke, (1799), N.

⁴ AJR 5 (F 00). 200-4: Polwhele, The Influence of Local Attachment, (1798), V; (Ap 00). 428-30: Polwhele, Grecian Prospects, V; (Mr 00). 269-77: Bisset, Douglas, (1800), N.

⁵ AJR 5 (F 00). 201.

⁶ AJR 6 (Ag 00). 513-4: La Foi Couronnée, (1799), V.

⁷ AJR 6 (My 00). 79-80: W. Dimond jun., Petrarchal Sonnets, (1800), V.

⁸ AJR 6 (Jl 00). 307: P. Pindar, Lord Auckland's Triumph, (1800), V.

His stylistic ideal was nervous and correct expression.¹ A certain concern with critical standards comes through in his statement that critics approve of Colwhele's revisions in The Influence of Local Attachment² and in his remarks on Pindar's supporters which is his only piece of stylistic bravura (normally his style is as undistinguished as his criticism):³

When we say that these pages exhibit a misshapen mass of most miserable doggerel, our decision will no doubt be imputed to prejudice by those tea-table critics whom we have frequently heard declare that Peter Pindar's poetry is vastly clever, so witty, and so funny, without making a single objection to his obscenity, his calumny, and his falshood.

3. HARRALL (12:0)

This contributor has not been identified. His reviews are of novels and plays, and thus, in spite of their solidity and competence, are relegated to the catalogues. His attitude to novels is clear: they should be moral (he even on one occasion proposes an alteration in a novel for the sake of the moral),⁴ and the supernatural should be kept under very strict control,⁵ romance being tolerable

¹ AJR 6 (My 00). 80: <R. Llwyd,> Beaumaris Bay, (1800), V; (Jl 00). 292: C. Rigshaw, Sans Culotides, (1800), V.

² AJR 5 (F 00). 204.

³ AJR 6 (Jl 00). 308: P. Pindar, Op. cit.

⁴ AJR 6 (My 00). 55: J.N. Brewer, A Winter's Tale, (1800), N.

⁵ Ibid., p. 54.

only on the Otranto level.¹ Grammatical errors were frequently pointed out in detail. In plays Harrall's chief demand was for novelty and permanent character interest.²

Harrall's style is undistinguished except, again, when he is in full hue and cry after an unfortunate author. Then it becomes more lively,³ and at least one ^musing review is the result. The Lane novel Andrew Stuart by Mary Ann Hanway⁴ with its absurd foreign phrases leads to a mock heroic tour de force by Harrall, containing such paragraphs as this:

Vi et armis we strove to retain sensation in our optic nerves; but Morpheus, that sombrous deity, weighed heavy on our eyelids, and we yielded to the soporific impulse.

The wrongs of the gentle-hearted Isabella, incarcerated in a castellated mansion, intenerated not our rigid feelings; nor did the vulgarity of the emaciated Orpington's cher ami excite our souls to laughter.

One moral sentiment is grandly displayed, and then the review suddenly loses confidence and tails off into Harrall's usual insipid style and matter:

We have nothing, however, to object to this novel on the score of morality. The moral is good, and

¹ AJR 6 (My 00). 52: G. Walker, The Three Spaniards, N.

² AJR 6 (My 00). 57: Kotzebue tr. Inchbald, The Wise Men of the East, (1799), D; F. Reynolds, Management, (1798), D.

³ AJR 6 (Ag 00). 451: Ormond, (1800), N.

⁴ AJR 6 (Ag 00). 449-51: M.A. Hanway, Andrew Stuart, (1800), N.

the author labours to enforce the precepts of honour, and virtue. It is not to the design but to the execution that our objections apply.

4. HEATH, The Revd William (8;2)

Heath is another unidentified contributor. What should have been his most interesting review is that of the Lyrical Ballads, but the result is disappointing: he is enthusiastic, but uses colourless terms in a way which gives no hint of anything extraordinary: genius, taste, elegance, and wit are discerned, the 'Ancient Mariner' is a good imitation of the elder poets, and Wordsworth displays a classic and accomplished mind.¹ Of more interest is his review of Godwin's St. Leon.² He reviewed this as soon as possible, fearing that censure would be necessary, but finds the domesticated Godwin greatly improved: let him continue and become 'a good Christian, a good subject, and an honest man.'³ Traces of the old Godwin remain: the pacifism is absurd, but at least infidelity and cant are restricted to moments of madness in the characters. Godwin's general reflections show profound thought, but (though a work without rules is difficult to judge) the style seems too diffuse and inflated.

The same moral concern is everywhere evident in Heath's criticism: his style is undistinguished except when he is censuring a work: it then assumes the

¹ AJR 5 (Ap 00). 434.

² AJR 5 (Ja 00). 23-8; (F 00). 145-53.

³ P. 151.

devastating tone characteristic of the Review in its most censorious pages. A quotation from Thorn's poem Lodon and Miranda is thus introduced:¹

... there is something so exquisitely tender, so beautifully simple, and so chastely natural in the following lines that we cannot resist the temptation of inserting them.

and it is thus commented upon:²

Ohe! jam satis est! -- "'Tis pitiful, 'tis wondrous pitiful." We will make a proposal to this Author. If he will inform us who the honourable gentleman is who promised him a place, and he will engage not to proceed in "the prosecution of his poem of greater magnitude," we will at leastt endeavour to get him employed more profitably to himself, and more advantageously to the public.

5. POLWHELE, The Revd Richard (1760-1838) (10:5)

Polwhele was one of the most prominent miscellaneous writers in England at the beginning of the last century. He was a poet of some distinction and wrote for other periodicals, including the Gentleman's Magazine, the European Magazine, and the British Critic. He was the leading light of the Exeter literary circle as was William Taylor of that at Norwich. A conservative churchman, he attacked the Methodists in the West Country with gusto.

Several of the reviews which he wrote in the Anti-Jacobin Review are among the best of the period. His chief distinctions are two. He was concerned more than

¹ AJR 5 (Ap 00). 433.

² Ibid., p. 434.

most reviewers with the maintenance of permanently valid standards of literary judgment. Thus in his review of Samuel Rogers' anonymously published poem An Epistle to a Friend (1798) ~~he~~ writes:¹

THERE are several poets of the present day, who, pleasing the ear by the music of their verse, and touching the heart by tender sentiment, have so far insinuated themselves into the public esteem, as to be applauded in terms which posterity can never sanction, but will deem the effusion of fleeting admiration. Sober criticism, uninfluenced by the panegyric of the moment, will endeavour to appreciate literary talents or genius, according to the unvarying principles of truth.

This empty easiness, together with a tendency to amplification and periphrasis, he found the besetting poetic sin of the age.² He demanded originality in works of literature, and found it without affectation in Bloomfield's The Farmer's Boy,⁴ but on one occasion his moral concern blinded him to originality which he should have noticed. He linked the first volume of the Annual Anthology with Jacobinism,⁵ and, if he was the reviewer of the second also, added to this condemnation an

¹ AJR 5 (Ja 00). 71.

² AJR 6 (Ag 00). 438: R. Bloomfield, The Farmer's Boy, (1802), V; AJR 6 (Jl 00). 306: Horace I and IV, (1799).

³ AJR 5 (Ja 00). 72: An Epistle to a Friend.

⁴ AJR 6 (Ag 00). 438.

⁵ AJR 6 (Je 00). 216.

accusation of a perverted sympathy for the indolent poor:¹ as a result the literary merits of the collection are not touched upon.

Polwhele's second distinction is that he is one of the few reviewers who is able to take a bird's eye view of the literary scene. His reviews often tend towards the thesis without losing sight of the work being treated. The most impressive example of this occurs in his review of Wakefield's *Lucretius* where he indulges in the survey of didactic poetry noted in the previous chapter.² R.P. Knight's *The Progress of Civil Society* is added to the list of didactic poems and castigated later in the same volume.³ Similarly when reviewing Persius' *Satires* he makes general comments on translating the classics,⁴ and after declining to give a disquisition on Horace proceeds to discuss other recent translations.⁵ Polwhele's style is dignified, but not in any way remarkable.

Only two of the contributors identified in the British Museum copy of the *Anti-Jacobin Review* play a small enough part to be relegated to this paragraph. One, John Taylor, conceivably the Tory pamphleteer and editor of the *Morning*

¹ AJR 8 (Ap 01). 412, 416.

² AJR 5 (Mr 00). 241-58.

³ AJR 5 (Ap 00). 454-7.

⁴ AJR 6 (J1 00). 274-81.

⁵ AJR 6 (J1 00). 302-6.

Post who appears in DNB, has four reviews, two major, of no literary importance; the other is an unidentified Walker¹ who recognised Schiller's literary merit while censuring his morals.²

The moral line-up of these contributors is unbroken, and the ideals of correctness and simplicity are rigorously maintained. The political and philosophical orthodoxy was responsible for diverting by far the most distinguished of the group, Polwhele, from his proper concern on one occasion: he alone attempts a real criticism of his age and sets the works received in a wider context which suggests that he takes them really seriously.

British Critic

Evidence for the British Critic is hard to come by. Sir James Mackintosh contributed a competent and informed account of Delille's poem L'Homme des Champs³ and

¹ The only eligible Walker in DNB would seem to be James Walker, later Episcopal Bishop of Edinburgh.

² AJR 6 (My-Ag 00). 496-7: Schiller tr. J.C. M<ellish>, Mary Stuart, (1801).

³ BC 17 (Ja 01). 9-21. See R.J. Mackintosh ed., Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh, (2 vols, London, 1835), i. 142.

John Stoddart reviewed Lyrical Ballads very intelligently in the February issue for 1801.¹

Critical Review

Since William Taylor's Thalaba review does not appear until 1803, only Southey's own reviews can here be dealt with. J.M. Good reviewed Hindley's Persian Lyrics learnedly and sympathetically,² while one Parsons wrote the famous review of Gifford's Juvenal with its harsh personal attack on the translator,³ but Southey is the only contributor for whom any real list of attributed reviews can be drawn up.

¹ Pp. 125-31. See The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth ed. De Selincourt, revd Shaver, i (Oxford, 1967), 320n.

² Olinthus Gregory, Memoirs of ... John Mason Good, M.D., (1828), p. 80.

³ R.B. Clark, William Gifford, Tory Satirist, Critic, and Editor, (New York, 1930), pp. 114ff, 264. Clark conjectures that Parsons was the Revd Phillip Parsons, miscellaneous writer, of a college at Wye, or possibly the Revd James Parsons, Congregational minister at Norwich. At any rate, in spite of his Examination, Gifford altered his translation in accordance with Parsons' strictures.

Southey's identified reviews for the Critical ¹ between 1797 and April 1804 are listed by Derek Roper. Those in the period under consideration are six in number:

- Bloomfield, The Farmer's Boy: (2) 29 (My 00). 66-77
 De Escorquiz, Mexico Conquistada: (2) 32 (My-Ag 01).
 513-20
 Ellis, Specimens of the Early English Poets: (2)
 33 (S 01). 44-7.
 Bloomfield, Rural Tales: (2) 35 (My 02). 67-75
 Mrs Opie, Poems: (2) 36 (D 02). 413-8
 Noroña, Poems: (2) 36 (My-Ag 00). 538-48.

Clearly, these are only a fraction of Southey's whole output, but all of them are major reviews, and it is for these that one might expect evidence to be available. Roper finds them disappointing, but in their context they are outstanding and certainly among the best with which this study will have to deal.

Southey exhibits, as does Polwhele, a tendency towards the dissertation, towards the setting of the work under review in its context without losing sight of the work itself. His Spanish interests account for the De Escorquiz and Noroña items: in the first he incorporates an interesting analysis of the requirements of an epic poem, drawing upon his own experience, and in the second he provides the ignorant reader with something approaching a condensed history of Spanish poetry. The Ellis review is

¹ The Reviewing of English Literature, pp. 393-407.

similarly learned and Southey makes a point of advocating the inclusion of Francis Quarles for whom he has a special affection. He is also able to suggest that several of the extracts are uncharacteristic of their authors.

Southey is considerably impressed by the Bloomfield poems, and approaches them as a poet, praising his eye and feeling for the everyday and his ability to make mundane circumstances appear interesting. He approves of the unusual word rips (p. 70) in The Farmer's Boy applied to a scythe (where most reviewers would have found it unpoetic), points out the influence of Cowper and Thomson, and postpones the poet's life till the end of his review so as not to prejudice the reader. All this is lively, intelligent, and largely original. The second Bloomfield review is less distinguished but praises the work as standing out above the insipidity of the literature of the day and stresses its spirit and -- another unusual word -- freedom. One interesting criticism links his article with the review of Mrs Opie: a farmer's wife does not apostrophise winds or call on spirits; similarly Mrs Opie makes a negro's thoughts too poetical for his language. Something of Jeffrey's objection to Wordsworth is here adumbrated. The Opie review leads to another dissertation, this time on contemporary female novelists; and to the use of the word melancholy in a sense not at all pejorative.

This is not great reviewing, but it is competent, versatile, attentive, sympathetic, and stimulating, and a fitting ornament for a liberal Review. Southey's own estimation of his achievement seems valid:¹

¹ Life and Correspondence, iii. 183: 9 N 08, to Bedford.

... I believe myself to be a good reviewer in my own way, which is that of giving a succinct account of the contents of the book before me, extracting its essence, bringing my own knowledge to bear upon the subject, and, where occasion serves, seasoning it with those opinions which in some degree leaven all my thoughts, words, and actions.

Monthly Review

That our information about the reviewers in the Monthly is nearly complete is due to two documents: the Bodleian's file of the Review with abbreviations of the contributors' names set against most of the articles, and Professor B.C. Nangle's two excellent volumes listing the contributors in the two series and providing identifications and information where possible. It would be pointless to reproduce the material so well set out in The Monthly Review: Second Series 1790-1815, so the following literary analysis and assessment should be read in conjunction with that volume. Nine of the twenty-two literary contributors during the period under consideration are sufficiently important to justify separate treatment.

1. BANNISTER, The Revd James (6;3)

This clergyman may well have been the dissenting clergyman of Nangle's hypothesis: the literary reviews are the epitome of literary and moral conservatism. His review of a work on Terence points out the classical virtues which Bannister desires in literature -- good sentiments, simplicity of style and accurate delineation of human life

and manners.¹ His other reviews are spent in censuring works which depart from this norm whether by using vulgarisms such as whetstone,² by exhibiting imagination without judgment and taste,³ by lacking strength and harmony,⁴ or by substituting romantic incidents for just representations of human life.⁵ The style is plain except for the review of R.F. Cheetham's Poems when it shows a little bantering in a style typical of the Monthly Review as a whole at this period:⁶

Though Mr. C. may pronounce that we are ill-qualified to judge of poetry, perhaps he will allow us to remark, as grammarians, that the expression numbers numberless is not far removed from nonsense; and, as he values himself on his classical education, he might have known that limitation is of the essence of number, and in that respect only it differs from multitude.

2. BURNEY, Charles Mus. D. (33:10)

Dr Burney is another conservative reviewer.⁷ Nangle in his

¹ MR n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 430: A Brief Account of the Life and Writings of Terence, (1799).

² MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 92: R.F. Cheetham, Poems, (1798)

³ MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 93.

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 419: A. Murphy, Addisoni Epistola, (1799), V: Murphy improves on Addison here. Cf. MR n.s. 34. 257.

⁵ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 105: Thorn, Lodon and Miranda, (1799).

⁶ MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 92.

⁷ Roger Lonsdale stresses that Burney's work became less central to the MR during these last years. 'Dr. Burney and the Monthly Review' RES 14 (1963). 346-58.

article 'Charles Burney, Critic',¹ has found his most important characteristic to be an insistence on originality and the need for something more than mere versifying. This does not emerge very clearly in the reviews of this period, but a similar concept is expressed in the course of Burney's approving summary of La Harpe's lectures:²

Poetry has perhaps not only degenerated in modern times, but, from being more common, is less respected and more severely examined than by the ancients. With us it is judged by the mind, and by reason; with the Greeks it was an affair of feeling and imagination; and it is easy to conceive how inflexible a judge is intellect, and how favourable are the decisions of the senses.

He feels further that the word genius has become debased by indiscriminate application.³ But during the period under consideration, at any rate, Burney is more of the inflexible judge. He does insist on originality and novelty in his review of James Cobb's play Ramah Droog⁴ and with regard to part of Delille's technically excellent L'Homme des Champs⁵ while Moore's force may make up for his roughness⁶ and the spark of creativity is essential

¹ In The Age of Johnson, (New Haven, Conn., 1949), pp. 99-109.

² MR n.s. 34 (Ja-Ap 01). 515: Laharpe, Lycée.

³ MR n.s. 33 (S-D 00). 451: Ibid.

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 107.

⁵ MR n.s. 33 (S-D 00). 478-9.

⁶ MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 405: Anacreon tr. Moore, Odes, (1800).

in a good translation;¹ yet such insistence is, as we have seen, very common among bored and disgruntled reviewers.

In the rest of his criticism, too, with its dismissal of the cult of sensibility,² its condemnation of tragi-comedy,³ its acceptance of Pope as the ne plus ultra of versification,⁴ its dislike of unusual metres,⁵ its praise of the true pastoral tradition in the middle style,⁶ its liking for regularly conducted drama,⁷ its seeing the main force of verse as lying in its substantives,⁸ and its objection to the mingling of archaisms and elegance,⁹ Burney is securely fixed in the late eighteenth-century tradition and displays no real originality in his own work during this period.

He is, however, competent, thorough, and detailed, and while his opening general comments cannot compare in

¹ MR n.s. 36 (N 01). 236: Delille tr. Maunde, The Rural Philosopher, (1801), V.

² MR n.s. 33 (S-D 00). 455: Laharpe, Lycée.

³ Ibid., p. 456.

⁴ Ibid., p. 470: Delille, L'Homme des Champs, (1800), V.

⁵ MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 405: Anacreon.

⁶ MR n.s. 34 (F 01). 197: Baldovini tr. Hunter, Cecco's Complaint, (1800), V.

⁷ MR n.s. 36 (S 01). 97: Gaetano Polidori, Olympia, (1800), D.

⁸ MR n.s. 36 (O 01). 147: Poems Chiefly Sonnets.

⁹ MR n.s. 36 (N 01). 276: Ellis, Gay's Fables, (1800), V.

richness with those of Southey or even of Polwhele they are nevertheless well integrated into the structure of the review: a view of Anacreon scholarship,¹ a general comment on translating,² or remarks on the limitations of the sonnet as a genre.³ His style is generally unremarkable, but has a pleasant mild humour on occasion, a whimsicality related closely to the bantering style typical of the Review as a whole. This can emerge in an image:⁴

Perhaps good writers are less safe from the monsters of envy, and from shallow critics, than the little Nautilus is from "the monsters of the deep."

It can take the form of a kindly au revoir to a young writer:⁵

Though this youthful bard has written his own elegy, and taken a solemn leave of this nether world, we hope that it was occasioned by a false alarm, and that he will live to write better verses at a future period.

Or it may be light-hearted banter exchanged with a light subject. Thus on Pandolfo Attonito! or Lord Galloway's Poetical Lamentation on the Removal of the Arm-Chairs from the Pit at the Opera-House! he remarks:⁶

¹ MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 404: Anacreon.

² MR n.s. 36 (N 01). 236: The Rural Philosopher.

³ MR n.s. 36 (O 01). 145-6: Poems Chiefly Sonnets.

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 426: T. Morton, Speed the Plough, (1800), D.

⁵ MR n.s. 34 (Ja 01). 97: Le Chevalier T.I. d'Ordre, La Mort d'Amyntas, (1799), V.

⁶ MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 317.

The preface, exceeding in length the poem itself, will probably excite in the successors of Sancho Pança, the proverbial exclamation: "great cry and little wool;" and, by the readers of Hudibras, the many-mouthed bard will probably be complimented for his learning, by allowing that

"When he pleas'd to shew't, his speech
In loftiness of sound was rich;
A Babylonish dialect, ...

Such mild whimsy is an essential part of the reviewing practice of the Monthly.

3. BURNEY, James (20:1)

Most of James Burney's reviews deal with novels and are brief notices of perhaps a dozen lines apiece. His main concerns are: to give some moral estimation of the worth of the works, though he is never censorious; to ask for novelty and plain, easy, natural language; and to mock gently ~~at~~ the romantic tastes of novel readers. His bantering is ^o confined to reviews of ghostly romances, except for a more serious bantering objection to the poem Britain Preserved in his only major review during this period: the objections here are liberal political as well as literary:¹

We do not consign his work "to line a trunk;" nor, on the other hand, can we offer much encouragement. The plan, the title, the poetry, and the prose, are confused, and at variance with each other; and there is no abundance of that quality which most of all is necessary to preserve a poem, i.e. genuine poetic fire.

¹ MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 306.

His concern for realism leads him not only to mock romance but to demand historical accuracy¹ and verisimilitude,² though when he finds more entertainment than probability in Mrs Robinson's novel The Natural Daughter he notes that this predominance "will more readily find favour with the generality of readers, (and, critics as we are, we cannot in conscience much blame their taste,)".³ This gentle tone is especially characteristic of his tone towards female writers.⁴

James Burney is, like his father, a civilised, conservative reviewer and has his feet very firmly on the ground of common sense.

4. FERRIAR, John (96:29)

The most prolific and impressive reviewer on the staff of the Monthly during the period under consideration was this Manchester physician. His literary and critical tenets provide an epitome of what we have seen as being typical of the high eighteenth century; his originality and strength lie in the consistency of his attack on those elements in contemporary literature which he felt were breaking up the old order or degrading art, and in his

¹ MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 424: J.H. Campe tr. Helme, Cortez, (1799); Pizarro, (1800), N.

² MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 103: A Northumbrian Tale, (1799), N.

³ MR n.s. 32 (My 00). 93.

⁴ Cf. MR n.s. 32 (My 00). 94: Miss Gunning, The Gipsy Countess, (1799), N.

variety, liveliness, and wit. His standpoint is made clear in lines from his own elegy Knaster written in 1791:¹

Here BURGHER'S muse, with ghostly terrors pale,
Runs, "hurry-skurry," thro' her nursery-tale;
Here HUON loves, while wizard-thunders roll,
Here Gorgon-SCHILLER petrifies the soul; ...

For Ferriar the rules of literature were fixed: the correctness of Boileau,² together with the maxims of Horace³ and the ease and elegance of his poetry,⁴ had been followed in the days of 'the good old poetical School' with its ease and polish.⁵ Ferriar was as stern as any Anti-Jacobin Review writer in his insistence on excellence of morality⁶ and stout patriotism,⁷ though he concentrates on the literary aspect of works under review to a much greater extent. Here the ideal was a smooth and flowing

¹ Illustrations of Sterne: with other essays and verses, (London, 1798), p. 306.

² MR n.s. 31 (J-Ap 00). 457: Mémoires de l'Institut National, (1799), PV.

³ MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 352: Annual Anthology vol. i, (1799).

⁴ MR n.s. 38 (Jl 02). 322: J. Jefferys, The Pleasures of Retirement, (1800), V.

⁵ MR n.s. 38 (Je 02). 188: A. Champion, Miscellanies, (1801), PV.

⁶ MR n.s. 36 (D 01). 442: Montaigne, Selected Essays, (1800), P.

⁷ MR n.s. 32 (Jl 00). 326: F. Gibson, Streanshall Abbey, (1800), D.

style,¹ and, if possible, tragic fire² or epic spirit³ when these were called for: the genius of Schiller⁴ and of Beaumont and Fletcher⁵ was hailed, even though Ferriar disapproved of much of their work. Like Polwhele, Ferriar had his eye on the judgment of posterity.⁶

The objects of his attack were headed by the German dramatists, and in particular Kotzebue who was absurdly popular during this period: Ferriar objected to the exaggerated sentiment, insipidity, and consequent immorality of the plays.⁷ It was a relief to be able to turn to Francis Gibson's patriotic and virtuous Streanshall Abbey which 'though not calculated to rank among first-rate performances, has afforded us some relief from the afflictions of our Kotzebue-reading.'⁸ The manliness of true literature was further threatened by the exaggerated

¹ MR n.s. 34 (Ja 01). 75: Virgil tr. Sotheby, Georgics, (1800).

² MR n.s. 35 (Jl 01). 325: Earl of Carlisle, The Step-Mother, (1800), D.

³ MR n.s. 37 (F 02). 183: Pye, Alfred, (1801), V.

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (O 00). 131: Schiller tr. Coleridge, Wallenstein, (1800).

⁵ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 152: Mason, Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, (1798), P.

⁶ MR n.s. 34 (Ap 01). 441: Lathom, The Dash of the Day, (1800), D.

⁷ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 315: Kotzebue adap. T. Dibdin, The Birth-Day, (1800), D.

⁸ MR n.s. 32 (Jl 00). 326.

simplicity of the nursery. Among childish writers Ferriar classes Southey,¹ and Atkinson with his Rodolpho,² while affected simplicity was generally condemned.³ Although he distrusted over-refinement, presumably of the Darwinian variety, vulgar simplicity, (as opposed to the true simplicity of James Hurdis⁴ or Moore⁵ and the true ballad simplicity of Gray and Goldsmith)⁶ was inimical to true poetry.⁷ It resulted in a poetry too close to prose:⁸

We have opposed the recent attempts to despoil poetry of her proper language; and we regret that we are again called to assert the distinction between simplicity and meanness.

This false simplicity he saw as springing partly from the absurd harking-back to the Elizabethan or middle ages

¹ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 266: Southey, Poems vol. ii, (1799).

² MR n.s. 37 (Ja 02). 101.

³ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 321: G.D. Harley, Ballad Stories, (1799), V.

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 282: James Hurdis, The Favourite Village, (1800), V.

⁵ MR n.s. 39 (O 02). 176: 'T. Little' <Thomas Moore>, Poetical Works, (1801).

⁶ MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 358.

⁷ MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 363: Annual Anthology vol. i, (1799).

⁸ MR n.s. 35 (My 01). 2: Cottle, Alfred, (1800), V.

which for all the genius of Beaumont and Fletcher and the 'fervid genius' of the old poets¹ were essentially barbaric times.² An age of settled linguistic practice made stern Augustan demands upon the literary practitioner,³ but indulging in 'Gothic taste'⁴ was no way to bring back the old energy. When the nursery and the middle ages combined -- and they were never far apart in Ferriar's estimation -- the absurd farrago of ghostly tales and poems was the result.⁵ Ferriar further felt it necessary to defend the fortress of pure English literary usage by condemning Scotticisms⁶ and unpoetical words.⁷ Of Miltenberg's novel The Man of Nature he writes:⁸

¹ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 436: W.H. Ireland, Mutius Scaevola, (1801), V.

² MR n.s. 31 (F 01). 187: G. Chalmers, A Supplemental Apology, (1799), F.

³ MR n.s. 37 (Ap 02). 364: Ogilvie, Britannia, (1801), V.

⁴ MR n.s. 38 (Je 02). 206: Selim and Zaida, V.

⁵ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 313: H.F.R. Soame, Epistle in Rhyme to M.G. Lewis, (1799).

⁶ MR n.s. 35 (J1 01). 322: The Conspiracy of Gowrie, (1800), D.

⁷ MR n.s. 31 (Ap 00). 359: The Annual Anthology vol i.

⁸ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 145: Miltenberg <i.e. Lafontaine> tr. Wennington, The Man of Nature, (1795), N. Ferriar often attacked Johnson's style: MR n.s. 31 (F 01). 190: Chalmers, Op. cit.

If we supposed that his efforts were capable of affecting the structure of the language, we should enter into a full exposure of their impropriety; -- but, when we consider how quickly the innovations of very popular writers, such as Johnson and Gibbon, have been discredited, we shall content ourselves with remarking that the language of Fielding, Sterne, or Goldsmith, (though not writers of first-rate reputation in point of style,) might surely have sufficed for a performance like the present.

The effectiveness of this crusade against the Germans, childish simplicity, medieval barbarism, immorality, and romance, and in defence of the Augustan orthodoxy was partly ensured by Ferriar's varied and lively style. He can be quite dead-pan in the normal anonymous reviewer's style -- as for example when he is dealing with Sotheby's Georgics translation.¹ When he is on the attack, however, and he usually is, his style can be richly varied. Consider this extract from the opening of his attack on Kotzebue's The East Indian:²

This comedy appears in a less exceptionable form, in the present publication, than in the "German Miscellany," which gave it to the world several years ago, under the title of 'Indians in England.' Still, however, it partakes too much of the defects of the Teutonic Drama,

Manserunt, hodieque manent vestigia ruris.

For some of its errors, however, our own stage may be accountable; since the character of Gurli, the child of nature in this piece, bears a resemblance too close to be accidental, to a similar personage

¹ MR n.s. 34 (Ja 01). 75-8.

² MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 97.

in a farce written by Kelly: that character was taken from Marmontel's Coralie, and here, heaven help us! has the imitative shadow risen again before us. Where will this literary traffic terminate? Should Mr. Kotzebue continue to engross the public favour, by rewriting the works of our own dramatists, he has still an ample career before him. Congreve, Dryden, Cibber, Farquhar, and many others, remain to be put to the torture, All the French writers, too, are still in reserve, from

"The frippery of crucified Moliere,"
to the lightest summer-fly of the Parisian theatres.

The scholarship displayed here is considerable and yet lightly presented. The scorn is un^{on}mistakeable, but so is the zest which issues in so syntactically varied a passage.

Such passages are not uncommon in Ferriar's work, and often a review incorporates an extended image or metaphor. Sometimes this is playful, though functional. The beautifully shaped review from which we have quoted the opening continues with a long quotation from the play and ends with this witty and playful metaphor:¹

Et sic infinitum. Thus does the Thespian waggon rumble forwards, till the fatigued passenger arrives at the joyful conclusion. Courteous reader! if ever thou hast known the agony and cordolium of travelling five tedious stages, through sloughs and quagmires, with the dullest and most vulgar personages who ever were stuffed as agreeable companions into a stage-coach or post-chaise, then mayest thou form an adequate idea of our sufferings during the perusal of this most sentimental performance.

¹ Pp. 98-9.

The image may however be the basis of the structure of the whole review. Ferriar's discussion of the second volume of the Annual Anthology¹ is based entirely on the conceit of the two summits of Parnassus: Southey and his friends are cultivating the barren summit and the resultant weeds are before the public. 'If these poetical florists should continue their annual exhibition, we hope that they will exclude, in future, their sow-thistles and brambles.'

It has been shown that Ferriar enlivens his reviews with quotations from miscellaneous authors. He also indulges in parodies and burlesques based on works under review. One such came during a doze induced by Kotzebue's The Happy Family;² one is an imitation of a Pope couplet applied to Kotzebue;³ one is a suggestion for a drama from a Kotzebue narrative;⁴ one is the adopting of the tone of a burlesque itself for a page of hilarious facetiousness.⁵ He can employ a biased comic summary to deflate a work,⁶ or amusingly but rather naughtily print one of Southey's English Eclogues as prose.⁷

¹ MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 363-6.

² MR n.s. 31 (F 00). 212.

³ MR n.s. 33 (N 00). 316: Kotzebue adap. Dibdin, The Birthday, (1800), D.

⁴ MR n.s. 31 (F 00). 221-2: Kotzebue, The Escape, (1799), P.

⁵ MR n.s. 34 (Ap 01). 421-3: 'C.P. Pastry' <Elizabeth Cobbold>, The Mince-Pye, (1800), V.

⁶ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 331: <John Britton,> Sheridan and Kotzebue, (1799), P.

⁷ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 267: Southey, Poems vol ii, (1799).

Many of these reviews are satisfyingly written not only because of the variety of the materials and expression and the stimulating conservatism of the thought but also because of the shapeliness of their structure. Considerations of space forbid more than one further instance: Ferriar's review of The Happy Family begins with an attack on the translator's verse style with a quotation; then follows the dream with its parody of the quotation; and finally there is a prose specimen and brief concluding sally.¹

It is fitting that this survey of Ferriar's work should conclude with a characteristic self-portrait:²

Harrassed as we are, we must even "crush our old limbs in ungentle steel," and repel the swarthy champions of the black-letter muse from the citadel of taste. We might indeed content ourselves with applying the words of Juvenal, addressed to his name-sake, to our enterprising countryman;

"I demens, et * * * curre per Alpes,
Ut PUERIS placeas, et DECLAMATIO FIAT."

5. JEFFREY, Francis (7:2)

Jeffrey's reviewing in the Monthly is remarkably akin to that of Ferriar: he must have learnt much from current reviewing practice. Jeffrey too conceived of the rules of versification as having long been fixed: Southey was

¹ MR n.s. 31 (F 00). 211-3.

² MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 323: Iffland tr. Lloyd, The Nephews, (1799), D.

mistaken in attempting to introduce an new hybrid metre.¹ The genres had also been determined and Southey was wrong to mix lyric, dramatic and epic styles 'rather more copiously than the strict rules of harmonious composition will admit.'² In this important review of Thalaba he praised little: some tender and simple sentiment appealed to him,³ though he was opposed to sentimentalism.⁴ There was a lack of manliness and correct taste⁵ which resulted in melancholy, remoteness from real human life, improbability, and consequent moral ineffectiveness.⁶

This strongly practical and rigidly conservative line (though Thalaba was splendid too)⁷ is fundamental to Jeffrey's criticism. He insisted upon the time-honoured virtues of elegance and strength,⁸ smoothness,⁹ and judgment.¹⁰

¹ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 251: Southey, Thalaba, (1801).

² P. 240.

³ P. 243.

⁴ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 326: Poems and Ballads.

⁵ P. 251.

⁶ P. 250.

⁷ P. 240.

⁸ MR n.s. 39 (D 02). 436: Thompson, Select Translations from the Works of Homer and Horace, (1801), V.

⁹ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 327: Poems and Ballads.

¹⁰ MR n.s. 39 (D 02). 435: W. Loscawen, Poems, (1801).

Fire was desirable, though Boscawen's poetry was acceptable even without it.¹ Novelty of imagery was also looked for.² A low style was undignified and not really to be considered as poetry: hence the dismissal of Goethe's Herman and Dorothea.³

This is so far orthodox conservative criticism, and Jeffrey is very severe in his reviews of most modern poetry. His style can be plain, but at its liveliest it banters in Monthly Review manner or is acerbic and ironic with more of the Anti-Jacobin Review in its tone. His scorn for the mediocre is evident and it was later to result in the selective reviewing policy of the Edinburgh Review:⁴

The sentiments of this little composition are in the true spirit of common-place, though the diction rises occasionally to the dignity of the absurd. The author, however, is extremely fluent, and on the whole sufficiently harmonious in the in the versification. He has copied with considerable success the verbose and lubricated style of Thomson in his Liberty, and seems to be tolerably familiar with the phraseology of most of our modern poets.

Jeffrey's review of Catherine Hood's poem Remonstrance is entirely made up of mock praise.⁵ He has also learnt from Ferriar the art of the loaded summary.⁶ There are few

¹ MR n.s. 39 (D 02). 435.

² MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 327.

³ MR n.s. 39 (D 02). 384, 389-90.

⁴ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 327: Union, (1802), V.

⁵ MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 328: Catherine Hood, Remonstrance, (1801).

⁶ MR n.s. 39 (D 02). 385-9.

signs yet of the Edinburgh dissertation, though the 'Goethe review does contain some comments on German literature in English eyes.¹

Jeffrey is a natural complement to Ferriar in the thirty-ninth volume of the Monthly, just at the time when his own Review was beginning to appear.

6. MOODY, The Revd C.L. (67:8)

Most of Moody's reviews are minor, and his thought is totally lacking in the rigour and sense of purpose of Ferriar, Jeffrey, or even Polwhele. He is a spineless conservative critic insistent on purity of morality, truth to nature and lack of exaggeration, and correctness involving ease, elegance, strength, harmony, judgment, and taste: citation of examples would be pointless. He does, it is true, stress the need for originality and imagination, but his greatest praise is reserved for the combination of truth and fancy in the work of Pratt² and for the linking of judgment and taste with grandeur of imagery in Pye's Carmen Seculare.³ He is, like Burney and Ferriar, one of those from whose faces the veil was not lifted: his complaint was thus of general dullness.⁴

¹ MR n.s. 39 (D 02). 383-4.

² MR n.s. 37 (Mr 02). 310: Pratt, Bread, or, The Poor, (1801), V.

³ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 304.

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (O 00). 224: 'St. Leon' <i.e. Edward Dubois>, St. Godwin, (1800), N.

When Moody is dull he is very dull, but it is not often, and the reason for this is that his style is as varied as that of Ferriar. The Monthly's stylistic distinction is here employed to the full in the expression of a whimsical personality, though the criticism is most undistinguished. Moody's banter is more superficial than Ferriar's, but it is no less amusing. He is at his liveliest when playing cat and mouse with some poetaster's efforts before dismissing it: are E.S.J.'s poems reminiscent of Chatterton, or of Sternhold and Hopkins? -- after a quotation he proceeds:¹

Shades of Sternhold and Hopkins! pardon us!
We ought to have said that these verses were
stolen from the Bellman's Christmas gift to his
good masters and mistresses.

Like Ferriar he enjoys exchanging banter with a light-hearted effusion.² He can be delightfully querulous and here his humour is not altogether without seriousness: thus of Peter Pindar:³

We have also another crow to pull with thee,
Master Peter. Why is thy Muse so frisky and
cloacinean? The pun on Lord B.'s Motions made us
turn away our noses; and as for the Baker's
wife's little oven, it is too hot for us. In
truth thou may'st as well let these things alone.
Thou, however, wilt probably reject our cold
advice, and wilt tell us that we are a set

¹ MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 99.

² MR n.s. 31 (F 00). 208-9: Andrew Merry, The Last Dying Words of the Eighteenth Century, (1800), V.

³ MR n.s. 39 (S 02). 107: P. Pindar, Pitt and His Statue, V.

of old stupid codgers who have outlived our days of fun, while thy imagination still enjoys its pristine vigour; ...

A gentle irony is occasionally employed, in attacking the generality of poems on Spring,¹ or in amused summaries without immediate comment,² and he provides an amusing translation of the tautological line:³

'Tenebrious gloom obscur'd the dismal night.'

as:

Dark darkness darkened the dark.

His images are not as fundamental or as structurally functional as those of Ferriar. In the most important, he sees the critics as a bench of judges,⁴ or he can compare Kotzebue's Writing Desk with a striking tapestry full of figures:⁵

One of the most amusing moments is when Moody is being deferential and gallant to a female writer. The result is flowery in the extreme, but it is recognisably Moody:⁶

¹ MR n.s. 35 (My 01). 109: The Vernal Walk, (1801), V.

² MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 26-7: Godwin, St. Leon.

³ MR n.s. 31 (Mr 00). 320: A. Peterkin, Britannia's Tears, (1800), D.

⁴ MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 315: 'Sappho Search' (i.e. John Black), A Poetical Review of Miss Hannah More's Strictures, (1800).

⁵ MR n.s. 31 (Ja 00). 99: Kotzebue, The Writing Desk, (1799), D.

⁶ MR n.s. 32 (Je 00). 194: Mrs Hale, Poetical Attempts, (1800).

Not that our expectations of poetical excellence naturally subside at the mention of female authorship; because, in the walks of literature, the fair wanderer has been known to follow close on the steps of man; and, in the present day, the successful female candidates for poetic fame constitute a respectable phalanx.

Like Ferriar, Moody has the ability to shape a short review well. Three examples must suffice to show this. His dismissal of William Scott's Signs of the Times consists of three prose comments divided by two quotations;¹ he clinches a pleasant review of John Black's The Free School with the epigrammatic paragraph:²

If he would please the public, a poet should be very difficult in pleasing himself.

and the servants' poem Contentment is thus treated in three lines:³

This kitchen-poetry is well calculated for the meridian for which it is designed. We shall content ourselves with wishing this 'half-starv'd' but well meaning poet a good dinner.

Contributors such as this hardly strengthen the critical reputation of the Monthly, but they do make for enjoyable reading and often suit the works reviewed extremely well.

¹ MR n.s. 35 (Je 01). 212.

² MR n.s. 39 (S 02). 104.

³ MR n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 437.

7. MOODY, Elizabeth (10:5)

Dr and Mrs Moody worked together on only one review in the period under consideration and that is a dull account.¹ Yet she appears to have caught much of his style, and within the limits imposed by novel reviewing she would appear to have had a more penetrating and original mind than her husband.

She objects to unnatural characters and to improbable incidents in novels: this is common enough. She does however suggest that the unnaturalness leads to a romantic style of writing which is incompatible with that moral edification which she regards as important in a serious novel.² She could appreciate romance on its own terms however as a form of light entertainment.³ A similar balance and discrimination is evident in her attitude to sensibility: the calculated sensibility of Sterne is fit matter for imitation,⁴ but the energetic sensibility of Madame de Genlis' description of the French Revolution is highly praised.⁵ Finally, on her

¹ MR n.s. 34 (Ja-Ap 01). 542-4: Marmontel, Nouveaux Contes Moraux, (1801), N.

² MR n.s. 36 (O 01). 187: Mme de Genlis, The Rival Mothers, (1801), N.

³ MR n.s. 34 (F 01). 203-4: W.H. Ireland, Rimualdo, (1800), N.

⁴ MR n.s. 37 (Ja-Ap 02). 531: La Fontaine, Tableaux de Famille, (1801), N.

⁵ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 101: Mme de Genlis, The Young Exiles, (1799), N.

only excursion into the poetic sphere, Mrs Moody manages to conclude that modern poetry is at a low ebb, and suggests that in the poem in question, The Lamentation (1801), prose is taking over from poetry.¹

Her style is less exuberant than Ferriar's, less playful than that of her husband, but it is often lively and always kindly in its banter. She manages to satirise romance while conveying a sense of her enjoyment of the game which had replaced the old romances of Arthur:²

We have a son in the Condé Rimualdo, as eminent for filial piety as AEneas himself. -- We have patient suffering innocence in the fair Constanza, equaling, if not transcending any of our novel heroines. -- We have very good haunted towers, -- and a spectre that stands supremely eminent over the whole race of ghosts.

