

A Stylistic Study of Oliver Goldsmith's Essays

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Introduction

"Nihil quod tetigit non ornavit,"⁽¹⁾ And this, in general, was the opinion Samuel Johnson held of Goldsmith's writing. Four years after the death of Goldsmith, in a conversation concerning the belated acknowledgment of his literary merit, Johnson continued to praise him thus: "Goldsmith, however, was a man, who, whatever he wrote, did it better than any other man could do."⁽²⁾ Johnson was an exception, for most of Goldsmith's contemporaries underrated his prose even while they read it avidly. It seems as if they were more concerned with anecdotes illustrating his eccentricities and personality than with the measurement of this literary strength. Through the years since, critics, in describing Goldsmith's prose style, have used these adjective most often--graceful, charming, simple, sweet, lucid, easy, elegant, flowing, and natural. In fact, many seem to view Goldsmith, the essayist, as the eighteenth-century composite of Charles Lamb and Leigh Hunt. What are the significant stylistic characteristics of Goldsmith as an essayist?

In order to develop a rationale for analyzing Goldsmith's prose style as revealed in his essays, written for the purpose of communication under specific circumstances, it seems appropriate to sketch briefly the major concepts of style, arbitrarily selected, in an attempt to support my somewhat eclectic approach to a study of his expression.

The main concept is the traditional, rhetorical theory with its roots among the ancients. Ever since the systematic rhetorics of the big three--Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian--stylistics has had a vocabulary for prose, both written and spoken.

1. Taken from Goldsmith's Epitaph in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey, written by Dr. Johnson. See James Boswell's Life of Samuel Johnson (Chicago, 1952), p. 116.

2. Ibid., p. 380.

In fact, the very term style is the third canon of oratory--the others being invention, disposition, memory, and delivery. Let us consider one classical representative, Aristotle. The essential rhetorical conceptions in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* are of great importance, beginning with his broad definition of rhetoric as "the faculty of discovering in a particular case the available means of persuasion."⁽³⁾ Implicit in this definition is the recognition of the need for individual discovery and the inclusion of the audience. In fact, Aristotle goes on in Book II of the *Rhetoric* to discuss the audience and to emphasize the idea that a person, interested in persuasion, must be concerned with human nature. In Book III he stresses clearness and appropriateness (both singularly noticeable in Goldsmith) as primary virtues of prose style. If we think of rhetoric as the use of discourse that employs directness in statement, these two qualities, clearness and appropriateness, seem vital corollaries. Basically, Aristotle's theory of rhetoric suggests a proper approach to the study of an individual writer--to isolate his particular stylistic characteristics and to show their effectiveness.

During the Renaissance rhetorical treatises dealt primarily with style and specifically with figures of speech. In fact, there was a general tendency to regard effective writing as largely determined by stylistic devices.

A. Language

A general way to study style is to analyze the language of a single writer statistically. In this process the selected writings are examined and reviewed according to determined factors. This, of course, requires the isolation of significant characteristics and a system of classification. But I shall employ what Read calls the "dipping audit"⁽⁴⁾ or the sampling of passages as demonstrations of characteristics of Goldsmith. These qualities will be selected from intuitive impressions as well as from logical conclusions that I have reached through general critical reading, but especially from the close perusal of Goldsmith's essays. Through this process I hope to gain a sense of the whole, which is the method Goldsmith himself employed in his criticism of the writings of others. This exploration of style will begin with Goldsmith's views of style as they appear in critical pieces, especially in

3. *The Rhetoric of Aristotle*, trans. Lane Cooper (New York, 1932), p. 7.

4. Herbert Read, *English Prose Style* (New York, 1928) P. XIII.

the Enquiry and in a few literary reviews.

Although Goldsmith has not articulated a complete doctrine of style, his remarks in many of his essays and critical articles indicate his concepts. He tended to discuss, as did other critics of his era, distinctions of style in relation to place and time and taste. As he described excellences and defects in the writings of others, he implied his own standards and preferences.

Throughout his writings Goldsmith praised clarity and conciseness, common sense and feeling, elegance and variety. He recommended imagination rather than imitation. He scorned obscurity and obscenity and monotony. He differentiated sharply between wit and humor, and he recommended good-natured satire. He revealed his keen sense of propriety in composition, both as a creator and a critic.

Earlier in an explication of approaches to the study of style, I mentioned Goldsmith's concern with the work of art in its totality. Repeatedly he suggests that critics should not examine particulars, i.e., minute faults or beauties, but rather that they should seek the essence, which is often the basic theme itself. In a review of Home's Douglas, A Tragedy, he disregards individual features but takes one perspective: the play is weak because of the lack of moral focus, a focus which Goldsmith regards as basic to every story--the "ground-work of every fable."⁽⁵⁾ Herein, Goldsmith shows his fundamental belief that literature should please and should instruct. Along with Samuel Johnson, he consistently upheld the high moral purpose of literature; but unlike Johnson's dogmatic manner, Goldsmith would instruct by blending the delightful and the moralistic. In this way he felt people might be deceived into instruction, for "The finest sentiment and the most weighty truth may put on a pleasant face, and it is even virtuous to jest when serious advice must be disgusting."⁽⁶⁾ Often the source of delight is humor, which, according to Goldsmith, is grossly lacking in English letters.

5. Oliver Goldsmith, The Works of Goldsmith, ed. J.W.M. Gibbs (London, 1908), IV, p.251--hereafter cited as Works.

6. Ibid., III, 514. His point of view is essentially the same as that expressed in No. 71 (5 June 1755) of the Connoisseur: "In a word, upon all occasions I have endeavoured to laugh people into a better behaviour: as I am convinced, that the sting of reproof is not less sharp for being concealed; and advice never comes with a better face, than when it comes with a laughing one." The British Essayists, XIX, 2. Goldsmith quoted this same passage in his own review of the Connoisseur, but it was omitted in the Gibbs edition and it was included in the Cunningham edition.

Although other writers of his age made distinctions between wit and humor, it seems important to include Goldsmith's particular differentiations, because he gave humor such prominence in his writing. He thinks of wit as a quality that raises human nature in the sense of appeal through word play and exaggerated surface effects, while humor depresses by emphasizing the low, the defective; witty expressions appeal to imagination and fancy whereas humor parallels human absurdity which merits ridiculing; and wit turns our admiration to the artist for his manipulation of language, so apparent, for example, in the Restoration comedy writers, while humor turns admiration or criticism to ourselves.⁽⁷⁾ In my estimation the element of humor is the spring of Goldsmith's appealing prose, poetry, fiction, and drama.

Interested in language Goldsmith became a part of a long and distinguished list of men who have written about language and thought from the questionings of Socrates to the probings of Mario Pei. Goldsmith recognized that fundamentally language, to be useful, must be related to the events and the times. Along with urging nations to develop the full power of their own language, and in contrast, criticizing those that did not, as in the case of Holland, he urged the re-examination of the level of language chosen by writers. It seemed to him that too many writers were living in the past with an inherited "inflated style" characterized by loaded epithets and ornate expressions. He urged men to write naturally, that is, appropriately, in terms of the subject, the audience, and the occasion.

Goldsmith speaks specifically of words in his tribute to the authors of the Connoisseur, Bonnell Thornton and George Colman. In many ways the purpose and style of the Connoisseur parallels publications of Goldsmith. The following statement has basic relevance to Goldsmith's practice in the use of words:

The dread of falling into (what they are pleased to call) colloquial barbarisms, has induced some unskilful writers to swell their bloated diction with uncouth phrases and the affected jargon of pedants. For my own part, I never go out of the common way of expression, merely for the sake of introducing a more sounding word with a Latin termination. The English language is sufficiently copious and expressive without any farther adoption of new terms; and the native words seem to me to have far more force than any foreign auxiliaries, however pompously ushered in...⁽⁸⁾

Despite the fact that the above passage was written by "Mr. Town, Critic and Censor-

7. Works, III, 515-516.

8. British Essayists, XIX, 2.

General," the same basic principles were expressed by Goldsmith. He deplored "laboured diction," "pompous epithets," "affected terms," and "coined words"--all of which he considered to be deviations from common sense.⁽⁹⁾ In reference to some revived plays, "ascribed to Shakespeare," Goldsmith castigated the forced humor, far-fetched conceit, and unnatural hyperbole.⁽¹⁰⁾

a. Choice of Words

Goldsmith regarded "laboured diction" as too forced, too contrived to be an effective instrument for persuasion. According to him, pedants, critics, grammarians, and some poets often seek the involved word, and the result is obscurity and cumbersome. In the Enquiry he recommends simplicity in expression, and this entails perspicuity and brevity. Only words that can convey ideas without unnecessary circumlocution should be used. Selection of terms with the most generally accepted connotations leads to understanding. Although he shows his respect for other languages, Goldsmith is determined to use English terms rather than barbarisms, a term ascribed to imported as well as obsolete words by eighteenth-century grammarians and rhetoricians. This, of course, is a view entirely opposite from Johnson's, for he believed writers should prefer Latin words to Saxon. On the other hand, Goldsmith criticizes the Germans for writing in Latin instead of studying and using their own language. Goldsmith associates the use of affected, stiff words with insincere writers. Such pomposity weakens the appeal of writing to readers of the middle class. Through full utilization of words in vogue, and Goldsmith believed that they may be repeated frequently, can a writer achieve clarity, the key to communication.

What basic type of word does Goldsmith choose from the world of Language? Believing that we can get a general impression of an author's vocabulary by a definite sampling, I recorded ten of the most frequently used nouns in the Enquiry. The results of the choice Goldsmith made and the number of times used are: learning (75); critic or criticism (40); taste (39); genius (33); nature (29); poet (20); absurdity (18); decline (14); decay (10); rules (9).

While there will be no attempt to probe any psychological aspects of language in this study, it is apparent that Goldsmith was concerned with judgments about absurdity

9. Works, III, 512.

10. Ibid., p.519.

and trifling. Obviously, standards and rules were of vital importance to him as they were to his age. But the primary value of this word tally, I feel, is the nature or choice of words themselves--basically a predominance of abstract words in popular use. However, unlike Johnson's "philosophic words" (to borrow Wimsatt's phrase) or merely "big words," Goldsmith's words are fundamentally general terms that would be used by reputable authors, the very standard modern linguists regard as the basic criterion for usage. That Goldsmith recognized a difference between his choice of words and Johnson's can be readily seen in one of his well-known repartees when Johnson was laughing at Goldsmith's description of the need for animals to talk simply in fables: "Why, Dr. Johnson, this is not so easy as you seem to think; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like WHALES."⁽¹¹⁾

One of the major ways Goldsmith achieves perspicuity or lucidity is by the avoidance of obscure words. The reader becomes engrossed in the thought of his essays and moves with it, unaware of the language. This is true even in respect to long sentences, such as the following:

For if, as it should seem, the rewards of genius are improperly directed; if those who are capable of supporting the honour of the times by their writings prefer opulence to fame; if the stage should be shut to writers of merit, and open only to interest or intrigue; if such should happen to be the vile complexion of the times (and that it is nearly so we shall shortly see;) the very virtue of the age will be forgotten by posterity, and nothing remembered, except our filling a chasm in the registers of time, or having served to continue the species.⁽¹²⁾

In analyzing this effective passage, the conclusion to the essay "Of Learning in Great Britain," I should like to consider first the general nature of the words employed. They are not technical, not scholarly, and not ambiguous--all common defects of obscure writing. Rather they are the popular words, with a preponderance of abstract terms, such as opulence, fame, interest, intrigue, virtue, pleasures, and honour. The one parenthesis is short, compared with the balance of the passage, and is placed properly; furthermore, it is suggestive of the conviction and sustained interest of the author as revealed throughout the Enquiry. Beginning a series of four parallel adverbial clauses with "if," i.e., through the use of anaphora, Goldsmith moves to the main clause, "the very virtue of the age will be forgotten by

11. Boswell, Life, p.215.

12. Works, III, 499-500.

posterity, and nothing remembered..." The sentence concludes, not with the main clause so characteristic of a strict periodic sentence, but with an elaborate *cursus*--"except our filling a chasm in the registers of time, or having served to continue the species." In the passage the antithetic parallelism, limited, of course, to two constituents, is shown in such phrases as "opulence to fame," and "interest or intrigue," Conjunctive and disjunctive words indicate the parallel elements, but it is significant that there is freedom in the ordering of the members. Hence, Goldsmith's passage does not seem to have the monotonous rhythm, common to Johnson's Rambler or Idler essays. Neither is there the steady coherence so obvious in Johnson's innumerable antithetical expressions, which may be the result of a difference between the two authors in concentration of thought. Here Goldsmith ranges in thought as he begins with the rewards of genius, moves on to the repudiation of playwrights, and ends with the values of the age--all in one sentence, which sentence itself begins with a dependent word for. Considering the passage as a whole, I think the result or effect is typical of Goldsmith--an individual treatment of a group of words in such a way as to flow and to end on an elaboration.