So too she can be witty about unnatural events,³ or about a mock-sentimental narrative,⁴ and this wit has the backing of an intelligently poised liberal conservative approach to literature.

8. WALLACE, Thomas (12:1)

A certain originality likewise distinguishes the reviews of the clever young Wallace. His main concerns are for morality and the natural and these need not detain the study. He does, however, ~~express~~ the effect of the work

¹ MR n.s. 37 (Ja 02). 9, 12:

² MR n.s. 34 (F 01). 203.

³ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 102.

⁴ MR n.s. 37 (Ja-Ap 02). 532.

on its readers. Indignation against the slave trade is roused by Butler's Zimao, the African;¹ this approach is responsible for the exceptionally interesting seven line review of Lamb's novel A Tale of Rosamund Gray and Old Blind Margaret where Wallace's moral interest and his insistence on naturalness and rationality combine most unusually with his concern for the effect of a work on the imagination and feelings of its readers.² It is no surprise to find him castigating a dull classical mythological poem,³ though he did recognise that the age was easily amused, for example by a frequent change of metre.⁴

His style can be ironical⁵ and stern⁶ in dismissal and he can cunningly accept an author's humble estimation of his work:⁷ Wallace's small contribution is well up to the best Monthly standards.

9. WOODHOUSE, Ollyett (31:5)

Much of Ollyett Woodhouse's criticism (half of it of novels) is conventionally conservative: ease, harmony,

¹ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 111-2.

² MR n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 447.

³ MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 428: J--- M---, Atys, (1799), V.

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (O 00). 149: A. Thomson, Pictures of Poetry, (1799), V.

⁵ MR n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 437: G. Nason, Alphono and Ethina, (1799), V.

⁶ MR n.s. 33 (D 00). 428.

⁷ MR n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 436: John Black, Poems, (1799).

classical imagery, natural characterisation, and morality are opposed to stiffness, obscurity, gloomy views, and caricature. With all this we are familiar. But Ollyett Woodhouse's work is redeemed by several lively and acute observations and by the occasional dryly ironic dismissal -- both of which features recall another lawyer, Francis Jeffrey.

He discriminates well between wit and coarseness in M.G. Lewis's drama The East Indian¹ and more importantly between true and false wit and humour.² He also reacts interestingly to the historical poem, one example of which he finds too detailed in its historical references to be old, and here he defends anachronisms in the remote past and expects the supernatural as part of the illusion of antiquity.³ He is able too to see that much of Bloomfield's charm derives from his softening of normally harsh rural details.⁴ He sets the individual work in its context, whether it be a piece dealing with the New World,⁵ or a

¹ MR n.s. 32 (J1 00). 258.

² MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 66: Beattie, The Minstrel, (1799), VP.

³ MR n.s. 35 (My-Ag 01). 509-12: J.C. Montbron, Les Scandinaves, (1801), V.

⁴ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 52.

⁵ MR n.s. 33 (S 00). 106: Sotheby, The Siege of Cuzco, (1800), D.

pastoral,¹ or a German novel.²

Ollyett Woodhouse's ironical dismissals of inferior works, usually novels, may be typified by the five lines on Mrs Burke's novel Elliott. Here there is none of Moody's chivalry:³

To those who can receive pleasure from the mere narration of successive events, without requiring any accordancy with nature and probability; and who can read the tale of thwarted love and suffering virtue, without regarding poverty of diction or faults of style; the history of Elliott may prove an interesting production.

The thirteen other identified contributors are:

10. Charles Burney, D.D. (2): provides detailed scholarly notes on Euripides.

11. Alexander Gessed (3): a few unimportant continental reviews.

12. G.E. Griffiths (8): moral and conservative, adding the occasional analysis or tidying up a review.

13. Ralph Griffiths (1): one moral review.

14. Alexander Hamilton (8:4): a conservative, but willing to admit that Eastern standards may be different and valid, doubtless on account of his Indian experience. A little banter may be found at n.s. 32 (Ag 00). 428-9.

¹ MR n.s. 37 (Mr 02). 324-5: E.A. Bray, Idyls, (1800), V.

² MR n.s. 34 (Mr 01). 321: Knigge, History of the Amtsrath Gutman, (1799), N.

³ MR ns. 35 (J1 01). 332.

15. The Revd Jabez Hiron (4): moral reviews of books for the young.
16. J.C. Hüttner (1): a brief foreign account.
17. Stephen Jones (5): undistinguished conservative comments.
18. Man<nin>g (13): conservative moral comments, usually very general.
19. Samuel Rose (12:4): summarises and generally comments on editions of modern classics.
20. William Tooke (3): three reviews stressing sound judgment.
21. Dawson Turner (1): one conservative review
22. Robert Woodhouse (9:3): unique in his lack of moral concern; attacks obscurity, indecorum, and incongruous images.

The number of these minor reviews however, a mere seventy, does not equal that composed by Ferriar, and it is on Ferriar that the burden of the liveliness and literary conservatism of the Monthly rests with the less brilliant assistance of Moody and the brief cleverness of Jeffrey. The critical attitudes expressed do not conflict, and individual differences are matters more of intelligence and stylistic talent than of fundamental disagreement on aesthetic matters.

PART FOUR: THE EDINBURGH AND ITS RIVALS: 1803-8

CHAPTER 1: THE EDINBURGH REVIEW

a) Facts

The story of the founding of the Edinburgh Review has been frequently told. Rather than add to the debate about the height of Jeffrey's house in Buccleugh Place, this introductory section will concentrate on a few points of peculiar interest for the present study.

The Scottish background of the Review is of limited importance. The wide liberal education characteristic of eighteenth-century Scotland exercised an influence on those brilliant young men of the Speculative Society who planned and contributed to the new publication. But there is no evidence of any distinctive influence of the generally unimportant earlier Scottish magazines, and Jeffrey's apprenticeship was served with the Monthly Review.¹ An association between lawyers and periodicals however was established practice in Edinburgh towards the close of the century,² and by the beginning of the new century Scott

¹ His debt to the Monthly is suggested by his giving one article, not literary, to Ferriar to revise for the Edinburgh: The Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham, (3 vols, Edinburgh and London, 1871), i. 265.

² See Randolph Hudson, 'Henry Mackenzie, James Beattie, et.al. and the Edinburgh Mirror' ELN 1 (1963-4). 105n.

remarked to James Ballantyne that there was scope for new periodical publications in Edinburgh.¹

The group of young Whigs who took up Sydney Smith's suggestion of a lively anti-governmental Review had little intention of constructing a monument. It was felt, especially by Jeffrey, that the new publication might well close down after a few weeks as its eighteenth-century namesake had done. After the first number, of which Sydney Smith was the nearest to being the editor, the group took fright at their own destructiveness and felt that the tone ought to be less violent.² Horner wrote to James Loch on 24 January 1803 of the second number: 'There are scarcely any insignificant books, -- no sermons -- few personalities -- the general train of criticism less abusive.'³

Contemporary readers seem to have welcomed two aspects of the Review above all others: it was rigorously independent of the booksellers and it was extremely selective in its choice of books for treatment. Rightly or wrongly, it was felt that the older Reviews were likely to be manipulated by booksellers. Thus Sydney Smith writes in 1803 to Constable: 'It is notorious that all

¹ Letters i. 96-7: 22 Ap 00.

² Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner, M.P. ed. Leonard Horner, (2 vols, London, 1843), i. 205: Journal 20 N 02.

³ Ibid., i. 214.

the reviews are the organs ^teither of party or of booksellers.¹ Jeffrey refused to allow Constable any influence upon the reviewing of his own publications.² The advantages of the Edinburgh's independence are stressed by Scott in his famous letter of advice to Gifford at the inception of the Quarterly:³

The extensive reputation and circulation of the Edinburgh Review is chiefly owing to two circumstances. First that it is entirely uninfluenced by the Booksellers who have contrived to make most of the other reviews mere vehicles for advertising & puffing ~~off~~ their own publications or running down those of their rivals. Secondly the very handsome recompense which the Editor not only holds forth to his regular assistants but actually forces upon those whose rank and fortune make it a matter of indifference to them.

Selectiveness was the main theme of the inaugural Advertisement of the Review:

It will be easily perceived, that it forms no part of their object, to take notice of every production that issues from the Press: and that they wish their Journals to be distinguished, rather for the selection, than for the number of its articles. ... The very lowest order of publications are rejected, accordingly, by most of the literary journals of which the Public is already in possession.

Later Coleridge recognised the critical importance of this

¹ The Letters of Sydney Smith ed. Nowell C. Smith, (2 vols, Oxford, 1953), i. 79.

² J.A. Greig, Francis Jeffrey of the Edinburgh Review, (Edinburgh, 1948), p. 22.

³ Letters, ii. 102-3: <25 0 08>.

selective policy with its implicit judgment for his own attempt to raise the standard of serious appreciation of literature. He praised to the consequent rise of extended philosophical criticism to supply 'the vacant place of the trash or mediocrity, wisely left to sink into oblivion by their own weight'.¹

The public showed its appreciation of the new criticism by buying the Review enthusiastically. The growth in sales from 1,750 copies in 1803 to 13,000 in 1814 is traced by Clive who also cites Jeffrey's estimate of 80,000 literate in 1804 and 200,000 in 1812.² The Review came out during the second half of the months of October, January, April, and July each year and cost 5/- per number.

Jeffrey was appointed the first official editor for the fourth number and exercised a firm control over a singularly unreliable band of contributors: most of the original group left Edinburgh to pursue their careers within a couple of years of the Review's inauguration. His letter of 11 September 1806 to Scott illustrates both his paternalism and his difficulties:³

¹ Biographia Literaria ed. Shawcross, (2 vols, Oxford, 1907), ii. 86.

² John Clive, Scotch Reviewers, (London, 1957), pp. 133, 142.

³ Edinburgh University Library MS. 584, fol. 31^r; cf. NLS MS. 3875, fol. 98^r.

My Dear Scott

I am come back in safety to my lonely house in this lonely and deserted city -- and I write to you immediately on my arrival partly to comfort my spirits and partly to supplicate your assistance in my never ending task of reviewing -- Brougham has gone to Portugal -- I made Horner idle by being with him -- Thomson is buried under records -- and almost all my occasional allies and auxiliaries are scattered into watering places, deriding all sorts of affliction and laughing at all demonstrations of distress -- You must do me a good spell of work this time or there is no salvation for me -- I depend upon Sir Wm's Beattie -- and I beg you would take some pains with it -- and do not let your private affection colour your critical impartiality --

Jeffrey goes on (fol. 31^v) to suggest that he himself may insert an account of the metaphysical side of the work, and there is no doubt that he not only suggested methods of treatment to his contributors but altered their reviews frequently and extensively; although the extent of these alterations is now impossible to determine since Jeffrey destroyed all the original manuscripts¹ it seems

¹ An unpublished letter of 16 D 09 in the Boulton and Watt Collection at Birmingham Public Library reveals this. Jeffrey writes to James Watt (fol. 1^v):

I am sorry I have not preserved the MSS. of your brothers articles in the review -- I very early adopted the maxim of destroying the whole originals of every number as soon as it was printed off -- ...

certain that Ralph Griffiths had been temperate in comparison with Jeffrey. The Review even acknowledged an editorial alteration publicly at the end of the third number:¹

In the editing the article of Charles and Marie, three pages of extract have been omitted, a note added, and a few words altered. If these changes have in any degree destroyed the truth of the criticism, or the expression, the Editor requests that the blame may be entirely imputed to him.

Scott describes the process to Gifford in his letter of 25 October 1808:²

One very successful expedient of the Edinr. Editor & on which his popularity has in some measure risen is the art of giving life & interest even to the duller articles of the Review. He receives for example a criticism upon a work of deep research from a person who has studied the book and understands the subject & if it happens to be written which may often be the case in a tone of stupifying mediocrity he renders it palatable by a few lively paragraphs or entertaining illustrations of his own or perhaps by generalising & systematising the knowledge which it contains.

I shall now deal with Jeffrey's original criticism during the years up to 1808 and then with the work of his contributors, almost all of whom have been identified.

¹ 2 (Ap 03). 268.

² Letters, ii. 104.

³ See the summary of the work completed and the definitive list in The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900, ed. Walter E. Houghton, (Toronto, 1966), pp. 416-546.

b) Jeffrey's Criticism

Of almost one hundred literary reviews in the first twenty-five numbers of the Edinburgh, approximately forty were the work of Francis Jeffrey. As the next section will show, the other literary contributors, especially Scott, were far from negligible; but most of the critical distinction of the Review is undeniably due to Jeffrey's contributions.

There are already some twenty noteworthy modern studies of Jeffrey, of varying degrees of thoroughness, and adopting often very different approaches to his work. No other regular reviewer of the period has been accorded anything approaching this steady trickle of interest in recent time. A chronological survey of this literature will outline the main issues under debate.

1. Leslie Stephen, Hours in a Library (Third Series), (London, 1879): 'The First Edinburgh Reviewers' pp. 138-77

Stephen's article contains an intelligent depreciation of Jeffrey's work written in his usual attractive style. He finds the work dull after the great reputation which has accumulated around him and judges him to be totally insensitive to valid literary judgment: 'Jeffrey's blundering is amazingly systematic and comprehensive.' (157-8) He hits at random, follows fashion blindly in his adulation of Rogers and Moore: (163-4)

The earlier thunders of the "Edinburgh Review" have lost their terrors, because they are in fact mere echoes of commonplace opinion. They are often clever enough, and have all the air of

judicial authority, but we feel that they are empty shams, concealing no solid core of strong personal feeling even of the perverse variety. The critic has been asking himself, not "what do I feel?" but "what is the correct remark to make?"

It will be shown that Jeffrey's personal feeling is strong and consistent and his shots far from random, but his conformity to general fashion is an important and valid point.

2. George Saintsbury, Essays in English Literature 1780-1860, (London, 1890): 'Jeffrey' pp. 100-34.

Saintsbury finds the key to Jeffrey's mind in a certain 'Gallicanism' issuing in orthodoxy and dogmatism and a limited taste. He believes that Jeffrey was sincere in the expression of views between the old and the new in the critical world. These judgments seem sound.

3. Lewis E. Gates, Three Studies in Literature, (New York, 1899): 'Francis Jeffrey' pp. 1-57.

Gates emphasises Jeffrey's continual stressing of general principles, more justly than Col^{er}idge's denial in the Biographia Literaria. (9) Jeffrey applied in part 'the historical method for the study of literature; he worked out with Alison an interpretation of beauty, which, though false in its emphasis and distorted, recognized and illustrated with great acuteness one highly important and comparatively neglected source of aesthetic emotion'. (9) As a lawyer, Jeffrey is either for or against an author (12): here Gates oversimplifies. The critic's most damning

failure is his inability to interpret the age in which he lived. (38) This is a balanced and perceptive essay with many excellent points, though it does suggest that the Monthly Review and Critical Review were merely booksellers' organs, a fallacy repeated by Wain. (46)

4. Richard Elsner, Francis Jeffrey, der Hauptbegründer der Edinburgh Review, und seine kritischen Prinzipien (Berlin, 1908).

Elsner emphasises the significance of the 'Essay on Beauty' developed from Jeffrey's Alison review. His study is valuable chiefly for its tracing of eighteenth-century analogues of Jeffrey's opinions, an aspect neglected except for Redpath's study.

5. D. Nichol Smith ed., Jeffrey's Literary Criticism, (London, 1910).

Nichol Smith makes the important observation: 'There are no great passages in Jeffrey, and there is not one single great essay. When he wins his way to appreciation, he wins it step by step.' (v) His early flippancy gave way to greater seriousness. Smith evidently bases his view on the Wordsworth articles in particular: most of early Jeffrey is far from flippant. Smith sides with Gates against Coleridge in stressing that Jeffrey has a talent for seizing on essentials.

6. C.T. Winchester, 'The New Essay -- Jeffrey as Critic' in A Group of English Essayists of the Early Nineteenth Century, (New York, 1910), pp. 1-25.

After repeating the unjustified condemnation of the Monthly Review, Winchester notes the characteristic structure of the Jeffrey article proceeding from general introduction to detailed criticism. He notes discrepancies in the corpus and declares unfairly (16-7): 'Jeffrey's general principles we suspect are mostly made to order. He first makes up his decision upon the work under review, quite empirically, and then frames a set of universal truths to justify his decision.'

7. Merritt Y. Hughes, 'The Humanism of Francis Jeffrey' MLR 16 (1921). 243-51.

Hughes' brilliant article represents a breakthrough in Jeffrey scholarship, bringing us closer to the man than anything before. He boldly asserts: 'Jeffrey was the Platonist of nineteenth-century criticism, and that is all his claim to a present hearing.' (243) This is too dogmatic and limited, but it is basically true. Hughes draws on Jeffrey's letters to show how he had in the mid-nineties been a fugitive from society. Thus on October 17th 1796 he writes to George Bell: (249)

Nothing can be more ridiculous than the way that men live together in society, and the patience with which they submit to the needless and perpetual restraint that they occasion one another; and the worst of it is that it spoils them for anything better and makes a gregarious animal of a rational being.

By 1798 he had attempted to return to society, with only partial success. He writes on 6 August to Robert Morehead: (250)

I shall never arrive at any eminence in this new character; and have glimpses and retrospective snatches of my former self, so frequent and so lively, that I shall never be wholly estranged from it, nor more than half the thing I seem to be driving at. Within these few days I have been more perfectly restored to my poesies and my sentimentalities than I had been for many months before. I walk out every day alone, and as I wander by the sunny sea, or over the green and solitary rocks of Arthur's Seat, I feel as if I had escaped from scenes of impertinence, and recollect, with some degree of enthusiasm, the wild walks and eager conversations we used to take together at Herbertshire about four years ago. I am still capable of going back to those feelings, and would seek my happiness, I think, in their indulgence, if my circumstances would let me. As it is, I shall go on sophisticating and perverting myself until I am absolutely good for nothing.

Only by a rigorous subordination of beauty to truth and ethics could Jeffrey stifle these yearnings for the solitary and unattainable. The result was a weakness for the conventional and the sentimental. He admitted to Horner in 1804 that he laughed at what he admired (247) and summed up his conscious self-limitation in 1818 to Charles Wilkes: (249)

Having long set my standard of human felicity at a very moderate pitch, and persuaded myself that men are considerably lower than the angels, I am not much given to discontent, and am sufficiently sensible that many things that appear to be and are irksome and vexatious are necessary to help life along.

Hughes has uncovered a vital source of much of Jeffrey's public hostility to the Lake poets.

8. Joseph M. Beatty Jr, 'Lord Jeffrey and Wordsworth' PMLA 38 (1923). 221-35.

Beatty's less startling but useful article defends Jeffrey's genuineness as a critic with references to Crabbe Robinson's diary and sees a classical idea of decorum as the basis of his common sense and consequent tendency to overpraise the commonplace. A tentative acceptance of some of Jeffrey's views on Wordsworth is proposed.

9. R.C. Bald, 'Francis Jeffrey as a Literary Critic' Nineteenth Century and After 97 (1925). 201-5.

This is a less important and decidedly superficial treatment. Bald's thesis is summed up in the sentence (202): 'His is the 1797 attitude of mind -- that of the Romantic movement immediately prior to the publication of the Lyrical Ballads.' Jeffrey always advocates the mean between extremes. He is a fair critic though blinded by some eighteenth-century views.

10. R.G. Cox, 'The Great Reviews' Scrutiny 6 (1937). 2-20, 155-75.

Cox provides an interpretation which gives high praise to Jeffrey's assault on mediocrity without altogether recognising the limitations of that assault. Jeffrey's criticisms of Wordsworth are found to anticipate those of Coleridge in the Biographia and they are 'at least an attempt to discriminate among Wordsworth's mixed output.' (5) He also anticipated Arnold's criticism of the Romantics. His chief fault is the tolerance of Regency

poetry. But Cox's attitude towards the Edinburgh and its contemporaries is very favourable: (20) 'All their best work shows a sense of responsibility, a consciousness of performing a necessary and valuable function, a concern for the maintenance of the highest standards of thought and feeling, which are completely lacking in modern reviewing.' The article's conclusion is important, in spite of a crudity arising from the division of literary works into sheep and goats.

11. Russell Noyes, Wordsworth and Jeffrey in Controversy, (Bloomington, Indiana, 1941).

Russell Noyes inaugurated a more cohesive debate with this anti-Jeffrey tract. In the first part of the pamphlet he traces the history of Jeffrey's criticism of the Lake poets. The second part cites charges against Jeffrey made chiefly by the Lakers themselves and concludes that he was determined to make an example of Wordsworth in the interests of a narrow decorum. The charge has validity for this limited area of Jeffrey's work and is mild compared with what was to come.

12. Robert Daniel, 'Jeffrey and Wordsworth: the Shape of Persecution' Sewanee Review 50 (1942). 195-213.

Daniel begins the most fundamental attack on Jeffrey with a fair summary of the general tone of the earlier criticism on the subject (he had presumably not read Noyes):

Beginning with Saintsbury, a succession of writers have maintained that in most of his judgments he was correct; that as to the others he was at all events sincere, even though political prejudice swayed him and the legacy of good taste and decorum from the previous century clouded his decisions.

Daniel rightly rejects in his second section the argument that Jeffrey was swayed chiefly by political considerations. (197) He points to Jeffrey's undoubted enthusiasm for the new poetry in general from Cowper to Keats and to his admiration for Wordsworth's genius expressed both in public statements in the Edinburgh and in such private remarks as that of 21 March 1799: 'I have been enchanted with a little volume of poems, lately published, called 'Lyrical Ballads'....' (200) On the basis of such remarks he concludes 'When Jeffrey damned Wordsworth, and talked about authority, and radicalism, and conservatism, he was going on the principle that any stick will do to beat a dog.' (200) The most damaging statement quoted by Daniel is that reported by Crabb Robinson as having been made by Jeffrey to John Wilson, that he attacked Wordsworth 'not because he himself thinks lowly of him, but because the public think lowly of him.' (201) This is quite different from any of the other evidence adduced and might have been made in jest or misconstrued: as third-hand evidence it is suspect and should not be given undue weight. Daniel also cites contemporary criticism of the increasingly bitter exchange between poet and critic. (201-3)

In his third section, Daniel presents passages from Jeffrey's correspondence which show his liking for

vigorous attacks in his Review, and this is unquestionably an important element in his editorial policy. Thus on 5 August 1804 he writes to his contributor Francis Horner: 'When will Wordsworth and Southey come forth? I shall try to give you a little pointed criticism then.' (204) Daniel also instances the alteration of the Monthly review of Thalaba for the Edinburgh, but he exaggerates the change in attitude which is one primarily of approach rather than of fundamental criticism. The reprinted Contributions are, Daniel shows, more rather than less severe.

In the fourth section, Daniel draws a depressing conclusion: (209)

When the point is established that Jeffrey was not sincere in disparaging Wordsworth's poems, but was damning them for various ulterior motives, it becomes pointless to examine these reviews as specimens of literary criticism.

Finally in a fifth section Daniel isolates six causes for Jeffrey's virulence in his Wordsworthian criticism (and it should be noted that like Noyes he is dealing with this aspect only of the corpus). Jeffrey wanted to produce lively reading matter; he was stung by Wordsworth's counter-attacks; he recognised the occasional verboseness and mawkishness of Wordsworth; he was carried away by his own vivacious style; he was depressed especially by Southey; his haste in writing led to lack of consideration. These are mild and just conclusions after a finely polemical but one-sided argument. Only the fifth point seems invalid: Jeffrey found Southey the least objectionable of the Lake poets.¹

¹ EF 1 (0 02). 68.

13. J. Raymond Derby, 'The Paradox of Francis Jeffrey: Reason versus Sensibility' MLQ 7 (1946). 489-500.

This is an elementary opposition of the two sides of Jeffrey already isolated by Hughes, but some useful additional examples of both are given.

14. James A. Greig, Francis Jeffrey of the Edinburgh Review, (Edinburgh, 1948).

Greig occupies the ground directly opposite to Noyes and Daniel and finds himself wholly in sympathy with Jeffrey's uncomprehending opposition to Wordsworth's mysticism.

His first chapter contains many contemporary adulations of Jeffrey as a critic -- by Scott, Macaulay, Campbell, and Hogg inter alia. Greig recognises that Jeffrey was over-severe at times (65) but praises his catholicity of taste (Ch. 6), his worldliness (Ch. 7), his opposition to Byron's sensationalism (Ch. 9) and the exclusivism of the Wordsworth cult (Ch. 12), and above all his championing of the ordinary man against mysticism and cabballism (Ch. 14).

Greig's survey is thorough but unexciting as his thesis which will convince the worldly and remind the Wordsworthians that the seige has not yet been lifted.

15. R.G. Cox, 'Homage to Common Sense' Scrutiny 16 (1949). 169-72.

This is a review of Greig, and Cox now rightly isolates the inadequacy of Jeffrey's critical method as a main

cause of his failure to reach the highest rank among reviewers. He stresses that Jeffrey's dismissal of Wordsworth is essentially superficial.

16. Byron Guyer, 'Francis Jeffrey's Essay on Beauty' HLQ 13 (1949-50). 71-85.

This article is a useful analysis of the offspring of the Alison review, in its turn connected with an essay on beauty written during Jeffrey's 1791-2 stay at Oxford. The basis of Jeffrey's objection to Wordsworth is, Guyer suggests, that he takes accidental personal associations, valid for the individual, too far: 'Jeffrey is simply saying in the language of his day that Wordsworth has mistakenly read his own personality into external nature or into his imaginary creatures.' (79) But the real sin, which Guyer does not emphasise, is that Wordsworth expects the public to share his private emotions.

17. Byron Guyer, 'The Philosophy of Francis Jeffrey' MLQ 11 (1950). 17-26.

The article begins with a summary of much of the previous work on Jeffrey. Guyer undertakes to relate all the approaches hitherto explored to Jeffrey's philosophy. Basically, Jeffrey tends towards romanticism because of his associationist principles but sets them in a positivist framework and therefore ends up preferring the ordinary and non-metaphysical.

18. Thomas Crawford, The Edinburgh Review and Romantic Poetry (1802-29), (Auckland University College, 1955).

Crawford links the literary compromise between old and new with the Whig political compromise, attracting Radicals and retaining aristocrats. On balance, the Edinburgh helped the new writers more than it hindered them. The second chapter stresses again the importance of the Edinburgh review and the distinction between public and private associations. Jeffrey's opposition to rigid neoclassical rules is stressed, though he has his own legalisms. (Ch. 3) Crawford supports Gneig in general terms, distrusting Wordsworth and sympathising with Jeffrey's criticism of him. He points out that the condemnation of Wordsworth was not illogical for Jeffrey: 'Because the Edinburgh condemned environmentalism, the myth of the noble savage, and German transcendentalism, it was almost inevitably suspicious of Wordsworth and his associates.' (26) Jeffrey's tastes were akin to those of Keats, another striver towards realism. Crawford concludes that the Edinburgh is advocating 'romantic realism': (33)

The Edinburgh, unlike the Quarterly, rejects the poetry of escape. What Jeffrey wants is poetry capable of expressing the new and turbulent emotions of the age, yet able to treat of men and women as they really are.

This is the see-saw movement which inclines more to the romantic as the Review progresses.

Crawford's study is suggestive and ranks with the best on the subject.

19. René Wellek, A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950 vol. ii, (1955), pp. 110-20.

Wellek's remarks on Jeffrey are derivative but just. He stresses the anti-neoclassical aspect of his work, his distinction between public and private taste, and his adherence to standards of common sense, morality, and propriety, making no distinction between life and art.

20. John Clive, Scotch Reviewers The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1815, (1957).

The sixth chapter of Clive's study deals with Jeffrey's criticism. He usefully concentrates on the double standard quoting appositely from MS. 3519 of the National Library of Scotland which contains a letter to James Grahame concerning his drama on Mary Queen of Scots. The important passage runs thus in the full original:¹

...the places where you decline into truisms and a sort of infantine simplicity cannot be so easily pardoned -- I would not have you trust the work to the public without correcting them It is a style indeed that has much beauty in it and very frequently a great deal of tenderness -- but it is not fit for the profane ears of the multitude -- it is liable to ridicule, and will often appear silly to those whose minds are familiarisd with grosser interests & have been little accustomed to the unambitious playfulness of affection -- Every man that appears before the public appears before a company to whom he owes respect upon whose sympathies he ought not to reckon too securely and with whom he should not be too familiar -- there should be a certain

¹ Fol. 5^r. Clive's version has inaccuracies.

dignity therefore as well as energy in all his behaviour -- We never think of entertaining a drawing room full of strangers with the prattle of our children nor think of giving way in their presence to any of those simple emotions which constitute the claim of our domestic society -- I have expressed this I see injudiciously -- & a controversial critic might reply to me with great advantage -- but you all understand what I mean I believe -- and that is perfectly sufficient ...

A critic should judge by universal associations, but might indulge his own taste in private. Society must be preserved from childishness. The idea of a poet's creating his own taste was anathema to Jeffrey. These are perceptive and just comments.

21. Russell Noyes: Review of Clive MLN 74 (1959). 71-4.

While acknowledging the value of Clive's work, Noyes restates his case in very strong terms which seem totally unjustified by the petty inconsistencies in Jeffrey's conduct: (74)

A solid body of evidence has been presented by other scholars to show that in his editorial policies Jeffrey's love of popularity and gain led him to personal vindictiveness, duplicity, downright dishonesty, and partisanship.

22. Theodore Redpath in Romantic Perspectives ed. Hodgart and Redpath (London, 1964), pp. 25-34.

Redpath's excellent essay contains an assessment of Jeffrey which stresses the conservative elements in his criticism (27), an approach expanded upon in the present study.

23. Peter F. Morgan, 'Principles and Perspective in Jeffrey's Criticism' SSL 4 (1966-7). 179-93

The latest contributor to the debate explicitly adopts a middle ground between Noyes and Greig, beside Wellek. He provides a judicious and balanced survey of the elements in Jeffrey's criticism. The most distinctive feature of this is his emphasis on Jeffrey's belief that literature was generally in decline with the rise in refinement. (188-90)

Since the main concern of this study is with reviewing practice it will be sufficient to summarise and comment upon the debate so far, to add a few points which seem to have been insufficiently stressed, and to attempt a different approach to the critical corpus up to 1808. Jeffrey will be observed more closely in action at the end of the section and in Chapter 3. A full study of Jeffrey's criticism, based on the whole corpus, may be awaited with mild enthusiasm.

The most useful contemporary comments on the issues raised by Jeffrey are those made by Scott in his letters. They are fuller and more balanced and perceptive than any contemporary utterances. Scott was able to admire the 'arch critic',¹ whose Review gave 'the only valuable literary criticism which can be met with.'²

¹ Letters i. 222 19 My 04 .

² ii. 121: 2 N 08, to George Ellis.

The double standard outlined by Guyer, Crawford, and Clive seems to be the most satisfactory explanation of Jeffrey's apparent inconsistency. It is confirmed by Scott in a letter of 10 April 1806 to Anna Seward:¹

I think were you to know my little friend Jeffery the Aristarchus of the Edinr Review you would perhaps have some mercy on his criticisms -- not but he often makes his best friends lose patience by that love of a severity which drives justice into tyranny but in fact I have often wondered that a man who loves & admires Poetry as much as he does can permit himself the severe or sometimes unjust strictures which he fulminates even against the authors whom he most approves of & whose works actually afford him most delight.

This duality arose from his own early experiences during a flirtation with the solitary, as Hughes has demonstrated.

The presence of this double standard disposes of the most serious and fundamental charges of insincerity. Beatty and Clive produce evidence of Jeffrey's sincerity to counter contemporary charges and rumours in an age of virulent personal bickering among literary men. That Jeffrey sought spice is unquestionable but his views are coherent, with very minor inconsistencies incidental to hastily produced work. There is no evidence to support the view that his principles were added to empirical judgments. Already in 1801 his double standard of public and private taste was fully developed. Nor is there any evidence of malignity on Jeffrey's part. All the evidence suggests that he was a pleasant, just man, and his letters

¹ i. 288.

are similar in their comfortably whimsical tone to those of Scott. While attacking Marmion he was on good terms with Scott personally, sending him the manuscript of the review. Scott writes to Southey in November 1807, inviting him to join the Edinburgh staff, that Jeffrey has the sincerest respect for his person and talents:¹

The other day I designedly led the conversation on that subject, and had the same reason I have always had to consider his attack as arising from a radical difference in point of taste, or rather feeling of poetry, but by no means from any thing approaching either to enmity or a false conception of your talents.

He goes on to stress Jeffrey's limited taste:²

Wordsworth is harshly treated in the Edinburgh Review, but Jeffrey gives the sonnets as much praise as he usually does to anybody. I made him admire the song of Lord Clifford's minstrel, which I like exceedingly myself. But many of Wordsworth's lesser poems are caviare, not only to the multitude, but to all who judge of poetry by the established rules of criticism.

Whether one sides with Jeffrey's or Wordsworth's basic beliefs is, as Scott recognised, a fundamental matter of taste, but Jeffrey's criticisms of Wordsworth's poetry are in any event too restricted by the faded vocabulary of neoclassical criticism to allow any effective encounter with the poems. We need not fear, however, to take Jeffrey's criticism seriously. It is not merely splenetic or legalistic, but springs from a unified if limited

¹ Letters i. 389.

² i. 390.

intelligence: he stands apart from other reviewers of the period in having called forth not only contemporary eulogies but also recent studies of the calibre of those by Hughes, Daniel, and Crawford.

The following consideration seeks to avoid paths already trodden and concentrates on Jeffrey's debt to the reviewing tradition which has been examined in the previous parts of this study. By drawing on all of Jeffrey's early criticism it will be made clear both that his originality is based firmly on commonplace beliefs of the time and also that his principles are all-pervasive and that his work forms a coherent and far from eccentric whole.

In line with the general policy of the Review, Jeffrey is severe on that mediocrity which had usually encountered a friendly reception. He may express his view politely, but its import is clear:¹

Mrs Hunter appears, from her book, to be a very amiable and accomplished woman: but poetry really does not seem to be her vocation; and rather appears to have been studied as an accomplishment, than pursued from any natural propensity.

More specifically he comments on the then anonymous author of The Sabbath (James Grahame) in its second edition of 1805:²

The author has evidently some talents for poetical composition, and is never absolutely absurd, tedious or silly; but he has no delicacy of taste or imagination: he does not seem to feel the force of the sanction against poetical mediocrity, and his ear appears to have no perception of the finer harmony of versification. If he be a young man,

¹ 1 (Ja 03). 426: Mrs John Hunter, Poems, (1802).

² 5 (Ja 05). 441.

we think there are considerable hopes of him; but if this be the production of maturer talents, we cannot in our conscience, exhort him to continue in the service of the muses.

The mildness of such censure is nevertheless evidence of Jeffrey's tendency to approve of works with conservative moral tendencies and unadventurous technically, and the lukewarmness may be summed up in his opinion of The Works of Richard Owen Cambridge, Esq. of 1803:¹

This is one of the many luxuries and superfluities of modern literature; a book which we are glad to have, but could have done very well without; containing nothing very new, or striking, or important; but innocent upon the whole, and respectable, and affording a very laudable recreation for those whose curiosity is rather the desire of amusement, than of knowledge.

By virtue of the plan of the Review Jeffrey can select the works which he wants to deal with from the mediocre mass of literature, and it is to his credit that the works on which he bestows most attention, if not always most approval, are those in which posterity is still interested, in the period under consideration the works of the Lake poets, Crabbe, and Scott. And it is to the directing of the genius of these men along what Jeffrey conceives to be the right paths that he devotes most of his critical energies.

The path is clear: it is that established by the poets of the past which constituted an orthodoxy capable

¹ 3 (0 03). 56-7.

of appreciation by all civilised men, and from which all wanderings aside are to be regarded as dangerous and corrupting heresy and to be sternly trampled underfoot. At the very outset of his first literary article, on Thalaba, Jeffrey makes the point with extreme firmness:¹

POETRY has this much, at least, in common with religion, that its standards were fixed long ago, by certain inspired writers, whose authority it is no longer lawful to call in question; and that many profess to be entirely devoted to it, who have no good works to produce in support of their pretensions. The catholic poetical church, too, has worked but few miracles since the first ages of its establishment; and has been more prolific, for a long time, of Doctors than of Saints: it has had its corruptions and reformation also, and has given birth to an infinite variety of heresies and errors, the followers of which have hated and persecuted each other as cordially as other bigots.

The point is frequently made in Jeffrey's attacks on the 'Lakers', and occurs elsewhere too. So in his criticism of the mediocre William Hayley's The Triumph of Music of 1804:²

If Mr Hayley's patchwork plan were at all consistent with taste, it is too obvious to have lain concealed for ages, in order to be revealed to a minor poet of the nineteenth century.

This is not to say that modern literature must be a mere imitation of the work of the past. Extreme neoclassicism is not here advocated, and Jeffrey criticises De Lille for excessive conventionality in his poem Le Malheur et

¹ 1 (0 02). 63.

² 6 (Ap 05). 60.

la Pitié:¹

The first canto is almost entirely engaged in the most hopeless common-places of poetry. Upon the subject of cruelty to animals, the sage of Samos is brought in, with his usual cortège of lowing oxen, and bleating sheep; and the oration which Thomson imitated from Ovid, is here very elegantly translated from Thomson. The iniquity of horse-racing is exposed in a very long homily, and the abominations of the slave-trade are detailed in the accustomed manner.

The bounds within which originality could be exercised were nevertheless closely drawn. When Jeffrey meets with anything like originality of diction he tends to label it tawdry; thus, of Moore's Poems of 1806:²

The tawdry, affected, and finical style of this author, cannot be better illustrated than in those verses about something which he calls the Snow-Spirit.

'The down from his wing is as white, as the pearl
Thy lips for their cabinet stole,
And it falls on the green earth as melting, my
girl,
As a murmur of thine on the soul!

Oh! fly to the clime, where he pillows the death,
As he cradles the birth of the year;
Bright are your bowers and balmy their breath,
But the Snow-Spirit cannot come here!'

Again, in reviewing Montgomery's The Wanderer of Switzerland Jeffrey writes:³

¹ 3 (O 03). 32-3.

² 8 (J1 06). 462.

³ 9 (Ja 07). 352.

... the following ... is as tawdry and vile as the tarnished finery of a strolling actress.

'O for evening's brownest shade!

Where the breezes play by stealth
In the forest-cinctur'd glade,
Round the hermitage of Health:
While the noon-bright mountains blaze
In the sun's tormenting rays.

O'er the sick and sultry plains,

Through the dim delirious air,
Agonizing silence reigns,

And the Wanness of despair:
Nature faints with fervent heat,
Ah! her pulse hath ceased to beat! ...

With so clear a conception of what should be in literature, it is inevitable that Jeffrey should agree with those critics in the other Reviews who stressed that authors were to critics as suppliants before judges. So with reference to Thalaba:¹

As Mr Southey is the first author, of this persuasion, that has yet been brought before us for judgment, we cannot discharge our inquisitorial office conscientiously, without premising a few words upon the nature and tendency of the tenets he has helped to promulgate.

As the study looks more closely at what Jeffrey praises and condemns it will become possible to define this general concept of style and matter more exactly.

The true tradition as it appears stylistically speaking in Jeffrey's criticism is one of simplicity, but not extreme simplicity. It is one of elegance, but not of excessive ornamentation. It is closely akin to the

¹ 1 (0 02). 63.

middle way which has been noted in the critics of the Reviews already considered. De Lillie comes closer than most modern writers to the ideal of elegance, but 'he wants simplicity and force for the higher departments of poetry, and commonly falls into a style of declamatory exaggeration and disorder, whenever he abandons his old and appropriate subjects.'¹ The ideal of elegant simplicity is found implicitly in Virgil. Jeffrey reviewed Sotheby's translation of his Georgics in the eighth number of the Review which came out in July 1804, and in the course of his review he makes these remarks:²

No writer has rivalled Virgil in the charms of his diction, or the elaborate beauty of his phraseology: and the poem before us is Virgil's most absolute and complete performance.

Why should Virgil's 'Zephyris primum impellentibus undis,' be translated,

'--when first young zephyr laves

His sportive pinions in the vernal waves.'

III.49. Seu quis Olympicae miratus praemia palmae.'

'Does fame for Pisa's palm the courser rear?'

In these, and in other passages, why should metaphorical agency be introduced where Virgil, 'the great master of proprieties,' uses the language of simple precept?

Jeffrey believed that classical languages were especially adapted to truly simple writing because they were musical,³ and the only superior to Virgil in his estimation is Lucretius, for reasons not preeminently stylistic:⁴

¹ 3 (0 03). 42.

² 4. 296, 9.

³ 7 (0 05). 135: Virgil tr. Delille, L'Enéide, (1804).

⁴ 10 (J1 07). 221-2: Lucretius tr. Good, The Nature of Things, (1805).

With less skill -- less uniform propriety -- and less sustained dignity than Virgil, it has always appeared to us, that he had more natural genius and original spirit; that his diction in his happier passages was sweeter and more impressive; and all the movements of his mind more free, simple, and energetic.