Another aspect of formal parallelism in Goldsmith's writing is his prevailing tendency to use word pairs, triplets and less frequently, quadruplets and quintuplets. Because of the dominance of these combinations, unusually fresh rather than trite, it is appropriate to include some illustrations and brief analysis. In a single paragraph from the essay "Of Polite Learning in France" the following word pairs appear: "in want and obscurity," "slow and cautious," "wealthy or indolent," "indolence and avarice," and "patronage and learning."⁽¹³⁾ Two of the five indicate a matching of meanings, two present contrasting ideas, and the last seems to distribute the meaning.

Goldsmith is deceptively clear, and one main factor of this apparent clarity is his ability to relate words of similar meaning or association in complex groupings. The triplet, composed of single units, is a common feature of Goldsmith's writing. Here are three examples from the essay "Of Polite Learning in Holland": "understood, cultivated, and spoken"; "want, banishment, or sorrow"; "the patriot, philosopher, and poet."⁽¹⁴⁾ We notice the alliteration of the last one, but such a device is infre-

13. Works, pp. 491-498.

14. Ibid., pp. 487-491.

quently used by Goldsmith. Rather he tends to break such a sequence of alliterative words, as in "porticos, processions, and cavalcades."⁽¹⁵⁾ Occasionally he creates a compound sentence of triplets-- "Thus, learning was encouraged, protected, honoured, and in its turn, adorned, strengthened, and harmonized the community."⁽¹⁶⁾ Such complete balance is rare and thus its presence is a variation. In general, the triplet is more forceful by its very extension, but its over-use could create monotony, a feature deplored by Goldsmith.

Rarely did Goldsmith increase single words to groups of four or five, but there are some examples in the Enquiry. Often the quadruplets are made up of proper names: "Edinburgh, Leyden, Gottingen, Geneva."⁽¹⁷⁾ In fact, the entire essay "On Universities" from which these names of both colleges and cities have been quoted, gives the impression of a listing, somewhat like a traveller's guidebook to places of interest. Undoubtedly the multiple elements contribute strongly to this over-all effect, once again illustrating the unity of thought and expression. However, quadruplets are not limited to lists of proper names, but are used in many other associations, such as the rather devastating picture of critics; "blank of silk, ribbons, smiles, and whispers."⁽¹⁸⁾ An illustration of the quintuplet completes this aspect of Goldsmith's style: "Critics, sophists, grammarians, rhetoricians, and commentators."⁽¹⁹⁾ Here Goldsmith enumerates and combines the figures he holds responsible for the literary decline. These "big five" seem to become an unforgettable combination for the reader.

Rather than leave the impression that Goldsmith used abstract words almost exclusively, I shall cite some evidence of his rather extensive use of concrete names of persons and places. At the same time, we can consider these as allusions that add vivacity as well as contribute to the perspicuity of his language. In discussing learning in various countries, Goldsmith mentions specific writers, contemporary and ancient. He alludes to geographical places and topical institutions, such as

15. Works, p. 482.

16. Ibid., p. 471.

17. Ibid., p. 523.

18. Ibid., p. 515.

19. Ibid., p. 471.

Herculaneum, the Sorbonne, and the Royal Society of London. He speaks of philosophers, kings, popes, scientists, and mythological figures. Through these numerous references, we surmise the scope of his reading. While he does not quote directly, as Johnson might some Greek or Roman motto or epigram, thus appearing unusually erudite, Goldsmith emerges nonetheless as the critic, the historian, the observer, who actually mentions his own need to refrain from presenting a dry catalogue of people, the very avowal of which indicates that he had selected names instead of telling all he knew. Further indication of concrete words are numbers that he uses in the biographical account of Baron Holberg of Denmark, the traveller, whose experience Goldsmith had seemingly emulated in his own tour of Europe.⁽²⁰⁾ The use of such concrete words as numbers and proper names demonstrates the precision of a segment of Goldsmith's writing. Certainly precision of this kind affects the mood of the whole and at the same time reflects the author's discrimination in thought.

Although Goldsmith did not think of precision in one modern sense, that of following or conforming to a standard of correctness, he did comment in his reviews on the beauty of his quality in the writings of others. He seems to come close to Blair's view that a writer knows that "the defects of his style can, almost on every occasion, be traced back to his indistinct conception of the subject..."⁽²¹⁾ Later Blair presents the etymology of the word precision as praecidere, meaning "to cut off" and concludes: "it imports retrenching all superfluities and pruning the expression, so as to exhibit neither more nor less than an exact copy of his idea who uses it."⁽²²⁾ There seems little doubt that the clearness and exactness of Goldsmith's representation of ideas and feeling in carefully chosen synonyms and antonyms, biased and forceful though they often are, evidence his respect for the importance of the selection of the apt word.

In considering the second characteristic of Goldsmith's words, that of vivacity, I believe the term itself needs to be explained. I interpret vivacity to mean animation, energy, lightness, liveliness, sprightliness. This agrees, in essence, with Cambell concept, which he relates to his theory of human nature: the mind perceives

20. Works, pp. 288-489.

21. Hugh Blair, Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters (New York, 1824), p. 12.

22. Ibid., p. 94.

through different degrees of vivacity.⁽²³⁾

Although Goldsmith uses, most appropriately, general terms to express abstract qualities or truths, he also uses particular names of people and places when necessary, as I have already demonstrated. Because his words are chosen discriminately and because they are generally familiar or common, the effect is emphatic and energetic, as well as easy or flowing. Implicit, too, in Goldsmithian charm is the personal flavor which stems in the beginning from his constant use of the personal pronoun I. The effect of this is evident to any reader of Goldsmith's writings, for it touches each one emotionally and directly. C.B. Tinker in his prefatory note to Balderston's A Census of the Manuscripts of Oliver Goldsmith expresses this feeling "Among the most precious endowments of Oliver Goldsmith is the power of making his readers feel a peculiar intimacy with him, almost of an association apart..."⁽²⁴⁾

Consciously avoiding staid, pompous epithets (to be construed as adjectives), Goldsmith, for the most part, finds striking, revealing combinations: "Supernumerary domestics"; "bearded school-philosophy", "the ogling of broad eye"; "dispassionate prudence"; "fat unthinking face"; "uncomplying thought"; and "causeless anxiety."⁽²⁵⁾

Besides his concern for exact epithets, Goldsmith uses, the surprise element in his lexical selection. We do not know what unexpected, agreeable twist of words will greet us next. Sometimes it is a shocking contrast, such as "to add the character of a philosopher to the vices of a debauchee."⁽²⁶⁾ Perhaps it is the combination of sound and ideas as the "passport to immortality"⁽²⁷⁾—a phrase that impresses me as anticipating some of the twentieth-century slogans, such as "Passport to Freedom" or "Passport to Living." Again it may be the words of diminution that frequently accompany his many parallels between the world of man and of lower animals. For example, Goldsmith points out that in their native community the elephant is a citizen and the beaver, an architect, but when man intrudes, the intellect and spirit of the

23. George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, ed. Lloyd F. Bitzer (Carbondale, Illinois, 1963). In an excellent introduction Mr. Bitzer discusses Campbell's theory of human nature, including his ideas of vivacity and concludes: "Campbell uses the following terms to signify the quality of vivacity: liveliness, force, energy, brightness, steadiness, and lustre...describes ideas lacking vivacity or possessing it in small degree as faint, languid, or feeble." p.xxi.

24. Katharine Canby Balderston, A Census of the Manuscripts of Oliver Goldsmith (New York, 1926), p.v.

25. Works, III, 472, 482, 493, 501, 504, 508.

26. Ibid., p.495.

27. Ibid., p.491.

animals decline.⁽²⁸⁾ Perhaps the Keenest surprises come with the frothy intermingling of allusions and words that suggests a nonsensical, yet logical, effect: "But the wiser part of mankind would not be imposed upon by unintelligible jargon, nor, like the knight in *Pantagruel*, swallow a chimera for a breakfast, though even cooked by Aristotle."⁽²⁹⁾

Realizing that vivacity and perspicuity of both thought and words are major factors in attracting, holding, and persuading his readers, Goldsmith, as a communication expert, chooses the simple, direct, appropriate vehicle. His choice is deliberate, not only proved by his overwhelming testimony in principle and practice, but by his evident rejection of the aureate expressions, which he slyly intrudes and places in juxtaposition with passages filled with common words. For example, in his analysis of the decay in learning in Italy, he writes of the poets who turn from reality to some Golden Age:

The zephyr breathes the most exquisite perfume, the trees wear eternal verdure; fauns, and dryads, and hamadryads, stand ready to fan the sultry shepherdess, who has forgot indeed the prettinesses, with which Guarini's shepherdesses have been reproached, but is so simple and innocent as often to have no meaning. Happy country, where the pastoral age begins to revive!--where the wits even of Rome, are united into a rural group of nymphs and swains, under the appellation of modern Arcadians!⁽³⁰⁾

Certainly this passage is a bold and artful contrast with the balance of the essay. Thus Goldsmith underscores the character of his own diction--its simplicity.

b. Sentence Structure

The scope of this part is limited to word order, both in sentences and paragraphs, and to rhythmical features of Goldsmith's essays. As in his selection and use of words, Goldsmith's style in sentences is in subtle accord with content.

A review of Goldsmith's principles of prose, cited in the earlier discussion of the *Enquiry*, reveals that he deplored the "inflated style" and urged "writing naturally." His repudiation of contrived writing does not mean that he wrote inellegant prose. On the contrary, he made use of balanced constructions, as revealed above in the analysis of formal parallelism in words.

Just as in the case of vocabulary, chosen with consideration for vivacity and perspicuity, Goldsmith professes his ideas on sentences in his essay "Of Eloquence":

28. *Ibid.*, pp.469-470.

29. *Ibid.*, p.474.

30. *Ibid.*, pp.481-482.

Fine declamation does not consist in flowery periods, delicate allusions, or musical cadences, but in a plain, open, loose style, here the periods are long and obvious; where the same thought is often exhibited in several points of views...⁽³¹⁾

In order to establish the application of Goldsmith's prose principles of simple, clear, loose periods--uncloyed by melody and stilted figures, repetitious but incremental--and analysis of his sentences is in order. And an examination of his sentences reveals their basic nature, the means of transition between sentences and paragraphs, and the purposes served by certain arrangements of words. The ordering of words involves a consideration of rhythm. Goldsmith, like Johnson, was interested in prose rhythm⁽³²⁾ and seemed to view this feature from semantic, euphonic, and lexical angles.

What does a study of Goldsmith's sentences reveal about their length and type? To begin with, he employs a variety of short and long units in individual paragraphs avoiding the periodic sentence, because it tends to shape its structure more formally. Probably he has chosen the loose sentence because it makes use of the natural structure of the language, proceeding from the subject, through the verb, to its object. In general, the pattern of subject-verb-object governs a large portion of the structure of English sentences, and it can be modified by an infinite variety of detail, as Goldsmith certainly demonstrates. He occasionally uses inversions, mainly in the form of questions, introductory phrases or clauses, and expletives. Frequently his opening sentences of essays are terse and precise "leads," as can be seen in these examples from the Bee:

The rise and fall of our amusements pretty much resembles that of empire.

"Of the Opera in England"

The history of the rise of Language and learning is calculated to gratify curiosity rather than to satisfy the understanding.

"An Account of The Augustan Age of England"

Deceit and falsehood have been an over-match for truth, and followed and admired by the majority of mankind.

"On Deceit and Falsehood"

Frugality has ever been esteemed a virtue, as well among Pagans as Christians: there have been even heroes who have practised it.

"Upon Political Frugality"

Our theatres are now opened, and all Crub Street is preparing its advice to the managers.

"Remarks on Our Theatres"

31. Works, II, 425-426.

32. See Boswell, Life, p.382. In discussing "numerous prose" Johnson speaks of Sir William Temple's giving cadence to English prose and expresses the opinion that before Temple's writing people were careless of the arrangement of words.

In the single essay "On Dress" Goldsmith uses sixty-five sentences--twenty-four of which are complex; twenty-one, simple; twelve, compound; and eight, compound-complex,⁽³³⁾ These sentences are intermingled throughout the paragraphs. There are two single-sentence paragraphs, both containing over fifty words, exceeded in length by only one other sentence of sixty-two words. There appears to be a distinct tendency to keep the longest sentences for the conclusion of each of the fourteen paragraphs, with the exception of the final two paragraphs. With half of the sentences in this essay under twenty-five words, there is little question of Goldsmith's use of short sentences to vary the long periods for which he expresses a preference. There is a preponderance of independent clauses, which supports Hopkins' findings, lending directness, and often, succinctness, to the prose. Nonetheless, my analysis of this essay "On Dress" suggests that Goldsmith varies the sentence structure constantly in order to maintain reading interest as well as to provide vitality.