The style which Jeffrey is advocating is essentially the middle style commended by the critics of the previous century. Thus he commends William Smyth in his English Lyrics for finding a middle style between the prettiness of Shenstone and the bold abstract personifications of Collins,¹ while Joanna Baillie equally avoids excesses in the dramatic field where 'the plain vulgarity and prose ecstasies of the German drama deserve still less indulgence, than the mellifluous majesty of our native dramatic poetry.'² He is thus consistent in taking a stand against the excessive use of periphrasis in those modern translations of the classics where the tawdriness of the device showed up badly.³

This middle style would help to ensure fulfilment of another of Jeffrey's demands, that poetry should be intelligible not only to the aesthete, but also to the man of broad education. Jeffrey regards specialisation and isolation in literature as a threat to the cohesion of society.⁴

¹ 8 (Ap 06). 155.

² 2 (J1 03). 282.

³ 10 (Ap 07). 232: Lucretius tr. Good.

⁴ 3 (0 03). 30: Delille, Le Malheur.

When one turns to Jeffrey's demands as regards the subject matter and general nature of literature, one finds that his main concern is closely linked with this last point: literature should be true to general experience and not excessively subjective or quirky. Thus he writes of Mrs Opie's Simple Tales of 1806:¹

Mrs Opie has no great share of invention, either in incident or in character. We often see through the whole story from its first opening; and few of her personages can be said to be original, or even uncommon, when compared either with the inventions of dramatists, or the variety of common life. They have a merit, however, which in our eyes is incomparably superior: they are strictly true to general nature, and are rarely exhibited, except in interesting situations. We have always been of opinion, indeed, that no character can be natural, unless it be pretty common; and that that originality, of which so many writers are ambitious, is of value chiefly in bringing out the effect of ludicrous and violently comical representations. For more serious sympathy we must be made to feel that the sentiments and actions of the characters are such, as must inevitably belong to all persons in their situation; and it is on the delicate adaptation of their language and conduct to their circumstances, and not to any supposed peculiarity in their character, that the success of the writer will generally depend. It will be found accordingly, we believe, that almost all the fine traits of natural expression that are quoted and remembered, from the dramatists and greater poets, both ancient and modern, derive their whole beauty from this perfect and beautiful conformity to general and universal nature; and that they reach the heart of every reader, just because every reader perceives at once that they express the concentrated and appropriate emotion, which it is natural for persons in such circumstances to feel.

¹ 8 (Jl 06). 465-6.

At the end of the same article, Jeffrey implies a preference for works which are useful 'in training ordinary mortals to ordinary duties.' (471)

As a consequence, Jeffrey attack literature which he conceives to be eccentric or harmful to society at large. The 'sickly affectation of delicacy and fine feelings' in Montgomery's The Wanderer of Switzerland is severely handled,¹ while the theatre is accused of sometimes inducing a contempt for ordinary life in the spectators.² The censure of irrationality in poetry is carried at times to extreme lengths. Thus The Sabbath is criticised since 'there is no physical truth or propriety in considering Sunday as calmer than any other day in the week'.³ Improbability resulting from caricature is censured on the same principles,⁴ and the immorality countenanced by the licentious Tom Moore is strongly deprecated on account of its 'inflammatory images and expressions'.⁵

Closely connected with Jeffrey's demand for normality and healthiness in art is his distrust of systems which lead the writer's genius astray from what seems to him manifestly the right path. He finds the plan of De Lille's Le Malheur et la Pitié 'somewhat scholastic and formal'.⁶

¹ 9 (Ja 07). 347.

² 2 (J1 03). 275: Baillie, Plays vol. ii.

³ 5 (Ja 05). 439.

⁴ 8 (Ap 06). 207: Edgeworth, Leonora.

⁵ 8 (J1 06). 456.

⁶ 3 (O 03). 32.

and if the French poet errs on the side of conservatism Joanna Baillie makes the same exaggerated concessions to a plan in her novel Series of Plays of 1802.¹

The vocabulary which Jeffrey uses to describe his preferences and dislikes in literature, both stylistically and more generally, is not materially different from that which has been isolated as the lingua communis of the reviewers during the two years before the Edinburgh came on the scene.

Stylistically, he praises as reviewers had done before him smoothness and perspicuity,² simplicity combined with truth and vigour,³ while attacking harshness (owing to unnecessary inversions) with antiquated and vulgar phrases,⁴ prosaic writing,⁵ and heavy inelegant work.⁶ It is only by setting such familiar, almost meaningless, critically appallingly inadequate terms against such a background as the preceding pages have attempted to establish that they can acquire any meaning.

When one considers the words which Jeffrey uses in his more general literary theory, one is at once in a region of more interest. Jeffrey's historical conception of the development of taste and genius distinguished his

¹ 2 (Jl 03). 269.

² 2 (Ap 03). 85: Hayley, Life of Cowper.

³ 5 (Ja 05). 420: Baillie, Miscellaneous Plays, (1804).

⁴ 4 (Jl 04). 283: Hayley, Life of Cowper vol. iii.

⁵ 2 (Ap 03). 84: Hayley, Life of Cowper.

⁶ 5 (Ja 05). 441: The Sabbath.

use of these worn words. Jeffirey has already been observed asserting that the canons of taste have been fully revealed; a writer may have genius and yet write in a 'very vicious taste', as Southey does in Thalaba; ¹ his work is summed up thus: (83)

All the productions of this author, it appears to us, bear very distinctly the impression of an amiable mind, a cultivated fancy, and a perverted taste.

Similarly, of Joanna Baillie's Miscellaneous Plays of 1804 he notes: ²

... though she will not easily meet with a superior in genius, it will not be difficult for her to find an instructor in taste.

Genius is the necessary prime impulse to creation, but it needs to be directed into proven channels by taste, or by judgment, in which Miss Baillie's genius is also lacking: ³ she is tempted by that over-simplicity which is becoming dangerously fashionable. But when in the eighteenth century taste became too refined, the genius of a poet such as Cowper was especially valuable; the passage is worth quoting at length to show Jeffirey's guarded view of the Augustan achievement: ⁴

The great merit of this writer appears to us to consist in the boldness and originality of his composition, and in the fortunate audacity with

¹ 1 (O 02). 79.

² 5 (Ja 05). 421.

³ 2 (J1 03). 286.

⁴ 2 (Ap 03). 81: Cowper i and ii.

which he has ~~varied~~ the dominion of poetry into regions that had been considered as inaccessible to her ambition. The gradual refinement of taste had, for nearly a century, been weakening the vigour of original genius. Our poets had become timid and ~~gastidious~~, and circumscribed themselves both in the choice and the management of their subjects, by the observance of a limited number of models, who were thought to have exhausted all the legitimate resources of the art. Cowper was one of the first who crossed this enchanted circle, who regained the natural liberty of invention, and walked abroad in the open field of observation as freely as those by whom it was originally trodden: he passed from the imitation of poets, to the imitation of nature, and ventured boldly upon the representation of objects that had not been sanctified by the description of any of his predecessors. In the ordinary occupations and duties of domestic life, and the consequences of modern manners, in the common scenery of a rustic situation, and the obvious contemplation of our public institutions, he has found a multitude of subjects for ~~ridicule~~ and reflection, for pathetic and picturesque description, for moral ~~de~~llamation, and devotional rapture, that would have been looked upon with disdain, or with despair, by most of our poetical adventurers. He took as wide a range in language, too, as in matter; and, shaking off the tawdry incumbrance of that poetical diction which had nearly reduced the art to the skilful collocation of a set of appropriated phrases, he made no scruple to set down in verse every expression that would have been admitted in prose, and to take advantage of all the varieties with which our language could supply him.

Cowper's genius broke through the restrictions of matter and style which in Jeffrey's view had been an aberration from the tradition of true taste in the Virgilian line. Hence he is able to praise Fowling, a poem in the Cowper tradition, in these terms:¹

¹ 13 (0 08). 76.

We do not offer these passages to our readers as specimens of very exquisite or powerful poetry; but they possess the merit, we think, of truth and simplicity. There is something modest and amiable and natural, we think, throughout the whole composition ...

An extract from the quotation preceding this remark will serve as an example of Jeffrey's taste in minor poetry of his own time: (75)

The snow has ceas'd to fall: the gloomy clouds,
Retiring, like disbanded troops, disperse
In all directions, and leave Heaven's wide plain
Free, for the glitt'ring stars their num'rous bands
Irregular to muster. Frost his rage
Abates not, but, with perservering spleen,
Stiffens the new-fall'n snow. The village pours
From ev'ry chimney volumes of thick smoke,
From the dry faggot or the close par'd turf
Arising, of more pure and wholesome scent
Than the rank coal sulphureous.

Apart from genius, then, the primary requirement for the best poetry in Jeffrey's estimation is a cultivated taste resulting in a simplicity and a truth to nature issuing in turn in elegant but vigorous art.

This is Jeffrey's general critical position, and it is very close to that adopted by his contemporaries. It is now time to consider his comments on the Lake poets and on Scott. These poets, together with Crabbe, were producing the most important work by far that appeared during the years under consideration, and Jeffrey recognised this and also appreciated that it was important that he should take up a definite critical attitude to them if the Edinburgh was to be more than a series of discrete

articles. The only parallel to his stand on the important poetry of his time is to be found in Ferriar's work for the Monthly Review. Jeffrey's contention is, in its simplest form, that Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Scott have considerable genius but that they are exercising this genius in such a way as to give a bad example to their followers and ultimately to harm society and inhibit their own full powers.

The public expressions of Jeffrey's immense admiration for the Lake poets must not be overlooked. Of Madoc he writes, and few will find his estimation over-severe:¹

If this poem be justly chargeable with the faults which we have ventured to ascribe to it, it certainly cannot be ranked among productions of the first rate excellence: at the same time, its beauties are unquestionably great and numerous ...

Of the Lyrical Ballads:²

... in spite of their occasional vulgarity, affectation, and silliness, they were undoubtedly characterised by a strong spirit of originality, of pathos, and natural feeling ...

Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge have 'extraordinary talents',³ and Jeffrey's disparaging review of Montgomery's The Wanderer of Switzerland ends with this sentence:⁴

¹ 7 (O 05). 20.

² 11 (O 07). 214.

³ 12 (Ap 08). 133.

⁴ 9 (Ja 07). 354.

When every day is bringing forth some new work from the pen of Scott, Campbell, Rogers, Baillie, Sotheby, Wordsworth, or Southey, it is natural to feel some disgust at the undistinguishing voracity which can swallow down three editions of songs to convivial societies, and verses to a pillow.

Jeffrey concentrated his criticism on the major poets of his time not primarily through spite or perversity of judgment, but because he esteemed them so highly and was distressed both at their self-debasement as he saw it, and at the wrong that he believed they were doing to society which he felt it his business to protect essentially in the form in which he found it.

The criticism of the Lakers is to be found principally in four articles in the period under consideration: the first literary review, devoted to Thalaba, of October 1802; the review of Madoc in October 1805; that of Wordsworth's Poems, in Two Volumes in October 1807; and the treatment of Crabbe's 1807 Poems in April 1808. It will be useful to outline first the general line of attack which Jeffrey adopts: a detailed consideration of the individual reviews will be introduced in the third chapter.

The Lakers are a new school. Of the Wordsworth Poems:¹

We have thus gone through this publication, with a view to enable our readers to determine, whether the author of the verses which have now been exhibited, is entitled to claim the honours of an improver or restorer of our poetry, and to found a new school to supersede or new-model all our maxims on the subject.

¹ 11 (0 07). 228.

New schools are in Jeffrey's view dangerous and unnecessary. The prosaic poetry of James Crirrie had been damned with the assertion that 'the reverend author, carried away by the innovating spirit of the age, has had the ambition of establishing a new school of poetry, and expected to set the example of an original manner of poetical description.'¹ The Lake poets are dissenters from the established church of poetry,² and traitors to their liege lords.³

Jeffrey attacks both the style and the subject matter which distinguish the Lake school.

It would be wrong to represent Jeffrey as being wholly unsympathetic to the stylistic views of the Lake poets. Thus in reviewing William Smyth's English Lyrics he writes:⁴

In the delineation of such objects <the blind> , we are perfectly satisfied, that the school of Southey and Coleridge is right, and that the whole effect of the representation must depend on the humble simplicity of the statement.

His quarrel with the Lake poets is that they are perversely addicted to low diction which he opposes to true simplicity. Thus he writes of Wordsworth's Poems, assuming the common sense:⁵

¹ 3 (Ja 04). 329.

² 1 (0 02). 63.

³ 7 (0 05). 1.

⁴ 8 (Ap 06). 157.

⁵ 11 (0 07). 217.

Every one knows that there are low and mean expressions, as well as lofty and grave ones; and that some words bear the impression of coarseness and vulgarity, as clearly as others do of refinement and affection. ...what we do maintain is, that much of the most popular poetry in the world owes its celebrity chiefly to the beauty of its diction; and that no poetry can be long or generally acceptable, the language of which is coarse, inelegant, or infantine.

From this great source of pleasure, we think, the readers of Mr Wordsworth are in a great measure cut off. His diction has no where any pretensions to elegance or ~~dis~~^{di}gnity; and he has scarcely ever condescended to give the grace of correctness or melody to his versification.

.... With Mr Wordsworth and his friends, it is plain that their peculiarities of diction are things of choice, and not of accident. They write as they do, upon principle and system; and it evidently costs them much pains to keep down to the standard which they have proposed to themselves.

It is the perverseness, the affectation, the childishness to which Jeffrey objects in the name of the common sense: 'Every one knows'. The language of the upper classes was clearly that for poetry, consecrated by long tradition to that use, and simplicity must never degenerate into vulgarity:¹

We may excuse a certain homeliness of language in the productions of a ploughman or a milkwoman; but we cannot bring ourselves to admire it in an author, who has had occasion to indite odes to his college bell, and inscribe hymns to the Penates. ... The poor and vulgar may interest us, in poetry, by their situation; but never, we apprehend, by any sentiments that are peculiar to their condition, and still less by any language that is characteristic of it.

¹ 1 (0 02). 66.

Jeffrey's perception of licentiousness in the work of the Lake poets also results in his severe criticism of the free verse of Thalaba which he found difficult to read.¹

The affectation which Jeffrey perceived in the style of the Lakers also extended to their subject matter:

They do not think any thing worth trying, in which others have previously succeeded; they will have none of the merits which have been already allowed to their predecessors; and as most of the natural beauties of conception and expression have been defiled by previous exemplification, they have been forced to betake themselves to a series of strange affectations, which, if not altogether unprecedented in themselves, were never seen at least before in compositions of so much genius. Of these resources, we endeavoured to give some account in a former article. The most remarkable, we think, are, an affectation of infantine innocence and simplicity; an affectation of excessive refinement and preternatural enthusiasm; and an affectation of a certain perverse singularity in learning, taste, and opinions.

This affectation Jeffrey saw as springing from the solitariness of the Lake poets which issued in a discontent with the institutions of normal society.

'A splenetic and idle discontent with the existing institutions of society, seems to be at the bottom of all their serious and peculiar sentiments.' As a result they had pity for offenders against just laws established by society for its protection.² Jeffrey believed that the peculiarity of subject matter and opinions exhibited by these poets was more important than their style as a

¹ 1 (0 02). 72.

² 1 (0 02). 71.

distinguishing feature of the school.¹ Presumably he could see the impulse behind the stylistic peculiarities and sympathise with it to some extent, whereas the distinguishing social gospel of the Lake poets seemed to him wholly reprehensible. It is interesting that the condemnation of solitary meditation occurs not only in the treatment of the Wordsworth Poems as the product of 'a mind of extraordinary sensibility, habituated to solitary meditation',² but also in his finding Southey's anonymously published Letters from England of the same year 'the productions of a mind accustomed either to indulge in solitary and unchecked speculation, or to predominate in a society of still humbler qualifications.'³ In all this Jeffrey anticipates Peacock's deflation in The Four Ages of Poetry.

The results of such solitary meditation and lack of mixing with healthy society were a contempt of the normal in art and a cult of the exaggerated. 'Instead of the men and women of ordinary humanity, we have certain moody and capricious personages, made after the poet's own heart and fancy'.⁴ On the other hand it must be observed that Jeffrey was not always in favour of an attempt to portray real peasants in art: in poetry peasants while not being capricious must be ideal and general.⁵

¹ 1 (0 02). 70.

² 11 (0 07). 218.

³ 11 (0 07). 389.

⁴ 12 (Ap 08). 134.

⁵ 1 (0 02). 67.

In serious poetry, a man of the middling or lower order must necessarily lay aside a great deal of his ordinary language; he must avoid errors in grammar and orthography; and steer clear of the cant of particular professions, and of every impropriety that is ludicrous or disgusting: nay, he must speak in good verse, and observe all the graces in prosody and collocation. After all this, it may not be very easy to say how we are to find him out to be a low man, or what marks can remain of the ordinary language of conversation in the inferior orders of society. ...

It has been argued, indeed, (for men will argue in support of what they do not venture to practise), that as the middling and lower orders of society constitute by far the greater part of mankind, so, their feelings and expressions should interest more extensively, and may be taken, more fairly than any other, for the standards of what is natural and true. To this, it seems obvious to answer, that the arts that aim at exciting admiration and delight, do not take their models from what is ordinary, but from what is excellent; and that our interest in the representation of any event, does not depend upon our familiarity with the original, but on its intrinsic importance, and the celebrity of the parties it concerns.

The Lakers failed to perceive the necessity of following tradition in portraying the idealised ordinary in their poetry and as a result wrongly stressed the individual and the eccentric in their work. Their meditation was likely to consist of 'some strained and exaggerated moralization of a vague and tragical description'¹ or 'perpetual exaggeration of thought'.²

¹ 12 (Ap 08). 133.

² 1 (0 02). 69.

When one turns to Jeffrey's treatment of Scott, and in particular of the poems The Lay of the Last Minstrel and Marmion, one observes a process similar to the consideration of the Lake poets. Scott is admired for his energy and vehemence. This derives from his imitation of the medieval romances:¹

It was his duty, therefore, to reform the rambling, obscure, and interminable narratives of the ancient romancers, -- to moderate their digressions, -- to abridge or retrench their unmerciful or needless descriptions, and to expunge altogether those feeble and prosaic passages, the rude stupidity of which is so apt to excite the derision of a modern reader: at the same time he was to rival, if he could, the force and vivacity of their minute and varied representations -- the characteristic simplicity of their pictures of manners -- the energy and conciseness with which they frequently describe great events -- and the lively colouring and accurate drawing by which they give the effect of reality to every scene they undertake to delineate.

Marmion is more vehement if less sweet than the Lay.² It is true that Scott lacks great delicacy of taste or elegance of fancy, but he displays no affectation or timidity and is therefore generally acceptable.³

The main objection which Jeffrey raises to Scott's work is that his subject is not sufficiently dignified for formal poetry. Scott fails implicitly to convert the public to his own opinion as to the interest

¹ 6 (Ap 05). 1.

² 12 (Ap 08). 2.

³ 12 (Ap 08). 3.

or dignity of the subject' of the Lay,¹ and the long descriptions of antiquarian interest in Marmion are 'without dignity or interest in themselves' and hence unsuited for the ordinary reader.² It is significant in view of Jeffrey's objection to the fantastical element in the Lakers that he similarly objects to the eccentric and useless nature of medieval revival poetry: 'To write a modern romance of chivalry, seems to be much such a fantasy, as to build a modern abbey, or an English pagoda.'³

Jeffrey sums up the grounds of his objections in terms which relate them very closely to his treatment of the Lakers: (34)

We have dwelt longer on the beauties and defects of this poem, than we are afraid will be agreeable either to the partial or the indifferent; not only because we look upon it as a misapplication, in some degree, of very extraordinary talents, but because we cannot help considering it as the foundation of a new school, which may hereafter occasion no little annoyance both to us and to the public.

Scott may establish 'an indiscriminate taste for chivalrous legends and romances in irregular rhyme'. (34-5)

It is for this reason that we conceive it to be our duty to make one strong effort to bring back the great apostle of the heresy to the wholesome creed of his instructors, and to stop the insurrection before it becomes desperate and senseless, by persuading the leader to return to

¹ 6 (Ap 05). 2.

² 12 (Ap 08). 28.

³ 12 (Ap 08). 3.

his duty and allegiance. We admire Mr Scott's genius as much as any of those who may be misled by its perversion; and, like the curate and the barber in Don Quixote, lament the day when a gentleman of such endowments was corrupted by the wicked tales of knight-errantry and enchantment.

From this consideration it will appear that Jeffrey's originality consists not in the basic tenets which he puts forward nor in the terms which he uses, but rather in the consistency with which he maintains his society-centred point of view and attacks everything antagonistic to it. The constant reference from the individual poem to the general principles underlying the criticism gives a coherence to his work which is anticipated only in the anti-German writing of Ferriar. His associationism and Platonism are merely two aspects of something much broader involving his whole view of society and literature.

While Jeffrey's treatment of the Lake poets and Scott is of special interest, his less obviously interesting criticism should not be neglected. An analysis in brief, in chronological order, of his unquestioned reviews of literary importance together with a comparison of his treatment with those of the other Reviews therefore follows.

1. Southey, Thalaba: See Ch. 3.

2. Mrs John Hunter, Poems, (1802).

1 (Ja 03). 421-6 5 pages: 3 of them quotations

BC 20 (O 02). 409-13 3 $\frac{1}{2}$:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 41 (Ag 03). 420-5 (Muirhead) 4 $\frac{1}{2}$:2 $\frac{1}{2}$

Both Jeffrey and Muirhead recognise Mrs Hunter's mediocrity and they characterise her inadequate virtues in similar faded terms. Jeffrey appears as very clearly in the established tradition here. The British Critic is indiscriminately favourable.

3. The Life and Posthumous Writings of William Cowper Esq.
ed. Hayley, (1803).

2 (Ap 03). 64-86: 21 $\frac{1}{2}$:8 $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (2) 38 (My 03). 1-15 14 $\frac{1}{2}$:4

MR n.s. 41 (J1 03). 225-45 (Moody) 20 $\frac{1}{2}$:12

BC 22 (J1 03). 55-63 7 $\frac{1}{2}$:2 $\frac{1}{2}$

The treatments of Hayley's hagiographic biography reveal clearly one difference between the Edinburgh and the other Reviews. The three older Reviews provide summaries of Cowper's life and little criticism of either Hayley or the poet. The Critical is strongly opposed to Cowper's harshness and the British Critic openly maintaining the middle way finds the minor poems often unpleasingly rough. Jeffrey gives an account after ironical comments directed at Hayley and his sycophancy. He then embarks (81-2) on a eulogy of Cowper's achievement in bringing new life to the matter and manner of English poetry by introducing low subjects and language hitherto deemed

unsuitable for poetry. There are echoes of the condemnation of the Lakers, however: Cowper, like most originators, went to extremes and failed to realise that 'The very essence of versification is uniformity'. (83) Jeffrey is always aware of the possibilities which an important book offers him for generalising about the nature of literature and literary history.

4. John Thelwall, Poems written chiefly in retirement, (1802).
2 (Ap 03). 197-202 5:2

A unique and caustic review attacks Thelwall's political and poetic principles.¹

5. Joanna Baillie, A Series of Plays vol. ii, (1802).
2 (Jl 03). 269-86 18:2

BC 20 (Ag 02). 184-94 10:3

CR (2) 37 (F 03). 200-12 (Southey) 12:8½

MR n.s. 43 (Ma 04). 31-9 (Ferriar) 8½:7½

The opportunity of making a comparison between Jeffrey, Southey, and Ferriar would be welcome, but Ferriar's is a cursory notice supplementary to the review of the first volume. Southey provides a series of observations with a tendency towards the general: he comments unfavourably on the state of the stage at the time (206) and on the

¹ See for the personal basis of this review The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth 2 edn, revd Shaver, (Oxford, 1967), p. 431n.

nature of dramatic illusion (212). The British Critic has specific discrete comments on the plays which reach no firm conclusion. Jeffrey's article is less unified than his best. He always proceeds to generalise whenever possible as he covers the different topics suggested by the works under review. His main thesis is the characteristic argument that Miss Baillie has been captivated by an invalid system of characterisation and diction, but he also comments on the amorality of drama (275-6) and the state of the modern stage with the 'artificial stateliness and wearisome pomp' of tragedy and the 'plain vulgarity and prose ecstasies of the German drama'. (282) His conclusion is (286) that 'there is no want of genius in this book, although there are many errors of judgement' and most of the article has led to this conclusion, if haltingly.

6. De Lille, Le Malheur et la Pitié, (1803).

3 (0 03). 26-42 16½:4½

AJR 16 (Ja-Ap 03). 500-11 11½:3½

MR n.s. 44 (Ag 04). 495-500 5:3½ (Mrs Moody)

The Monthly is unfortunate in Mrs Moody here: she takes De Lille's excellence for granted and gives a mere account of the poem. The Anti-Jacobin Review and Jeffrey take the same basic line: De Lille is to be praised for breaking away from French provincialism in matters of taste, but he is inadequately equipped for great poetry, being too precious and scholastic. Jeffrey's presentation of the position is fuller, more subtle, and better organised.

He begins challengingly with the statement: 'A reputation that prevails so universally, and is retained so long, must necessarily be merited', and proposes an investigation of the nature of the merits and any possible defects. His critical vocabulary is as usual severely limited, as his conclusion woefully demonstrates: (42)

His diction and versification, indeed, are almost uniformly harmonious and elegant: but he wants simplicity and force for the higher departments of poetry, and commonly falls into a style of declamatory exaggeration and disorder, whenever he abandons his old and appropriate subjects.

7. 7. R.O. Cambridge, Works, (1803).

3 (O 03). 56-60 3:1

CR (2) 39 (N 03). 270-4 4½:3

The contrast between these reviews is instructive. Jeffrey sees Cambridge's work as pleasant but inessential, one of the literary luxuries that are 'the best indication of a refined and enlightened state of society'. His weakness, in spite of himself, for neo-Augustan verse is evident and his censure of the mediocre thus checked. The Critical is much more severe on degenerate Popean verse: (274)

It cheats the ear with similar cadences, and the eye with similar phraseology: it is correct, easy, euphonious, but maukish, tautologous, and servile; seldom picturesque, never brilliant.

8. James Cririe, Scottish Scenery, (1803).

3 (Ja 04). 328-34 5 $\frac{1}{2}$:2

BC 26 (Ag 05). 195-7

CR (3) 1 (F 04). 150-60 9 $\frac{3}{4}$:7

MR n.s. 46 (Ja 05). 14-20 (Muirhead) 5 $\frac{3}{4}$:3

The underlying themes of Jeffrey's criticism reappear here and distinguish this article not only from the cursory condemnations of the Critical and the British Critic but also from Muirhead's witty and close analysis. All of the critics agree that the work is prosaic. Jeffrey is heavily sarcastic: Cririe evidently intends to establish a New School. Especially perceptive is his remark to the effect that Cririe's descriptions are dull because merely denotative (329-30) It is an effective review both by itself and in the corpus.

9. Life and Posthumous Writings of Cowper vol. iii, (1804).

4 (J1 04). 273-84 11 $\frac{1}{2}$:7

MR ns. 44 (J1 04). 241-52 (Moody) 12:8 $\frac{1}{4}$

CR (3) 4 (Ja 05). 45-59 14 $\frac{1}{2}$:11

BC 25 (Ja 05). 8-16 8:4 $\frac{3}{4}$

These reviews of the third volume of Hayley's Cowper are predictably straight accounts. Jeffrey offers the significant observation that Cowper's critical judgments are weak because not generally held: the general opinion is the only valid judgment.

10. Virgil tr. Sotheby, Georgics, (1800).

4 (J1 04). 296-303 7 $\frac{1}{2}$:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (2) 30 (S 00). 10-24 14:5

BC 16 (D 00). 655-61 5:2

17 (F 01). 164-74 9 $\frac{1}{2}$:4 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 34 (Ja 01). 75-8 (Berriar) 3 $\frac{1}{4}$:2 $\frac{1}{4}$

AJR 13 (S 02). 1-6 5 $\frac{1}{2}$:4 $\frac{1}{4}$

The treatments of Sotheby's Virgil are approving and scholarly in the case of the Critical and the British Critic. Both these reviews contain general comments, the Critical's on the place of didactic poetry in classical literature, that of the British Critic on the difficulties of translating a work relying entirely on its style. Jeffrey also generalises, in his case praising Virgil for 'the charms of his diction' and 'the elaborate beauty of his phraseology'. (296) He charges Sotheby with excessive complexity of the Darwinian variety and exhibits adequate scholarship to place his review beside those of the Critical and the British Critic and above the cursory treatments of the other two reviews.

11. The Correspondence of Samuel Richardson ed. Barbauld, (1804).

5 (O 04). 23-44 22:8 $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (3) 3 (O 04). 155-65 9 $\frac{3}{4}$:4

(N 04). 276-87 10 $\frac{1}{4}$:5

AJR 19 (O 04). 167-77 9 $\frac{2}{3}$:1

BC 24 (N 04). 506-14 7 $\frac{1}{4}$:4 $\frac{3}{4}$

The Anti-Jacobin Review and the British Critic provide simple accounts of Barbauld's edition of Richardson's correspondence. The Critical manages to make comments about the novels in the course of its review: its principal complaint is that unalloyed virtue becomes tedious. (278) Jeffrey, after finding the letters disappointingly immoral, turns bodily to a discussion of the novels in the sort of retrospective review which is common today. It is bold, if a little crude. His main contention is that the novels succeed largely because of their minuteness, building up an associative background.

12. Joanna Baillie, Miscellaneous Plays, (1804).

5 (Ja 05). 405-21 16:9

CR (3) 4 (Mr 05). 238-54 16:5 $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 27 (Ja 06). 22-8 7:4 $\frac{1}{4}$

MR n.s. 49 (Mr 06). 303-10 (Ferriar) 7:4 $\frac{3}{4}$

The reviews of Miss Baillie's new volume of plays are of unusual interest. Jeffrey is sorry that he criticised her plan in the earlier volumes: these plays are worse, yet she has a salutary influence to exert on contemporary drama, 'a degree of truth, simplicity and vigour, which are of the best example in the present state of the British drama'. Like Scott, Jeffrey tends to overestimate Joanna Baillie because of the bad state of drama at the time. The Critical, on the contrary, welcomes the relief which Miss Baillie's abandonment of her scheme brings, though the plays are severely handled because of her 'unskilfulness and absurdity of conduct, glaring

improbability of incident, and dialogue in some parts despicably feeble, in others strangely and unnaturally abrupt.' (241) The British Critic is very enthusiastic about the volume, again because of its relative excellence, while Ferriar typically demands that Miss Baillie should imitate the Elizabethans: (310)

It is perhaps impossible to effect more than our best dramatic writers have already accomplished: let this fair author, then, be contented with trying to imitate instead of deviating from the most successful efforts of human genius.

Ferriar's estimation is correct, if not his remedy.

13. <James Grahame,> The Sabbath, (1805).

5 (Ja 05). 437-42 4 $\frac{1}{2}$:2

BC 24 (O 04). 436-7 1: $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 47 (My 05). 101-2 (Manning) 1 $\frac{1}{4}$: $\frac{3}{4}$

The British Critic finds Grahame's pious versifying animated and sublime, harmonious and vigorous, and Manning praises the matter. Only Jeffrey bluntly observes that 'he does not seem to feel the force of the sanction against poetical mediocrity, and his ear appears to have no perception of the finer harmony of versification.' (441)

14. Scott, The Lay of the Last Minstrel: See Ch. 3.

15. Southey, Madoc: See Chapter 3.

16. Virgil tr. De Lille, L'Eneide, (1804)

Virgile à De Lille, (1805)

7 (0 05). 134-47 13 $\frac{1}{4}$:4 $\frac{1}{2}$

A sober critical evaluation of the translations involving close comparisons again shows Jeffrey in his academics.

17. Lessing, Nathan the Wise, (1805)

8 (Ap 06). 148-54 6:2 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR ns. 49 (Mr 06). 243-8 (Moody) 4 $\frac{1}{4}$:3

BC 27 (My 06). 549-50 4:1

Lessing fares ill at Jeffrey's and Moody's hands. Jeffrey sits in the scorner's chair and condemns the low manner and vile philosophy; Moody the dissenter approves of religious toleration but also finds the work low. The reactions are expected. The British Critic merely commends the translation.

18. William Smyth, English Lyrics 3 edn, (1806).

8 (Ap 06). 154-8 4:3

BC 28 (Ag 06). 179

Smyth's lyrics appeal to Jeffrey's love of a traditional middle way, ^{where} between Shenstone and Collins. (155) It is here also that he makes his noteworthy commendation of the school of Southey and Coleridge, for 'the whole effect of the representation must depend on the humble simplicity of the statement.' The British Critic has a pleasant commendatory notice in similar terms.

19. Maria Edgeworth, Leonora: See Ch. 3.
20. Thomas Moore, Epistles, Odes, and other Poems: See Ch. 3.
21. James Montgomery, The Wanderer of Switzerland, (1806).
 9 (Ja 07). 347-54 7:3 $\frac{1}{2}$
BC 28 (J1 06). 80-1 1: 7/8
MR n.s. 50 (Ag 06). 436-8 (Muirhead) 2 $\frac{1}{2}$:1 $\frac{3}{4}$
CR (3) 8 (Ag 06). 363-72 8 $\frac{1}{2}$:5 $\frac{1}{4}$

The three older Reviews all supply general praise of Montgomery's small talent. Jeffrey, incensed by his originality which he sees as tawdry finery, launches a violently sarcastic attack on this mediocrity and sickly sensibility: (348)

There are few young men who have the slightest tincture of literary ambition, who have not, at some time in their lives, indited middling verses; and, accordingly, in the instructed classes of society, there is nothing more nauseated than middling poetry.

Montgomery is a small enough poet, but he deserves better than this. Jeffrey's censure of mediocrity is selective, not random, and he tends to prefer the unadventurous.

22. William Sotheby, Saul, (1807)

10 (Ap 07). 206-17 11:8
BC 30 (O 07). 381-9 8 $\frac{1}{4}$:5
MR n.s. 55 (Ap 08). 400-5 (Moody) 5:3

Moody has the measure of Sotheby's dead epic: it is a heavy, nerveless expansion of Scripture. (401) The British Critic finds the style abrupt and apparently seduced by the Lake school. Jeffrey is more enthusiastic: it is respectable verse: (207)

There is delicacy and grace in many of the descriptions; a sustained tone of gentleness and piety in the sentiments; and an elaborate beauty in the diction, which frequently makes amends for the want of force and originality.

Unlike Montgomery, Sotheby is predictable and acceptable in his dullness.

23. Wordsworth, Poems, in Two Volumes: See Ch. 3.

24. Espriella { Southey }, Letters from England, (1807)

11 (Ja 08). 370-90 19 $\frac{2}{3}$:8 $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 31 (F 08). 168-78 11:2 $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (3) 13 (Mr 08). 282-3 1 $\frac{2}{3}$:0

MR n.s. 55 (Ap 08). 380-6 (Moody) 6 $\frac{1}{2}$:3 $\frac{1}{4}$

The elder Reviews all recognise the deceit, the Critical being the most indignant and the British Critic eschewing the radical principles of the work. Jeffrey finds the letters anti-social, and his review suggests that he is aware of the true authorship.

25. Scott, Marmion: See Ch. 3.

26. Crabbe, Poems: See Ch. 3.

27. Elizabeth Hamilton, The Cottagers of Glenburnie, (1808)

12 (J1 08). 401-10 9:6

BC 32 (Ag 08). 112-8 6:1

CR (3) 15 (D 08). 421-30 9:6

Jeffrey, like the other two reviewers, commends the instruction offered to the lower orders, but has little literary criticism to offer.

28. Fowling, A Poem, (1808).

13 (O 08). 69-76 8:6 $\frac{1}{4}$

Even if didactic verse is absurd, this is good minor verse in Jeffrey's view: true, simple, amiable, and natural (76).

c) Other Reviewers in the Edinburgh

A survey of the contributions of Jeffrey's staff shows that they back him up in most respects very fully. They censure mediocre writing severely: Drummond finds the poetry of Bowles in The Spirit of Discovery pretentious and is severe with him.¹ The tendency to generalise is reflected in much of the critical writing, as is Jeffrey's ironical and sarcastic streak. Herbert generalises on the sonnet genre when criticising Robert Walpole's Isabel,² and the unidentified reviewer of Mant's Poems of 1806 has a useful survey of nature poetry.³

¹ 6 (J1 05). 321.

² 6 (J1 05). 296-8.

³ 11 (O 07). 168-9.

Jeffrey's defence of the status quo in literature is supported by his critical subordinates. Brougham finds Josiah Walker's poem The Defence of Order (1803) mediocre as literature, but its doctrinal value is firmly asserted;¹ Hallam states that the rules of taste are as universal as those of ethics, one of Jeffrey's comparisons;² and for Wright it is to the existence of the classics that 'we owe almost every thing noble and beautiful in the productions of modern genius.'³

The reviewers defend this citedal against the familiar array of attackers. There is Moore with his immoral subversion with the aid of Anacreon, than whom in the words of Eyre 'it would be difficult to point out any classical writer, whose pen has done smaller service to the cause of virtue or good citizenship.'⁴ Frere supports the defence by finding Moore's licentiousness reflected in a member of his school, Strangford,⁵ and 'the exgrau^gant creations of a prurient imagination, tricked out in all the tinsel and frippery of the modern poet's effeminate vocabulary' (46), and the same source of the voluptuous imagery of Robert Walpole's Isabel is recognised by Herbert.⁶

¹ 2 (Jl 03). 421.

² 7 (Ja 06). 306: Knight, An Analytical Enquiry, (1805).

³ 2 (Ap 03). 215: Dalzel, Collectanea Graeca Majora, (1802-3).

⁴ 2 (Jl 03). 463.

⁵ 6 (Ap 05). 48.

⁶ 6 (Jl 05). 290, 300.

The Lake School are further attacked by the minor reviewers. Lamb is castigated by Brown, both as an innovator in the dramatic field with John Woodvil and as a friend of Coleridge. The unidentified reviewer of Mant's Poems is presumably referring to the Lakers in his commendation of Mant at the end of his history of nature poetry 'who, without the microscopic eye of some of our poetical Leuenhocks, is still an accurate observer of nature, and who feels what he writes, without professing to write from his feeling.'² Another article by an unidentified reviewer refers to the prevalent 'monotonous enumeration of rocks and rivers, birds and beasts, variegated only with the still more dreary embellishment of sickly and sombre sentiment.'³

The unidentified reviewer of Lichtenberg's Vermischte Schriften makes its author a stick with which to beat most other Germans: Kotzebue, Iffland, and Schiller who has great genius but is imitated by those who are merely after cheap popularity.⁴ The whole irregular shopkeepers' taste in English drama, ultimately attributable to the unfortunate irregularities of Shakespeare, is castigated by Hamilton as he praises the regularity of Raynouard's tragedy Les Templiers (1805).⁵

¹ 2 (Ap 03). 90-6.

² 11 (0 07). 169.

³ 11 (Ja 08). 411.

⁴ 3 (Ja 04). 345.

⁵ 9 (0 07). 197-204.

The citidal of taste remains unscathed by these attacks, and the reviewers stand firm on the middle ground taken up by common sense in the face of subversive excess; so Thomas Thomson on James Mercer's Lyrical Poems of 1804:¹

Justness and elevation of thought, equally remote from trivial vulgarity and far-fetched refinement, -- terseness of expression, -- purity and polished elegance of diction, may be enumerated among the happiest characteristics of this species of poetry.

For Campbell the immaculate simplicity, calmness, and permanence of pleasure afforded by Thomson's Castle of Indolence is evidence of ideal poetry.²

The terms used in the defence of this position are the same as those used by Jeffrey and his critical predecessors: elegance, harmony, simplicity, energy, and natural characters and incidents are approved of; heaviness, lowness, and vulgarity are criticised.

In the following consideration of the reviewers, articles about which there is debate as to the authorship are omitted: possible contributors with only one dubious ascription to their credit are however included.

1. Henry BROUGHAM (1778-1868)

Brougham had been a brilliant Edinburgh undergraduate in the nineties and was regarded as a potential troublemaker by his colleagues on the Review. Thomas Campbell suggests

¹ 7 (Ja 06). 473-4.

² 12 (Ap 02). 81: Stockdale, Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets, (1807).

that he was invited to contribute only 'from a dread of his enmity if he should be excluded'.¹ He himself treated his responsibilities lightly at the time, writing to James Loch on 20 August 1802:²

Of late I have been writing a few articles for the new Review here, which, of course, you have heard of. ... But all this I look upon as little better than waste of time.

This wasting of time resulted in some virulent articles which had damaging effects on the reputations of those authors attacked in them: Brougham in later life recognised that they had been over-severe.³

The severity of the criticism on books and their authors was much, and often justly, complained of; but no one could accuse it of personal malice, or any sinister motives.

Brougham himself was asked to 'put a little salt' into a review by Dr Parry of Fuseli's lectures in the second volume.⁴

Literary reviewing was of very little consequence in Brougham's large output, and no literary reviews are

¹ Arthur Aspinall, Lord Brougham and the Whig Party, (Manchester, 1927), pp. 2, 5.

² Brougham and his Early Friends Letters to James Loch 1798-1809, ed. Atkinson and Jackson, (London, 4 vols, 1908), i. 345-6.

³ The Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham, (3 vols, Edinburgh and London, 1871), i. 259.

⁴ Ibid., i. 258.

reprinted in his Contributions to the Edinburgh Review of 1856. Only two in the volumes under consideration are definitely known to be his, and both are very severe.

1. Josiah Walker, The Defence of Order, (1803).

2 (J1 03). 421-8 7:2 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 43 (Mr 04). 262+6 3 $\frac{3}{4}$:2

His review of Walker's poem is consistently ironical and admits in true conservative fashion no suspension of the present rules of taste. Walker's originality of language is far more generously treated by Muirhead in the Monthly Review. With Brougham it is merely an excuse for irony: the torturing of words is evidence of great genius (416). Mediocrity finds no mercy with this reviewer.