In addition to his concern for readability and vitality, Goldsmith recognizes the importance of unity and coherence, manifested, in part, through his transition devices between sentences and paragraphs. He makes conspicuous and discriminating use of all kinds of conjunctions. As these transitional words and phrases bridge sentences, they reveal relationships of cause to effect, general to particular, restriction, supplementation, and concession. By his selection of appropriate connectives, Goldsmith keeps the material that has been presented in close proximity with new ideas that he is about to introduce, and thus maintains a high level of unity and coherence.

As a result of Goldsmith's frequent use of a series of words, phrases, and independent clauses, his leading transitional expression is "and", implying supplementation. In examining "Of Eloquence" I have tabulated the connectives Goldsmith uses in this single essay and the number of times he employs them:

and, used to link matters of like kind and of the same grammatical forms 53

33. Works, II, 324-329. See also Robert Hazen Hopkins, "The Creative Genius of Oliver Goldsmith," an unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1961, p.25. Mr. Hopkins states as a result of his study of Goldsmith's style as a whole: "In terms of sentence-structure Goldsmith possesses a distinctive characteristic among the major writers of his period, a characteristic that to the best of my knowledge has never before been commented upon; he consistently uses compound-sentence structure, or in other words main clauses consistently outnumber subordinate clauses."

But, used to state a change in direction or to introduce opposition 30

as, used to show cause mainly or to reveal similarities 21

since, used to show cause or time 3

then, used to show cause or time 4

or, used to show contrast 12

Other transitional forms used include if, therefore, however, thus, in vain, from hence it follows, at present, and in a word. The latter phrase or, in short, Goldsmith depends on to introduce conclusions or paragraphs and to summarize the main thought or moral of the discourse. His transitions seem almost "organic" and move easily to establish the desired relationships. In fact, these natural connections provide a vital service in linking ideas smoothly and clearly.

To attain unity and coherence in paragraphs, Goldsmith uses parallelism and repetition. His sentences are lucid, not only because of the choice of words, but also because of the balanced phrasing. The balance may be shown in such simple forms as:

By this means, strong expression, new thought, rising passions, and the true declamatory style, will naturally ensue. (34)

It appears, of course, in longer, more complex units:

As I said before, the good preacher should adopt no model, write no sermons, study no periods; let him but understand his subject, the language he speaks, and be convinced of the truths he delivers. (35)

However, unlike Johnson, whose use of parallelism is one of his most conspicuous qualities, Goldsmith does not sustain parallels throughout many paragraphs and seems to elude any positive, consistent, organized system of hypotaxis. Rather his parallelisms seem to develop spontaneously in order to vary the rhythm of the prose or to provide a precise expression of thought.

Despite common strictures against repetition by rhetoricians and grammarians, Goldsmith demonstrates steadily his belief that repetition is necessary, not only for emphasis, but for full and effective explanation of the subject. Often he attempts through restatement, not usually a literal repetition, to expand ideas. Note how repetition functions in this paragraph:

Enthusiasm in religion, which prevails only among the vulgar, should be the chief object of politics. A society of enthusiasts, governed by reason, among the great, is the most indissoluble, the most virtuous, and the most efficient of its own decrees that can be

34. Works, II, 425.

35. Ibid., p.427.

imagined. Every country, possessed of any degree of strength, have had their enthusiasms, which ever serve as laws among the people. The Greeks had their Kalokagathia, the Romans their Amor Patriae, and we the truer and firmer bond of the Protestant Religion. The principle is the same in all: how much, then, is it the duty of those, whom the law has appointed teachers of this religion, to enforce its obligations, and to raise these enthusiasms among people, by which alone political society can subsist. (36)

We are aware of the repetition of the words enthusiasm, religion, society, most, law, people, and politics. Moving from the opening short topic sentence to the long final clinching statement, Goldsmith equates enthusiasm in religion with enthusiasm in political units. Restatement expands the basic idea and suggests complexity of thought. And, of course, the entire paragraph reveals coherence, achieved not by transitional devices, but mainly by repetition of words and thoughts.

Because the avoidance of ambiguity or double meaning was an ideal of Goldsmith, he not only chose his words carefully, but he collocated them judiciously and skillfully. In analyzing the arrangement of words, phrases, and clauses in Goldsmith's essays, I have found that the disposition rests on sense, sound and rhythm.

In considering sense or meaning in relationship with the ordering of words, my study of Goldsmith's sentences shows that he sometimes begins his sentences with the main thought, followed by modifying, dependent phrases or clauses, often in parallel constructions. The following illustrations are typical of this pattern of Goldsmith's loose sentences:

We shall undoubtedly hear learned disquisitions on the structure of one actor's legs, and another's eyebrows.

"Remarks on Our Theatres"

Thus, she spends the whole week in a close chamber, with no other company but her monkey, her apothecary, and cat: and comes dressed out to the Park every Sunday, to show her airs, to get new lovers, to catch a new cold, and to make new work for the doctor.

"On Dress"

They esteemed those virtues so inseparable, that the known expression of Vir frugi signified, at one and the same time, a sober and managing man, an honest man, and a man of substance.

"Political Frugality"

But the predominant structures in Goldsmith's essays are the long, compound and compound-complex sentences. Here, of course, independent and dependent elements are balanced, and these circumulative sentences tend to move thought steadily

forward to satisfying, often surprising, conclusions. Professor John Arthos, in a perceptive article on Goldsmith's prose, contends that Goldsmith's control of word order reveals what is in his mind and that Goldsmith writes "in order not to lead but to follow thought."⁽³⁷⁾

At times the thought which Goldsmith wishes to express is argumentative. The following examples reveal the effectiveness and fullness of expression achieved through a combination of phrases and clauses in polemical material:

These rules, it may be said, will diminish the necessary taxes; but this is false reasoning, since what was consumed in debauchery abroad, would, if such a regulation took place, be more justly, and perhaps more equitably for the workmen's family, spent at home; and this cheaper to them, and without loss of time.

"Political Frugality"

But, let us suppose a new law to be perfectly equitable and necessary; yet, if the procurers of it have betrayed a conduct that confesses by-ends and private motives, the disgust to the circumstances disposes us, unreasonably indeed, to an irreverence of the law itself; but we are indulgently blind to the most visible imperfections of an old custom.

"Custom and Laws Compared"

A mind thus leaving school, stored with all the simple experience of science, would be the fittest in the world for the college course; and though such a youth might not appear so bright, or so talkative, as those who had learned the real principles and causes of some of the sciences, yet he would make a wiser man, and would obtain a more lasting passion for letters, than he who was early burdened with the disagreeable institution of cause and effect.