2. Byron, Hours of Idleness, (1807): See Ch. 3.

2. Dr Thomas BROWN (1778-1820)

Brown was a prominent member of the Edinburgh Academy of Physicians and a minor poet. In his three reviews he appears as a supporter of the common sense approach but lacks Jeffrey's flair for spotting the mediocre.

1. Mrs Opie, Poems, (1802).

1 (O 02). 113-21 8:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 20 (N 02). 553-4 2 $\frac{1}{4}$:2

MR ns. 39 (D 02). 434-5: 1 $\frac{1}{4}$:1

CR (2) 36 (D 02). 413-8 (Southey) 5:3 $\frac{1}{2}$

He grossly overpraises Mrs Opie in a neat, polite style; the best of her work is hardly surpassed in the language. (116) There is however a certain amount of detailed criticism of the poems which makes the review superior to the general criticisms in the Monthly Review and the British Critic. Brown's review is less measured than Southey's in the Critical.

2. Lamb, John Woodvil: See Ch. 3.

3. d'Adele de Senange, Charles et Marie, (1802), N.

The other two reviews show the sort of writing against which Mrs Opie was a bulwark. John Woodvil is treated with persistent irony in probably the best of the very bad reviews of that work, and Charles et Marie is seen as equally an example of the cult of exaggeration, though it is preferable to modern insipidity.

3. Thomas CAMPBELL (1777-1844)

Campbell's two reviews are amusing and interesting but hardly add up to an identifiable character in the period under consideration.

1. Hoyle, Exodus, (1807), V.

11 (Ja 08). 362-70 8:2 $\frac{2}{3}$

CR (3) 13 (Ap 08). 428-34 5 $\frac{1}{2}$: $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 31 (My 08). 496-502 6 $\frac{1}{2}$:1 $\frac{1}{4}$

His dismissal of Hoyle's Exodus is persistently ironical with a jocular use of Aristotelean criteria: thirteen books are a pleasing baker's dozen. The whole tribe of epic poets of the period are damned with the observation at the outset: (362)

A correspondent wrote us lately an account of a tea-drinking in the west of England, at which there assisted no fewer than six epic poets -- a host of Parnassian strength, certainly equal to six-and-thirty ordinary bards ...

This is a more devastating method than the solemn rebukes of the Critical and the British Critic, though Sydney Smith believed that its levities would give 'very great offence'.¹

2. Percival Stockdale, Lectures on the Truly Eminent English Poets, (1807).

12 (Ap 08). 62-82 20 $\frac{1}{2}$:2 $\frac{3}{4}$

CR 13 (F 08). 142-8 6:4

The review of Stockdale defends Johnson against the critic's notorious prejudice and expresses a variety of views on English poetical history with a climax in high praise given to the calm permanence of pleasure afforded by Thomson. The Critical's review is greatly inferior, being largely an account.

Both reviews by Campbell exhibit the intelligent concern of the poet for the maintenance of standards and a lively and original style.

¹ The Letters of Sydney Smith, i. 130: Ja 08, to Jeffrey.

4. William DRUMMOND (?1770-1828)

(?) William Bowles, The Spirit of Discovery, (1804), V.

6 (J1 05). 313-21 8:3

CR (3) 5 (Ag 05). 348-60 11 $\frac{1}{4}$:3

MR n.s. 47 (Ag 05). 419-26 7:4 $\frac{1}{2}$ (Muirhead)

BC 26 (N 05). 526-34 7 $\frac{2}{3}$:5

The diplomat and poetaster Drummond's single possible literary review finds that Bowles has attempted too much on this occasion and that he is 'a very pretty poet in his own way' (321) rather than the great poet he imagines himself to be. It is a gently mocking review, inferior to the extensive historical thesis in the discriminating Critical which sees Bowles's pseudo-simplicity as the final stage of a development from the wildness of Ossian, through the simplicity of the ballads, the correct elegance of Goldsmith and Gray, and the excessive refinement and meritorious decoration oddly ascribed to Darwin, Southey, Lloyd, Lamb, '& Co.' (350). Muirhead's review in the Monthly and the treatment in the British Critic are both more cursory and inferior to the Edinburgh's treatment.

5. George ELLIS (1753-1815)

Scptt ed., Sir Tristrem, (1804).

4 (J1 04). 427-43 15 $\frac{1}{2}$: $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (3) 3 (S 04). 45-52 7:3 $\frac{1}{4}$ (William Taylor)

BC 25 (Ap 05). 361-8 7:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 48 (O 05). 196-203 (Muirhead) 7:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Scott's antiquarian friend reviews Sir Tristrem solidly and favourably, his only serious criticism, accepted by Scott,¹ relating to the price of the volume: (428)

Perhaps it may add to our indignation, that our own labour is thus considerably increased, because it becomes necessary that we should describe more particularly the contents of a valuable work which cannot be known to the whole number of our readers.

It is the best antiquarian notice, though without the prophetic vision of future 'epopoeias' offered by Taylor in the Critical.

6. The Revd Peter ELMSLEY (1773-1825)

1. Heyné, Homeri Carmina (Leipzig, 1802 etc.)

2. (J1 03). 308-29 21½:0

The Oxford Whig classical scholar contributes one or two scholarly and unique reviews of classical editions. His treatment of the Homer is given a certain general interest by his contrasting of the trade of literature in pedantic Germany with the hobby of literature in Britain.

7. John EYRE

The important review by this young Edinburgh doctor of Moore's Anacreon is treated in Chapter 3.

¹ Letters, i. 230-1: N 04.

8. Bartholomew FRERE (1778-1851)

Strangford, Poems from the Portuguese, (1803)

6 (Ap 05). 43-50 7:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Frere, the younger brother of John Hookham Frere, was an eminent diplomat. His attack on Strangford's translations may have been inspired by professional antagonism as Buckingham suggests: it is certainly convincing with its devastating literal translations (45-6) and its implacable hostility to Moore and all his followers with their enervated licentiousness.

9. Henry HALLAM (1777-1859)

1. R.P. Knight, An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste, (1805).

7 (Ja 06). 295-328 33 $\frac{1}{4}$:2 $\frac{1}{4}$

CR (3) 6 (N 05). 225-37 13: $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 50 (Je 06). 141-57 (Moody) 16 $\frac{1}{4}$:6 $\frac{1}{4}$

BC 29 (Ja 07). 1-21 19 $\frac{1}{2}$:5 $\frac{3}{4}$

(F 07). 168-90 22 $\frac{1}{2}$:3 $\frac{3}{4}$

Henry Hallam, the father of Arthur^r Hallam of In Memoriam, was a distinguished Whig historian. His account of Knight's Inquiry has more discussion than its rivals. Its main interest lies in the maintaining of Jeffrey's line that taste is universal and not totally relative as Knight maintains (306) but generally Knight's work is approved.

2. The Works of John Dryden ed. Scott, (1808).

13 (0 08). 116-35 19 $\frac{3}{4}$:4

The review of Scott's Dryden contains little criticism. It attacks Scott's Tory prejudice and finds the task below him.

10. Alexander HAMILTON

(?) F.J.M. Raynouard, Les Templiers, (1805), D.

9 (0 06). 196-211 15:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (3) 5 (My-Ag 05). 541-3 1 $\frac{3}{4}$:0

Both reviews of Raynouard find his work dull, but Hamilton stresses the excellence of French observation of the rules in an exceptionally conservative article in which Johnson is attacked for his attitude to the unities.

11. William HERBERT (1778-1847)

1. Componimenti Lirici ed. T.J. Mathias, (1803)

5 (0 04). 45-63 19:7 $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 21 (Ja 03). 32-5 3:1

CR (2) 38 (My 03). 72-6 4:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Herbert, a classical scholar, poetaster, and author of Select Icelandic Poetry, provides a competent but thin treatment of Mathias' volume consisting largely of selections from the collection. Some general interest is provided by a discussion of the early maturity of Italian language and literature. (45) The British Critic is

slighter, but also generalises, this time about Italian studies in England which are on the increase. The Critical has a negligible account.

2. Robert Walpole, Isabel, (1805), V.

6 (J1 05). 290-300 10 $\frac{1}{2}$:2 $\frac{1}{2}$

The Italian element persists in the review of Isabel since Herbert judges Italian models to be better than the voluptuous imagery of Strangford and Moore. There is a detailed comparison of the original and the translation.

3. Thomson tr. Poulin, Les Saisons, (1803).

7 (Ja 06). 328-36 7 $\frac{2}{3}$:4 $\frac{1}{2}$

This, the only treatment of Poulin, is notable chiefly for its criticism of 'the general heaviness and encumbrance' of Thomson's style (329) which Poulin successfully avoids, though the incoherence of the original transitions is past remedy. (329-30) As an example of Thomson's 'laboured, pedantic, and injudicious phraseology' Herbert cites 'A shoreless ocean tumbled round the globe.' (331) His criticism suggests that he has little feeling for poetry.

4. The Plays of Philip Massinger ed. Gifford, (1805).

12 (Ap 08). 99-119 20 $\frac{1}{2}$:8

AJR 22 (0 05). 123-9 6 $\frac{1}{4}$:2

CR (3) 6 (S 05). 68-77 9 $\frac{1}{2}$:3

(0 05). 135-57 21 $\frac{1}{2}$:4 $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 27 (Ap 06). 347-63 15 $\frac{1}{2}$:11 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 52 (Ja 07). 1-14 (Ogle) 13:10

Herbert's treatment is largely antiquarian as are the others, with the exception of the Monthly, where the idle Ogle resorts largely to quotation.

12. George LAMB (1784-1834)

(?) Thomas Holcroft, Tales in Verse, (1806).

9 (0 06). 101-11 10:2

Lamb, the playwright and later M.P., has possibly one literary review in the period under consideration, a sad, undistinguished dismissal of the Tales in Verse for imitating the wrong models instead of those 'who are remarkable for purity of style, correctness of ideas, and chastity of design'. (101) The best classical models only should be imitated by natural genius.

13. The Revd Robert MOREHEAD (1777-1842)

Dante, La Divina Commedia tr, Boyd, (1802).

1 (Ja 03). 307-13 64:3 $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (2) 37 (Mr 03). 241-9 8:3 $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 21 (Mr 03). 255-65 10:7

MR n.s. 46 (Mr 05). 272-82 (Muirhead) 11:6 $\frac{1}{2}$

Morehead, Jeffrey's clerical cousin, appears from his Dante review to be competently orthodox. He recognises Dante's unique combination of elegance and polish but finds the scholastic elements indigestible and unnatural pedantry. The lack of historical sense here manifested is confirmed when Morehead finds Dante, like Homer, to be

an unprepared genius. There is some competent detailed analysis of the translation.

Lockhart Muirhead's specialist review in the Monthly is on approximately the same wavelength, though rather more illuminating in its detailed discussion of Boyd's expansions of the original and showing more critical acumen and stylistic fluency. It is the best treatment of the four, that in the Critical being totally imperceptive and that in the British Critic more detailed but very plain. Morehead's review is thus above average, but not by any means noteworthy.

14. Dr Alexander MURRAY (1775-1813)

Pratt, Bread, or The Poor, (1801), V.

1 (O 02). 108-112 4:1

CR (2) 34 (Ja 02). 80-7 6 $\frac{2}{3}$:6

MR n.s. 37 (Mr 02). 310-4 (Moody) 4 $\frac{1}{3}$:2 $\frac{1}{2}$

AJR 11 (Mr 02). 285-90 4 $\frac{3}{4}$:4

BC 19 (Ap 02). 416-8 1 $\frac{1}{3}$:1

Alexander Murray rose from humble origins to become a professor of oriental languages at Edinburgh and editor for a period in 1802 of the Scots Magazine to which he contributed verses. His disapproving review of Pratt is lively with an ironic wit and a flair for imagery: though it is chiefly concerned with the argument of the poem, an unfortunate variant this of 'philosophical criticism', the perceptive remark occurs that the images are sometimes suggested by the rhymes.

The Anti-Jacobin Review's treatment is entirely anti-jacobin, that in the British Critic negligible. The Critical is mostly quotation with a disapproval of the imitation of Goldsmith. Murray's only rival is Moody in the Monthly who well shows how bad some of Pratt's lines are. (313)

15. Joseph PHILLIMORE (1775-1855)

Milton tr. De Lille, Paradis Perdu, (1805)

8 (Ap 06). 167-90 224:13

The lawyer Phillimore provides the only review of Delille's version of Paradise Lost. It is very severe as is appropriate, condemning his omissions and expansions, and his frippery ornaments, and concluding philosophically that French is unsuited to the highest poetic flights. The comparison is detailed and illuminating.

16. Professor John PLAYFAIR (1748-1819)

1. De Staël, Corinne: See Ch. 3.

17. Walter SCOTT (1771-1832)

With eleven reviews, Scott is the most prominent literary contributor apart from Jeffrey. His articles are often antiquarian but this discussion concentrates mainly on the critical elements which they contain.

1. Southey tr., Amadis de Gaul, (1803), P.

W.S. Rose tr., Amadis de Gaul, (1803), V.

3 (0 03). 109-36 27:5 $\frac{1}{2}$

Southey: CR (3) 1 (Ja 04). 45-52 (Wm Taylor) 7:5

BC 24 (N 04). 471-81 10 $\frac{1}{2}$:3 $\frac{1}{4}$

MR n.s. 47 (My 05). 13-25 (Muirhead) 11 $\frac{1}{2}$:7 $\frac{1}{4}$

Rose: CR (3) 1 (Ja 04). 40-5 (Wm Taylor) 5 $\frac{1}{2}$:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 45 (D 04). 415-7 (Muirhead) 2 $\frac{1}{2}$:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 26 (J1 05). 47-51 4:2

Scott's combination of sound antiquarian scholarship with critical perceptiveness appears at its best in his long account of the Southey and Rose translations. Judged apart from the Edinburgh the other treatments of the separate versions are not all negligible. The British Critic restricts itself to antiquarian and very general comment and Muirhead is generally disapproving of the medieval originals, but Taylor in the Critical has a very discriminating account of the tedious Rose translation and of the limitations of the originals.

Scott's treatment is on a different level altogether. His style is ponderously jocular, the comfortable basic narrative style familiar from the Waverley Novels. He allies himself with one of Jeffrey's basic beliefs by maintaining that Southey's excellence as an editor (he concentrates throughout on Southey rather than Rose) is due to his being attached more to truth than to system. (113) Scott proceeds to characterise the merits of the metrical as against the prose romances and

his criticism here is on a high level, looking forward to his own poems. Their prolixity is condemned, but their natural descriptions praised: in prose romances the long descriptions lack 'any general sensibility of the beauties of nature' (118). Scott welcomes Southey's expurgations (125) and stresses as others had done the importance of the romances as evidence of the customs, morals, and mode of thinking of the middle ages. (132) Turning finally to Rose, Scott suggests the ideal style for metrical romance, again looking forward to his own work: (135)

An easy flow of verse, partaking more of the school of Dryden than of Pope, and chequered, occasionally, with ancient words and terms of chivalry, seems well calculated for the narration of romance and legendary tale.

At its best, as here, the Edinburgh is far beyond its rivals.

2. James Sibbald, Chronicle of Scottish Poetry, (1802).

3 (0 03). 198-21 $\frac{3}{4}$: 12 $\frac{2}{3}$:2

CR (2) 38 (J $\frac{1}{2}$ 03). 326-30 4:1

BC 23 (F 04). 116-9 3 $\frac{1}{4}$:2 $\frac{1}{4}$

MA n.s. 43 (Mr 04). 235-47 (Muirhead) 11 $\frac{1}{2}$:2 $\frac{1}{4}$

The article on Sibbald is purely antiquarian, though Scott interestingly finds naked coarseness less corrupting than Thomas Little. The other reviews are less solidly antiquarian and Muirhead as usual criticises all early poetry.

3. Godwin, Life of Chaucer, (1803).

3 (Ja 04). 437-52 14 $\frac{3}{4}$:2

CR (3) 1 (Ja 04). 60-5 4 $\frac{1}{2}$:1

(F 04). 144-50 6 $\frac{1}{4}$:2 $\frac{1}{4}$

(Mr 04). 324-42 18:2

BC 23 (Mr 04). 226-33 7 $\frac{1}{2}$:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

AJR 18 (Jl 04). 221-41 19 $\frac{1}{2}$:5 $\frac{1}{2}$

(Ag 04). 337-50 13 $\frac{1}{2}$:2

19 (S 04). 30-44 14 $\frac{1}{4}$:2 $\frac{3}{4}$

(O 04). 154-67 13 $\frac{1}{4}$:2

(N 04). 249-63 13 $\frac{3}{4}$: $\frac{3}{4}$

MR n.s. 46 (F 05). 113-30 17:9 $\frac{1}{4}$

(Mr 05). 287-302 15 $\frac{1}{4}$:9 $\frac{3}{4}$

Scott's one really severe article sets the tone for all except the Anti-Jacobin Review which sees Chaucer as the centre of a panorama. All the other reviews are factual accounts, condemning the endless conjectures which Godwin indulges in. Scott's treatment contains more of interest than the factual accounts and general criticisms of the other reviews. Most interesting is his belief that Godwin reads himself into Chaucer: (448)

In this respect, the work reminds us of a particular class of novels, said to be founded on real history, in which the dramatis personae are assumed from the ages of chivalry, but apparelled in the sickly trim of sentiment peculiar to the Grevilles and Julias of Mr Lane's half-bound duodecimos.

4. George Ellis, Specimens of the Early English Poets
3 edn, (1803).

4 (Ap 04). 151-63 12½:3½

1 edn: CR (2) 33 (S 01). 44-7 (Southey) 3:1

BC 19 (Mr 02). 217-24 7:¾

(Je 02). 615-23 8:3½

MR ns.s 42 (O 03). 154-7 (Ferriar) 2¾:2

3 edn: CR (3) 2 (Je 04). 229-30 1:0

Scott does not measure up so well to the general level of the Ellis reviews. Perhaps he is being over-conscientiously objective in this treatment of his friend's work. His article is largely a summary with some intelligent but amateurish comment on the poems selected. The Monthly article by Ferriar is very general and the second Critical article a mere antiquarian note, but Southey's 1801 Critical treatment and the article in the British Critic are more formidable. Southey's knowledgeable article based on the conviction that Ellis's selections are uncharacteristic of their authors has already been referred to. The British Critic usefully sets the project in its antiquarian context: (217)

Within the last half century, the study of our literary antiquities has commenced. It has been cultivated, in general, with zeal and industry; sometimes with sense and taste.

Ellis is found to be lacking in the dullness, pedantry, and frivolity of many antiquarians. Both of these last reviews must be judged superior to that by Scott.

5. The Works of Thomas Chatterton ed. Southey and Cottle,
(1803)

4 (Ap 04). 214-30 16:3

BC 21 (Ap 03). 367-73 6:3½

MR ns. 42 (S 03). 110 (S. Rose) 8 11.:11.

Scott maintains in his review of Chatterton that his article is not the place for a critical discussion of the merits of the Rowley poems. (226) The resulting article is thus largely antiquarian and rather disappointing for the modern reader, though thoroughly competent within its limits. Harmony and ease supply the place of arduous criticism of the juvenilia (216). Three interesting comments may be isolated. Scott welcomes Chatterton as an antidote to the prevailing late eighteenth-century correct mediocrity; he notes that some authors speak in disguise, the personal significance of which is plain; and he sees that the Ossian imitations fail because Chatterton lacked Macpherson's knowledge of Celtic poetry and thus caricatures the most bombastic passages.

Nothing of interest occurs in the other treatments of the edition except for the British Critic's partially valid observations that the Rowley poems succeed because of the greater care demanded by the forgeries.

6. Sir J. Froissart's Chronicles <tr. Sir T. Johnes>,
(1803 etc.)

5 (Ja 05). 347-62 15:2

The unique review of Johnes's Froissart is of high quality. Scott is sceptical of the need for a new translation, greatly preferring the less accurate but more vital Berners (357-60). He stresses the almost dramatic quality of the historian who was to be among the most important influences on his own original work in verse and prose and characteristically remarks that the smallest encounter in Froissart may be interesting 'while we prefer a knowledge of mankind to a mere acquaintance with their actions'. (347)

7. Godwin, Fleetwood

Scott's perceptive and balanced review of Godwin's novel is fully dealt with in Chapter 3.

8. Report of the Committee of the Highland Society, (1805). The Poems of Ossian ed. Laing, (1805).

6 (J1 05). 429-62 33:9

Laing only: BC 28 (D 06). 641-52 104:3

Scott's treatment of the still vexed Ossianic question in the masterly and imaginative and unlikely to be bettered article in the Edinburgh begins with an acceptance of a genuine basis for the poems but shows how eighteenth-century epic machinery and sentimentality came to dominate the Gaelic elements (446-7). His conclusion is the sane one that if Scotland has produced no Ossianic epics: (462)

our national vanity may be equally flattered by the fact, that a remote, and almost a barbarous corner of Scotland, produced, in the 18th century, a bard, capable not only of making an enthusiastic

impression on every mind susceptible of poetical beauty, but of giving a new tone to poetry throughout all Europe.

The British Critic follows Scott weakly.

9. The Works of Edmund Spenser ed. Todd, (1805).

7 (O 05). 203-17 15:3

BC 27 (F 06). 139-48 9 $\frac{1}{4}$:3 $\frac{1}{4}$

CR (3) 7 (Ap 06). 411-6 6:0

AJR 25 (S 06). 1-12 10 $\frac{2}{3}$:1 $\frac{1}{4}$

This scholarly treatment attacks Todd's unregulated display of erudition. The remaining articles are also technical rather than critical, that in the Critical being a particularly interesting sketch of the history of editing Spenser.

10. Ellis ed., Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances, (1805).

Ritson, ed., Ancient English Metrical Romances, (1802).

7 (Ja 06). 387-413 26:7

Ellis: BC 27 (Mr 06). 277-87 10:5 $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (3) 10 (F 07). 113-30 17:8 $\frac{1}{2}$.

MR n.s. 51 (N 07). 281-7 (Muirhead) 6:2 $\frac{1}{2}$

Ritson; CR (2) 39 (O 03). 179-87 8 $\frac{1}{2}$:2 $\frac{3}{4}$

BC 24 (S 04). 231-43 12:3

Scott's article is the most formidable of those under consideration. He begins with an elaborate restatement of the value of romances for the reader seeking a full

understanding of the middle ages as opposed to 'dull and dreary monastic annals'. (388) He sketches the history of the genre, rebuking Ritson for the violence of his attack on Percy, who was excellent for his time. (388-93) Ellis's jocularly is sometimes distracting, but he is certainly no mere collector.

The other treatments are less full, being mostly accounts. That of Ellis in the Critical however well isolates for praise his shaping gift as an antiquary of outstanding ability as a populariser, while the Critical's review of Ritson is witty, urbane, and intelligent with evidence of medieval learning.

11. William Herbert, Miscellaneous Poetry (1806).

9 (0 06). 211-23 12:6 $\frac{3}{4}$

BC 30 (Ag 06), 196-7 1:2 $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (3) 10 (Ja 07). 37-52 15:4 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 52 (Ap 07). 355-66 (Finlay) 11:3 $\frac{3}{4}$

Scott's treatment of Herbert is again scholarly and balanced. He is fascinated by the translations direct from the Icelandic (which look forward to his own unhappy Harold the Dauntless) while recognising the tawdriness of Herbert's versifying. His comments here are of the utmost importance for understanding the ballad situation in Britain at the time: (223)

In some of the verses, the author has in fact slid into that style of tawdry and affected simplicity, which we should have thought that he who has studied popular poetry upon the manliest

models, would, of all persons, have been least likely to imitate. ...

This is not genuine ballad poetry, which Mr Herbert can write when he pleases; but that spurious kind, which trickles through Sir Eldreds of the Bower, and other legendary ditties of the 18th century.

The British Critic gives a brief notice, and the Critical makes cheerful hay of the volume. Finlay has an article as fine as Scott's, scholarly and discriminating and with a similar concern for standards which becomes clear in the tart conclusion: (366)

The work which Mr. Herbert has in contemplation, and to which we have already alluded, will, we hope, increase our opinion of his talents, and ameliorate the impression which his own poetry has at present made on our minds. It will at all events prove a more noble exertion of his faculties than the composition of riddles, or than turning the choruses of Euripides into Italian sonnets.

Scott's work for the Edinburgh is not of uniform interest, but it is usually of a very high quality, the antiquarianism being interspersed with critical aperçus of interest both in themselves and for a fuller understanding of Scott's critical and artistic development.

18. Sydney SMITH (1771-1845)

1. M.G. Lewis, Alfonso: See Ch. 3.

2. Mme de Staël, Delphine, (1803), N.

2 (Ap 03). 172-7 5:1

BC 21 (Mr 03). 314 1:0

CR (2) 38 (My 03). 48-58 11:5

MR n.s. 43 (Ap 04). 441 (Manning) 7 11.: 0

Delphine was harshly treated by all four reviewers. Smith recognises a certain skill in character portrayal (175), but spends most of his time violently castigating the morality of the piece with severe wit. The British Critic and the Monthly provide brief dismissals, while the Critical recognises Madame de Staël's genius but is resolutely opposed to her moral system.

As a literary critic Smith is no credit to the Review: his shallow and inaccurate treatment of Lewis is noted below.

19. Sir John STODDART (1773-1856)

Scott ed., Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border: See Ch. 3.

20. Dr Thomas THOMSON (1768-1852)

Thomson, the legal antiquary and friend of Scott and Jeffrey, was an important standby in the early days of the Edinburgh. In his Memoir Cosmo Innes states that his style was too stately and polished for a review, though that is not obtrusive in the plain style of the literary articles under consideration. Further, 'On two different occasions he took charge of editing a number in Jeffrey's absence'.¹

¹ <Cosmo Innes,> Memoir of Thomas Thomson, Advocate,
(Edinburgh, 1854), p. 44.

1. The Poetical Works of Thomas Warton ed. Mant, (1802).

2 (Ap 03). 250-61 11:1

BC 21 (My 03). 506-13 6 $\frac{1}{2}$:4 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 41 (Ag 03). 337-43 (S. Rose) 6 $\frac{1}{2}$:4 $\frac{1}{2}$

AJR 16 (O 03). 203-6 2 $\frac{1}{2}$:1

The treatment of Mant's Warton is unexciting but very sound and much fuller and more radical than that provided by any of the other reviewers. Thomson spends most of his time pointing out Warton's limitations, the servile imitations, the lack of a unifying theme in the History of English Poetry. Thomson concentrates here on essentials. The purely descriptive articles in the British Critic and the Monthly, and the very conservative adulation of Warton in the Anti-Jacobin Review are superficial and thin in comparison.

2. Erasmus Darwin, The Temple of Nature: See Ch. 3.

3. Anna Seward, Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Darwin, (1804).

4 (Ap 04). 230-41 14:2

AJR 17 (Mr 04). 285-9 3 $\frac{1}{2}$:1 $\frac{1}{4}$

CR (3) 2 (Je 04). 189-99 10 $\frac{1}{4}$:4 $\frac{3}{4}$

MR ns. 47 (Jl 05). 286-300 (Ferriar) 14:7

Thomson once again goes to the centre of the problem with his article on the Lichfield volume. He condemns Miss Seward's abysmal style and her digressions, points out the true originality of The Botanic Garden and suggests an analogue of 1735 in Henry Brooke's Universal Beauty. The

Anti-Jacobin Review and the Critical give superficial treatments concentrating on the style, but Ferriar's treatment may be more fruitfully compared with the Edinburgh article. It consists of a series of interesting comments which never touch the centre as Thomson's work does. Most interesting his suggestion that Brooke's work also anticipates the neologisms and inelegant expressions found in Darwin: he acknowledges Thomson's suggestion of this point.

4. James Mercer, Lyric Poems, (1804).

7 (Ja 06). 471-8 7:4

BC 23 (Ja 04). 81-2 1:²/₄

The British Critic briefly characterises Mercer's volume as elegant and regrets that it has no room to place it among the major articles. Thomson is more detailed and the phrase 'terseness of expression' strikes an unusual note among the otherwise hackneyed praise of moderation which he offers. (473) Dunbar is effectively made to lament his death at the close. (478)

On the basis of these four reviews it may be regretted that Thomson did not write more frequently for the Edinburgh.

Chapter 2: The Four Reviews: 1803-8

There is very little overall change in the collective standpoint of the older Reviews during the first six years of the Edinburgh's usurpation of the stage. The via media remains the universal ideal, the period of Augustan and mid-eighteenth-century writing the golden age, while the mode of thinking is summed up by the frustrated British Critic in a sentence which epitomises much of the reviewing of the period:¹

Some years ago complaint was made, and not without reason, of the great dearth of Poetry; now there is such a glut, not merely of works pretending to a poetical form, but really of elegant poetry, that one of our constant difficulties is that of keeping pace with the futility of our bards, and another that of finding expressions of accurate discrimination to distinguish their various merits.

Any development must be sought not on this common ground but in the individual periodicals.

The Critical Review

The Critical is by far the most noteworthy of the older Reviews during these six years. This is in spite of a series of disruptions beginning with the fire of 2 February 1803, which led to the inauguration of the third series and Hamilton's bankruptcy, and also to a series of changes in ownership which appears to have had little effect on the quality of the literary reviewing except

¹ BC 32 (0 08). 409: George Baker, Tenby, (1807).

for William Taylor's disappearance from its pages.¹

The Critical is the only Review to exhibit any influence of the Edinburgh. Its own attitude to the new publication is equivocal. It recognises the new discrimination introduced by the northern Review even in its carping:²

We cannot but surmise that Mrs. Opie has either been the reviewer of her own work, or has at least got it criticised by some partial friend in a certain northern review, which had in this instance deviated from its professed plan of severity, and may therefore fairly be suspected of sometimes suffering that to be done, which it has of late unbecomingly insinuated to the prejudice of other journals.

Its mixed view may be summed up by a remark at the beginning of a review of L.D. Campbell's A Reply to the Strictures of the Edinburgh Review of 1807:³

THE publication which passes under the name of the Edinburgh Review, has in many of its disquisitions exhibited a considerable share of intellectual ability, enlivened occasionally by some sallies of wit, and what many may perhaps feel equally stimulant, considerable virulence of abuse.

The Critical is determined to take up a less destructive stance, and its relationship to the Edinburgh may be seen as akin to that between Essays in Criticism and Scrutiny in our own time:

¹ For the facts concerning these vicissitudes see CR (3) 1 (Ja 04): Preface, and J.W. Robberds, A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich, ii. 68, 223.

² CR (3) 8 (Ag 06). 443-4: Mrs Opie, Simple Tales, (1806).

³ CR (3) 12 (D 08). 444.

Far from adhering to that new set which would limit the honorable functions of criticism to the detection of offenders, it appears to us old English reviewers, that the most useful, as well as the most agreeable part of our office is to confer deserved praise, and render 'honour to whom honour is due.'

Nevertheless, it is a characteristic of the Critical that it becomes more severe after the advent of the Edinburgh. Before 1803 approximately 43% of its reviews were unfavourable, 32% favourable, and 25% neutral; after 1803 the figures are 52%, 28%, and 20% respectively. The real change occurs first in 1805, and in 1807 60% of the reviews were unfavourable. The Critical bears out in part Scott's observation of 18 November 1808 to George Ellis:¹

The common Reviews, before the appearance of the Edinburgh, had become extremely mawkish; and, unless when prompted by the malice of the bookseller or reviewer, gave a dawdling, maudlin sort of applause to everything that reached even mediocrity. The Edinburgh folks squeezed into their sauce plenty of acid, and were popular from novelty as well as from merit. The minor Reviews and other periodical publications, have outrèd the matter still farther, and given us all abuse, and no talent.

William Taylor sets the tone of the best Critical reviewing in his severe treatment of Klopstock:²

The foregoing remarks will perhaps be accused of needless severity, but surely not of blindness to merit. Literary art has declined in Great

¹Letters, ii. 128.

² CR (3) 2 (Ag 04). 492.

Britain, partly for want of sharper criticism. By welcoming mediocrity with politeness, and genius with unqualified worship, both are soothed into contented repose too soon, and rest satisfied with efforts below their strength, and below their duty.

The Critical finds it necessary to stress that this is no unthinking severity: reasons will be given for every objection made to a work¹ and criticism of their censures by disappointed authors should be ignored.² The insistence on asking why a work is commendable³ is not fully developed in the criticism of the Review, but the standard of articles is generally good, and the style is biting and amusing.

The Edinburgh's influence appears not only in direct references and the general attack on mediocrity, but also in a tendency to attack the Lakers as a school. Thus in a review of Charles Grant's prize poem A Poem on the Restoration of Learning in the East of 1805:⁴

While we are sickened at the noise of the misbegotten brood that cackle at the foot of Parnassus, we contemplate with genuine pleasure even the desultory flight of a muse of fire. While so many candidates for the laurel are seduced, by the silly vanity of founding a new school, to mistake singularity for eminence, we applaud the poet who is content to cultivate the grand style, of which our great masters have bequeathed to us such noble models. While an inordinate rage for

¹ CR (3) 7 (F 06). 167: Lucretius.

² CR (3) 10 (Mr 07). 283: Revd Richard Mant, Poems, (1806).

³ CR (3) 5 (My 05). 31: J.B. Linn, The Powers of Genius, (1804), v.

⁴ CR (3) 4 (Ap 05). 420; cf. (3) 15 (O 08). 124: (Burgess and Cumberland), The Exodiad, (1807).

writers of real ability, we listen with fondness to the strain that revives in our minds the cherished memory of the greatest of our poetic moralists.

The most glittering of the Critical's ornaments in 1803-4 (and briefly in 1809) was William Taylor of Norwich. Taylor has some twenty literary reviews in the Critical of those years. Some are ordinary, some learnedly antiquarian. At his best, Taylor is concerned with literary standards, displays a certain discrimination, and forces new vocabulary into his strange Teutonic style. Thus of the 1804 edition of Churchill's Poetical Works he writes:¹

Facility of versification, a vein of peculiar humour, were the merits admitted; an affected contempt for the ancients, and a certain autophilism, or self-complacency, were the failings exposed. The vague imprecision of the poet's language, the inconsistency of contiguous sentiments, the fondness for abstract imageless expressions, the streaming flet-milk exuberance of thought, were not enough reprehended.

Churchill is 'naked, sprawling, and listless'. (18)

The Anti-Jacobin Review

The mild interest of the pre-1803 Anti-Jacobin Review vanishes almost completely after that date. It becomes spinelessly favourable. Before 1803 approximately 32% of the reviews were unfavourable, 43% favourable, and 25% neutral; afterwards the figures are 25%, 55%, and 20%.

¹ CR (3) 2 (My 04). 17.

it opposes the Edinburgh on political grounds¹ and while recognising its talents finds it severe² and malignant.³ No influence from the Edinburgh is traceable. The Anti-Jacobin Review continues to be severe chiefly on political and religious grounds, though claiming political independence.⁴ Much of its ethos is summed up in a review of Signs of the Times (1806):⁵

Critics next come in for their share of our censure. It would be a ridiculous affectation of humility in us, one of the chief objects of whose work it was to expose the scandalous partiality, and unprincipled conduct of the critics of the day, to disclaim all pretensions to the praise which he bestows on our humble, but well-intended, efforts. We feel that we deserve it; and therefore we shall not hesitate either to extract the passage which contains it, or to subscribe to the justice of his attacks on Reviews, some of which we have fortunately succeeded in suppressing, while we have the satisfaction of knowing that we have greatly restrained the formerly unbridled profligacy and licentiousness of others.

The British Critic

The British Critic continues as before 1803. The very occasional thoughtful article is swamped by many mild undeserved approvals, though the percentage of favourable

¹ AJR 18 (Ag 04). 416.

² AJR 18 (J1 04). 225: Godwin, Life of Chaucer, (1803).

³ AJR 20 (Ja 05). 82.

⁴ Preface to vol. 17, p.1.

⁵ AJR 25 (S 06). 84.

articles is not significantly increased (from 44% to 48%):
 'such is the refinement of the times that smooth and polished versification is as common, as the distinctions of real genius, originality of conception, force of sentiment, and brilliant imagery, are found but with the chosen few.'¹

The Monthly Review

The decline of the Monthly beneath an unchanged format is due to the loss of solid contributors such as Ferriar and their replacement by nonentities such as Thomas Ogle. It is the beginning of the process noted in Pantologia:²

At present it scarcely maintains its ancient character, partly because very formidable rivals have arisen to contend for the public esteem, partly because the death of able contributors occasions a vacancy, which is sometimes but inadequately supplied by successors.

A survey of the work produced by the different reviewers will tell the story adequately. The increase in severity is noticeable, but it does not indicate any improvement in the standard of reviewing. Unfavourable reviews, approximately 36% before 1803, rise to 44% thereafter.

1. Charles BURNEY the younger (1757-1817) 2:1 major

Two classical reviews

¹ BC 28 (Ag 06). 179: William Smyth, English Lyrics, (1806).

² Vol. 3, s.v. 'Criticism'.

2. James BURNEY (1750-1821) 1

One moral review.

3. Thomas DENMAN (1779-1854) 35:8

Denman begins to review in the November 1807 number of the Monthly and continues till the end of the period. He reviews extensively, especially in the foreign appendix, but his work is totally undistinguished. His opposition to Boileau as a dictator¹ results merely in a weak maintaining of the stylistic middle way and moral rigour. His treatment of Crabbe's 1807 volume is typical and is fully treated in Chapter 3: Crabbe's verses are 'manly and powerful, equally remote from vicious ornament and the still more disgusting cant of idiot-simplicity'.²

4. John FERRIAR (1761-1815) 28:16

Ferriar's reviews are much less frequent after 1802 and cease in 1806. He devoted his final major articles largely to emphasising his basic anti-revolutionary tenets: childish substitutes for true simplicity were condemned and the German drama declared anathema. Boileau was introduced to condemn Lamb's tragedy John Woodvil and with it all the new school of writers whom Jeffrey and Ferriar were by now both attacking.³ (It is worthy of note that

¹ MR n.s. 57 (D 08). 514: Grandmaison, Les Amours Épiques, (1804).

² MR n.s. 56 (Je 08). 179.

³ MR n.s. 40 (Ap 03). 443.

in a review of a weak translation of Boileau's eighth satire Ferriar employs the phrase taken up by Jeffrey in his review of The Excursion: 'This will never do'.¹ Ferriar returns to the attack in isolated articles on Madoc² and Cottle's Alfred.³ In this half-page review, one of his best, he sums up his work with little attention to the piece in hand except for a rebuttal of Cottle's arguments against the Review:

We have said, and we repeat it, that some modern writers do not distinguish between simplicity and meanness; we have therefore endeavoured to expose that low style of writing, which we observe inculcated both in prose and verse; and which we conceive to proceed from the antipodes of good taste and true genius. When the perversion of poetry is openly patronised, it becomes the duty of critics to resist the impulse. We have opposed the absurd fondness for German plays, with success; and we shall continue to withstand the barbarous innovators, who are attempting to despoil poetry of her finest and richest ornaments, and to reduce her to the beggarly state of a ballad-singer, or a Sternholdian rhymmer.

A similar concern is evident in his dismissal of Joanna Baillie's new-fangled dramatic theories where he apparently takes his cue from Jeffrey's account of over a year before,⁴ in his rejection of Darwin's gaudiness⁵ and Moore's

¹ MR n.s. 40 (Ja 03). 101.

² MR n.s. 48 (O 05). 113-22.

³ MR n.s. 48 (D 05). 437-8.

⁴ MR n.s. 49 (Mr 06). 303-10.

⁵ MR n.s. 43 (F 04). 113-27.

mawkishness,¹ and in his praise of true simplicity in the work of Bloomfield.²

This evidence suggests that Jeffrey's criticism in the Edinburgh could have stimulated Ferriar to consistently assertive statements of his fundamental principles, so closely akin to Jeffrey's. Such a conclusion can be only a suggestion: Ferriar's influence on the more formidable critic is clearer to see.

5. John FINLAY (1782-1810) 5 major reviews

Finlay's reviews during his brief life are scholarly and intelligent treatments of Scottish literary works and compilations.

6. G.E. GRIFFITHS (d. 1829) 41:1

Griffiths continues to fill in with the occasional brief notice, morally and predictably. He is disheartened at the lack of effect of his publication. Thus in this review of P.W. Dyer's poem The Shield of the United Kingdom (1803) he writes:³

When we read such publications as this, and some others that have lately come before us under the denomination of poems, we feel almost disheartened at the little effect which the long exercise of our critical functions seems to have produced.

¹ MR n.s. 51 (S 06). 59-70.

² MR n.s. 42 (O 03). 215-7.

³ MR n.s. 41 (Ag 03). 439.

He unexpectedly takes on what is technically a major review of Byron's Hours of Idleness, treated below, where he spots the real talent but objects to the Hudibrastic foretaste of Don Juan.¹ The decline in the Monthly's reviewing standards during these years must be ascribed in part to its uninspiring editor.

7. The Revd Jabex HIRONS (1728-1812) 1

One review of a children's book.

8. Francis JEFFREY 3

Jeffrey's three remaining Monthly reviews are of small importance. They continue his noted severity: two briefly castigate mediocre and slovenly verse in precise and severe language,² and the third is only mildly approving.³

9. Stephen JONES (1763-1827) 13:6

Jones's work is purely general and summarising and may be ignored.

10. MANNING 81:2

The unidentified Manning becomes very prominent during the years 1803-6, and not to the good of the Review.

¹ MR n.s. 54 (N 07). 256-63.

² MR n.s. 40 (Ja 03). 97-8: William Holloway, The Peasant's Fate, (1802), V; 103-4: The Poetical Works of Eaglesfield Smith, Esq., (1802).