"On Education"

Thus the clearness of Goldsmith's thinking, shown here in convincing language, gives to these passages the quality of good sense, which he so often praised in his critical judgments of others, including Locke. There is little question of Goldsmith's desire to reveal meaning, that is, to make it transparent, and to transfer his ideas to the minds of others where, he hoped, they might take root and grow.

The effect of sentences is not only a result of sense but certainly also of sound. Euphony is a characteristic of most good prose, and it is reasonable to assume that Goldsmith, the poet, would be sensitive to its power. Earlier, it was pointed out that Goldsmith frequently avoids alliteration in a series of triplets by changing the alliterative pattern in the final member. He seems to avoid other mannered or

37. John Arthos, "The Prose of Goldsmith," Michigan Quarterly Review, 1 (January, 1962), 51-55.

unharmonious conjunctions of sound: a succession of polysyllables, the collisions of vowels, and excessiveness of sibilants, or identical word endings. When he uses harsh or uneuphonious sounds, it is done deliberately. In fact, Goldsmith's selection of words for vocal effect is associated with his thought and his visual sense, and much of the choice is probably instinctive.

In the opening paragraph of his celebrated "A City Night Piece" Goldsmith achieves a soft, somnolent, sound effect by combining liquid consonants, i.e., l, m, n, and r, along with p, t, k or c, and s, with short and monophthong vowels interspersed with long vowels; the nasals, as in the words expiring, nothing, and destroying in the opening paragraph and an obscure, negating effect:

The clock has struck two, the expiring taper rises and sinks in the socket, the watchman forgets the hour in slumber, the laborious and the happy are at rest, and nothing now wakes but guilt, revelry, and despair. The drunkard once more fills the destroying bowl, the robber walks his midnight round, and the suicide lifts his guilty arm against his own sacred person. (38)

The gradation of the last parallel clause enhances the harmonious modulation of the passage.

In contrast, the third paragraph from the same essay reveals strong, harsh sounds through Goldsmith's use of diphthongs, i.e., around, sound, hour; long vowels; mutes, i.e., dying, bustle, gleam; "h" words, i.e., hangs, heard, human; and "ch" sounds, i.e., chiming:

What a gloom hangs all around! The dying lamp feebly emits a yellow gleam; no sound is heard but of the chiming clock, or the distant watch-dog. All the bustle of human pride is forgotten, and this hour may well display the emptiness of human vanity. (39)

Now, in moving from a consideration of rhythm as sound to rhythm in syntax, we are dealing with a much more generally accepted aspect of this stylistic feature. Balance of structure or syntactic order constitutes a major basis for rhythm. Parallelism of phrases and clauses appears often in Goldsmith's essays. "The way to acquire lasting esteem, is not by the fewness of a writer's faults, but the greatness of his beauties....," The rewards of mediocrity are immediately paid; those attending excellence generally paid in reversion," and "If wrong, every inferior dunce

38. Works, II, 376-377.

39. Ibid., p.377. See also George Campbell, The Philosophy of Rhetoric, (Carbondale, Illinois, 1963), pp.329-330 for a discussion of various elements of articulate sounds; I found this material by an eighteenth-century rhetorician to have basic relevance.

thinks himself entitled to laugh at their disappointment; if right, men of superior talents think their honour engaged to oppose..."⁽⁴⁰⁾

Occasionally the final part of the parallel structure is expanded by Goldsmith. These gradations appear in the following illustrations:

The expenses of society, of presents, of entertainments, and the other helps to cheerfulness, are actions merely indifferent...

"Justice and Generosity"

Puffed up themselves with ideas of false grandeur, and measuring merit by adventitious circumstances of greatness, they generally communicate those fatal prejudices to their pupils, confirm their pride by adulation, or increase their ignorance by teaching them to despise that wisdom which is found among the poor.

"Charles the Twelfth"

Different types of anaphora are used by Goldsmith for emphasis. For instance, when he wishes to add emotional stress to his ideas, he often repeats the initial word in a series of exclamations:

Our fire-works, our public feasts and entertainments, our entries of ambassadors, etc., what mummery all this! what childish pageants! what millions are sacrificed in paying tribute to custom! what an unnecessary charge at times when we are pressed with real want, which cannot be satisfied without burthening the poor.⁽⁴¹⁾
(Note also the gradation.)

A striking variation in the use of anaphora can be seen in these sentences, where there is a strong secondary element of repetition:

Happy those princes, who are educated by men who are at once virtuous and wise, and have been for some time in the school of affliction: who weigh happiness against glory, and teach their royal pupils the real value of fame; who are ever showing the superior dignity of man to that of royalty; that a peasant who does his duty is a nobler character than a king of even middling reputation. Happy, I say, were princes, could such men be found to instruct them; but those to whom such an education is generally intrusted, are men who themselves have acted in a sphere too high to know mankind.⁽⁴²⁾

Thus repetition of the initial word Happy is reinforced by a series of relative clauses introduced by the pronoun who.

In addition to parallel phrases and clauses, with their variations of gradation and repetitional features, the paragraph, as a unit of sentences, is also a unit of rhythm. In fact, Herbert Read believes that rhythmically sentences need to be

40. Works, II, 375-376.

41. Ibid., p.382.

42. Ibid., p.332.

placed in a paragraph unless they are aphorisms and therefore are self-contained. He writes that "The sentences must be dissolved in a wider movement and this wider movement is the rhythm of the paragraph--a rhythm that begins with the first syllable of the paragraph and is not complete without the last syllable."⁽⁴³⁾

What can we learn from an analysis of a selected paragraph from Goldsmith's essays?

What we clearly conceive, says Boileau, we can clearly express. I may add, that what is felt with emotion is expressed also with the same movements; the words arise as readily to paint our emotions as to express our thoughts with perspicuity. The cool care an orator takes to express passions which he does not feel, only prevents his rising into that passion he would seem to feel. In a word, to feel your subject thoroughly, and to speak without fear, are the only rules of eloquence, properly so called, which I can offer. Examine a writer of genius on the most beautiful parts of his work, and he will always assure you that such passages are generally those which have given him the least trouble, for they came as if by inspiration. To pretend that cold and didactic precepts will make a man eloquent, is only to prove that he is incapable of eloquence.⁽⁴⁴⁾

The thought is clear: quoting Boileau, Goldsmith begins his paragraph with the key statement that clear expression naturally follows clear thought. In addition, Goldsmith declares that true orators must be able to feel or react emotionally to their subject. His simple rules of eloquence are not more didactic directions but rather are recommendations for emotional control: the orator must feel his subject in a total sense and he must overcome fear. Rhythmically, the movement is one of balance as the sentences glide up and down. Prepositional and infinitive phrases appear in parallel groupings. Many words are repeated, i.e., the words we and clearly are repeated twice in the opening sentence, consisting of ten words. And from this point on many words are repeated, thus adding to the sound as well as the sense of the paragraph. But the major source of rhythm rests in the balanced constructions, both phrases and clauses. It is mainly through syntactic repetition that the rhythm of this paragraph is established. And, once again, Goldsmith's union of thought and expression is clearly evident.