³ Ibid., 98-9: Thoughts on Happiness, V.

His articles are the epitome of undistinguished moral and aesthetic dustiness -- they are in effect what all eighteenth-century reviews were once imagined to be. The style is as anonymous as the author. Part of his review of The Strolling Player, an anonymous novel, will illustrate the pervading tone and standard:¹

In the first place, the language is incorrect; 2dly, there are some great improbabilities in the story, especially in Caroline's venturing out to sea with strangers; and, lastly, the hero is a man of loose morals, and introduces us to others of his acquaintance who are more unprincipled than himself.

11. James MANNING the younger (1781-1866) 16:3

A totally undistinguished conservative reviewer.

12. John Herman MERIVALE (1779-1844) 12:4

There is only a handful of reviews by Merivale, in the last two volumes of 1808: he is a very severe reviewer who enjoys making sarcastic comments in the process of demolishing minor works. His own ideal appears in his one favourable review, that of Matilda Betham's Poems (1803) which he finds free from affectation 'whether of sensibility, simplicity, or Della Crusca glitter, by which so many of our modern bards endeavour to conceal or to excuse their scantiness of ideas.'² It is not surprising that his

¹ MR n.s. 40 (F 03). 208.

² MR n.s. 56 (Ag 08). 427.

one big review, his first, of Marmion is insensitively destructive: it is treated in Chapter 3.

13. The Revd C.L. MOODY (1753-1815) 190:34

Moody's reviewing after 1802 follows the same pattern as thitherto with one major qualification. He seems to have been influenced by the Edinburgh in his new insistence on the intolerability of mediocrity. It is amusing to observe his assertion that this had always been a keystone of his Review's criticism: it had certainly not been a characteristic of his own work. In his account of T.A. Warren's poem Beheficence he writes:¹

How often must we repeat that it is not lines consisting of a certain number of syllables, rhyming in couplets or in alternate stanzas, which constitutes a poem: but that it requires brilliancy of thought, elegance of diction, and a beauty of finishing like that which an artist would give to a cabinet picture.

Even more insistent is his comment on Charles Crawford's Poems on Several Occasions (1803):²

In proportion to our approbation of the virtuous and amiable tendency of Mr. Crawford's writings, must be our regret on being restrained by the laws of our Court from paying any high compliments to his Muse: but, as we have remarked, till we are ourselves disgusted with the repetition, good meaning is not a sufficient atonement for bad poetry, when a man professedly undertakes to delight us with the charms of verse.

¹ MR n.s. 42 (S 03). 99.

² MR n.s. 45 (S 04). 95.

The only justification in Moody's own work for these assertions is his occasional 'patriotic but unpoetic' verdict on the well-intentioned works of minor poetasters, and even then he is as likely to maintain that exceptionally well-intentioned pieces stand beyond the jurisdiction of the critic.

There are two results of this increased severity. Firstly, Moody was forced for once to be severe with a lady:¹

When ladies appear in the court of criticism, they must submit to forego the privileges of their sex, since politeness is often incompatible with the exercise of our judgment.

Moody's subsequent treatment of the sex was, however, no less courteous than this. His severity is more marked in repeated condemnations of low diction which seems likely to have been inspired in its most definitive statement by Jeffrey's assault upon the Lakers.² It occurs in the review of Robert Fellowes' Poems (1806):

It is not sufficient to constitute good poetry that the writer avoids the extremes of affectation and bombast; he must also share with equal care those of tameness and negligence. Verse should be elevated above prose both in thought and expression; while it ought not to be stiff and inflated, it should be elegant and polished; and it is not a sufficient apology for a prosaic and drawling rhimer, that it has been his aim to be natural and easy.

¹ MR n.s. 43 (Ap 04). 438: A. Flowerdew, Poems, on Moral and Religious Subjects, (1803).

² MR n.s. 51 (0 06). 214.

As an example of the style which he found objectionable Moody cited the monosyllabic couplet:¹

E'en then as fresh and warm for thee
As now it is, my love shall be.

Other features of interest in Moody's later reviewing are: a sudden attachment to the term nervous to describe style;² an appreciation of oriental wildness which enables him to appreciate Landor's anonymous Poems from the Arabic and Persian (1800);³ and a classic statement on the preferability of modern refinement with all its limitations to works of man's unpolished infancy. This last passage is the nearest that Moody comes to philosophical criticism and might be regarded as a minor result of the climate produced by the Edinburgh:⁴

In estimating the merits of the antients and of the moderns, writers are apt to deviate into opposite extremes. The advocate who takes his brief on the side of the former is sure to descant on the importance of unrestrained genius, and to represent them as in a situation peculiarly favourable to bold and original conception. The counsel for the moderns, on the other hand, enlarges on the progressive improvements which science and literature have introduced, on the value of method and arrangement, and on the utility of taste and criticism in correcting the aberrations of a wild

¹ Cf. MR n.s. 40 (Ja 03). 16: Gifford's Juvenal, (1802), and MR n.s. 44 (Ag 04). 428-9: The Revd C.W. Ethelston, The Suicide, (1803), V.

² E.g. MR n.s. 47 (Jl 05). 262: M.A. Shee, Rhymes on Art, (1805); MR n.s. 48 (O 05). 218: Hugh Downman, Infancy, 6 edn, (1803).

³ MR n.s. 44 (Jl 04). 331-3; cf. the review of Hoppner's Oriental Tales of 1805: MR n.s. 46 (Ap 05). 404-9.

⁴ MR n.s. 48 (D 05). 412: The Song of the Sun imitated by Beresford, (1805), V.

fancy, and in giving to the creations of the mind their due proportion and beauty. An enlightened judgment may restrain the flights of the imagination, and the knowledge of rules may damp the ardour of genius: but we are not hence to conclude that those poets are most to be admired who write in the infancy of nations, and that the mis-shapen conceptions of the untutored intellect are preferable to compositions of a more refined period.

Moody otherwise continues to favour shallow elegance, to advocate originality in theory and distrust it in practice: thus he objects to Francis Wrangham's original phrase 'Wresting a river from its course.'¹

14. Elizabeth MOODY (d. 1814) 7:4

Mrs Moody's gently effective approach continues.

15. Lockhart MUIRHEAD (1765-1829) 88:39

Muirhead's first literary reviews appear in the first volume for 1803 and he is one of the most frequent literary contributors thereafter. He cannot be regarded as a useful addition to the Monthly team. His approach is dominated by six characteristics only one of which is of great interest. This is his stress, akin to Jeffrey's, on the inadmissibility in serious literature of accidental, local, or personal associations. Thus in his review of The Lay of the Last Minstrel he writes:²

¹ MR n.s. 43 (Ja 04). 83.

² MR n.s. 49 (Mr 06). 295; cf. 42 (S 03). 29: Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, and 50 (Ag 06). 434: Edward Coxe, Miscellaneous Poetry, (1805).

On the choice of a subject which is presumed to sanction an irregular narrative and irregular rhymes, we cannot bestow our most cordial congratulations; nor on scenes and incidents merely local, and on manners and customs which have been obliterated in the civilization of mankind, can we linger with the fondness of regret.

Muirhead is not advocating extreme generality in descriptive writing. Drawing on Johnson's practical compromise, he points to the necessary middle way between trivial obscurity and meaningless vagueness in one of his best reviews, that of John Leyden's Scenes of Infancy (1803):¹

In painting our favourite haunts, we should, therefore, have recourse to varied if not to original colouring; we should lay hold of peculiar incidents or sentiments connected with the subject; and, above all, we should select the most prominent and characteristic features, and touch them at once with delicacy and boldness. Every thing of a vague and general complexion should be studiously avoided, and the physical and moral aspect of the district alone brought into view. Minute and tedious description, also, though it may be tolerated, or even relished by a native of the country which is delineated, will, in the judgment of the impartial, weaken the effect of a sketch that may be pronounced faultless in every other respect.

Connected with the associationist point, as has already become apparent, is Muirhead's contempt for works of the middle ages: only Dante manages to rise above his crude and benighted age.² Since Muirhead is allotted

¹ MR n.s. 45 (S 04). 62-3.

² MR n.s. 46 (Mr 05). 272.

several 'primitive' publications including the Minstrelsy, The Complaynt of Scotland,¹ the Decameron,² Amadis de Gaul,³ and Ellis's Specimens of Early English Metrical Romances,⁴ his aversion to early literature is particularly regrettable.

The Dante review touches upon two further points which characterise Muirhead's criticism. His professional interest in Italian literature is manifested in several reviews such as those of Lorenzo de' Medici,⁵ the Decameron, and the works of Metastasio.⁶ No detailed knowledge is exhibited in these generally thin reviews. The review of Dante, by far the most interesting of the Italian articles, exhibits another Muirhead trait. Dante copies Virgil: (273)

We may, moreover, remark that, in various instances, the Florentine compresses his thoughts in language too concise and unadorned to bear comparison with the full, smooth, and alluring strains of the Mantuan bard; nay, we had almost said, in diction too homely and naked to merit the name of poetry.

Harshness is strongly condemned by Muirhead, though in common with many reviewers he recognises that mere elegance is not enough.⁷

¹ MR n.s. 46 (Mr 05). 239-47.

² MR n.s. 46 (Ap 05). 409-15.

³ MR n.s. 47 (My 05). 13-25.

⁴ MR n.s. 51 (N 06). 281-7.

⁵ MR n.s. 45 (N 04). 274-81.

⁶ MR n.s. 55 (F 08). 223.

⁷ MR n.s. 47 (Je 05). 188: George Richards, Poems, (1804); 50 (Jl 06). 318: Mrs J.T. Serres, St. Julian, (1805), N.

Two final characteristics of this generally undistinguished critic remain. He is Johnsonian in his abhorrence of the intrusion of artificiality into grief.¹ Hence his praise for W.R. Spencer's poem The Year of Sorrow (1804):²

If his sentiments and images are neither new nor particularly brilliant, they are such as nature dictates (sic) when we bewail the loss of those whom we loved.

Finally, when Muirhead disapproves of a work under review his style can be caustic rather than bantering, more in the Anti-Jacobin Review or Edinburgh Review style. Thus of the historical poem The Battle of Largs (1804) he writes:³

We frankly confess that his talent, such as it is, had just as well have remained hidden in his napkin; and we seriously exhort him to bear his faculties of taste and imagination with all becoming meekness, and never again to publish a Gothic poem without notes, merely to try 'the merits of his performance by itself;' for this is to submit his effusions to a cruel test.

This scorn, the associationism and the repeated demands for sincerity give some character to a reviewer otherwise of small account.

16. Thomas OGLE 50:2

Mostly nondescript reviews of a few lines, generally on novels.

¹ MR n.s. 45 (N 04). 281: Poesie del Magnifico Lorenzo de' Medici, (1801).

² MR n.s. 45 (N 04). 288.

³ MR n.s. 46 (F 05). 215.

17. The Revd William J. REES (1772-1855) 18:1

Brief conventionally moral reviews.

18. Samuel ROSE (1767-1804) 3: 3

No change from his earlier reviewing.

19. The Revd Dr Charles SYMONS (1749-1826) 2:1

One classical review and a joint effort with Griffiths.

20. William TAYLOR (1765-1836) 5:3

The very minor works reviewed by Taylor at the end of the period give no opportunity for his brilliance to appear. There is some wit in his treatment of Robert Walpole's translation of de la Vega's Isabel.¹

CHAPTER 3: REVIEWS OF SIXTEEN MAJOR WORKS: 1803-8

1. Byron, Hours of Idleness, (Newark, 1807).

CR (3) 12 (S 07). 47-53 6:3½

BC 30 (O 07). 436-7 1¼:1

MR n.s. 54 (N 07). 256-63 (G.E. Griffiths) 6½:5

AJR 28 (D 07). 407-8 1:¾

ER 11 (Ja 08). 285-9 (Brougham) 4½:1½

¹ MR n.s. 55 (Mr 08). 323-6.

Byron's juvenile publication is valued today only for occasional hints of the dawning satirical impulse. The Critical's review seems too favourable to be just and one must assume that Byron's nobility is the cause of the fulsome praise: although the reviewer disclaims any flattering intent at the outset, he ends with a long utterance of friendly and respectful advice to the young aristocrat. The body of the review consists of a series of admiring comments and extracts showing Byron's possession of 'a correct taste, a warm imagination, and a feeling heart' (48) and it is the conventionality of Byron's work which ensures the reviewer's approval, the Augustan 'Childish ^{col}Reflections' being especially commendable.

The British Critic has a very brief review to illustrate the remarks with which it opens: 'This is very ingenious idleness, and has produced some elegant and interesting compositions. There is much taste, and more vigour than might reasonably be expected from a minor' (436), which is non-committal enough to suit Hours of Idleness as well as most reasonably accomplished versifying.

G.E. Griffiths himself undertook to review the volume for the Monthly: the result is undistinguished as one expects from his pen. Most of the review consists of extracts with conventional epithets 'ease and strength', 'pathos and fire' (257). Interestingly, Griffiths objects to the Hudibrastic elements which are joyfully hailed today as adumbrating the Byron of Don Juan: (262)

'She blushes, curtsies, frowns, -- in short she
Dreads, lest the subject should transport me;'

The beginning and end of the article approve of such pastimes but hope that Byron will make his talents useful to mankind. This is the treatment which Hours of Idleness should have expected, though even within the limits of the volume more acute and detailed treatment ought to have been possible: Griffiths was not the man to supply it.

The Anti-Jacobin Review is sycophantic and very general in its brief commendation of the volume in the vaguest of critical terms; 'strong proofs of genius, accompanied by a lively but chastened imagination, a classical taste, and a benevolent heart.'

After these spineless commendations, Brougham's notorious advice to the young nobleman to give up poetry and his assertion that minority is no excuse for bad verse come as something of a relief. It is very severe, far more severe than the occasion demands, but there is every reason for censuring as Brougham does the weak and inappropriate anapestics which disfigure the volume. Less justifiable is Brougham's assertion 'that there is nothing better than these stanzas in the whole compass of the noble minor's volume.' (286) The remaining types of poem are censured, the translations, the Ossianics, the excessive egotism also, with some justice, but kinder things might also be said, and it appears that Brougham is once more ^{more} concerned with writing a strong article than with doing justice to the poems.

Somewhere between these extremes lies the truth. The Edinburgh disagrees with all but two of the sixteen other reviews of the poems.¹ It is the best review stylistically, but no better, and no worse, in its own exaggerated judgment.

2. CRABBE, Poems, (London, 1807)

AJR 28 (D 07). 337-47 10:7 $\frac{3}{4}$

CR (3) 12 (D 07). 439-40 $\frac{1}{2}$:0

ER 12 (Ap 08). 131-51 (Jeffrey) 20:11

MR n.s. 56 (Je 08). 170-9 (Denman) 9:5 $\frac{3}{4}$

BC 31 (Je 08). 590-5 5:3 $\frac{1}{4}$

The review in the Anti-Jacobin Review is typical of the pious but totally uninformative articles which constitute the bulk of its literary reviewing. The reviewer has read 'The Library' and 'The Village' in his youth and therefore welcomes the present volume which is excellent in every way: (338)

... his characters are ably drawn; his descriptions are highly poetical; and the moral reflections with which they are interspersed are excellent. Few poems are better calculated to interest the feelings, to meliorate the heart, and to inform the mind. They do great credit to the author's talents, while they reflect honour on his principles.

This reference is primarily to 'The Parish Register' and three extracts from the three parts of that poem follow,

¹ See W.S. Ward, 'Byron's Hours of Idleness and other than Scottish Reviewers' MLN 59 (1944). 547-50.

to show the natural and morally and ecclesiastically excellent character of the work. The review deals briefly with the ^{shorter} ~~shorter~~ poems, finding 'The Village' a little too violently anti-Goldsmith, and ends with a commendation of the references to Burke in the Preface. With the strong emphasis on moral and doctrinal qualities this review typifies the Anti-Jacobin Review's approach and shows how the most sympathetic work can sink almost without trace into its piety.

The Critical has a mere brief approving notice citing the reliable opinions of Johnson, Burke, and Fox as an excuse for failing to review the poems properly itself.

Jeffrey's review is a fascinating document. At last he finds a contemporary poet worthy to represent 'the old poetical establishment' against 'the revolutionists' (151). Nicer discriminations tend to be lost in the polemical process, but the general reaction to Crabbe is of great interest and importance. After a general estimate, Jeffrey compares Crabbe and Wordsworth, and then deals with the different poems in the volume.

He begins by remarking that Crabbe has been overlooked because of the brevity of his output. Already the course of the review is hinted at: (131)

There is a truth and a force in many of his delineations of rustic life, which is calculated to sink deep into the memory; and, being confirmed by daily observation, they are recalled upon innumerable occasions, when the ideal pictures of more fanciful authors have lost all their interest.

The fourth paragraph of the introduction (132) contains the most substantial criticism of the review. In spite of his opposition ^{of Crabbe} to Goldsmith, Jeffrey ^{sees that he} combines a similar diction and versification with a strength and originality akin to that of Cowper. Crabbe has more vigour and less delicacy, more surface gaiety than Goldsmith, though his temper is more gloomy and his diction is sometimes harsh and quaint:

With a taste less disciplined and less fastidious than that of Goldsmith, he has, in our apprehension, a keener eye for observation, and a readier hand for the delineation of what he has observed. There is less poetical keeping in his whole performance; but the groups of which it consists, are conceived, we think, with equal genius, and drawn with greater spirit as well as greater fidelity.

This is all discriminating and fine comparison, interpreting Jeffrey's limited conception of harshness on late neoflclassical principles.

Jeffrey turns now to a comparison with Wordsworth the main point of which is to elaborate the sentence quoted from the first page of the review: (133)

Mr Crabbe exhibits the common people of England pretty much as they are, and as they must appear to every one who will take the trouble of examining into their condition; at the same time that he renders his sketches in a very high degree interesting and beautiful, -- by selecting what is most fit for description, -- by grouping them into such forms as must catch the attention or wake the memory, -- and by scattering over the whole, such traits of moral sensibility, of sarcasm, and of useful reflection, as every one must feel to be natural, and own to be powerful.

The gentlemen of the new school, on the other hand, scarcely ever condescended to take their subjects from any description of persons that are at all known to the common inhabitants of the world; but invent for themselves certain whimsical and unheard of beings, to whom they impute some fantastical combination of feelings, and labour to excite our sympathy for them, either by placing them in incredible situations, or by some strained and exaggerated moralization of a vague and tragical description.

Crabbe shows us what everyone can see; he is a poet of the common sense, of 'mere observation'. Jeffrey presents several of Wordsworth's characters and fails totally to grasp the significance of his spiritual penetration, though the subjective element in the overtly objective Lyrical Ballads cannot be ignored. In Jeffrey's eyes they are condemned because they are not visible to the average eye, not 'drawn from that eternal and universal standard of truth and nature, which every one is knowing enough to recognize, and no one great enough to depart from with impunity'. (136) In this reworking of the neoclassical theory of generality, Jeffrey mocks Wordsworth's description of the narrator of 'The Thorn', unfairly for he fails to emphasise that Wordsworth is making a suggestion only with his 'for example'. (137)

From this incomprehension Jeffrey turns 'with pleasure to the manly sense and correct picturing of Mr Crabbe'. Unfortunately, his critical faculties appear to be exhausted by this point, and all the reader is given is a set of extracts from 'The Village' and 'The Parish Register' with unhelpful general comments.

The theory of generality continues to dominate the discussion of the latter poem: the portraits are 'finished with much more minuteness and detail, indeed, than the more general pictures in 'The Village;' and, on this account, may appear occasionally deficient in comprehension, or in dignity.' (141) For the modern reader this greater detail, together with the greater freedom of the verse, is a main reason for the superiority of the 'Register' to the early poems. Jeffrey tends to see greater carelessness and quaintness, which is a different way of seeing the same development, and it is to his credit that he recognised a development at all.

In the course of his survey of the poem, Jeffrey is particularly moved by melancholy tales and the description of the deserted Hall which is 'in the good old taste of Pope and Dryden', and by now standard means of commendation. (146) The tales of 'Sir Eustace Grey' and 'The Hall of Justice' are almost too powerful, but make their effect on Jeffrey, and with the remarks with which this account began the review ends, most of the important criticism of Crabbe having occurred during the first two pages.

Denman's review in the Monthly is, like the treatment in the Anti-Jacobin Review, totally inadequate. His introduction mentions the early works, of which he strangely liked 'The Village' least (he does not explain why), and confesses that he is touched by the association of the dying Fox with the volume. A series of extracts follows, without significant critical comment, and the review ends

with a commendation of the manly middle style, 'equally remote from vicious ornament and the still more disgusting cant of idiot-simplicity'. It is incidentally remarked that the recent poems are better than the early ones: again, no supporting argument is offered. The review is totally inadequate and unworthy of its subject, showing the Monthly in its decline after the disappearance of Ferriar.

The British Critic is again enthusiastically inadequate. It welcomes the reappearance of an old friend, makes extracts from the 'Parish Register', remarks that allegory as in 'The Birth of Flattery' is out of fashion, and urges all who oppose affectation to persuade Crabbe not to repeat his long silence.

Only Jeffrey makes any serious contact with Crabbe's work and even he is forced to work by contrasts, and says remarkably little about the poetry. It is not easy poetry to talk about, but some discussion of the versification and its development might have been forthcoming, some discussion of Crabbe's expanding vocabulary. As it is we are left simply with the impression that Crabbe is good, not with an understanding as to why he is to be admired.

3. Erasmus DARWIN, The Temple of Nature; or, the Origin of Society, (London, 1803).

ER 2 (J1 03). 491-506 (Thomson) 15¹:3

CR (2) 38 (Ag 03). 361-70 10:4

39 (0 03). 157-68 10¹:7¹

AJR 16 (O 03). 170-3 2²:1

MR n.s. 43 (F 04). 113-27 (Ferriar) 14¹:8

BC 23 (F 04). 169-74 5:1

Thomson's treatment of one of the strangest poems in the language shows him at his critical best. His treatment falls into four sections: an introduction, a summary, a discussion of Darwin's system, and a brilliant demolition of his claims to be a poet. Since he is clearly an amateur in the scientific field, most of this discussion will be concerned with his purely literary assessment of the work.

The introduction asserts firstly that The Temple of Nature is clearly inferior to The Botanic Garden with fewer beauties and defects 'more frequent and obtrusive'. (492) Thomson then hints at what is to be the main argument of the third section of his article, that Darwin 'does not restrain himself within the narrow bounds of observation' but tries to penetrate the veil of Nature. (492)

A somewhat ironical summary follows (493-8) and then the discussion of Darwin's system. (498-501) This consists largely of an attack on Darwin's use of his imagination on a subject which required logical observation. This may appear severe now that Darwin's ideas have in some measure been vindicated, but the general principle is sound.

The rest of the review is on a particularly high level. Thomson admits in starting (501) that The Temple of Nature suffers from being posterior in date to The

Botanic Garden. His main criticism is that Darwin is a mannerist, an unusual word of considerable importance. This mannerism he sees as taking several forms.

In the first place, his is a poetry of visual, picturesque effect, and Thomson astutely quotes from a theoretical passage in The Botanic Garden to show how Darwin's theory is responsible for his surface glitter. As in the case of Wordsworth in Jeffrey's analysis, Thomson sees that this theory is taken too far: (502)

Like most other theories, it contains a certain portion of truth without embracing the whole; and the little it contains is rendered mischievous by the exclusion of the remainder.

Abstract and emotive terms are also needed in poetry to avoid coldness, and Thomson excellently compares lines in Pope with their imitation by Darwin to show how much more impressive poetry in the round can be, (503-4) Also arising from this seminal defect is Darwin's inability to subordinate elements in a group, since all are portrayed with the utmost clarity: (504)

It seems impossible, merely by the language of vision, to give that due keeping or subordination of parts which is essential to true picturesque effect, and which on canvas is accomplished by those gradations of size and of colouring which the rules of perspective prescribe.

The continual use of metaphor, personification, and allegory consequent on the system also leads to monotony.

One additional point from this discussion of the surface picturesque shows how Thomson can use new and lively language to convey his understanding: (502)

Bold metaphors, personifications and allegories, are his constant and sole resources; and in portraying the scenery of this fairy kingdom of his own creation, he adheres strictly to the principle of addressing himself directly and only to the eye. Nor does his propensity to metamorphosis stop here; but even in delineating inanimated external nature, her own graceful and varied forms seem too tame to catch his fancy, till they have been transformed into the living monsters of his own brain.

After dealing with the picturesque, Thomson proceeds to a related point, the glittering diction. (505) Again it aims at uniformity of grandeur and there is no variety; ornament is itself the centre of attention. Thomson is aware of the charges brought against the versification as being insufficiently varied, but he believes that the picturesque sameness in image and diction is largely responsible for the generally acknowledged monotony of Darwin's work: (506)

It is in the structure of his sentences, and in the selection of his thoughts, not in the measurement of syllables, that his characteristic blemishes are to be traced.

Thomson concludes by acknowledging Darwin's merit: as in the case of Jeffrey's Wordsworth, so here a nascent sect had seemed likely and the fascination of the author could blind his audience to his grave faults. Apart from this lenient conclusion, Thomson's treatment of Darwin stands today as unequalled.

The long review in the Critical consists largely of an attack, in the form of a summary, on Darwin's materialistic evolutionary theory rather than on his poetry.

The introductory paragraphs (38.361-3) consider rightly that the poetry and philosophy are mutually incompatible and harm one another. Poetry has 'a language of its own' and technical terms, like vulgar phraseology, are barred from it. The reviewer admires Darwin's elegant virtuosity but finds his versification monotonous (38. 367) with its seldom varied caesura after the fourth or fifth syllable. At the end of the article, the reviewer draws on Jeffrey to sum up his poetic objections: (39. 168)

It is a gallery of little gaudy pictures, in which the artist is a continual mannerist, and for ever copying from himself.

This is all fair poetical criticism, though it is always subordinate to the theoretical attack and never profound, lacking Thomson's aesthetic urgency.

The Anti-Jacobin Review concerns itself almost entirely with an attack on Darwin's impiety.

Ferriar boldly divides his review into two parts dealing with the poetry (113-22) and the philosophy (123-7) of the poem. His introductory paragraph makes the standard point that the two elements do not combine well. The poetical survey is just but piecemeal, without the cohesion of Thomson's argument. His main objections are to the allegory, which he finds clumsy, and to a certain roughness in the versification. In accordance with his liking for traditional elegance however Ferriar accepts the less clogged versification as highly praiseworthy. He objects to the close comparison of men and animals, but

this arises primarily from the philosophy of the poem and not from its technique. The final verdict on the style, again using Thomson's terminology, (122) is rich but often gaudy.

The British Critic provides an ingenious and amusing dismissal of the poem by spending most of its time in proving that it is really an imitation by Darwin of the Anti-Jacobin's parody of his style in 'The Loves of the Triangles' (169-73). The review concludes with some serious remarks, mostly of horror at the impiety exhibited by Darwin, but containing a condemnation of the shadowy combat of his organic forms as opposed to the solidity of the best descriptive poetry such as that of Thomson. This is an effective and entertaining review on the political side.

4. Maria EDGEWORTH, Leonora (2 vols, London, 1806)

CR (3) 7 (F 06). 215-6 $\frac{1}{2}$:0

ER 8 (Ap 06). 206-13 (Jeffrey) $6\frac{1}{4}$: $3\frac{1}{4}$

BC 28 (D 06). 655-9 $3\frac{3}{4}$: $2\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 53 (Ag 07). 435-6 (W. Rees) $\frac{2}{3}$:0

Maria Edgeworth's moral epistolary novel Leonora is not well served by its critics. It is compelling reading, generally well constructed if a little thin and repetitive at times, and with a liveliness of language and imagination which help to make up for its over-abstract theorising.

The Critical is totally inadequate. Three paragraphs praise its morality, tell the story, and end with the only

approach to criticism: (216)

Olivia's character is portrayed with a strong pencil, and the whole novel is written with great spirit. The sixth letter is an excellent specimen of moral reasoning.

Jeffrey's review is fuller, but still far from adequate to the technical and imaginative felicities of Miss Edgeworth's novel. He sums up its status in his usual opening paragraph, overstating a plausible case: (206-7)

Miss Edgeworth always writes with good sense, and with good intentions: but this is not among her best doings. The story is neither very probable, nor very interesting; -- most of the characters are rather sketches than finished portraits; and there is a want both of persons and of incidents, which produces a degree of languor not to have been expected in so short a work of so animated a writer.

Jeffrey's main incitement to deal with the work has been its moral importance.

These general points are expanded in the three paragraphs following. Firstly the moral aspect: this is well handled in the epistolary form, though the vice of excessive sensibility is on the wane at any rate among the upper classes. Secondly the Lady Olivia and Madame de P---- are caricatures, though Jeffrey admits a certain effectiveness in the outline sketches. Thirdly, returning to the moral aspect, Miss Edgeworth is as usual too hard on men.

Jeffrey continues with three lengthy extracts, the moral aspect of which he finds excellent but not very entertaining, and ends with a further discussion of the

moral. The dullness of his review is due largely to his selection of the moral as the seminal principle: a technical discussion would be much more rewarding, but Jeffrey's concern for literature's social function dominates this unimpressive review.

The British Critic offers a summary, a quotation, and a moral commendation of no value: the characters are well supported. This is also the verdict of Rees in the Monthly Review which follows the same pattern of moral and summary, though Rees thinks that Leonora may appear too cold to the sentimental reader, a harsh judgment.

The treatments of Leonora then are all inadequate, only that of Jeffrey having any value, and that limited. The technical felicities are entirely ignored in a way which the treatments of Fleetwood, a less happy novel, make very disappointing.

5. GODWIN, Fleetwood: or, the New Man of Feeling (3 vols, London, 1805).

ER 6 (Ap 05). 182-93 (Scott) 11½:2½

CR (3) 4 (Ap 05). 383-91 7½:4½

AJR 21 (Ag 05). 337-58 21:6¼

MR n.s. 49 (Ja 06). 102 (Moody) ½:0

All four reviews of Godwin's novel are hostile in part at least, and one finds it difficult to say much in favour of Fleetwood. Its morality was generally welcomed as evidence of Godwin's new conformity to acceptable standards. Those passages in the novel which rise above its pervasive

vague hysteria are the scene on the lake and relation of Ruffigny(vol. i Ch. IX to vol. ii Ch. IV), the derangement of Mary (vol. iii Ch. V), and the striking if melodramatic anniversary feast (vol. iii Ch. XV). Its main faults are prolixity, vagueness, improbability, psychological crudity, and despicable egotism on Fleetwood's part for which his later authorial persona is insufficiently developed to compensate.

Scott's review in the Edinburgh is a mild but firm rejection of the novel on the grounds of common sense. His article is distinguished by Johnsonian simplicity and by a neatness of structure which make the later reviews look very untidy. The article falls into three sections: an introduction summing up Godwin's work to date, a summary with comments, and two concluding pages of general criticism.

The introduction (pp. 182-3) rejects the remote incidents of Caleb Williams and St. Leon in terms which read strangely from Scott's pen; another novel is welcomed from Godwin: (1820)

not, indeed, that we had any great pleasure in recollecting the conduct and nature of the story; for murders, and chains, and dungeons, and indictments, trial and execution, have no particular charms for us, either in fiction or in reality.

This is at any rate in line with the official Edinburgh dislike of incidents remote from everyday life, and the following point is clearly Scott's own. He rejects the legal questionings of Caleb Williams in terms

which remind the reader of the later legal debate in The Heart of Midlothian: (182)

There is nothing instructive or consolatory in this proposition, when taken by itself; and if intended as a reproach upon the laws of this country, it is equally applicable to all human judicatures, whose judges can only decide according to evidence, since the Supreme Being has reserved to himself the prerogative of searching the heart and of trying the reins.

This objection is unusual in its specific application and provokes thought rather than a blind reaction as is so often the case in moral reviews.

Scott links his prefatory remarks to the novel under consideration by quoting Godwin's remarks in the Preface which point out that Fleetwood is domestic rather than romantic.

The summary of the work which occupies the body of the review (183-92) is often ironical in tone. This irony is frequently justified by the overblown sentiments of the novel, but it is at times offensive and suggests that Scott is not giving the work a fair chance: (185)

The host of Fleetwood carries him to a pleasure party on the lake of Uri, and chuses that time and place to acquaint him, that while he was living jollily at Paris, his father had taken the opportunity of dying quietly in Merionethshire.

The scene is as has been noted one of the best in the work, though marred by sentimentality: Scott's tone is unjustifiable.

The criticism which Scott makes of the work in the course of his summary seems perceptive and just.

He has an overall grasp of the novel showing how the story sags before the marriage of Fleetwood and Mary, and indeed the story up to the marriage is weak, 'consisting entirely of idle and inflated declamations upon the most common occurrences of human life.' (187) The marriage section, potentially interesting, is spoilt by its absurd over-dramatisation, while the end of the work where a regular story almost begins is spoilt by its confessed improbability. Scott then finds the continuously meditative basis of the work unacceptable, and this largely because he perceives its essential unreality. The romantic generosity of Ruffigny is of a sort usually confined to novels (186); the passions of Fleetwood are totally selfish (193) without fine discrimination of shades of feeling (192), and disgusting in their excess (190). The high points of the narrative, Ruffigny's story, the sea delusion of Mary, and the Gothick wedding anniversary, are mentioned and the last two quoted. Only the lake scene is unrecognised. The facetious tale of Withers in the first volume is severely found unconnected with the main plot;

Most of these comments occur in the course of the summary, a few in the final three paragraphs of general criticism, which stresses the disgusting, selfish, and crude psychological make-up of the hero and the unsatisfactory plotting. The review is thus solidly adequate though certainly not brilliant; it is satisfying structurally.

The importance of a sound structure becomes clear when one turns to the article in the Critical Review. This begins as a summary, but becomes bogged down in a four-page quotation of the lake scene and concludes lamely with a page of miscellaneous comments. The difference in approach springs from a comment on this quotation: (390)

... we have already made an extract of greater length from a work of so small importance as a novel, than we should have done, had it not proceeded from the pen of so well-known an author as Mr. Godwin.

Scott may have been guilty of levity in his summary, but he was concerned to treat the novel seriously at bottom: the Critical's article seems trivial in comparison. Thus, its moral points are unimportant rather than fundamental: purity is preserved in the description of debauchery, while anticlerical remarks are intolerable. (385) The Withers episode is praised for its unexpected humour and the merit of the lake scene is recognised, but the Ruffigny narration is mentioned only for its improbability. (390) Like Scott, this critic would prefer a more conventional narrative method, and certainly Fleetwood is not a persuasive advocate for the personal meditation. Again like Scott, the reviewer observes that Godwin seems to be able to draw only extraordinary individuals. (384)

In spite of some fair points, the general effect of the review is thus scrappy and trivial: Fleetwood, the critic concludes, 'is a perfectly harmless book'.

The strangest treatment of the work occurs in the Anti-Jacobin Review. Like the Critical it finds the

genre obviously trivial, and makes the point at the outset:
(337)

WE were sorry to find Mr. Godwin descending from the higher and more dignified walks of literature, to engage again in the manufacture of novels. This line of composition, is, at present, so degraded by the dulness or stupidity of the scribblers who deal in it, that men of talents and sense regard it as disreputable.

The reviewer is aware that there are many exceptions to the charge, but Fleetwood is regrettably not one of them. The introduction concludes with two paragraphs (338-9), the second presumably derived from Scott, maintaining that Fleetwood is the work of a recluse and its hero an egotist.

The review now turns into a moral treatise on marriage lasting for four and a half pages (339-43) in answer chiefly to the final paragraph of Godwin's preface. The tone is abusively personal, especially regarding Mary Wollstonecraft.

After this unpleasant digression a summary with comments concludes the review, all the high points being duly noted: the Ruffigny narration is criticised for improbability and lack of poetic justice and the anniversary feast is denominated the work of a madman. Effectively the review concludes with a quotation of this last extraordinary episode. It is an unusual ending to a review reasonably effective except for the marriage digression.

Moody's brief review in the Monthly is almost entirely favourable but of little importance. The Ruffigny

episode and the morality are praised without reservation, though Fleetwood is found excessively naïve. The other reviews will be found more discriminating, their common sense approach most solidly and sensitively exemplified in Scott's Edinburgh article.

6. Charles LAMB, John Woodvil A Tragedy (London, 1802)

BC 19 (Je 02). 646-7 1 $\frac{1}{4}$: $\frac{3}{4}$

MR n.s. 40 (Ap 03). 442-3 (Ferriar) 1: $\frac{1}{4}$

ER 2 (Ap 03). 90-6 (Brown) 6 $\frac{1}{2}$:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

Lamb's tragedy was received with unmixed scorn by the reviewers. The British Critic in a brief notice regrets that it can bestow no praise and sets the fashion by condemning the unusual conclusion in which John repenting prays in the parish church alone early, and the style 'a mixture of very puerile prose, and very irregular blank verse'. Its objection to the conclusion reflects its ecclesiastical standpoint, the sudden divine forgiveness being 'not a little puritanical', while the stylistic objections are a natural reaction to Lamb's unruly blank verse.

Ferriar's treatment in the Monthly is more bantering and concentrates on the mawkish ending, particularly on the particularity of the St Mary's Ottery reference: 'Nothing can be wanting to complete this exhibition, but that John and Margaret should chant "All people that on earth do dwell," before the dropping of the curtain.' He

significantly quotes Boileau in condemnation of the carelessness and meanness.

The Edinburgh goes even further in sharp irony with an extended reiteration of similar points by Brown. He begins with a page suggesting that the drama bears the signs of true pre-Aeschylean antiquity and in a brief summary (91) points fairly to two improbabilities in the conduct of the Sherwood scene:

... Lovel, with a single companion, hastens to the forest, to seize Sir Walter; but, awed by the undaunted appearance of the father and the son, 'they both slink off;'

The conclusion is again criticised for its particularity and one of the phrases quoted suggests an underlying unstated reason for the condemnation: 'all things felt like mystery.' (92) The 'puritanical' and the mysterious were anathema to these logical men. The pervading drunkenness is objected to and Brown reasonably finds the comic scenes as a whole feeble and tenuous. (93) The blank verse is again censured and objection made to some licentious images in the carping moral vein noted as the worst features of this reviewing. (94)

The reviewers make fair points in their criticism and two write entertainingly in the process: John Woodvil is not a good play. But they miss merits. The prose is sometimes worthy of the best of Lamb: 'A good old couple, when the snows fell, to crowd about a sea-coal fire, and talk over old matters.' (28) The verse has moments of charm if not of strength as in Simon's list of loved things

(49-50). There are some psychological tensions 'That stick like burrs to the brain' (79) and the ending is in its own odd terms effectively abrupt. The reviewers were too concerned with faults obvious to them to seek for merit and as a result their criticisms are superficial even when cleverly written.

7. M.G. LEWIS, *Alfonso, King of Castile*, (London, 1801).

CR (2) 34 (Mr 02). 355 $\frac{1}{2}$:0

BC 20 (N 02). 558-9 $\frac{3}{4}$: $\frac{1}{4}$

ER 1 (Ja 03). 314-7 (Sydney Smith) $3\frac{1}{4}$: $\frac{1}{2}$

'Monk' Lewis's five-act tragedy of Alfonso is a lively, full-blown piece with some good imaginative writing in the first three acts, though degenerating into second-rate Gothick towards the close. The blank verse has a breadth and the imagery a horticultural consistency which are attractive, and the character of the noble wronged Orsino is of some dramatic interest. A copy in the Bodleian (M. add. 108.e.93) contains minute alterations which bear out Lewis's assertion in the Preface (iv) that he had spared no pains in writing it.

The Critical and the British Critic have adequate short reviews of half a page and three-quarters of a page respectively, the latter using its space particularly strenuously. Both perceive the originality of the work, the British Critic making its relief apparent:

We have been so long used to meet with plays void of originality, vigour, or any living spirit, that we hail such an exception as this, and purposely refuse to seek for minute exceptions, where there is so much that manifestly demands commendation.

The British Critic also quotes one of the most striking imaginative passages, making good use of its limited space. It takes up Lewis's remark in the Preface about the faulty catastrophe, and both Reviews note that the sentiments and language are sometimes over melodramatic. These are fair reviews, that in the British Critic giving an especially good idea of the play's merits and defects.

The review in the Edinburgh by Sydney Smith is expectedly very different. Smith begins with a straight summary, straight that is until the end where he finds the strain too great and begins a page of generally unfair mockery with the quip: (314)

... Ursino stabs his own son, at the moment the King is in his son's power; falls down from the wounds he has received in battle; dies in the usual dramatic style, repeating twenty-two hexameter verses.

Actually there are eighteenth lines, and they are pentameters. This sort of inaccuracy is characteristic of Smith's irresponsible approach to his subject. In the course of the following page, he embarks on an unfair mocking summary of part of the action once more and quite wrongly suggests that Caesario is unsurprised at the news of his father's survival. It is clear from the play that he bursts out in surprised soliloquy within

half-a-minute of the announcement. Smith has several moral quibbles with Lewis. For the modern reader, these seem petty, though he would probably object to the sadism of several of the scenes in reply to Lewis's challenge in the Preface. (pp. iii-iv)

Smith has in conclusion some better points to make. His mockery seems justified when directed against the divine thunderclap in the final scene and he quotes with approval a spirited speech of Caesario. His final summary has some truth in it, but it has not been justified by what has gone before:

The ill success which it has justly experienced, is owing, we have no doubt, to the want of nature in the characters, and of probability and good arrangement in the incidents: objections of some force.

This is the cocksure Edinburgh at its worst, flashy, shallow, and unconcerned. A reader seeking a just impression of Lewis's work had far better turn to the perceptive and worthy British Critic or even to the Critical.

8. Thomas MOORE tr., Odes of Anacreon, translated into English Verse, with Notes, (London, 1800).

CR (2) 30 (0 00). 202-8 5 $\frac{1}{2}$:2 $\frac{3}{4}$

MR n.s. 35 (Ag 01). 404-9 (Dr Burney) 5 $\frac{1}{2}$:3 $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 20 (J1 02). 27-32 5 $\frac{1}{4}$:2 $\frac{1}{4}$

ER 2 (J1 03). 462-76 (Eyre) 13 $\frac{3}{4}$:1 $\frac{3}{4}$

Moore's flashy translations, or reworkings, of the Anacreontic odes provided the Edinburgh in 1803 with a fine opportunity to show its prowess in the scholarly field. The three reviews of the three previous years had been acutely unsatisfactory.

The Critical had led off in the year of publication with an indiscriminately laudatory article, approving of Anacreon's morals but otherwise depressingly flabby. Moore's verse is 'polished and easy' (203), his criticism 'judicious and elegant' (204), and, most remarkably wide of the truth, 'he has imitated, as far perhaps as it was possible in a translation, that concise simplicity of phrase which renders the odes of Anacreon so attractive.' (205) The reviewer notes editions and approves of them because of their high quality.

Dr Burney's article^{le} in the Monthly a year later is a thin, evasive piece. He spends the first page praising Bayle so that he can cite him as an authority for the Anacreontic authorship. (504) Not only was Bayle wrong, but the procedure is unsatisfactory in the extreme. 'It is now time to pay our respects to Mr. Moore'. Burney while generally approving of Moore's work finds it unsatisfactory on occasion 'from the harshness of a few of the lines, and the use of unlyrical words.'. The harshness springs from the prohibited indiscriminate mingling of iambs and trochaics; the unlyrical words constitute the majority in the language. This is neoclassical prosody at its most dogmatic, and its least specific

since no examples of the faults are given. Burney makes up the bulk of his review with beauties introduced without critical perception. This is a review unworthy of Burney's elsewhere very considerable criticism.

After another year, the British Critic brought out a review greatly superior to the first brace. It begins with an apology for the delay caused by 'accidental circumstances' and the need to give such an important publication adequate consideration. The prefatory remark on the poems hits the truth as to their authorship. (27) A judicious balance is struck between praise and blame of Moore's reworking, as occasion prompts. Usefully, the reviewer presents a passage of Fawkes's 1760 ^{an}translation for comparison. He prefers Moore's without saying why: the modern reader is likely to find Fawkes's more sinewy translation preferable. The review ends with the just suggestion that Moore has considerable talent as an original poet. This is a perceptive brief review, hardly adequate to the occasion but within its modest limits thoroughly satisfactory.

The Edinburgh allotted its review to John Byre M.D. who turns out in this solitary article to be an excellent knowledgeable and perceptive reviewer. He begins badly with a severe moral attack on Anacreon, but this moral standpoint does embrace a valid criticism of Moore's moral vacillation in the preface. (464) Further, his objection to veiled eroticism will generally be held to be equally valid. (465)

Eyre passes from the moral debate to consider at some length the problems facing a translator in general terms. (465-7) The difficulties facing the translator of ancient literature and especially of poetry are daunting. The problems for the original poet are especially acute. A literal translation is not to be contemplated for it is 'rude, awkward, and barbarous': (466)

... yet the principle which first dictated literal translations remains in force. It constitutes the translator's obligation to learn the prevailing species of his author's style, and to seek for a corresponding one in his own language. It forbids him, on any account, to substitute ornament for simplicity, diffuseness for energy and conciseness, or languor for animation.

By this section of the introduction to his review proper, Eyre prepares the ground for his attack upon Moore, an attack thus firmly based upon the general principles established by philosophical criticism. One further preparation is necessary, to examine the nature of the simplicity attributable to Anacreon. (467-70) This is not to be found in the matter, which is witty rather than simple, but rather in the language. Epithets are rare in this poetry: (469)

In the very few instances which do not fall under this remark, we shall find that the epithets are specifically necessary to the description, and constitute the most prominent feature of the picture. They are neither expletive nor ornamental; neither paraded for show, nor introduced for the sake of the measure. They seem intended to make the author understood by his reader, and aspire at no higher object.

Anacreon seldom dwells on amorous images but passes by them without fuss. This characterisation of 'Anacreon's

way of working -- Eyre realises the diversity of authorship -- is deft and perceptive.

Having thus established the nature of the task which Moore ought to have set himself, Eyre can swing into his main consideration (470-5) of the translation before him:

If there be any truth in the preceding observations, we cannot be expected to award to Mr Moore the praise of being a faithful interpreter. Anacreon, we have said, used scarcely any poetical diction; but Mr Moore employs one that is both very copious, and extremely ornamented. Anacreon is sparing, even to niggardliness, of epithets. Mr Moore pours them forth with profusion on all occasions.

The emphasis is turned from thought to diction, from vivacity to elegance, and here the term elegance takes on a specific meaning in the precise context. Eyre censures especially the use of the word rosy on every occasion. He goes on to compare Moore's expressions with the original version and some literal translations to expose the full horror of what has been committed. But he has already made it clear that his censure is not indiscriminate. The embellishing method can occasionally improve the original: (470-1)

It is used with advantage in a few odes that are descriptive; but we feel it cumbersome in many of the lighter pieces, and quite intolerable in those which hinge on a conceit, or partake of the manner of an epigram.

Later in the consideration this statement is backed up (475) by a literal rendering of Ode XXI with Moore's version. Here the modern reader will suggest that Eyre has been misled

by his liking for elegance. The stark original is finer, and indisputably very different.

Eyre rounds off his review excellently by bringing in a much worse translator, the sprawling 'Reverend Mr Younge', and is able to end aphoristically: 'Younge's translation is well fitted for a pot-house; Moore's is much better calculated for a bagnio.'

Eyre's achievement is to have combined the widest and the closest considerations of his subject, to have largely avoided easy terminology, and to have penetrated to the soft centre of Moore's specious verses. More reviews from his pen would be welcome.

9. Thomas MOORE, Epistles, Odes, and other Poems, (London, 1806).

ER 8 (J1 06). 456-65 (Jeffrey) 9:4

AJR 24 (J1 06). 263-71 8:6½

MR n.s. 51 (S 06). 59-70 (Ferriar) 11:9

CR (3) 9 (O 06). 113-28 15½:4

Moore's volume of miscellaneous poems of 1806 is a production of varied quality. At its best it is a gentler reworking of metaphysical love poetry, playful, melodious, and with a certain sinewy quality and imaginative diversity which bewitch the reader at times. But Moore has written far too much and polished far too little, and much of the volume is repetitive, uninspired, and sickly.

Jeffrey fails totally to appreciate the good qualities of the work, though he makes it clear at the outset that Moore has pleased him in the past with 'A singular sweetness and melody of versification, -- smooth, copious, and familiar diction, -- with some brilliancy of fancy, and some show of classical erudition,' qualities which are mostly present in the Epistles. But Jeffrey chooses to launch a violent moral attack on Moore's latest volume which occupies pages 456-60, over half his review, and one may imagine that his later aesthetic condemnation is influenced by this moral abhorrence. The moral attack maintains that poetry and life must be judged by the same moral standards, and that Moore is a creeping debaucher as opposed to the honestly evil Rochester and Dryden: he is especially bad for women who must be kept pure, and for the nobility. This is of merely historical interest, as is the full-scale uncomprehending mockery of some fine passages which makes up the rest of the review. Jeffrey's failure to sympathise with the non-logical which is to appear again in his Wordsworth review leads to his ironic condemnation as 'magnificent' of the stanza: (462)

Soft as she smil'd, he smil'd again;
 They seem'd so kindred in their charms
 That one might think, the babe had then
 Just budded in her blooming arms!
 He look'd like something form'd of air,
 Which she had utter'd in a sigh;
 Like some young spirit, resting there,
 That late had wander'd from her eye!

The only poems which Jeffrey does appreciate are, significantly, the epistles in heroic couplets dealing

with political affairs: those 'approach the nearest to common sense'. Only here and in his consideration of Wordsworth does the full limitation of Jeffrey's approach become clear. He speaks another language.

Oddly, the Anti-Jacobin Review turns out to be much more favourable to Moore's volume, but this is largely due to the anti-jacobin sentiments of the epistles which had attracted Jeffrey. Almost the whole of the review is devoted to quotation and praise of the political poems. In the last two pages the amatory pieces receive some small attention. Morally they are found over-sensual, but without specification the reviewer justly notes the variation in standard. Though more just in its final evaluation, the review is no more valuable than Jeffrey's.

By far the most discriminating of these reviews is that by Ferriar in the Monthly. It is not notable for its construction -- a set of general remarks, specific criticisms, lengthy quotations, and a brief conclusion -- but it is critically perceptive throughout in a way which puts Jeffrey to shame.

Ferriar begins by recalling the high hopes which Moore had inspired in his early days. The terms of his praise are exceptionally interesting: (59-60)

Limited, as his poetical powers generally seemed, to florid and sometimes quaint description, a warmth of feeling, and an intermixture of elegance of expression, were occasionally discernible, which reminded us of the better times of poetry; and which afforded reason for expecting that a due

application of the file might impart superior merit to his succeeding productions. Far from realizing these agreeable prospects, we have now to complain that Mr. Moore has emptied the rough drafts of his Portfolio before the public, to make up a sizeable volume in Quarto.

Ferriar rightly notes the carelessness which robs this volume of its rightful effect and accuses Moore of substituting sensuality for wit which is certainly true on occasion. Moore does sometimes achieve the wit which Ferriar demands: (60)

Erotic poems, like those which constitute the principal bulk of this volume, cannot, ought not to please by exhibiting open depravity. If their authors can ever be forgiven, it is when they divert the fancy by the seductions of wit and taste, from the contemplation of the real grossness of their subjects.

The faults which Ferriar enumerates in the following paragraph (61) are justly characterised and make more specific the earlier charge of carelessness:

The perpetual recurrence of a few ideas, the careless lines, the ill-moulded phrases, and the poor conceits, which beset us throughout the volume, render it far inferior to the author's former productions. Most of the poems before us read like faint copies of Mr. Little.

Specific examples follow, all well-chosen. Especially effective is the contrast drawn between Moore and Donne, bearing out Ferriar's earlier disappointment with the volume by presenting the 'warmth and delicacy' of Donne's 'rough-spun' lines. He also quotes perhaps the finest lines in the volume, from the Marvellian second Epistle:

At once, the mighty wood receives
The stranger in its world of leaves,
Which soon their barren glory yield
To the warm shed and cultur'd field ...

Two extensive quotations lead to an understandable mockery of the irregular odes and a final call for polish.

Again, this is not a shapely review, and it has not the inner coherence of Jeffrey's best articles, but it shows evidence of a very discriminating critical faculty, even if the final effect is arguably over-severe.

The Critical's review is long but imperceptive. It consists chiefly of a mockery of Moore's conceits which have been shown to be uncongenial to the logical reviewing mind. The review begins with a brief moral condemnation but wisely decides that since conversion on the moral front of the apprentices who like Moore's specious glitter is unlikely the attack must be strictly on aesthetic principles. (114) The faults discerned in a lengthy catalogue with ample illustrations arise from the basic need for Moore to diversify the essential monotony of his language and sensual feeling. Almost all the conceits condemned spring from this observation so that even if the censure is imperceptive it is coherent as Jeffrey's is coherent in his happier articles. The first example of far-fetched imagining cited is significant. For two parted friends to look at the moon is simple and poetical, but for it to be a transatlantic letter-carrier is crabbed, disk being furthermore an astronomical term. (115) In the whole publication 'is a rare mixture of colloquial vulgarism and smartness, with far-fetched, crabbed, and abstruse conceits and allusions.' (116)

This basic premise is carried through relentlessly, so as to destroy its partial truth in the general amused

censure which also embraces the metaphysical poets. (117) Effective and strained conceits are treated with equal scorn, and the criticism of miscellaneous faults ends on page 122 with a conservative horror at vulgarisms. A more general characterisation of Moore as the sickly embellisher of Cowper's bald simplicity leads to a reluctant set of beauties deriving from Moore's lucid intervals, mostly resulting in pleasant descriptive passages.

This review is intelligent but insensitive, more unified and powerful than Ferriar's, but less just and discriminating since Moore's style is anathema to the late neoclassical intelligence.

10. Walter SCOTT, Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border,
(2 vols, Kelso, 1802).

BC 19 (Je 02). 570-6 6½:3½

ER 1 (Ja 03). 395-406 (Stoddart) 11:4½

MR n.s. 42 (S 03). 21-33 (Muirhead) 12:7

CR (2) 39 (N 03). 250-9 9:7½

These four Reviews all give substantial notices of Scott's ballad collection which was clearly a major antiquarian event: it is indeed closely linked by all except the Monthly with Percy's Reliques. The account given by the British Critic is the only undistinguished article and even it has points of interest. The critic is particularly struck by 'The Fray of Suport' and 'A Lyke-Wake Dirge' (the former actually a forgery by Surtees) and comments with Burkean emphasis: 'Both are singularly uncourtth and savage; but their wildness has a terrific effect, which would

perhaps be diminished, if they were more easily intelligible. (575) It is clear however that while the critic appreciates the antiquarian value of the 'truly elegant collection' (576) he is unconcerned with any literary value which the pieces may have. Thus of Leyden's spirited ballad imitations he writes that they 'would be perhaps more generally pleasing, if they represented less exactly the obscurity of transition, and harshness of character, observable in the early border-poetry.' (576) His article is thus laudatory but ultimately of very limited interest, and is largely an account rather than a criticism.

Stoddart's essay in the Edinburgh is an outstanding piece. He too begins with a reference to Percy but expands on a mere mention by pointing out justly that the polishing of ballads was essential for Percy's readers but that now readers may be presumed to be capable of accepting the originals. (396) Incorporated in the Percy section is a short paragraph of philosophical criticism with its implied Aristotelean and explicit Sidney references. This is one of the distinctive features of the Edinburgh's criticism and demands quotation: (396)

The legitimate aim of history and of poetry is the same -- to improve mankind, delectando, pariterque monendo: but the object is attained by different means. History follows human events through the course of time; poetry seizes their prominent features, their permanent principles, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. History is a subject of profound philosophical investigation; but poetry, as Sir Philip Sidney observes, 'is indeed the right popular philosophy.' In a publication which endeavours to unite their

separate advantages, something must be conceded to both sides. It is no objection to these volumes to say, that the poetry is sometimes trivial, any more than it would be to remark, that the historical facts are not always correct.

The first part of the review is antiquarian and continues in this knowledgeable and intelligent vein, making the excellent point that it was right of Scott to be generous in his selection since the materials preserved would otherwise have perished with the decline of the oral tradition. This section of the review concludes (399) with a criticism of Scott's orotund style, interestingly extended to include the title itself. Opinion on Scott's stylistic merits or demerits has always been sharply divided.

Unlike his colleagues, Stoddart devotes half of his review to the aesthetic merits of the ballads, with the bold and refreshing opening: (399)

We come, now, to consider the poetical merit, which, though not the only, must be the chief object of such a publication; and which, we may add, is here attained in a very eminent degree.

He rightly characterises the rugged force of this early literature, citing as his predecessor had done the 'Fray!' and 'Dirge', but his critical vocabulary is too limited to make much further advance possible, and he is reduced to talking of 'stamp of nature', 'exquisite merit' (400), 'pathos and simplicity' (401), and 'spirited description' (402) with extensive quotation. One attempt to break out of the terminological circle is interesting. Part of the ballad of 'Kinmont Willie' is introduced with the sentence:

'in many of the recitals is a mixture of rough humour, which, like the characterising touches of Hogarth's pencil, gives an animation often attempted in vain by more polished writers.' (403) On one occasion, however, Stoddart mistakes in a manner characteristic of his age the serious tone of a stanza: (404)

The whole story of 'Willie's Ladye' turns on a difficult delivery. The fair 'Lady Janet' commits a faux-pas of the same kind; and so common does the indiscretion appear to have been, that the bold baron, her father, is made to inquire after it in this easy manner:

'Out then spoke her father dear,
And he spoke meek and mild;
And ever, alas, my sweet Janet,
I fear ye gae with child.'

The moral tone is at any rate mercifully light in this section of the review, a virtue most rare.

This outstanding article ends with sensible remarks on the modern imitations. The attempt to blend spirit and elegance is commended, but the result is different from the ancient ballad, however excellent in its own right. This is only one of the different aspects of the publication covered succinctly and penetratingly by Stoddart.

Muirhead's review in the Monthly is a very mixed affair. He is knowledgeable, but unsympathetic to the genre and dishonest in his methods. He begins by wishing that most of the volumes had been consigned to the Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh: they can be of no interest to the general reader. He fails totally

to appreciate the power of the ballad stanza, describing as savouring of Sternhold and Hopkins the excellent quatrain:

Edinburgh castle, town, and toure,
 God grant thou sink for sinne!
 And that even for the black dinoure,
 Erl Douglas gat therein.

By neoclassical prosodic standards this is certainly unacceptable. Muirhead takes up a point touched on by Stoddart in criticising Scott's limited polishing. (24) He characterises well the peculiar dramatic qualities of the genre (25-8) but blindly demands 'smoothness or delicacy' and forfeits sympathy by an unfair transliteration of part of 'The Sang of the Outlaw Murray' (28-9). This is the passage in Muirhead:

Should it be alleged that none but a native of Scotland can feel and appreciate the beauties of his vernacular poems, we admit the assertion to a certain extent; and that much of the spirit and effect of an original composition may vanish in a translation: -- but let us, for the sake of experiment, merely change the orthography and pronunciation of two stanzas taken at random, and see how much poetry will remain behind:

"Bid him meet me at Penmanscore,
 And bring four in his company;
 Five Earls shall come with myself;
 Good reason I should honoured be.

"And, if he refuses to do that,
 Bid him look for no good of me!
 There shall never a Murray, after him,
 Have land in Etrick forest free."

This is undistinguished, but the original turns out to occupy three very satisfactory stanzas:¹

¹ Minstrelsy i. 18.

"He bidds ye mete him at Penmanscore,
 And bring four in your cumpanie;
 Five Erles sall gang himsell befor,
 Nae mair in number will he be.

"And, gif you refuse to do that,
 (I freely here upgive wi' thee)
 He'll cast yon bony Castell down,
 And mak a widowe o' that gaye Ladye.

"He'll loose yon bluidhound Borderers,
 Wi' fire and sword to follow thee;
 There will never a Murray, after thysell,
 Have land in Stricke Foreste frie."

It appears from this that Muirhead's procedure is more false even than that of Skeat in his notorious modernised edition of the Rowley poems.

In this strangely mixed review, Muirhead goes on to anticipate one of Jeffrey's key ideas, that accidental or local associations can have no place in poetry intended for a serious, widespread audience: 'That species of gratification, however, which originates in accidental associations, scarcely belongs to the cognizance of general criticism.' (29) It is no surprise that Muirhead greatly prefers the modern ballad imitations to their models. (32) He concludes by copying Stoddart's examples of Scott's own orotundity.

Muirhead makes several good points, but he is unreliable and imperceptive in what matters most of all, the ballads themselves.

The Critical's article appeared in November 1803 and was thus able to include in its consideration the third volume of the Minstrelsy. The reviewer begins with

the standard Percy reference and a sensitive tribute to 'Edward'. Most of his article is quotation, but he rises to prophetic heights on pages 255-6, looking forward to The Lay of the Last Minstrel and its successors:

Under each of these six heads of dissertation, a number of curious out-of-the-way relations are compiled from the forgotten repositories of fabulous marvels. Many of them will serve for the story of future ballads, and the decoration of yet unwritten metrical romances. They constitute the elements of British mythology; and, in the hands of a modern Ovid, may be shapen into a wild catalogue of matamorphoses, into amusive anecdotes of sorcery, fableries of romance, or tales of wonder -- into a thousand and one nights of entertainment, or golden legends of shuddering astonishment. Nations must have their mythologists: when the priest grows rational, the poet takes up the task of delusion.

This remarkable passages raises a dull analysis into the philosophical class at one stroke, but of the reviews that of Stoddart in the Edinburgh is the touchstone, sure and penetrating, rising fully to the occasion.

11. Walter SCOTT, The Lay of the Last Minstrel, (London, 1805).

ER 6 (Ap 05). 1-20 (Jeffrey) 19 $\frac{1}{2}$:8 $\frac{1}{2}$

CR (3) 5 (Jl 05). 225-42 17:5 $\frac{1}{2}$

BC 26 (Ag 05). 154-60 5 $\frac{1}{2}$:3

MR n.s. 49 (Mr 06). 295-303 (Muirhead) 8:5 $\frac{1}{4}$

The four Reviews all recognised the importance of Scott's first romance, but it was the Edinburgh which gave the lead: without Jeffrey's largely enthusiastic essay the other

Reviews might well have given less attention to the poem. Jeffrey's fine article falls into four sections: an introductory assessment, a summary and comment on the arrangement of the fable, and lists of beauties and faults.

The first three paragraphs are a penetrating introduction. Jeffrey begins by characterising the poem succinctly and justly: (1)

This is a romance ... composed by a minstrel of the present day; or such a romance as we may suppose would have been written in modern times, if that style of composition had continued to be cultivated, and partaken consequently of the improvements which every branch of literature has received since the time of its desertion.

Jeffrey goes on to deduce from this what Scott's procedure ought to have been, and with the reservation that he is excessively severe with the medieval models his reasoning is just: (4-2)

Upon this supposition, it was evidently Mr Scott's business to retain all that was good, and to reject all that was bad in the models upon which he was to form himself; adding, at the same time, all the interest and the beauty which could possibly be assimilated to the manner and spirit of his original. It was his duty, therefore, to reform the rambling, obscure, and interminable narratives of the ancient romancers, -- to moderate their digressions, -- to abridge or retrench their unmerciful or needless descriptions, -- and to expunge altogether those feeble and prosaic passages, the rude stupidity of which is so apt to excite the derision of a modern reader; at the same time he was to rival, if he could, the force and vivacity of their minute and varied representations -- the characteristic simplicity of their pictures of manners -- the energy and conciseness

with which they frequently describe great events -- and the lively colouring and accurate drawing by which they give the effect of reality to every scene they undertake to delineate.

Jeffrey gives it as his preliminary opinion (2) that the result is 'a very beautiful and entertaining poem', making only two reservations: the subject is insufficiently dignified and Scott has been too sparing of amending medieval faults. The introductory paragraphs are in technique akin to Lyre's in their setting down of the case as it appears to the reviewer, in their laying of this foundation upon which the review can be based.

Jeffrey passes, as part of his scheme to put the reader in possession of the facts, to a summary, warning him first of all that the plot is irregular. The summary is entirely plain and occupies 2½ pages (3-6): the two paragraphs on page 6 deal with the fable. Judged on regular principles it is defective, not all the parts contributing to the action, but Jeffrey is willing to admit that causal sequence is of secondary importance in accordance with his associationist conception of the nature of poetry:

But though we feel it to be our duty to point out these obvious defects in the structure of the fable, we have no hesitation in conceding to the author, that the fable is but a secondary consideration in performances of this nature. A poem is intended to please by the images it suggests and the feelings it inspires; and if it contain delightful images and affecting sentiments, our pleasure will not be materially impaired by some slight want of probability or coherence in the narrative by which they are connected.

Jeffrey is not dealing here with an inner coherence of the work of art, important for a full understanding of Scott's genius, but rather with a series of beauties emotionally apprehended. This becomes clearer as faculty psychology terms make their familiar appearance:

The callida junctura of its members is a grace, no doubt, which ought always to be aimed at; but the quality of the members themselves is a consideration of far higher importance, and that by which alone the character of the work must be ultimately decided. The adjustment of a fable may indicate the industry or the judgment of the writer, but the genius of the poet can only be shewn in his management of its successive incidents.

With this important distinction, essentially pre-Coleridgean though thoroughly up to date, Jeffrey disposes of the poem considered as a whole and goes on to list and quote the beauties.

These beauties are not merely listed as they might be by a lesser critic. They arise from Scott's civilising or softening of the rudeness of medieval minstrelsy. The introductions and the poet's own moralisations are particularly impressive (7-10) and a general and acceptable softening is noted at the opening of the work. (10-13) Characteristically, Jeffrey attributes the superiority of the Lay to medieval romances in the difficult field of description partly to the associations which the descriptions arouse, as in the moonlight view of Melrose Abbey (13):

In the following description of Melrose, which introduces the second canto, the reader will observe how skilfully he calls in the aid of sentimental associations to heighten the effect of the picture which he presents to the eye.

Careful selection can make even descriptions without overt emotion acceptable. (14-5) Jeffrey concludes his set of beauties with a quotation of the Rosabelle ballad and turns to the faults.

The faults are of two sorts. The poem can be too local and minute, as has been pointed out a characteristic complaint of Jeffrey: on this ground he objects to Gilpin Horner, actually the kernel of the poem and clearly essential to its imaginative coherence. He finds the diction too rough and quotes two examples which demand a disyllabic r to scan. He also reasonably censures the repetition of words: 'never, never,' 'in vain, in vain', and the like. (20)

Jeffrey's article is of the highest importance. It is limited in its faculty psychology basis and in its distrust of the particular, but its linguistic criticism and its understanding of Scott's purpose and achievement are clearly visible in an article worthy of its subject.

The Critical has a useful article, not nearly as philosophical as Jeffrey's, but just in its balanced estimation of the Lay. It consists chiefly of a summary with quotations and occasional critical comments, but there is an introduction largely on the style and a concluding estimation.

The critic has as his effective opening gambit a comparison of the Minstrel in Beattie's poem with Scott's more genuine figure. He passes to consider Scott's professed reason for introducing the Minstrel and finds it

specious: the stylistic reginements are modern rather than seventeenthth century, and no less welcome for that. Scott's real motive would appear to the critic to be his liking for the discursive introductions to the cantos. (226) The poet's own digressions are more varied and still more welcome than those of the Minstrel, apart from the 'metaphysical' introduction to Canto V. The actual merit of the verse is mixed in its varied metre which has both advantages and disadvantages for the reader.

The summary (227-40) is plain. The reviewer criticises the dialogue between the river and mountain spirits amusingly but justly: (29)

This may be 'very pretty and gent,' as Mr. Bayes says, but to our mind, it savours too much of the small talk, which passes between two beings of a similar description in a certain frantic production, entitled, if we recollect right, the Ancient Mariner.

Technical terms and Gilpin Horner are also, following Jeffrey, censured, while Scott's descriptions are generally admired.

The review ends with a just estimation of the work. It has too much of the improvisatore; it is irregular (though that is of small importance); it is full of excellent description; and finally: (241)

Born in the country once pregnant with events,
similar to those which his verse portrays, he
appears to snatch much of local enthusiasm from
the ground he has trod. Nursed amid scenes,
Where every mountain
Inspiration breathed around,
he has caught what fragments of traditionary lore

float down the stream of time, he has woven these into his narrative, he has from these given a colouring to what is the offspring of his own vivid imagination, and he has wrought the whole into a tissue, at once beautiful and consistent.

This ending is at a higher temperature than the rest of the review, but it is the climax of a just and discriminating if unexciting and generally rather superficial treatment.

The treatment in the British Critic is a strawy affair drawing largely on Jeffrey's article and largely a plain summary. The minstrel is praised and Jeffrey's conclusion restated: (160)

Among imitations of ancient poetry, the lay of the last Minstrel must always be distinguished, from the judgment with which every beauty of the model is preserved and improved, and every disgusting fault avoided.

The reviewer does defend Gilpin Horner, and the opening of the fifth canto is denominated 'very elegant poetry' but otherwise this review deserves its oblivion.

Muirhead's review in the Monthly is equally unimpressive and also draws heavily upon Jeffrey. He condemns the choice of subject, summarises briefly and plainly, and is more rigid than Jeffrey in his condemnation of the construction: beauties may help only to make up for it. Some beauties are quoted at length, including the Introductions to Canto I and Canto III and the Rosabelle ballad. Miscellaneous criticism of prosodic licence, the grating nomenclature and technical terms, and the Pies Irae which 'would make a capital figure in

Drunken Barnaby's Journal.' This last sums up much of the crude Muirhead in his parody of Jeffrey's subtle and assured reasoning.

12. Walter SCOTT, Marmion, (Edinburgh, 1808)

ER 12 (Ap 08). 1-35 (Jeffrey) 35:15

CR (3) 13 (Ap 08). 387-401 141:61

MR n.s. 56 (My 08). 1-19 (Merivale) 18:71

BC 31 (Je 08). 640-8 71:31

Jeffrey's review of the Lay had been somewhat equivocal, balancing the faults against the virtues. In his treatment of Marmion, while adopting the same procedure (general estimation plus summary plus faults and beauties) he comes down against Scott, or at any rate against the Scott of the metrical romances.

His introductory assessment (1-3) notes intelligently that it is always difficult to repeat an initial success: the Lay had the double advantage of shock and later idealisation in the readers' minds. Basically Marmion is not different from the Lay except that its beauties and its faults are more clearly visible since it is on a larger scale: (2)

It has more tedious and flat passages, and more ostentation of historical and antiquarian lore; but it has also greater richness and variety, both of character and incident; and if it has less sweetness and pathos in the softer passages, it has certainly more vehemence and force of colouring in the loftier and busier representations of action and emotion. ...

The characteristics of both, however, are evidently

the same; -- a broken narrative -- a redundancy of minute description -- bursts of unequal and energetic poetry -- and a general tone of spirit and animation, unchecked by timidity or affectation, and unchastised by any great delicacy of taste, or elegance of fancy.

This is going to be Jeffrey's main line of attack -- as in the Lay but always more strongly developed. He makes clear in the final paragraph of the introduction (and he is to repeat it more forcefully towards the end of the review) that he believes that Scott is wasting his great talents on a basically unviable genre and that it is his duty as a critic to persuade him of his error. The evangelical spirit of the anti-Lake campaign thus spreads to Jeffrey's treatment of Scott.

A summary follows, detailed, slightly ironical at times, but generally straight (3-8), and it is followed by censure of five main faults of construction arising from it (8-13), much of which has validity. Firstly, the story is too slight for so long a poem and the descriptions rarely add to the understanding of the story. This is true, though the whole question of the nature and validity of this schizophrenic genre demands subtler treatment than it receives here. Secondly, the plot is intolerably obscure: Jeffrey's unanswerable charge is backed up with many valid examples of obscurity. He incidentally objects to the Gothick trial scene: (9)

The public, we believe, has now supped full of this sort of horrors; or, if any effect is still to be produced by their exhibition, it may certainly be produced at too cheap a rate, to be worthy the ambition of a poet of original imagination.

The Gothick is so well done in this passage that Jeffrey's censure seems harsh. Thirdly, Jeffrey objects to the many coincidences which Scott freely employs in his plot, consulting 'his own ease, rather than the delight of his readers.' (10) Again valid examples are liberally provided. His fourth objection is to the uninteresting characters and to their general moral despicability. Finally (and with less general validity) he censures Scott for his lack of Scottish patriotism.

Jeffrey proceeds to deal with the very considerable beauties hinted at in his introductory remarks largely by extensive quotation of descriptive passages (13-28) introduced by the elucidatory sentences:

If there be any truth in what we have now said, it is evident that the merit of this poem cannot consist in the story. And yet it has very great merit, and various kinds of merit, -- both in the picturesque representation of visible objects, in the delineation of manners and characters, and in the description of great and striking events.

The quoted passages are all descriptive and fine above anything previously seen in Scott and they reach a climax in the account of Flodden: (27-8)

From the moment the author gets in sight of Flodden Field, indeed, to the end of the poem, there is no tame writing, and no intervention of ordinary passages. He does not once flag or grow tedious; and neither stops to describe dresses and ceremonies, nor to commemorate the harsh names of feudal barons from the Border. There is a flight of five or six hundred lines, in short, in which he never stoops his wing, nor wavers in his course; but carries the reader

forward with a more rapid, sustained, and lofty movement, than any Epic bard that we can at present remember,

This is the high point of Jeffrey's praise: he concludes with more faults, somewhat clumsily appended to the announced plan of the article, since his distinction is not altogether viable: (28)

The faults of the fable we have ~~already~~^{al} noticed at sufficient length. Those of the execution we shall now endeavour to enumerate with greater brevity.

He devotes most of the remaining space to one fault, the antiquarian description. (28-32) He complains that this is unnatural in a modern author, a dubious point: antiquarian description does not occur in the medieval metrical romances, where it is the newness of the setting that is emphasised. Such description, Jeffrey further argues, is obscure to the modern reader: again the objection might be raised that Scott helps the reader very adequately with his notes and glosses. Jeffrey strangely argues that only description intimately connected with the generally esteemed medieval chivalric system is successful. (31) On the following page he illuminatingly rounds off his argument with a comparison of Scott and Darwin: both are eccentric to the main permanent interests of mankind and therefore both must become obsolete. The argument is more valid for Darwin than for Scott, though in his case too it is partly applicable:

Fine ladies and gentlemen now talk, indeed, of donjons, keeps, tabards, scutcheons, tressures, caps of maintenance, portcullisses, wimples, and we know not what besides; just as they did, in the

days of Dr Darwin's popularity, of gnomes, sylphs, oxygen, gossamer, polygynia, and polyandria. That fashion, however, passed rapidly away; and if it be now evident to all the world, that Dr Darwin obstructed the extension of his fame, and hastened the extinction of his brilliant reputation, by the pedantry and ostentatious learning of his poems, Mr Scott should take care that a different sort of pedantry does not produce the same effects.

Some examples of ugly expressions follow which are ascribed to the haste in which the poem was composed and in the penultimate paragraph Jeffrey repeats his warning to Scott not to waste his great talents, not to found a new school to annoy the critics, 'a new schism in the catholic poetical church'. Imitations of the Scott poems are certainly uniformly weak, lacking Scott's knowledge and cohesive imaginative power.

Finally* and lamely, Jeffrey deals with the epistles which he finds generally unsatisfactory, not exploring at all their effect on the poem or their connection with the different cantos. It is a weak ending to a review sound rather than brilliant, a little disordered, and not going deeply enough into controversial aspects of Scott's work. Nevertheless many useful and valid criticisms are made.

The treatment afforded by the Critical is still more severe. It begins with a summary of the obscure plot with comment and quotation. The ballad style is criticised and it is maintained that the Gothick conclave derives its effect rather from the stock reactions of the

reader than from any originality in the description, (339) a judgment which seems untenable: Scott's description is certainly more powerful than most Gothick work before him. More just is the assertion that Scott's poetic style is unable to rise to passionate declamations as before the conclave or at the meeting of Clara and de Wilton. The only aspect of the poem which comes in for unstinted praise is the description.

The reviewer passes to the introductions (393-6) with which he is not impressed. He finds them lacking in ideas and particularly objects to the pictures of gloomy weather. These pictures are integral to the poem and the objections are trivial. The epistles demand more astute and penetrating treatment.

The review concludes (396-401) with miscellaneous faults, beginning with a useful summary of objections in terms very close to those of Jeffrey in the simultaneous review:

... the impression made on ourselves, and those whom we have consulted, is, that the story is faulty in connection, that the events are not sufficiently numerous for the length of detail, that an ambition to display all the knowledge with which the author's mind is imbued, of old times, has induced him to dwell upon particulars on ancient manners, armour and building, more suitable to an antiquarian than a poet; and above all, that the thoughts want dignity, and the verses harmony.

The detailed faults are headed by grammatical infelicities as part of Scott's loose style. As in the Edinburgh, Scott's speed of writing is blamed for such ugly expressions

as 'These executioners were chose' and repeated use of But oh! (397). The variations in metre are found unpleasing and excessive simplicity is predictably objected to. A more detailed analysis of the novel style of the poem would be required to back up these allegations. The Critical joins Jeffrey in his desire to see Scott fulfil his potentialities. The terms of the statement are significant and link up with the anti-barbaric trait frequently found in criticism of the period: (400-1)

... we should rejoice to see an author of a genius so transcendent adopt a tone and manner consistent with the powers of his mind, and enlist himself in the cohort of regular and polished English poets. ... he owes to his country his endeavours to promote the cause of good sense, good poetry and good taste under the sanction of his name, rather than his example in aiding and abetting every offender who rises in arms against the few salutary restrictions on English literature, which may yet withhold our poesy from utter barbarism.

This conventional ending is not surprising in a review of some small acuteness but little sustained penetration and one which never really comes to grips with its challenging subject.

Equally severe is the Monthly Review which begins by summarising the nature of the work and goes on to consider the Epistles, to give a summary of the plot, and to conclude with grammatical faults and weaknesses in the versification.

The introduction speaks highly of Scott's power of transporting the reader to the time and place of the action,

perhaps the highest merit of poetry, but turns immediately to mention the faults of the plot and versification and to point out that some of the blemishes result from an exaggeration of elements admirable in themselves: (1-2)

... his descriptions of natural scenery are repeated to tediousness; ... his knowledge of the manners of former ages occasionally betrays him into pedantry; and ... even the proper names of places, which convey a peculiar charm to ears that have been versed in the antient Scottish minstrelsy, are sprinkled so thickly and often with so little meaning as to make the reader, though delighted at first, begin at last to suspect a trick, and to take offence at that which, if managed with a sparing hand, might have been made a source of unmixed pleasure and approbation.

Strangely, Merivale considers that the plot and characterisation are superior to those of the Lay while there are fewer pathetic and poetical moments: a more general judgment would involve a contrary assessment.

The Epistles are found to be misplaced, interrupting the fable: Merivale fails to appreciate their contribution to the scale of the poem. The first epistle is deemed commonplace and the second the most poetical. Merivale notes that five of the epistles begin with winter pieces but fails to draw any conclusions from this about the tone of the poem.

The summary (6-17) is str^{ai}ght, but embodies quotations and comments. The most important of these relate to the trial, where Merivale rightly finds Constance's recital dull and butcher-work for the immurement unforgiveable. The descriptions are generally appreciated.

After attacking, with examples, the rhymes and grammar, and also the want of ear, Merivale confesses himself disappointed with the poem and admonishes Scott in terms akin to those of Jeffrey or the Critical: (9)

We do not flatter ourselves that he will pay to our advice that attention which he has refused to his acute friend, Mr. Erskine: but it is possible that his own good sense may in time persuade him not to abandon his loved Fairy ground, (a province ever which we wish him a long and prosperous government,) but to combine the charms of lawful poetry with those of wild and romantic fiction.

Again with several good points, Merivale fails to penetrate to the imaginative heart of his subject.

The British Critic sometimes shows a perceptive balance in its articles not found in the rest of the Edinburgh's contemporaries. It is so on this occasion. The reviewer rejoices to concur in the public's high estimation of Marmion, though he has reservations. In the course of his introductory remarks he praises Scott for his true originality as opposed to the perversity of indiscriminate rule-breaking, or what has been noted as mannerism. The nature of Scott's poem is carefully defined: 'It is a kind of Lyric narrative, partaking occasionally in some qualities of the Epic, but always more easy and familiar.' (641) Scott's main virtue is his descriptive power, and the second section of the review gives a series of descriptive 'beauties'. Answering earlier reviewers, this critic does not find the minuteness objectionable: it is a Homeric device: (642)

These particulars, often inconsiderable in themselves, have the effect of giving truth and identity to the picture; and assist the mind in realizing the scene, in a degree which no general description could suggest; nor could we so completely enter the castle with Lord Marmion, were any circumstances of the description omitted.

In a judicious comparison the vault is found less extraordinary than the voyage of the nuns, though both are striking.

The transition from these beauties to the examination of Marmion's weak points is well made: (644-5)

The attractions we have here enumerated, added to that of an easy and natural versification, which seems to be entirely unpremeditated, will sufficiently account for the great popularity of Marmion, notwithstanding the faults, which are many, in the plan and conduct of the story. But the beauties prevail over the faults, because the former are seen and felt at a glance, whereas the latter are chiefly perceived upon reflection.

The main fault is the despicable nature of the characters, and here the reviewer draws extensively on Jeffrey's analysis of their failings. The plot (with which all readers are by this time presumed to be familiar) is improbable, but this may be allowed to genius, for there is a 'charm' which cannot fail to please, however rough the story. (646) The epistles are found good in themselves but out of place as they interrupt the narrative: again a reviewer has failed to penetrate to the essence of the poem's imaginative cohesion.

This is a just and unusually but effectively constructed review which shows evidence of thought within its too small compass.

13. Robert SCUTHEY, Thalaba the Destroyer, (2 vols, London, 1801).

BC 18 (S 01). 309-10 1:4

ER 1 (O 02). 63-83 (Jeffrey) 20 $\frac{2}{3}$:4 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 39 (N 02). 240-51 (Jeffrey) 11 $\frac{3}{4}$:6

CR (2) 39 (D 03). 369-79 (Taylor) 10:4

The British Critic's review of Thalaba has the merit of promptness, but no more can be said for it: '... the writer of this wretched stuff has the vanity to censure the approved verse of his country'. By approved verse here the neoclassical prosodic tradition, and especially the heroic couplet, is meant. Like Jeffrey, this reviewer is baffled by Southey's free verse, but unlike Jeffrey is stung into pure invective: 'A more complete monument of vile and depraved taste no man ever raised.'

It was noted at the outset of this study that Jeffrey wrote two reviews of the epic, an ordinary article for the Monthly Review and a much more ambitious one for the first literary utterance of the Edinburgh. Although the article in the Edinburgh appeared in October, and that in the Monthly not till November, 1802, it is clear that the Edinburgh article is the more mature. But the question of temporal priority is of little moment. Jeffrey has arranged that the articles, while consistent, should be complementary. His examples are not duplicated, nor are most of the incidents which he chooses for comment.