Throughout my observations on style I have stressed Goldsmith's graceful, flowing

43. Read, English Prose Style, pp.63-64. See also Baum, pp.61-74. Here Baum, after quoting this passage as well as other lines from Read, concludes that paragraph rhythm remains a rather nebulous thing and recommends the analysis of successive paragraphs rather than an isolated one as Read has done.

44. Works, II, 421-422.

line. In the examination of transitional phrases, syntactical balance, and repetitional devices—all forces in the ordering of words in sentences—I have discussed clarity, coherence, unity and rhythm.

B. Literary Techniques

"Studying the outlines of any work of genius, is like watching the progress of infancy to maturity; we trace it growing under the hands of the artist; we imagine ourselves present at every addition and improvement, and congratulate ourselves as if we had been assisting to its final perfection."⁽⁴⁵⁾ In these words lauding Montesquieu's Miscellaneous Pieces, Goldsmith seems to describe a feeling we might have about his own essays in their most mature state in The Citizen of the World. Having experienced the evolution from the argumentative, rhetorically-balanced Enquiry, through the varied and lively Bee, to an analysis of The Citizen of the World from the figurative level, we, too, are sharing in the realization of a work of art.

a. Figures of Speech

The literary techniques that Goldsmith employs in his most masterly written essays serve his major purposes of communication and persuasion. His attitude toward figurative expression was examined previously in connection with the Enquiry, where he expressed his dislike of loaded epithets and orate expressions, far-fetched conceits and unnatural hyperbole. Yet these critical pronouncements did not mean that he wrote in literal terms all of the time. He made extensive use of similes and to a lesser degree of metaphors, and he frequently chose to allegorize his moral theses. But it is true that in his poetry he chose to avoid brilliant images and in his reviews of others' writings, whether history, aesthetics, poetry, or drama, he gave the palm for thought, humor, and various harmony but not for affectation in any guise.

45. Works, IV, 363. Goldsmith's authorship of this review has been questioned by Arthur Friedman in "Goldsmith's Contributions to the Critical Review," MP, XLIV (1946), p.42. This point of view is supported by Morris Goldenbroit, "Internal Evidence and Goldsmith's Periodical Writings," an unpublished doctoral dissertation (New York University, 1953), p.265. Earlier R. S. Crane in New Essays by Oliver Goldsmith (Chicago, 1927), pp. xl-xli quoted a passage from Goldsmith's review as the final evidence for justification for the publication of the new essays. Because of Goldsmith's known interest in Montesquieu's writings and the influence of some of these pieces of literature on Goldsmith and because the critical edition establishing Goldsmith's canon of writings has not been published, I choose to include a quotation which seems especially pertinent and representative of Goldsmith's basic news.

Goldsmith's principles of imagery were in sympathy with those of the rhetoricians, Hugh Blair and George Campbell, who urged moderation and good taste in the use of metaphor, hyperbole, and personification. They recommended good sense and simplicity as the best indicators of cultures that had advanced in science and language. In short, Goldsmith and his associates tended to think of the lavish use of metaphors as merely ornamental and not an integral or constitutive part of language.⁽⁴⁶⁾

Similes constitute the main figures and these are appropriate and lively. Typical of Goldsmith's practice, many are drawn from animals and human beings and from their activities, such as: "I am as well known in England as the dromedary, or live crocodile"; "I grew as merry as a grig"; "natural speaking like sweet wine, runs glibly over the palate, and scarce leaves any taste behind it"; and "the rich she treats like an arrant stepmother." While concrete details--Calvert's butt and Sedgeley's homebrew, Punch and King Solomon, Tentenden and London -- are subordinate to the general narrative or action details, they add a flavor. Key words are often repeated, including tankard, candle-snuffer, and I, suggesting geniality, comedy, and egotism. Trite phrases--"the ups and downs of fortune," "give us both the speen," "I naturally had no ear for music"--are placed next to these original combinations--"instructing me on beating all the marches and points of war" and "such was my success, that I could ravish the laurels even from a sirloin of beef."

In focusing on the figurative language of The Citizen of the World we can readily see that Goldsmith uses analogical language. His analogies are frequently in the form of simple, literal similes; for example, the first sentence of Letter IV begins: "The English seem as silent as the Japanese..." and in the next paragraph appears: "An Englishman is taught to love his King as his friend..."⁽⁴⁷⁾ Letter Vi contains a longer example: "and he who separates sensual and sentimental enjoyments, seeking happiness from mind alone, is in fact as wretched as the naked inhabitant of the forest, who places all happiness in the first, regardless of the latter."⁽⁴⁸⁾ Sometimes the similes are pictorial, such as: "A few nights ago, one of these generous creatures, dressed all in white, and flaunting like a meter by my side, forcibly

46. See I. A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (New York, 1936), pp. 99-138.

47. Works, III, 21.

48. Ibid., p. 30.

attended me home to my own apartment";⁽⁴⁹⁾ "The guardian goose flew at him like a fury, pecked at him with her beak, and slapped him with her feathers";⁽⁵⁰⁾ and "We have seen with terror a winged phalanx of famished locusts, each singly contemptible, but from multitude become hideous, cover like clouds the face of day, and threaten the whole world with ruin."⁽⁵¹⁾ It should be noted that Goldsmith's simple similes, in contrast with epic or sustained similes that he avoids, far outnumber the metaphors he uses. His similes seem to serve to illuminate ideas or descriptions whereas the metaphors tend to be more traditional, ornamental, and trite, e.g., "the Book of Nature", "the wheel of fortune," "The Giver of all," "A map of my mind," and "machines of pity or obedience." In many instances these traditional metaphors are used by Altangi or Fum Hoam and may bear out Goldsmith's intentions as presented in the Preface--that he would retain the formality of Eastern metaphors.⁽⁵²⁾ Contrary to Altangi's statement, "In the East, similes are seldom used, and metaphors, almost wholly unknown,"⁽⁵³⁾ figurative language has always been prevalent in Oriental literature.

Occasionally Goldsmith employs animal images for the purposes of description and for ironic effects as can be seen in many passages in The Citizen of the World.