The article in the Monthly is essentially an analysis with quotations of beauties in the traditional style. The opening sets the mixed attitude which Jeffrey adopts throughout: (240)

It is not easy either to class or to appreciate this singular performance. It has many faults and many striking beauties. It is irregular and splendid, improbable and interesting, and at once extravagant and elaborate.

At once the analysis begins. The summary of each book's action is followed or interspersed by beauties. The beauties inevitably leave a predominantly favourable impression. The summary is unbiassed till the end of the second book (243) where mockery begins to appear very occasionally, as the sorcerer's blow is avoided as 'the whole pious family prostrate themselves in prayer'. The irony is never all-embracing, however, and most of the account continues to be straightforward. Jeffrey's comments on the individual books discriminate well between their varying degrees of success, but these comments are scanty. There is no use of critical terminology, the beauties simply being presented to the reader without comment. The review ends with four general paragraphs justly summarising the mixed success of the poem, improbable, loose metrically, but with considerable descriptive talent, even if it is over-employed to the detriment of character interest.

For the Edinburgh, Jeffrey has entirely rethought the reviewing process. Half of the long article is devoted to his first attack on the Lake poets of whom he

admits that Southey is the least objectionable. (68)
 This attack does not concern the immediate consideration except in so far as it biasses the reader against Thalaba before the review proper has begun. This bias is increased by two other factors. Thalaba is quoted as an example (admittedly not the worst) of poetical slovenliness (68-9) with the comment:

Now, this style, we conceive, possesses no one character of excellence; it is feeble, low, and disjointed; without elegance, and without dignity; the offspring, we should imagine, of mere indolence and neglect, or the unhappy fruit of a system that would teach us to undervalue that vigilance and labour which sustained the loftiness of Milton, and gave energy and direction to the pointed and fine propriety of Pope.

Further, when discussion of the poem finally commences (72) it is with no balanced statement about beauties and faults, but thus:

The first thing that strikes the reader of Thalaba, is the singular structure of the versification, which is a jumble of all the measures that are known in English poetry, (and a few more), without rhyme, and without any sort of regularity in their arrangement.

The review of Thalaba falls into three main sections. The sentence quoted leads into a discussion of the versification (72-4); then follows a critique of the fable and its arrangement (74-9); and finally a series of beauties and points of excellence selected from different parts of the poem. (79-93)

Jeffrey's main criticism of the versification is that it is unreadable without preparation. Southey believed that exactly the reverse was the case:¹

¹ Thalaba, i. viii-ix (Preface)

One advantage this metre assuredly possesses; the dullest reader cannot distort it into discord: he may read it with a prose mouth, but its flow and fall will still be perceptible.

The modern reader will with his experience of free verse agree with Southey, but Jeffrey's bewilderment is historically understandable. The treatment of the fable begins with a mocking summary of the very worst sort full of 'The good man', 'The old lady', and suchlike witticisms. (75) Jeffrey characteristically and not altogether unjustly regards all the goings-on as mere childishness, and, also with some justice, the outpourings of a common-place book. (77-8) Finally, but too late to save the poem, Jeffrey relents, leaves his arch style and quotes miscellaneous beauties. There are several points of interest here. An attempt at novel critical language is made, though only once, when the opening lines of the epic are said to have 'a certain solemn and composed beauty'. (80) Maimuna reminds Jeffrey of Calypso. (81) Further, it is worthy of note that the ending of the seventh book, which had originally seemed abrupt, is now cited among the beauties: (80)

Who comes from the bridal chamber?
It is Azrael, the Angel of Death.

Jeffrey's penultimate paragraph strikes the reader as ingenuous in the circumstances: (83)

There is some very fine poetry in the two concluding books, from which we would willingly make some extracts, if we had not already extended this article to an unusual length, and given such a specimen of the merits and defects of this performance, as will probably be sufficient to determine the judgment of our readers.

This Edinburgh article is far more readable and interesting than that in the Monthly, but its final effect is too severe while that of the Monthly is too flattering to Southey's frequently tedious versifying. Both make good points; both show characteristic limitations; neither strikes the desired balance. The Edinburgh article is significant beyond question, but it is not significant primarily as a review of Thalaba.

An original approach to this provocative poem is also adopted by the last in time of the reviewers, William Taylor of Norwich in the Critical. Essentially, he combines the dissertation and the summary with a difference.

He begins with ~~two~~ two startling paragraphs characterising the poem imaginatively and justly; the over-enthusiasm is tempered later:

PERHAPS no work of art so imperfect ever announced such power in the artist -- perhaps no artist so powerful ever rested his fame on so imperfect a production -- as Thalaba. The author calls it a metrical romance; he might have called it a lyrical one; for the story is told, as in an ode, by implication; not directly, as in an epopoeia.

Taylor catches succinctly a characteristic feature not only of Thalaba but of the age ushered in by the Lyrical Ballads. The originality of Taylor's expressions brings the poem before the reader in an impressionistic manner looking forward to his admirer Hazlitt: (369)

No arguments are prefixed to the books of Thalaba; in many places it would be difficult to infer the argument, and to write down, in lucid

order, the adventures of the personages. Every being bursts into luminousness, like figures in the phantasmagoria; and, before one can ask, Whence and whither dost thou fly? another springs before us more mysterious and awful, which, in its turn, becomes distincter as it recedes. The verse itself seems to have the wildness and the power of incantation; to call down at will the moon from heaven, or build a palace in the desert; to bid the gardens of Paradise blossom, or the destroying Samiel commence his blast.

Taylor's third paragraph introduces the nevertheless systematic section of the dissertation and must be quoted for its observations on critical method confirming the impressionistic effect created by his opening: (369-70)

So novel a romance it is difficult to praise or to blame too much; and it is more natural, or at least more in unison with the tone of the poem, to do both rhapsodically than methodically, as the alternative but not evanescent impressions occur, than, according to the prescriptive rules of criticism, by the successive analysis of fable, characters, machinery, and style, and the ordinary discussion of its historic, ethic, fantastic, and phraseologic peculiarities.

The dissertation proper does in fact deal successively with the fable, the hero, the place of the supernatural, and the style, two paragraphs being allotted to the first, and one to each of the others. The plot is found tenuous, the adventures disconnected, as in Jeffrey's criticism, but Taylor prefers to concentrate on the many individual beauties. Thalaba's unworldly emotions are rightly found inhuman and the agency of the immortals similarly cold. Taylor professes to be able to discern Hebrew, Italian, and German elements in the style. More convincing is

his analysis of the mingling of the genres: (371-2)

In turn, the ballad lends its affecting simplicity, the heroic poem its learned solemnity, the drama its dialogue form, and the ode its versatility of metre.

Thermerely English reader is overwhelmed, but it ~~is~~ exhilarating to the literary cosmopolitan. Taylor significantly recognises 'new principles' of metrical theory, (372) though such lines as iv. 202 'And his camel than the monstrous elephant' defy even new principles^{le} (presumably accentualism is in his mind).

After this stimulating general analysis, Taylor embarks on a summary of the twelve books. But this is no mere summary of events: rather it is a characterisation of the atmosphere of each book with occasional comments on details. There are two points of special interest here. As the structure of the review is a compromise between the two Jeffrey reviews, so the treatment of the ending of Book VII is a refinement half-way between Jeffrey's treatments, presumably intended as a comment upon them: (376)

The seventh book would be very interesting, if a certain suspense overhung the prepared nuptials of Thalaba and Oneiza. The unexpected catastrophe lessens the pathos of the chilling words --

'Who comes from the bridal chamber?
It is Azrael, the angel of death.'

The critical language of the comments is not generally distinguished but the remarks on the atmosphere of the books are successful, and depend for their effect on giving the 'feel' of the book in a short space. When

Taylor wants to praise a specific passage, such as the opening of Book IX, he resorts to an infectious if naïve enthusiasm: (376, 8)

Book IX. -- The charm, which opens this book, is wondrously well painted: it is more than painted; it is created! it breathes! it lives! -- We must transcribe.

<1½ pages transcribed>

Greeks! Latins! come with your Pythonesses! Where is there a description like this? Edinburgh reviewers, tamers of genius, come and vaunt couplets and habitual metres, and show us an effect like this! Ghost of Boileau, scowl! we will enjoy.

With this passage the gauntlet is thrown down to the old criticism, in which the Edinburgh Review is significantly included, and we are unmistakably in a new age.

Taylor's article is vastly superior to Jeffrey's Edinburgh review as a treatment of Southey. He is open to the new poetry as Jeffrey is not and he is evolving a critical method to convey his enthusiasm. This is an article of the highest importance.

14. Robert SCUTHEY, Madoc, (London, 1805)

ER 7 (0 05). 1-28 (Jeffrey) 28: 11½

MR n.s. 48 (0 05). 113-22 (Ferriar) 91:6

CR (3) 7 (Ja 06). 72-83 111½

BC 28 (0 06). 395-410 151:5½

(N 06). 486-94 87:1

Jeffrey's treatment of Madoc is closer to the subject than that of Thalaba had been. Although his four-page introduction

does mention the Lake school it is primarily concerned with Southey's work. The main fault according to Jeffrey is unregulated ambition, contempt for established practice and acknowledged masters: (2)

If we must renounce our faith in the old oracles of poetical wisdom before we can be initiated into the inspiration of her new apostles -- if we must abjure all our classical prejudices, and cease to admire Virgil, and Pope, and Racine, before we can relish the beauties of Mr Southey, it is easy to perceive that Mr Southey's beauties are in some hazard of being neglected, and that it would have been wiser in him to have allied himself to a party so respectably established, than to have set himself up in opposition to it.

While all of this strikes the modern reader as being largely of historical interest, it should be recognised that Jeffrey has been provoked by Southey's remark at the close of his Preface:¹

The manners of the Poem, in both its parts, will be found historically true. It assumes not the degraded title of Epic; and the question, therefore, is not whether the story is formed upon the rules of Aristotle, but whether it be adapted to the purposes of poetry.

Jeffrey continues by applying his associationish^t principles to the local associations aroused by new poetry and

¹ Loc. cit., p. ix. It is of interest to note that in the copy of the first edition of Madoc now in the Bodleian (13. 9. 69) one George Taylor who possessed the work in 1814 has indicated classical parallels alongside several passages. Reverence for the classics could take more than one form.

suggesting that since only what is generally felt can please and therefore be true poetry nothing new in taste can be produced: (2)

In matters of taste, however, we conceive that there are no discoveries to be made, any more than in matters of morality. The end of poetry is to please; and men cannot be mistaken as to what has actually given them pleasure. Accidental associations, indeed, may impose upon them for a season, and lead them to ascribe to the genius of the poet an emotion which was really excited by the circumstances in which they perused him: but this illusion can never be of long duration; and the emotions which he continues to excite under every variation of circumstances, the feelings which he commands among every class of his readers, and continues to impress upon every successive generation, can only be referred to that intrinsic merit, of which they afford indeed the sole and ultimate criterion.

This is an intelligent adaptation of the eighteenth-century theory of generality to the new psychology. Accidental associations are a major source of invalid ad hoc judgments. But the dubious nature of Jeffrey's case is brought out by his elaboration on page three of the moral parallel where he numbers among the eccentric parallels from the moral realm 'educating boys without the use of birch'. To Jeffrey all the newness of the new school is affectation, 'an affectation of infantine innocence and simplicity; an affectation of excessive refinement and preternatural enthusiasm; and an affectation of a certain perverse singularity in learning, taste, and opinions.' (3)

When Jeffrey turns in the final paragraph of his introduction on page four to Southey's specific defects, he is unanswerable. The historical element fades and his

criticisms become relevant to our reading of Madoc. Southey is betrayed by his facility; this is the basic contention of the paragraph and from it Jeffrey draws a variety of conclusions. The style is redundant rather than nervous or concise because of the easiness of the metre which:

leads him on insensibly from line to line, and from page to page, without let or obstruction, and carries him smoothly through every sort of illustration or exposition that occurs to him, without once admonishing him of the necessity of excluding much, in order to give effect to what is permitted to remain.

The result is verbal looseness, the easy word rather than the right one, and precision by inflation rather than by pruning. The result too is a metrical and imaginative flabbiness. Those who have drooped their way through this blank verse will recognise the truth of Jeffrey's statement. Its brilliant procession from the seminal concept of facility is no less admirable.

Equally just is the concise summary of the merit of the poem with which Jeffrey turns from the general to the particular, a characteristic paragraph akin to that at the opening of the review of Scott's Lay: (4-5)

The poem now before us contains many beautiful passages, and bears decisive testimony, we think, to the genius and amiable character of the author. But it is obviously too long, -- and, independently of the faults resulting from the affectations we have already mentioned, its excessive length, together with a want of interest in the story, and a considerable failure in the delineation of character, will render it tedious, we are afraid, to ordinary readers, and communicate an air of heaviness to the whole composition.

This 'ordinary readers' is important. To the antiquary Madoc will be full of interest, but poetry is not written for the antiquary.

Jeffrey proceeds to his second main section, the summary. (5-9) This is largely straight but occasionally slightly 'swung' ironically to point out improbabilities. The burden of the occasional comments is that the connection between the sections of Part I and between Part I and Part II is weak. This objection has more force than the similar complaints about the Lay as Southey's work depends more on its narrative structure, the imaginative coherence being considerably weaker.

An analysis of faults connected with the fable and characters follows and all of the points seem valid. (9-14) The lack of coherence is stressed again; Madoc is too perfect to arouse any interest; the opening is obscure to the general reader; the blending of Madoc and Columbus, thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, leads to gross improbabilities in the American section of the poem.

Finally Jeffrey deals as usual with faults and beauties of versification at the end of his gradual penetration to the smallest of details. Four main categories of faults are noted. Firstly affectedly simple passages are mocked, and certainly the flatness of much of Southey's verse demands censure, though Jeffrey's crude irony can be applied with equal abandon to far better works. (14-7) Low, antiquated, and vulgar words are condemned in the approved fashion of the times. Most of

the examples are happily chosen. Second of the detailed faults is a tendency to bombast and obscurity by which Jeffrey means chiefly Southey's unimpressive 'sublime' utterances and his lists of unpronounceable Welsh names. (17-9) Thirdly, Southey's 'diffuseness and prolixity' are censured and an example with endless conjunctive clauses quoted. (19-20) Finally the negligent prosody predictably receives its share of the condemnation. (20) All these points are well made and wisely illustrated.

Against these faults are to be set beauties of description, chiefly of the minutiae of nature, but also of such rites as the cathedral service and the Aztec horrors. The Welsh lays are praised and extensively quoted. Jeffrey selects just those passages of Madoc which are still of real interest, though his critical comments are negligible and his vocabulary correspondingly unimpressive. The whole review is one of his most valuable and permanently valid as an estimation of the poem: it is doubtful if a more detailed or sophisticated study would produce a more satisfactory result.

The comparison of Jeffrey's assured treatment with that of Ferriar in the Monthly is instructive. Ferriar makes similar points, but his article lacks unity and shape and is considerably less detailed than Jeffrey's. The tone, often ironical, is very similar. Ferriar's review falls essentially into two parts (which is one of his main complaints against Madoc). The first is a collection of miscellaneous points, the second a set of long extracts from the poem.

The miscellaneous points are five in number. Ferriar begins as Jeffrey had with the genre and its relation to classical models. He is at his most witty but equally unenlightening, his correct conclusion being presented ironically: (113)

The title of epic, which he indignantly disclaims, we might have been inclined to refuse his production, had it been claimed; and we suppose that Mr. Southey would not suffer it to be classed under the mock-heroic. The poem of Madoc is not didactic, nor elegaic, nor classical, in any respect. Neither is it Macphersonic, nor Klopstockian, nor Darwinian, -- we ~~beg pardon~~, we mean Brookian. To conclude, according to a phrase of the last century, which was applied to ladies of ambiguous character, it is what it is. -- As Mr. Southey has set the rules of Aristotle at defiance in his preface, we hope that he will feel a due degree of gratitude for this appropriate definition of his work. It is an old saying, thoroughly descriptive of such an old song as this before us.

The prefatory verses attract just irony as 'modest ostentation' (114) and Ferriar equally justly finds the structure unsatisfactory. Since the poem opens with Madoc's return to Wales, we lose the sense of expectation which ought to pervade the first voyage to America. The criticism of the two-part structure is too flippant to carry the weight of Jeffrey's condemnation of the lack of connection between the parts. Finally, Ferriar follows Jeffrey in mocking Yuhidthiton, Coanocotzin, and 'the yawning jaw-dislocating' Ayayaca (115) and in condemning the general dull mediocrity. These remarks, while just, are not unified by a central concept as those of Jeffrey

are by the seminal criticism of facility.

The concluding extracts make the scrappiness more obvious. They are chosen avowedly to enable the reader to judge for himself, presumably presented as representative of the qualities of the work, both good and bad. Thus the first extract is selected from the opening pages of the work, describing the ship in an impressive manner later adopted by Scott in The Lord of the Isles and then de^{cl}ining into an allusive dialogue. Ferriar comments, with some reason: (117)

This long passage contains instances of Mr. Southey's peculiarity of manner, both in his success and failure. The description is sometimes striking, and even brilliant for a moment: but the action and the manners are heavy, and we must add, mean. We will repeat, at the hazard of being called prejudiced and pedantic, that this is not the simplicity of Homer and Milton; and that an historical poem requires elevation in the thought and language. If the author cannot support his work with proper dignity, he should choose a different task.

More detail is needed, however, and one suspects that Ferriar is earning his money too easily with this superficially attractive procedure.

The review ends after further extracts accompanied by less and less comment with a bitter attack which gives an unduly harsh picture even of this severe review: (122)

To us, there appears a thorough perversion of taste, in the conception and execution of the whole; and we are disgusted with the tameness of the verse, the vulgarity of the thoughts, and the barbarity of the manners.

The unidentified reviewer in the Critical is a man of lively mind and a welcome sense of humour. He begins severely but in the course of extracting beauties for his final section warms to the better parts of Madoc and is able to conclude with a balanced assessment. The first section of the review (72-9) which precedes the beauties-faults conclusion (79- end) falls into four sections.

The reviewer is particularly annoyed, as Ferriar had been, by the amusingly egotistical prefatory verses:

COME, LISTEN TO A TALE OF TIMES OF OLD!
COME, FOR YE KNOW ME! I AM HE WHO SONG
THE MAID OF ARC; & I AM HE WHO FRAMED
OF THALABA THE WILD & WONDEROUS SONG.

The reviewer seizes on this and parodies it in the form of an advertisement for patent medicines by Dr Solomon: (73)

Come, listen to a list of cures performed!
Come, for ye know me: I am he, who cured
Maids of their aches, and I am he who framed
Of Balm of Gilead the wondrous power.

It is a flyting rather than an illuminating parody, and is backed up by the anecdote of the wit who is alleged to have soliloquised:

'Come, for ye know me! I am he who framed Of
Thalaba the wild and wondrous song. Are you?
Then I will not waste any money by purchasing your
Madoc.

The reviewer passes to consider revolutionary verse, of which he disapproves morally in that linking of style and politics which has been noted as characteristic

of the age, and to expound the true meaning of the quotation from Lucian on the title page of Thalaba. This introduces the whole subject of Southey's relationship to the approved classical models which the reviewer vividly sums up thus: (75-6)

If the lines of Dryden and of Pope are to be compared to the twing-twang of the Jew's harp, Mr. Southey must not accuse us ^{of} want of good manners, if we should compare some parts of his Thalaba to the grinding of the hurdy-gurdy, some to the dissonant clang of marrow-bones and cleavers, and some to the rapid rapping harmony of the salt-box.

Lucian is quoted against Southey to round off the subject neatly.

Southey's anti-Aristotelean statement in the Preface now attracts the reviewer's attention and he conservatively maintains the integrity of the genres, but in terms exceptionally interesting, again seeing literature as an essential part of the fabric of society: (77)

The purposes of poetry are of various degrees; they are sometimes answered by a sonnet, or by a ballad, in the same manner as a hovel or a shed will answer the purposes of a house, or as a fig-leaf will answer the purposes of an embroidered petticoat: but if in all those arts which adorn life, we are to study only this tame sufficiency, then all the various improvements, which have rendered man's social abode a theatre of wonders, may be quietly given up, and all our pride and all our honors be lowered to the ground.

Before passing on to the beauties and defects, the reviewer mentions that Southey has been unjust to Columbus in ascribing his adventures to the nonentity Madoc, an

interesting variant of the demand for historical accuracy with again a moral note introduced.

The beauties and faults are indiscriminately mingled in the final section of the review. The descriptive beauties receive their due, but the reviewer is more impressed by the characters than his contemporaries were or the present day reader is likely to be: (79)

There is scarcely a single page without some striking beauty, without some sublime description, some delightful picture, or some forcible appeal to the heart: but as a poem it is defective in plan and in arrangement.

The main defect is pointed out in a striking restatement of Jeffrey's condemnation of the construction of the poem: (80)

... the banners are gay, the pomp is magnificent, the actors are of noble mien, and appropriately attired, the music is harmony itself, but the whole procession is badly arranged.

While other defects such as the versification, the names, and the over-minuteness are particularised, the beauties are slenderly represented in spite of the reviewer's new fulsomeness of praise, so that the final effect is again untidy. Nevertheless this article is generally discriminating and if lacking in Jeffrey's logic has in a large degree the equally important quality of readability.

The British Critic has a long treatment of Madoc, most of it consisting of a summary with comments. Unfortunately, the summary of the first part evidently took longer than the reviewer anticipated and he has to compress the second part with the lame excuse that it is

not nearly as interesting. Before the summary begins there is a severe comment on Southey's anti-Aristotelean remark in the Preface which plays into the hands of most of his reviewers: (395)

This position, which will operate as a considerable abridgement of our labours, and must have materially facilitated those of the author, who wrote, as he advises us to judge, without a standard.

This misses the point of Southey's contention and therefore does indeed avoid the question of standards altogether.

The reviewer's comments on the individual cantos of each part are mostly hostile: he prints verse as prose (397) and objects to the imitation of the story of Columbus; (400) like Jeffrey he finds the opening dialogue distressingly inferior to the description of the sea voyage (396) and the main voyages improbable (402). His own complaints are chiefly against the antiquarianism, especially when the notes contradict the text, an unusual objection to this sort of poetic licence. (397, 404, 409) The descriptions and Welsh odes he finds excellent as does Jeffrey.

In the second part of the review a slightly ironic summary is offered of the second part of Madoc, and a series of general remarks concludes. The work is irreverent in its flippant use of Scripture and shows Jacobinical tendencies; the antiquarianism is clogging; the hero is dull and facility leads to feebleness of language (both these points are Jeffrey's): the man of taste will choose

a just medium between the extremes of Della Cruscan and naked verse. The article ends with a call for a national subject.

This review is detailed but derivative and lacking in a central thesis. All four reviews of Madoc are substantial, intelligent, and just, but Jeffrey's alone has the logical cohesion which makes for compulsive reading of his argument.

15. Madame de STAEL, Corinna, or Italy, (3 vols, London, {1807}).

ER 11 (O 07). 183-95 (Playfair) 10:1 $\frac{1}{2}$

MR n.s. 54 (O 07). 152-9 (Moody) 7 $\frac{1}{2}$:4

CR (3) 12 (N 07). 281-4 4:0

BC 31 (My 08). 517-23 7:5

Playfair's review of Madame de Staël's strange hybrid and overwrought fantasy is indiscriminatingly favourable and critically slight. He begins adequately with a paragraph characterising the work in normal Edinburgh fashion and stressing the to him satisfactory combination of narrative and descriptive elements and the importance of the opposition of national sentiments. A long summary follows with a few slight comments (183-9) and this is succeeded by a series of short extracts including descriptive passages, an effusion of Corinna, and a detailed account of the excellent Northumbrian passage at the beginning of Corinna's narrative (Book XIV). The review ends with a

few general comments (194-5) approving of the morality of the work.

Moody's treatment of Corinna in the Monthly is more just if no more substantial. He too throws most of his critical comment into the opening paragraph and follows it with a plain rushed summary and descriptive extracts. He rightly admires Madame de Staël's descriptive and philosophical excellences, but equally rightly insists that description and story do not fuse into a whole. It is however a genuine attempt 'to confer Novelty on the species of composition called Novels; and it requires no small portion of genius to accomplish this object in any degree, so prodigiously multiplied at the present day are the works which come under this description.' (152)

The Critical's review is the most entertaining, over-severe yet understandable in its exasperation at the absurdly over-sensitive fluctuations of the lovers. It consists almost entirely of a mocking summary interspersed with comments. The view of Britain as dull is condemned and the long-concealed secret justly found unexciting; the Northumberland passage is acknowledged to be just and the partial linking of buildings and moods indicated with some precision in a paragraph which sums up the tone and quality of the article: (282)

From the time that Corinna and lord Nelvil become acquainted, all is tumult; despair for no reason, hope with equal reason; and from this first acquaintance the book becomes partly a guide to the public places, and ruins of the Capitol;

partly a thermometer, marking all that passes in the thoughts and praecordia of these two original lovers.

After the summary is concluded, the review ends with a paragraph stressing Madame de Staël's genius, but deploring her melancholy sensibility and prolixity. This is an entertaining and generally just and perceptive brief characterisation of a very uneven work.

Justness of comment also characterises a wildly wayward article in the British Critic which is closest to a summary with quotations but chaotic in its plan. The points which can be extracted from the débris are that the story is preposterous but interesting, the descriptions are excellent, especially that of Northumberland, and Lord Nelvil and Corinna are improbable, the last point being peculiar to this Review and especially welcome.

Apart from the Edinburgh Review the reviews are just; if they are hardly adequate to the demands of the work individually, taken together they give a fair, balanced assessment of one of the strangest of novels.

16. William WORDSWORTH, Poems, in Two Volumes, (London, 1807).

CR (3) 11 (Ag 07). 399-403 3 $\frac{2}{3}$:1 $\frac{3}{4}$

ER 11 (0 07). 214-31 (Jeffrey) 17 $\frac{1}{2}$:9 $\frac{1}{2}$

Wordsworth's Poems, in Two Volumes is the most important work of literature published in the period under examination. Its reception is a matter of some curiosity

since neither the Anti-Jacobin Review nor, remarkably, the Monthly treated it. The British Critic has a belated, hostile review in March 1809. The first review to appear was that of the Critical and here for the first time the direct influence of the Edinburgh is indubitably felt. Jeffrey's attacks on Wordsworth in his reviews of Southey bear fruit both in matter and in arrangement, for the reviewer in the Critical devotes half his article to an essay on Wordsworth as a whole, and the other half to a very cavalier but totally integrated mockery of the Poems.

A SILLY book is a serious evil; but ~~it~~ it becomes absolutely insupportable when written by a man of sense.

The dissertation makes it clear that Wordsworth stands high in the reviewer's estimation, though the poems listed are inevitably all readily acceptable to the conservative sensibility: (400-1)

We are not among the number of his injudicious friends and flatterers; yet our memory has often dwelt with delight on his 'Tintern Abbey,' his 'Evening sail to Richmond,' his 'Michael,' and a few more of the pieces contained in his first publication of Lyrical Ballads. Even in our magisterial chair we are not ashamed to confess that he has had the power to draw 'iron tears' from our stony hearts.

It is all the more important, therefore, that Wordsworth should recognise the fatal effect of his vicious sensibility and, with his friends, cease to attempt to guide the taste of mankind.

A mocking series of quotations from the lyrics of the two volumes follows (401-3) leading to the

despairing comment: (403)

How can we sufficiently lament the infatuation of self-conceit and our own disappointed hopes! Wordsworth should spend more time with books and less with his singular ego. Hints of reason and judgment are visible: the reviewer does not specify which these are, but on the analogy of Jeffrey's reaction one might suggest the sonnets.

The article is well written and coherent, the clearest possible example of Jeffrey's influence, but the weightier parts of the volumes are totally neglected: 'Resolution and Independence' and the Immortality Ode are not mentioned. Incompatible sensibilities are at the root of the trouble here as in Jeffrey's case.

Jeffrey's review of the 1807 Poems is approached as a long-awaited encounter and ^{the} tenor of his argument is made clear in the prefatory dissertation (314-8) before he goes on to the faults of the poems and the beauties of a few of them.

He begins by recalling that he has had cause to mention Wordsworth in his earlier attacks on the new school in poetry (the references are given on page 216): 'We are glad, however, to have found an opportunity of attending somewhat more particularly to his pretensions.' (214) The Poems have on their title page the words 'By William Wordsworth, author of The Lyrical Ballads.' and Jeffrey alludes to the Ballads' mixed qualities: on the credit side 'a strong spirit of originality, of pathos, and natural feeling' and their moral excellence; on the

debit side 'their occasional vulgarity, affectation, and silliness'. The very defects became laudable in some eyes and this is the basic reason for the severity which Jeffrey thought it necessary to adopt in the public interest: (215)

It was precisely because the perverseness and bad taste of this new school was combined with a great deal of genius and of laudable feeling, that we were afraid of their spreading and gaining ground among us, and that we entered into the discussion with a degree of zeal and animosity which some might think unreasonable towards authors, to whom so much merit had been conceded. There were times and moods indeed, in which we were led to suspect ourselves of unjustifiable severity, and to doubt, whether a sense of public duty had not carried us rather too far in reprobation of errors, that seemed to be atoned for, by excellences of no vulgar description.

The present volume brings the issue to a head, for the peculiarities of the poetry are more marked than ever. Jeffrey is therefore confident that the public will reject them and that Wordsworth's system will be finally discredited. Jeffrey's statement that the Poems are 'written avowedly for the purpose of exalting a system' (216) is unsubstantiated and certainly false.

Poetry can be divided into the emotional excitement, derived from the Imagination or the Reason, and the pleasure derived from the diction. It is this latter element which is lacking in Wordsworth. Diction demands exquisite propriety as in Virgil and Pope, it is sanctioned by classical usage, and it depends for its effect upon melody and correct associations. This is not to defend

hackneyed commonplaces, but vulgar diction is equally reprehensible. The New School err through deliberate perversity. But Wordsworth's diction is not alone responsible for the poor effect of his poems: his often fine conceptions are associated with trivial incidents which impart an 'air of parody, or ludicrous and affected singularity.' (218)

Jeffrey's introduction is lucid and well-written as usual, and he proceeds to give examples of vulgarity and feebleness in the individual poems. (218-28) Wordsworth accepted many of Jeffrey's criticisms in later editions of his works: it will be an intention of the following consideration to examine the validity of these alterations as well as of Jeffrey's other criticisms. Quotations from the Poems, with the exceptions noted, are corrected from the original volumes where necessary. Lines numbers and quotations from later editions are taken from the Oxford Poetical Works in five volumes.

'To the Daisy' (218-9)

'... very ~~flat~~ feeble, and affected; and in a diction as artificial, and as much encumbered with heavy expletives, as the theme of an unpractised schoolboy.' The flatness and feebleness are found primarily in lines italicised by Jeffrey:

1. 12 Spring cannot shun thee;
1. 20 Thou art not daunted,
1. 24 When such are wanted.

Line 12 is weak and was emended by Wordsworth for the 1827 edition:

Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
That she may sun thee;

Line 20 seems unexceptionable and was altered only syntactically in 1836 to 'Yet nothing daunted'. Line 24 is rightly unchanged. Jeffrey refers also to the phrases wrong or right in l. 47:

Some chime of fancy wrong or right;
and more or less in l. 63:

Without some feeling, more or less,
of true devotion.

The first is unaltered and in the second Wordsworth's alteration in the next printing in 1815 seems inferior in its more conventional and less forceful expression and in its excision of the wry humour typical of early Wordsworth. The two versions run as follows:

1807: At dusk, I've seldom mark'd thee press
 The ground, as if in thankfulness
 Without some feeling, more or less,
 Of true devotion.

1815: And when, at dusk, by dews oppress
 Thou sink'st, the image of thy rest
 Hath often eased my pensive breast
 Of careful sadness.

This bowdlerisation of his early work is familiar to the modern reader from the 1850 Prelude. Jeffrey's part in the growth of Wordsworth's unfortunate self-emendation seems not to have been recognised.

Jeffrey also refers to this lyric as 'affected' and this may refer either to the simplicity or to the artificial

diction and heavy expletives, or, of course, to both. These latter terms refer presumably to the whimsical diction which exquisitely contrasts with the extreme simplicity of lines such as 16 'When rains are on thee':

a morrice train' (17)

violets in their secret mews (25)

and

humbler urn (51).

Jeffrey also objects to the conclusion of the poem as an 'unmeaning prophecy' which is true only if the poem itself is unimpressive or a daisy a thing of no moment as Jeffrey suggests.

The tone of Jeffrey's criticism is thus set:

Occasionally just when Wordsworth is bathetic, but out of sympathy with the sentiments dignifying things and the mingled simplicity and often humorous whimsicality of the style.

'Louisa' (219)

This exquisite lyric is totally lost on Jeffrey and again the older Wordsworth yields to his offended sense of propriety, though in the final version the words italicised by the critic are unchanged. The 1807 version as quoted by Jeffrey runs thus:

The next is called 'Louisa,' and begins in this dashing and affected manner.

'I met Louisa in the shade;
And, having seen that lovely maid,
Why should I fear to say

That she is ruddy, fleet, and strong;
 And down the rocks can leap along,
 Like rivulets in May?' I.7.

Does Mr Wordsworth really imagine that this is at all more natural and engaging than the ditties of our common song writers?

The first three lines were vilely altered in 1836 but restored in 1845. It is interesting to note that an early reader of the Bodleian copy of the 1807 volume answered Wordsworth's brilliantly judged question in terms perhaps caught from Jeffrey:¹

Why? because you'll be justly laughd at.

The fourth line is disastrously altered in 1836 when ruddy becomes healthful, and in 1845:

That, nymph-like, she is fleet and strong,
 which Jeffrey would doubtless have preferred in spite of the retained strong. The fifth line is beyond any criticism, let alone that of Jeffrey.

'The Redbreast and the Butterfly' (219)

Jeffrey quotes the first fourteen lines italicising by some name or other (9) which remains unobjectionably in later editions, and mocking lines 12-14:

Could Father Adam open his eyes,
 And see this sight beneath the skies,
 He'd wish to close them again.

This is not Wordsworth's most happy whimsy, but the only concession to Jeffrey's charge of 'downright raving' is a note in the 1815 edition, actually added at de Quincey's suggestion and giving the Miltonic reference. Jeffrey's

¹ 280 n. 290-1: i. 7.

objection to this lyric may find echoes in some modern bosoms, even if 'Silly Sooth' is considered unnecessarily severe.

'To the Small Celandine' and 'To the Same Flower' (220)

Jeffrey describes these two poems (taken as one) as 'a piece of namby-pamby ... which we should almost have taken for one of Mr Philips's prettyisms.' and quotes lines 41-56 of the first poem, and lines 31-2 and the final stanza of the second. The last 'babyish absurdity' is again a piece of Wordsworthian whimsy, here very acceptable but the only part of the quoted passages altered by Wordsworth, in 1827 when Magellan disappears. Wordsworth informed Barron Field in October 1828 that he would be restored¹ but he never was, remaining as 'the bold Adventurer' or 'Discoverer'.

'The Character of the Happy Warrior' is found more manly, 'The Horn of Egremont Castle' 'very tolerable, and free from most of the author's habitual defects.' Both are more traditional poems, with subjects more obviously important. 'The Kitten and the Falling Leaves' is found too close to Ambrose Philips again but lively.

'Ode to Duty' (220-1)

Jeffrey objects to the last two lines of the penultimate stanza:

Thou dost preserve the Stars from wrong;
And the most ancient Heavens through Thee are
fresh and strong.

¹ Letters: The Later Years, i. 311.

This imaginative realisation of Kant's starry heaven above and moral law within carries metaphysical metaphor far beyond the limits of common sense and elicits the remark:

The two last lines seem to be utterly without meaning; at least we have no sort of conception in what sense Duty can be said to keep the old skies fresh, and the stars from wrong.

Jeffrey's treatment of the Immortality Ode later shows this lack of understanding at its most extreme.

'Beggars' (221)

Jeffrey regards this poem as 'a touchstone of Mr Wordsworth's merit', judging it a favourite of his 'though to us, we will confess, it appears to be a very paragon of silliness and affectation.' He quotes stanzas 1 and 3 and the last two, also the phrase 'like that woman's face as gold is like to gold.' (30) All of these passages were extensively and disastrously altered by Wordsworth in 1827, almost totally obscuring in staid poeticising the splendid vigour and plainness of the original most clearly visible in the third stanza:

Before me begging did she stand,
Pouring out sorrows like a sea;
Grief after grief ...

which becomes:

Advancing, forth she stretched her hand
And begged an alms with doleful plea
That ceased not ...

Wordsworth outlined his reasons for the alteration to Barron Field in 1828 'to give more elegance and dignity' to the poem, the favourite eighteenth-century elegance being

particularly telling here. His points concerning clashes of sounds are well made, but the remedies are too drastic.

Besides his implied objection to the vulgarity of the language, Jeffrey refers to the mother as 'this interesting person' and the whole as 'this memorable adventure', having no perception of the Wordsworthian mystery, a mystery largely destroyed in the revision on principles of which Jeffrey would have approved.

'Alice Fell' (221-2)

This story is equally 'trash' and the scribbler in the Bodleian copy notes on page 84 of the first volume:

'In commemoration of W.W's giving away 10/-'. Most of it is quoted, but no illuminating comment is made: it is an insult on the public taste. The poem was slightly formalised, on the whole with little damage in this case, chiefly in 1845.

'Resolution and Independence' (222-3)

The sight of a critic as competent as Jeffrey in stunned incomprehension before one of the great imaginative achievements in the language is a sad one. He recognised the 'fine distich' (unless he is being ironical):

We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;

But thereof comes in the end despondency and madness.

He quotes lines 55-6, 75-84, 88-91, 99-105, and, after some amusement at Wordsworth's slowness to understand the leech-gatherer's answer, 117-26 and the last two lines.

There are alterations to some of these lines, again uniformly unfortunate. Jeffrey quotes ll. 88-91 thus:

"What kind of work is that which you pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
He answer'd me with pleasure and surprise;
And there was, while he spake, a fire about his eyes.

This becomes absurdly over-particular and inflated in 1820 and 1836:

"What occupation do you there pursue?
This is a lonesome place for one like you."
Ere he replied, a flash of mild surprise
Broke from the sable orbs of his yet-vivid eyes.

The passage which aroused Jeffrey's mockery because of the poet's slowness is also altered, becoming over-specific and losing the superb simplicity of the haunted original.

Lines 117-9 stood:

And now, not knowing what the Old Man had said,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

It is altered in 1815 and becomes in 1820:

--Perplexed, and longing to be comforted,
My question eagerly did I renew,
"How is it that you live, and what is it you do?"

Whether Jeffrey had an influence on such alterations for the worse is not clear, but the later Wordsworth was certainly much closer to Jeffrey than the author of these poems had been.

In the second volume, 'Rob Roy's Grave' is found dull -- which it certainly is not --, while the 'Address to the Sons of Burns' is miserable after the expectations aroused by the title -- it certainly is.

'Yarrow Unvisited' (224)

Jeffrey finds this 'a very tedious, affected performance'. Again, the sentiment is found absurdly over-sensitive and the delicacy of the evocation¹ and its humour altogether missed. Whereas Jeffrey finds Wordsworth's motive for leaving Yarrow unvisited 'fantastical' the Bodleian scribbler considers it 'too prudential a motive for a true poet.'²

'O Nightingale!' and 'My heart leaps up' are mocked, both as 'ineffable compositions', the latter for its brevity.

'The Sparrow's Nest' (225)

Both the sets of four lines quoted from this brief lyric were altered for the worse by Wordsworth, though line 11 is improved, again on principles which Jeffrey shared.

Jeffrey quotes the arrestingly naive opening:

Look, five blue eggs are gleaming there!
Few visions have I seen more fair,
Nor many prospects of delight
 More pleasing than that simple sight.

This is sophisticated and destroyed in 1815:

Behold, within the leafy shade,
 Those bright blue eggs together laid!
 On me the chance-discovered sight
 Gleamed like a vision of delight.

¹ So delicate that Scott misquotes 'The Swan on still St. Mary's Lake' in his notes to Marmion as an ordinary 'The swans on sweet St Mary's lake': Wordsworth rightly rebuked him. Marmion, (Edinburgh, 1808), Notes, p. xxxviii; Letters: Middle Years, p. 240.

² ii. 35.

'To the Cuckoo' (224-5)

Jeffrey is out of sympathy with the perception of the spirituality inherent in nature:

We have then a rapturous mystical ode to the Cuckoo; in which the author, striving after force and originality, produces nothing but absurdity.

He traces with amusement the appearances of the spirit until its materialisation as a Bird in the final stanza. Two of his verbal criticisms were unfortunately taken up in 1815. Lines 7-8:

From hill to hill it seems to pass,
About, and all about!

became the milder:

From hill to hill it seems to pass,
At once far off and near!

while lines 11-12 which originally stood:

Thou tellest, Cuckoo! in the vale
Of visionary hours.

became logically but unimaginatively:

And unto me thou bring'st a tale
Of visionary hours.

'To a Butterfly' is more briefly mocked in similar vein.

'The Blind Highland Boy' (225)

Jeffrey's mockery of this outstanding poem centres in the household tub:

This, it will be admitted, is carrying the matter as far as it will well go; nor is there any thing, -- down to the wiping of shoes, or the evisceration of chickens, -- which may not be introduced in poetry, if this is tolerated.

To the modern intelligence the wiping of shoes and evisceration of chickens seem excellent subjects for poetry, but Wordsworth was persuaded by Coleridge to make the unfortunate change to a turtle-shell which introduces a long exotic passage into a poem where extreme simplicity is of telling importance. Wordsworth points to the alteration in his 1815 note, again using the key word elegant, the tub being a 'less elegant vessel', but the whole story is told to Barron Field:¹

The 'shell' was substituted for the 'washing-tub', on the suggestion of Coleridge; and, greatly as I respect your opinion and Lamb's, I cannot now bring myself to undo my work; though if I had been aware beforehand that such judges would have objected, I should not have troubled myself with making the alteration.

The whole of the passage leading up to the revelation of the tub is also revised, covering all of Jeffrey's implied stylistic objections. Both Jeffrey and Coleridge were in their different ways offended by extreme particularity.

'The Green Linnet' (225-6)

Jeffrey rightly objects to the lines concluding the first stanza:

And then a Bird will be the toy
That doth my fancy tether.

Wordsworth totally alters this in 1815. It is the first instance of an indisputably correct judgment on Jeffrey's part in this detailed review. The unusual and effective transitive use of teems in line 35, italicised by Jeffrey,

¹ Letters: Middle Years, p. 308.

is also rejected in 1827 with consequent rewriting to avoid the rhyme. Wordsworth found the usage provincial when writing to Field¹ and significantly quotes from Johnson's Dictionary to prove his point: 'A low word when used in this sense.' and says that he altered the stanza to avoid the train of leaves on the tree, a valid point not noted by Jeffrey.

The unimpressive 'Star Gazers' is dismissed and 'Foresight' termed 'this quintessence of unmeaningness', while the second stanza which Jeffrey finds absurd in 'Yes! full surely 'twas the Echo,' was rightly omitted after 1807. Jeffrey confesses himself baffled by the Immortality Ode and thus ends his specific criticisms, hardly more than two or three of which are justified, but all of which arise from his opposition to Wordsworth's style and sentiment.

Jeffrey has not yet finished, though he has dealt with 'undeniably the most peculiar and characteristic part' of the volumes: (228)

In our own opinion, however, the demerit of that system cannot be fairly appretiated, until it be shown, that the author of the bad verses which we have already extracted, can write good verses when he pleases; and that, in point of fact, he does always write good verses, when, by any accident, he is led to abandon his system, and to transgress the laws of that school which he would fain establish on the ruin of all existing authority.

¹ Letters: Middle Years, p. 310.

The elevated minstrel style of the 'Song, at the Feast of Brougham Castle' is especially commended as are the formal sonnets. After quoting from these examples of Wordsworth at his most traditional, Jeffrey laments: (231)

When we look at these, and many still finer passages, in the writings of this author, it is impossible not to feel a mixture of indignation and compassion, at that strange infatuation which has bound him up from the fair exercise of his talents, and withheld from the public the many excellent productions that would otherwise have taken the place of the trash now before us.

Wordsworth's emendations in accordance with Jeffrey's criticism must be judged to be extensive and almost uniformly unfortunate. Jeffrey failed altogether to appreciate the peculiar subtleties of the Wordsworthian simplicity and therefore branded it as childish and insipid.

PART FIVE: CONCLUDING EVALUATION¹

It is arguable that, in a sense, a thesis should not mean but be, but in this case there rightly emerges in conclusion at least one central unifying theme. This is that the reviewers of the period surveyed in this study worked almost without exception within the eighteenth-century reviewing tradition outlined in Part I and the late neoclassical critical system explored in Part III. This dual inheritance imposed severe limitations upon them which only alert and powerful minds could overcome or use to striking advantage.

The reviewing tradition involved the use of abstracts and lengthy quotations, extensive coverage of minor literature, and usually an amateurism of approach. The abstract could be turned to advantage in the form of a summary, often ironical, with critical comments interspersed, as for example in Jeffrey's review of Southey's Thalaba. Quotations were seldom well integrated into the fabric of longer reviews, the 'beauties' tradition

¹ It is with regret that I omit consideration of contemporary reactions to the Reviews headed by the brilliant pamphlets of Edward Copleston and Josiah Conder. (<Edward Copleston,> Advice to a Young Reviewer, With a Specimen of the Art, (Oxford, 1807), and <Josiah Conder,> Reviewers Reviewed, (Oxford, 1811)) The material is so rich and varied that even a long chapter could hardly do justice to the numerous pamphlets, comments in letters, diaries, and memoirs, notes and alterations in second editions, and the like.

still being important for the reader intent on instant digests of literature, but Jeffrey's treatment of Wordsworth's Poems, in Two Volumes breaks completely clear of the tradition in favour of detailed poem-by-poem analysis, however unfortunate the judgments in that particular case. The dead weight of very minor literature is eased somewhat by the important works of the nineties and the beginning of the new century and largely disposed of by the Edinburgh's revolutionary selective policy of thorough coverage of the works that mattered then, and often that still matter today. The amateurism, which led to a lack of intensity in most of the older reviewing after the committed work of Goldsmith, wavers in the period considered here. Jeffrey is deeply sensitive to literature and concerned about its effect, even if his concern is primarily moral and social rather than aesthetic. Coleridge, Scott, and Southey are profoundly involved in their subjects, and William Taylor's total commitment is undeniable, if his critical faculties leave much to be desired.

The new thinking makes its impact too on the limitations of a decaying neoclassical system based upon a decent middle way between extremes. The restricted vocabulary shows some signs of breaking up. William Taylor is the most striking example with his Teutonic enthusiasm and infectious images, but evidence of original language has also been observed in Scott, Thomas Thomson, and (to a small extent) in Jeffrey. Johnson's sensitivity

and stout pragmatic coherence had enabled him to work wonders with a very limited critical vocabulary, and though the breakthrough effected by Coleridge is only hinted at in the Reviews considerable achievements are discernible within the bounds of the old terminologies.

The fragmented faculty psychology terms remind the reader that Coleridge's introduction of German critical organicism is still in the future: nevertheless, major critics approached it at a distance. Jeffrey fails to penetrate to the imaginatively coherent depths of Scott, much less those of Wordsworth, but his unifying system gives a coherence to most of his work, while individual articles often capture the essence of the exterior at least of works such as The Lay of the Last Minstrel. Unity of purpose is observable too in several of his contributors (Scott, Thomson, and Eyre) as well as in the less deliberate William Taylor. Goldsmith's critical cohesion is thus recaptured in the best work of the period and is reflected even in the lesser criticism of Ferriar.

It would, then, be wrong to conclude either that the Edinburgh Review alone is of value or that the whole state of reviewing which^{ch} largely failed to take serious account of the Preface to the Lyrical Ballads was rotten. Within a uniform and distinctly faded tradition original minds could produce stimulating work in which sensitive thought issued in some unusual terminology. Some new names can now be added to the roll of honour, notably Eyre, Finlay, and Thomas Thomson.

Many less extensive but hardly less interesting conclusions can also be drawn from the study. The Reviews have been differentiated, and detailed estimates of individual reviewers' work during the period have been made possible: thus the critical standpoints of Scott, Southey, and Campbell are illuminated and their relative excellence as reviewers made clear not only by comparisons with lesser contemporaries but by setting them against the reviewing tradition of the previous century. Some of the criticism is as good as any yet produced, for example that of Jeffrey on Crabbe or Taylor on Southey. It has been possible to plot the development of reviewing more accurately at this key period: the beginning of a new selective and at times impressionistic criticism has been observed and the exact point at which the disintegration of the Monthly Review's sound tradition began indicated. The unique response of the Critical to the Edinburgh has been pointed out. The way in which criteria defining the via media of the eighteenth-century golden age were modified to deal with literature at the turn of the century has been investigated in some detail. It has been possible too to build up a picture of the critical audience and to some extent of the reading public which existed for literature. And it has become clear that mercifully often, in accordance with long-established tradition, this reviewing was written to be enjoyed by its readers.

BIBLIOGRAPHYA. MANUSCRIPTS1. Bodleian Library

MS. Add. C. 89 Letters to Ralph Griffiths

MS. Add. C. 90 Letters of Samuel Badcock to Ralph Griffiths

MS. B. Litt. d. 720 Derek Roper, The Reviewing of English Literature, c. 1789-1802, (January, 1959)

2. Birmingham Public Library

Letter of Jeffrey to James Watt, dated 16 December, 1809,
in the Boulton and Watt Collection

3. Edinburgh University Library

MS. 584 fol. 31 Letter of Francis Jeffrey to Scott, dated
11 September, 1806

4. National Library of Scotland

MS. 3519 fols 3-6 Letter of Francis Jeffrey to James
Grahame, dated 28 April, 1801

MS. 3876 fol. 215 Letter of Francis Jeffrey to Scott <1808>

B. PRINTED BOOKS

1. Periodicals

The Analytical Review, or History of Literature, domestic and foreign, on an enlarged plan 28 vols (London, 1788-99)

The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine; or, monthly political and literary censor 61 vols (London, 1799-1821)

The British Critic, a new review 42 vols (London, 1793-1813)

The Critical Review; or, Annals of Literature. By a Society of Gentlemen 70 vols (London, 1756-90)

The Critical Review, extended and improved ... A new arrangement 39 vols (London, 1791-1803)

The Critical Review Series the Third 24 vols (London, 1804-11)

The Edinburgh Review, or Critical Journal 250 vols (Edinburgh, 1802-1929)

The Gentleman's Journal (1692)

The History of the Works of the Learned (1699)

The Moderator (1692)

The Monthly Mirror: reflecting men and manners 22 vols (London, 1795-1806)

The Monthly Review (or Literary Journal) 81 vols (London, 1749-89)

The Monthly Review, or Literary Journal, enlarged 108 vols (London, 1790-1825)

The Universal Historical Bibliothegue (1687)

Weekly Memorials for the Ingenious (1683)

2. Other Early Works

- The Battle of the Reviews, (London, <1760>)
- <Beloe, William> The Sexagenarian, (2 vols, 1817)
- Blair, Hugh Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, (2 vols, London, 1783)
- <Boswell, Alexander> Epistle to the Edinburgh Reviewers, (Edinburgh, 1803)
- Boswell, James Life of Johnson ed. G.B. Hill, revd Powell, (6 vols, OUP, 1934-56)
- Bowles, W.L. Poems vol. ii, (London, 1801)
- Brougham, Henry Brougham and his Early Friends Letters to James Loch 1798-1809 ed. Atkinson and Jackson, (4 vols, London, 1908)
- Contributions to the Edinburgh Review, (3 vols, London and Glasgow, 1856)
- The Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham written by himself, (3 vols, Edinburgh and London, 1871)
- Byron, Lord Hours of Idleness, (Newark, 1807)
- Campbell, L.D. A Reply to the Strictures of the Edinburgh Review, (London, 1807)
- Coleridge, S.T. Biographia Literaria ed. Shawcross, (2 vols, Oxford, 1907)
- <Conder, Josiah> Reviewers Reviewed, (Oxford, 1811)

<Coplestone, Edward>

Advice to a Young Reviewer, with
a Specimen of the Art, (Oxford,
1807)

A Reply to the Calumnies of the
Edinburgh Review against Oxford,
(2 edn, Oxford, 1810)

Copleston, W.J.

Memoir of Edward Copleston D.D.,
(London, 1851)

Crabbe, George

Poems, (London, 1807)

Darwin, Erasmus

The Temple of Nature; or, The
Origin of Society, (London, 1803)

Mme de Staël

Corinna, or Italy, (3 vols, London,
1807)

Edgeworth, Maria

Leonora, (2 vols, London, 1806)

Ferriar, John

Illustrations of Sterne: with
other essays and verses, (London,
1798)

Field, William

Memoirs of the Life, Writings,
and Opinions of the Rev. Samuel
Parr, LL.D., (2 vols, London, 1828)

Fitz Gerald, W.T.

The Tears of Hibernia! dispelled
by the Union, (London, 1802)

Godwin, William

Fleetwood: or, the New Man of
Feeling, (3 vols, London, 1805)

- Goldsmith, Oliver Collected Works ed. Friedman, (5 vols, Oxford, 1966)
- Gregory, Clinthus Memoirs of the Life, Writings, and Character ... of the late John Mason Good, M.D., (London, 1828)
- Hazlitt, William The Spirit of the Age in The Complete Works ed. Howe, (21 vols, London and Toronto, 1930-4), xi. 126-34
- Horner, Francis Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner, M.P. ed. Leonard Hgrner, (2 vols, London, 1843)
- <Innes, Cosmo,> Memoir of Thomas Thomson, Advocate, (Edinburgh, 1854)
- Johnson, Samuel A Dictionary of the English Language, (2 edn, 2 vols, London, 1755-6)
- Lives of the Poets ed Hill, (3 vols, Oxford, 1905)
- Lamb, Charles John Woodvil, (London, 1802)
- Lewis, M.G. Alfonso, King of Castile, (London, 1801)

- Mackintosh, R.J. ed. Memoirs of the Life of the Right Honourable Sir James Mackintosh, (2 vols, London, 1835)
- <Mant, Richard> The Simpliciad, (London, 1808)
- Moore, Thomas Epistles, Odes, and Other Poems, (London, 1806)
- (tr.) Odes of Anacreon, (London, 1800)
- Pinkerton, John The Literary Correspondence, (2 vols, London, 1830)
- Pope, Alexander tr. The Iliad of Homer I-IX ed. Mack, Twickenham Edn vol vii, (London, 1967)
- Robberds, J.W. A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich, (2 vols, London, 1843)
- Ring, John The Beauties of the Edinburgh Review, alias the Stinkpot of Literature, (London, 1807)
- Scot, Elizabeth Alonzo and Cora, (London, 1801)
- Scott, Walter The Lay of the Last Minstrel, (London, 1805)
- Marmion, (Edinburgh, 1808)
- Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border, (2 vols, Kelso, 1802)
- The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, ed. Grierson, (12 vols, Edinburgh, 1932-7)

- Seward, Anna Letters ed. Scott, (6 vols, Edinburgh, 1811)
- Smith, Sydney Letters ed. Smith, (2 vols, Oxford, 1953)
- Smollett, Tobias Letters ed. Noyes, (Cambridge, Mass., 1926)
- Southey, Robert Madoc, (London, 1805)
- (ed.) Specimens of the Later English Poets, (3 vols, London, 1807)
- Thalaba the Destroyer, (2 vols, London, 1801)
- Life and Correspondence ed. C.C. Southey, (6 vols, London, 1849-50)
- New Letters of Robert Southey ed. Curry, (2 vols, New York and London, 1965)
- Selections from the Letters of Robert Southey, (4 vols, London, 1856), ed. Warton
- The Spectator ed. Bush, (5 vols, Oxford, 1965)
- Stockdale, Percival The Memoirs of the Life, and Writings of Percival Stockdale, (2 vols, London, 1809)
- The Tatler ed. Aitken, (4 vols, London, 1898-9)
- Timperley, C.H. Encyclopaedia of Literary and Typographical Anecdote, (London, 1842)

Wordsworth, William

Poems, in Two Volumes, (London, 1807)

The Poetical Works ed. De Selincourt, 6 vols, Oxford, 1940 etc.)

The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth ed. De Selincourt, 2 edn vol. i, rev. Shaver, (Oxford, 1967)

The Letters The Middle Years, (2 vols, Oxford, 1937)

The Letters The Later Years, (3 vols, Oxford, 1939)

3. Modern Studies

Abrams, M.H.

The Mirror and the Lamp, (NY, 1958)

Altick, Richard

The English Common Reader,

(Chicago, 1957)

Aronson, A.

'The Anatomy of Taste A Note of Eighteenth-Century Periodical Literature' MLN 61 (1946). 228-36

Aspinall, Arthur

Lord Brougham and the Whig Party, (Manchester, 1927)

Atkins, J.W.H.

English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries, (London, 1951)

Babcock, R.W.

'The Idea of Taste in the Eighteenth Century' PMLA 50 (1935). 922-6

- Baizer, Ashur 'The Theory of Imitation in English Neo-Classical Criticism' DA 21 (1960-1). 194
- Bald, R.C. 'Francis Jeffrey as a Literary Critic' Nineteenth Century and After 97 (1925). 201-5
- Bate, W.J. 'The English Poet and the Burden of the Past, 1660-1820' in Aspects of the Eighteenth Century ed. Wasserman, (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 245-64
- From Classic to Romantic, (Cambridge, Mass., 1946)
- 'The Sympathetic Imagination in Eighteenth-Century English Criticism' ELH 12 (1945). 144-64
- Bateson, F.W. A Guide to English Literature, (London, 1965)
- Beatty, J.M. jr 'Lord Jeffrey and Wordsworth' PMLA 38 (1923). 221-35
- Bloom, Edward A. '"Labors of the Learned": Neoclassic Book Reviewing Aims and Techniques' SP 54 (1957). 537-63
- Bond, Donald F. '"Distrust" of Imagination in English Neo-Classicism' PQ 14 (1935). 54-69
- 'The Neo-Classical Psychology and the Imagination' ELH 4 (1937). 245-64

- Bosker, A. Literary Criticism in the Age of Johnson, 2 (revd) edn, (Groningen, Djakarta, 1953)
- Brandenburg, A.S. 'English Education and Neo-Classical Taste in the Eighteenth Century' MLQ 8 (1947). 174-93
- Brett, R.L. 'The Aesthetic Sense and Taste in the Literary Criticism of the Early Eighteenth Century' RES 20 (1944). 199-213
- Brogan, D.W. 'The Intellectual Review' Encounter 21 (N 1963). 7-15
- Brown, J.E. The Critical Opinions of Samuel Johnson, (Princeton, 1926)
- Brown, S.G. 'Dr. Johnson, Poetry, and Imagination' Neophilologus 23 (1938). 203-7
- 'Observations on Hume's Theory of Taste' English Studies 20 (1938). 193-8
- Buckingham, L.H. The Authorship of the First Twenty-Five Numbers of the Edinburgh Review (1802-1808) Yale University Dissertation, (1938)
- Bullitt, John and W.J. Bate, 'Distinctions between Fancy and Imagination in Eighteenth-Century English Criticism' MLN 60 (1945). 8-15

- Carlson, C.L. 'Edward Cave's Club, and its Project for a Literary Review' PQ 17 (1938). 115-20
- Clark, A.F.B. Boileau and the French Classical Critics in England (1660-1830), (Paris, 1925)
- Clark, R.B. William Gifford Tory Satirist, Critic, and Editor, (New York, 1930)
- Clive, John Scotch Reviewers The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1815, (London, 1957)
- Clough, Wilson O. 'Reason and Genius -- An Eighteenth Century Dilemma' PQ 23 (1944). 33-54
- Cockburn, Lord Life of Lord Jeffrey 2 edn, (2 vols, Edinburgh, 1852)
- Congleton, J.E. Theories of Pastoral Poetry in England 1684-1798, (Gainesville, Florida, 1952)
- Couper, W.J. The Edinburgh Periodical Press, (2 vols, Stirling, 1908)
- Cox, R.G. 'The Great Reviews' Scrutiny 6 (1937). 2-20, 155-75
- 'Homage to Common Sense' Scrutiny 16 (1949). 169-72
- Crane, R.S. 'English Neoclassical Criticism: An Outline Sketch' in Critics and Criticism ed. Crane, (Chicago, 1952), pp. 372-88

- Crane, R.S. 'A Neglected Mid-Eighteenth-Century Plea for Originality and its Author' PQ 13 (1934). 21-9
- 'On Writing the History of Criticism in England 1650-1800' in The Idea of the Humanities, (2 vols, Chicago and London, 1957), ii. 157-75
(and Arthur Rriedman,) 'Goldsmith and the Encyclopédie' TLS 11 May 1933, p. 331
- Crawford, Thomas The Edinburgh Review and Romantic Poetry (1802-29), (Auckland University College, 1955)
- Daniel, Robert 'Jeffrey and Wordsworth: The Shape of Persecution' Sewanee Review 50 (1942). 195-213
- Derby, J.R. 'The Paradox of Francis Jeffrey: Reason versus Sensibility' MLQ 7 (1946). 489-500
- Draper, J.W. 'Aristotelean 'Mimesis' in Eighteenth Century England' PMLA 36 (1921). 372-400
- Elsner, Richard Francis Jeffrey, der Hauptbegründer der Edinburgh Review, und seine kritischen Prinzipien, (Berlin, 1908)

- Erämatsä, Erik A Study of the Word 'Sentimental' and of Other Linguistic Characteristics of Eighteenth Century Sentimentalism in England, (Helsinki, 1951)
- Foerster, D.M. 'Critical Approval of Epic Poetry in the Age of Wordsworth' PMLA 70 (1955). 682-705
- Friedland, L.S. 'The Dramatic Unities in England' JEGP 10 (1911). 56-89, 280-99, 453-67
- Friedman, Arthur 'Goldsmith's Contributions to the Critical Review' MP 44 (1946). 23-52
- Fussell, Paul jr Theory of Prosody in Eighteenth-Century England, (New London, Conn., 1954)
- Gates, Lewis E. Three Studies in Literature, (New York, 1899)
- Graham, Walter The Beginnings of English Literary Periodicals, (New York, 1926)
- English Literary Periodicals, (New York, 1930)
- Greig, J.A. Francis Jeffrey of the Edinburgh Review, (Edinburgh, 1948)

Guyer, Byron

'Francis Jeffrey's Essay on Beauty' HLQ 13 (1949-50). 71-85

'The Philosophy of Francis Jeffrey' MLQ 11 (1950). 17-26

Halpern, Sheldon

'Sidney Smith in the Edinburgh Review A New List' BNYPL 66 (1962). 589-602

Hamm, V.M.

'Addison and the Pleasures of the Imagination' MLN 52 (1937). 498-500

Havens, R.D.

'Simplicity, a Changing Concept' JHI 14 (1953). 3-32

Hooker, E.N.

'The Discussion of Taste, from 1750 to 1770, and the New Trends in Literary Criticism' PMLA 49 (1934). 577-92

'The Reviewers and the New Criticism, 1754-1770' PQ 13 (1934). 189-202

'The Reviews and the New Trends in Poetry, 1754-1770' MLN 51 (1936). 207-14

Hudson, Randolph

'Henry Mackenzie, James Beattie, et al. and the Edinburgh Mirror' ELN 1 (1963-4). 104-8

Hughes, M.Y.

'The Humanism of Francis Jeffrey' MLR 16 (1921). 243-51

Hussey, Christopher

The Picturesque, (London, 1927)

- Havens, R.D. 'Johnson's Distrust of the Imagination' ELH 10 (1943). 243-55
- Hodgart, Patricia and Theodore Redpath, Romantic Perspectives, (London, 1964)
- Jones, Claude E. 'Dramatic Criticism in the Critical Review, 1756-1785' MLQ 20 (1959). 18-26, 133-44
- 'The English Novel A Critical View, 1756-1785' MLQ 19 (1958). 147-59, 213-24
- 'Poetry and the Critical Review, 1756-1785' MLQ 9 (1948). 17-36
- Smollett Studies, (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1942)
- Kallich, Martin 'The Meaning of Archibald Alison's Essays on Taste' PQ 27 (1948). 314-24
- Kaufman, Paul 'A Bookseller's Record of Eighteenth-Century Book Clubs' The Library (5) 15 (1960). 278-87
- Borrowings from the Bristol Library 1773-1784, (Charlottesville, Va, 1960)
- 'Heralds of Original Genius' in Essays in Memory of Barrett Wendell, (Cambridge, Mass., 1926), pp. 191-217

- Keast, W.R. 'The Theoretical Foundations of Johnson's Criticism' in Critics and Criticism, pp. 389-407
- Kennedy, Wilma L. The English Heritage of Coleridge of Bristol 1798, (New Haven, 1947)
- Klukoff, P.J. 'Smollett and the Critical Review: Criticism of the Novel, 1756-1763' SSL 4 (1966-7). 89-100
- Knapp, L.M. 'Comments on Smollett by the Rev. Dr. Thomas Birch' N & Q 210 (1965). 218-21
- 'Griffiths's "Monthly Review" as Printed by Strahan' N & Q 203 (1958). 216-7
- 'Ralph Griffiths, Author and Publisher, 1746-1750' Library (4) 20 (1939). 197-213
- Tobias Smollett Doctor of Men and Manners, (Princeton, 1949)
- Longueil, Alfred E. 'The Word "Gothic" in Eighteenth Century Literary Criticism' MLN 38 (1923). 453-60
- Lonsdale, Roger 'Dr. Burney and the Monthly Review' RES n.s. 14 (1963). 346-58, n.s. 15 (1964). 27-37
- Dr. Charles Burney, (Oxford, 1965)

- McKenzie, Gordon Critical Responsiveness,
(Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949)
- Mann, Elizabeth L. 'The Problem of Originality in
English Literary Criticism,
1750-1800' PQ 18 (1939). 97-118
- Mayo, R.D. The English Novel in the
Magazines 1740-1815, (Evanston and
Oxford, 1962)
- Mineka, F.E. The Dissidence of Dissent,
(Chapel Hill, N.C., 1944)
- Monk, S.H. The Sublime: A Study of Critical
Theories in XVIII-Century
England, (New York, 1935)
- Moorman, Mary William Wordsworth A Biography
(2 vols, Oxford, 1957-65)
- Morgan, B.Q. and Hohlfeld, A.R. eds, German Literature in
British Magazines 1750-1860,
(Madison, Wisc., 1949)
- Morgan, P.F. 'Principles and Perspective in
Jeffrey's Criticism' SSL 4
(1966-7). 179-93
- Nangle, B.C. 'Charles Burney, Critic' in The
Age of Johnson, (New Haven, 1949),
pp. 99-109
- Reynolds, T.V. The Monthly Review First Series
1749-1789, (Oxford, 1934)
- The Monthly Review Second Series
1790-1815, (Oxford, 1955)

- Nitchie, Elizabeth 'Longinus and the Theory of Poetic Imitation in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century England' SP 32 (1935). 580-97
- Noyes, Russell Wordsworth and Jeffrey in Controversy, (Bloomington, Indiana, 1941)
Review of Clive: MLN 74 (1959). 71-4
- Owen, W.J.B. 'Wordsworth and Jeffrey in Collaboration' RES n.s. 15 (1964). 161-7
- Pantologia A New Cyclopaedia ed J.M. Good, O. Gregory, and N. Bosworth, (12 vols, London, 1813)
- Patterson, C.I. 'The Authenticity of Coleridge's Reviews of Gothic Romances' JEGP 50 (1951). 517-21
- Raysor, T.M. 'The Downfall of the Three Unities' MLN 42 (1927). 1-9
- Rea, Thomas Schiller's Dramas and Poems in England, (London, 1906)
- Reynolds, W.V. 'Goldsmith's Critical Outlook' RES 14 (1938). 155-72

'The Reception of Johnson's Prose Style' RES 11 (1935). 145-62

- Roper, Derek 'Coleridge and the Critical Review' MLR 55 (1960). 11-16
- 'Mary Wollstonecraft's Reviews' N & Q 203 (1958). 37-8
- 'The Politics of the 'Critical Review', 1756-1817' Durham University Journal 53 (1960-1). 117-22
- 'Smollett's 'Four Gentlemen': The First Contributors to the Critical Review' RES n.s. 10 (1959). 38-44
- Rossi, Sergio The Edinburgh Review (1802-1830) (Milan, 1955)
- Saintsbury, George Essays in English Literature 1780-1860, (London, 1890)
- Sellier, Walter Kotzebue in England, (Leipzig, 1901)
- Smith, D. Nichol ed. Jeffrey's Literary Criticism, (London, 1910)
- Smith, Elsie An Estimate of William Wordsworth by his Contemporaries 1793-1822, (New York, 1966)
- Spector, R.D. 'The Monthly and its Rivals' BNYPL 64 (1960). 159-61
- Steegman, John The Rule of Taste from George I to George IV, (London, 1936)

- Stephen, Leslie Hours in a Library (Third Series)
(London, 1879)
- Stockley, V. German Literature as Known in
England 1750-1830, (London, 1929)
- Swedenberg, H.T. 'Fable, Action, Unity, and
Supernatural Machinery in English
Epic Theory, 1650-1800' Englische
Studien 73 (1936). 39-48
- 'Rules and English Critics of
the Epic, 1650-1800' SP 35
(1938). 566-87
- Taylor, Harold 'Hume's Theory of Imagination'
UTQ 12 (1942-3). 180-90
- Taylor, J.T. Early Opposition to the English
Novel, (New York, 1943)
- Thorpe, Clarence de Witt 'Addison and Hutcheson on the
Imagination' ELH 2 (1935). 215-34
- Trowbridge, Hoyt 'Joseph Warton on the Imagination'
MP 35 (1937-8). 73-87
- Wain, John ed. Contemporary Reviews of Romantic
Poetry, (London, 1953)
- Ward, W.S. 'Byron's Hours of Idleness and
Other than Scotch Reviewers'
MLN 59 (1944). 547-50
- The Criticism of Poetry in
British Periodicals 1798-1820
(1943) University of Kentucky
Microcards

- Ward, W.S. 'Some Aspects of the Conservative Attitude Toward Poetry in English Criticism, 1798-1820' PMLA 60 (1945). 386-98
- 'Wordsworth, the 'Lake' Poets, and their Contemporary Magazine Critics, 1798-1820' SP 42 (1945). 87-113
- Wardle, R.M. 'Mary Wollstonecraft, Analytical Reviewer' PMLA 62 (1947). 1000-9
- Oliver Goldsmith, (Lawrence, Kansas, and London, 1957)
- Wasserman, E.R. 'Another Eighteenth-Century Distinction between Fancy and Imagination' MLN 64 (1949). 23-5
- Watkins, W.B.C. 'Dr. Johnson on the Imagination: A Note' RES 22 (1946). 131-4
- Watson, George G. 'Contributions to a Dictionary of Critical Terms: Imagination and Fancy' EC 3 (1953). 201-14
- Wellek, René Concepts of Criticism, (New Haven and London, 1963)
- A History of Modern Criticism: 1750-1950 vols i and ii, (London, 1955)
- The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900
ed. Houghton, (Toronto, 1966)

- Wiley, M.L. 'Genius: A Problem in Definition'
Texas Studies in English 16
(1936). 77-83
- Williams, Stanley T. 'The Literary Criticism of
Sydney Smith' MLN 38 (1923).
416-9
- Winchester, C.T. A Group of English Essayists of
the Early Nineteenth Century,
(New York, 1910)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the thesis is, after tracing the roots of British literary reviewing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to examine closely the literary reviews in the Monthly Review, the Critical Review, the British Critic, the Anti-Jacobin Review, and the Edinburgh Review during the years 1800-1808 with a view to determining their nature and merit and in particular the degree of originality exhibited by the Edinburgh Review, its debt to the older Reviews, and its influence upon them in turn up to 1808.

Part I: Reviewing before 1790: The General Background

The Monthly Review and the Critical Review are introduced as the major critical journals of the second half of the eighteenth century. The review article is distinguished from other critical forms current during the period. Four distinctive elements are isolated and traced from their origins to the early nineteenth century. These are: the abstract with which literary reviewing began in the mid-seventeenth century; a more specifically critical element found at the end of that century; the stylistic element in which seventeenth-century acerbity and eighteenth-century elegance fuse to result in a characteristic bantering style found in many review articles; and, the appearance of major writers in the increasingly respectable reviewing world. Smollett and Goldsmith dominate the first flowering of the Review, both working in the Monthly and Critical. Smollett is lively but somewhat haphazard; Goldsmith is much more coherent, his reviews united by the liberal critical principles found in An Enquiry into the Present State of Learning in Europe and displaying

some technical innovations. After this important period in the late fifties and early sixties, the two Reviews declined into comparative dullness, the Critical especially tending to shelter behind a series of abstracts and the works reviewed being of less interest.

Part II: Four Reviews 1790-1802: The Immediate Background

The first chapter describes the factual background of the four older Reviews, outlines their policies, and presents evidence of their widespread circulation; the Monthly Review may well have been read by as many as 25% of the literate population.

In the second chapter the Reviews are compared, firstly by considering the Anti-Jacobin Review's criticisms of its rivals, then by making a statistical comparison of the works reviewed by each periodical. This reveals that poetry is predominant in all the Reviews, while the Monthly reviews no Lane novels, the British Critic few novels at all, and the Anti-Jacobin Review comparatively few plays. No Review achieved much more than 50% coverage of the literature published. A survey of reviewing in the 1790s concludes the chapter. It supplements the work of Derek Roper by concentrating on individual Reviews and their contributors, paying particular attention to the important pioneering work of William Taylor of Norwich in the Monthly and articles by Coleridge and Southey in the Critical.

The third chapter, entitled 'Editors and Reviewers', surveys comments by reviewers on their work and isolates

the images of court and citadel of taste which they employ to describe the reviewing process. The method of choosing works for review is examined and the difference between major articles and catalogue entries considered. The editor was usually firmly in control and demanded consistency from his contributors.

Part III: Reviewing Practice in the Four Reviews 1800-2

The first chapter is entitled 'The General Critical Background: the via media'. It begins with a summary of the general critical background in Britain, made up largely of a neoclassicism modified by: the strong individuality of the three dominating English critics (Dryden, Addison, and Johnson); the new interest in human psychology; an increasing emphasis on key words common to all the arts (such as taste, sublime, originality, and genius); the appreciation of Shakespeare; a stressing of middle-class morality; and historical relativity. Within this neoclassical framework loosely held together by middle-class decency, demand for intelligibility, and good taste adopting the middle way the reviewers had to work.

The bulk of the chapter consists of a survey of the terminology and attitudes occurring in the four older Reviews during the three years 1800-1802. There is close enough agreement among the different reviewers to make such a mass study possible.

Terms relating to style are first considered. Approval is generally given to correct, easy, elegant, harmonious, and smooth verse and prose. Roughness and

harshness are generally to be avoided. The derivations, significance, and application of these terms is examined. Simplicity is commended, especially when it avoids the extremes of bombastic obscurity and prosaic meanness and vulgarity. To offset possible insipidity and dullness, correct and simple verse needs energy, force, and strength, and the resulting middle way will resemble the path chosen by the golden age of literature, the first half of the eighteenth century. The consideration of stylistic terms ends with remarks on diction, grammar, and versification. In diction a Johnsonian middle way between the gaudy and the low was demanded, while ungrammatical usage was condemned and versification expected to be regular in the neoclassical prosodic tradition.

Qualities expected in works considered as wholes are next considered. In plots the extremes of bareness and over-complexity were to be avoided. Characters were to be well-sustained and novel; imagery was regarded as decorative and expected to be apprehensible by logic.

Passing to qualities expected of the author, the study isolates for consideration judgment and taste, genius, fancy, imagination, and wit. Judgment is the steadying, estimating faculty which controls excess, but the fact that it is not invoked as frequently as in the previous century suggests a lightening and loosening of the neoclassic structure. Taste was a potentially disruptive faculty and true taste was ardently sought by the new middle classes. The reviewers conceive of its principles as immutable: good taste perceives the

middle way which poetry ought to adopt and is to be cultivated. The term genius rarely meant more than 'natural talents', but often involved a carelessness of the rules allowable to great authors. Fancy and imagination are used mostly in the same senses of 'an ingenuity in invention' or a faculty elevating the mind but always to be controlled by taste or judgment. Wit is the brilliant quality possessed by Anstey but lacking in his imitators.

Three types of feeling for situation or character associated with the terms picturesque, sensibility, and sublimity occupy the next section of the chapter. The first, rarely found in the reviews, involves a rough but not rugged visual beauty. Sensibility in moderation is approved as sympathetic compassionate feeling likely to have a good effect on the reader. Some measure of generalisation is regarded as essential to sublimity, and mock sublimity is to be carefully avoided.

Probability, naturalness, and the supernatural are next considered. Caricature and extravagance is widely condemned, as are romantic incidents tending to revive barbarism. Historical accuracy in manners, though not in facts, is demanded. The reviewers are mostly tired of ghosts and even of Greek legends, but the supernatural finds occasional defenders.

Originality is universally commended except when it leads to excess. Early- and mid-eighteenth-century models were to be imitated, though not too closely. The neoclassical rules are liberally interpreted, the ancients being far from infallible and the unities receiving varying degrees of stress.

Moral considerations occupied a large part of many reviews, especially those of novels. The moral should be obvious and salutary. The distinction between virtue and vice should ~~never~~ be blurred, and rationality was always demanded.

The chapter ends with an examination of philosophical, religious, and patriotic considerations. Jacobinical philosophy was condemned, especially for its melancholy; piety and good doctrine were highly ~~praised~~^{ed}, as were patriotic sentiments in that time of national crisis.

In all these considerations, the concepts of the middle way and the old school of the early eighteenth century are paramount and are adapted to deal with all new literature, except for moral strictures^{tu} sympathetically enough.

The second chapter deals with the reviewers' attitudes to groups of writers and to individuals, and begins by discussing genres and schools. Opinions varied on the value of the modern ballad and the multitudinous epics of the period. The pastoral was generally found alien to common sense. After remarks on the reception of satire, descriptive and didactic poetry, novels are considered. Lane productions were universally mocked, the Godwinian school execrated, and romantic novels generally considered childish. Estimates as to the value of the novel as a genre varied widely. Modern drama was generally found very poor, with spectacle, nonsense, and German and Gothick absurdity predominating. Opinions on works produced in times or places remote from the reviewers were diverse,

the former being often seen as of antiquarian rather than than literary value: classical works were however generally approved.

Advice was frequently offered by reviewers to authors and often accepted. Allowances were made by many reviewers for personal disabilities such as youth or bereavement and for good intentions. Puffing was frequent in the Critical and the Anti-Jacobin Review, and very rare in the Monthly. Little evidence has come to light to convict the British Critic.

The third chapter deals with individual reviewers. In the Anti-Jacobin Review Richard Polwhele is the most important contributor, concerned with permanently valid literary standards and a wider critical view than the other reviewers in a very orthodox publication which occasionally exhibits some of the stylistic versatility of the Anti-Jacobin. Southey's reviews for the Critical are considered: they exhibit a tendency towards the dissertation and show evidence of the poet's ear in competent and sensitive reviewing which can not, however, be considered major. Nine reviewers are selected from the Monthly Review for detailed treatment. Among the most significant of these is John Ferriar, the Manchester physician. He is often learned and writes well. Francis Jeffrey is seen as a severe but thoroughly comfortable pupil of Ferriar in the Monthly tradition, orthodox in his conservatism and with little sign of the limited originality of the Edinburgh. C.L. Moody writes exceptionally well, though his criticism is of no permanent value.

Part IV: The Edinburgh and its Rivals 1803-8

The first chapter deals with the Edinburgh Review itself. Its history is briefly sketched and some account of Jeffrey's editorial procedures is given. Jeffrey's criticism is then examined, beginning with a critical survey of studies from Leslie Stephen to the present day, stressing Jeffrey's double standard for public and private reading of literature arising from his early rejection of individualism and affirming that his criticism is deserving of serious study and is not merely capricious. Jeffrey is severe with mediocrity, though he has a weakness for the competently conservative. The approach adopted to the critical corpus in this study is one which stresses Jeffrey's kinship with the late neoclassical tradition in which all of the reviewers to some extent stand. The true path for literature is the middle way in style and that of common experience in material and sentiment: the excessively subjective and quirky is excluded. Hence his criticism of the Lake poets: their great talents were being misapplied both in style and matter, in their cult of childish simplicity and their unreality encouraged by their solitary meditations. Scott is again admired for his enormous vigour but found eccentric in his antiquarianism and careless in his style. An analysis of Jeffrey's individual reviews follows: they are briefly compared with other treatments of the same works. In most cases Jeffrey's review is the most satisfactory with a wide critical approach and adequate scholarship, but he can over-estimate conventional verse, or be too severe on originality.

The other literary reviewers in the Edinburgh are considered in the last section of the chapter and their work is compared with that in the older Reviews. They back up Jeffrey's defence of the old tradition in literature. The standard of their contributions varied greatly from the flashy imperception of Brougham and ~~Sydney~~ Sydney Smith and some very ordinary writing to Scott's fine series of eleven literary reviews, combining profound learning with acute penetration and sensitive perception. Thomas Campbell provides two excellently written, subtle articles, and the legal antiquarian Thomas Thomson displays a power to penetrate to essentials. The Critical is again the Edinburgh's closest rival, showing much discrimination.

The second chapter deals with the four older Reviews after the advent of the Edinburgh and finds only in the Critical any influence of the new Review. It is determined to be less severe than the Edinburgh, but becomes more discriminating than before in the rejection of mediocrity. William Taylor is the main asset of the Critical during 1803-4 with his penetration and original vocabulary. The Anti-Jacobin Review becomes spinelessly favourable, the British Critic still produces the very occasional good article, and the Monthly Review sinks into a rapid decline with the departure of Ferriar and the arrival of Thomas Ogle. A survey of the individual reviewers' work is made to show the full effect of the changes in personnel.

The final chapter compares in detail the treatments afforded sixteen important works in the five Reviews. Jeffrey's eight reviews in the Edinburgh dominate the survey and his

generally disastrous criticisms of Wordsworth's Poems, in Two Volumes, many of which were later accepted by the poet, are afforded special consideration. Ferriar's Monthly reviews are often perceptive, but less unified. William Taylor's review of Thalaba in the Critical, a direct challenge to Jeffrey, opens up new avenues of impressionistic criticism, while the British Critic continues to produce occasional good articles. The majority of the reviews outside the Edinburgh are inadequate and even in the Edinburgh seven of the sixteen articles are grossly marred by blustering insensitivity on the part of Jeffrey, Brougham, Smith, and Playfair.

Part V: Concluding Evaluation

The role of individual talent is seen as the central factor emerging from the study in determining the standard of reviewing which varies from the obscurantist to the original article which has sometimes not been surpassed. The chapter ends with a survey of less central but significant conclusions to be drawn from the study.