(A) The subject of Letter XXVIII, a satirical essay, is the reasons for the great number of old maids and bachelors in London. This sentence contains two similes and two traditional metaphors:

49. *Ibid.*, p.34.

50. *Ibid.*, p.231.

51. *Ibid.*, p.327.

52. *Ibid.*, p.10.

53. *Ibid.*, p.127. This point is often mentioned by critics in commenting on Letter XXXIII, pp.124-129. Gibbs in n.l., p.129, states: "Oriental literature abounds in metaphor and similes; but Goldsmith either had not paid sufficient attention to the subject to be aware of this fact or he was content to overlook it in his eagerness to condemn the clumsy exaggeration of scribblers who affected to imitate the Eastern style.--B (Bohn)" I believe that Goldsmith has used this denial, as cited in the text of this study, as part of his general ironic treatment and thus undercuts the literal statement. After all in The Citizen of the World he retells Eastern allegories and fables, filled with images. According to Miss, Woo, quoted above, time and river metaphors have always been used by the Chinese for many ideas, and she declared: "We use metaphors abundantly to express ideas and always have."

I behold an old bachelor in the most contemptible light, as an animal that lives upon the common stock without contributing his share: he is a beast of prey, and the laws should make use of as many strata-gems, and as much force, to drive the reluctant savage into the toils, as the Indians when they hunt the rhinoceros. (54)

(B) In Letter XXII Altangi reflects on the news of his son's being made a slave, and he wonders if mortal man can ever find happiness and remarks:

Like reptiles in a corner of some stupendous palace, we peep from our holes, look about us, wonder at all we see, but are ignorant of the great architect's design. (55)

(C) In Letter XXI the Man in Black and the Chinese visitor are leaving the theatre:

wherefore, mixing with the crowd, my companion and I got into the street, where, essaying a hundred obstacles from coach-wheels and palanquin poles, like birds in their flight through the branches of a forest, after various turnings, we both at length got home in safety. (56)

(D) In an essay, Letter XLV, on the habit of the people of London to run after sights and monsters, Altangi concludes:

A man, though in his person faultless as an aerial genius, might starve; but if stuck over with hideous warts like a porcupine, his fortune is made for ever, and he may propagate the breed with impunity and applause. (57)

Far from being trite, contrive, and far-fetched these figures of speech are appropriate and have increased the range of meaning, carrying many more implications than a more prosaic, descriptive statement might. Goldsmith has used these images functionally, not merely as a device of decoration. He seems to be in agreement with Aristotle, who, in recognizing the value of metaphor in poetry and prose in both the Poetics and the Rhetoric, stresses that the best metaphors are appropriate, are not far-fetched, and are "drawn from the province of things that are beautiful in sound, or in effect, or to sight or some other of the senses." (58) Although many of Goldsmith's metaphors are traditional, his combining them with original similes frequently results in an integrated, effective passage. In spite of the fact that his figures of speech constitute a minor place as compared, with example in his prose, he often uses similes, and occasionally metaphors, to extend meaning and to add vitality, i.

54. Works, III, 106.

55. Ibid., p.84.

56. Ibid., pp.81-82.

57. Ibid., p.171.

58. The Rhetoric of Aristotle, trans. and ed. Lane Cooper (New York, 1932), p.189

e., perspicuity and animation.

b. Satire

In approaching satire as a literary art, we must be concerned with purposes, situations, characters, and language. The comic-ironic-satiric elements fuse into a form of rhetoric to be used by its creator for the unmasking of evil in order to induce correction of human vice or folly. The satirist, either the writer or his persona, emerges to shape the reader's response to the folly or evil being portrayed. Very often the satirist is a traveller, a simple person, a descendant from an amalgam of Horace and Juvenal; Chaucer, Piers Plowman, Pierce Penniless, and Pasquil the Playne; Rabelais, Cervantes, and Ben Johnson; and Pope, Gay, Swift. The tools the satirist chooses may be the direct means of invective, melodramatic exaggeration, burlesque; or the indirect means of irony through allegory, fables, symbolism. As in the metaphor, satire involves double vision; it aims at dissimulation for effect.

With this frame of reference about the term satire, let us consider Goldsmith's place in one of the greatest ages of satire in British letters. From Samuel Butler, through Dryden, Pope, Swift, Gay, Fielding. Goldsmith, to Jane Austen, there is present an ironic perspective of life; that is, all of those writers recognized the difference between reality and man's conception of actuality. In the use of their own society these satirists exposed pretension and affectation, idiocy and depravity, and their social vision often provided the key to an improvement in the human state.

Along with Goldsmith's preference for humor over wit, and his readiness to praise satire in others, such as Montesquieu and Samuel Butler, he offers further insight into his conception of ironic humor in a review of Rabener's Satirical Letters. In the opening sentence Goldsmith suggests his basic ironic vision of life: "As humour, in writing, chiefly consists in an imitation of the foibles or absurdities of mankind, so our pleasure in this species of composition arises from comparing the picture in description with the original in nature."⁽⁵⁹⁾ He feels too that every country has its peculiar humor, revealed in both situations and language, and that translations of humorous material are often unsuccessful.

In introducing The Citizen of the World and in the discussion of themes, I stated that the major object satirized was pride, reflected in individuals and nations. The form of the satire is a series of letters from a Chinese philosopher, Goldsmith's

59. Works, IV, 283.

major persona, who criticizes the land he visits in a refine, frank, but native way. Coming from a country that places the scholar ahead of the merchant or the scientist, he is presented as one whose ethical character will persuade others to listen to him. He is a man with friends, he is a man concerned about his son's safety and character development, and he is a man who wants to study the manners and customs of many lands, not for the sake of curiosity, not for economic aggrandizement, but for human betterment. Unlike most satirists who make extensive uses of invective and ridicule, the Chinese visitor shows how England looks to one who thinks about in terms of contrast with his own ideal state. The impressions, the shortcomings, the follies, and the vices are all viewed with an attendant change of perspective as the Chinese traveller moves from shock to admiration in many instances. His criticism and moral judgments may be ironically considered, but they are also impressive for their reasonableness and good-humored presentation. Goldsmith creates the Man in Black, a major character, as a balance for Altangi. In him he portrays a person who will picture England as a native son, who is able to tell this Chinese outsider the story of English life and ideals; but at the same time he is free to voice his personal criticisms. In a sense, the conversations between Altangi and his friend in Black become debates that often reveal the ingenuity and subtlety of the grand designer, Goldsmith. Through them the ills of England are exposed without bitterness or vitriolic attack.

In addition to the Man in Black, the other characters, who become vivid figures, minor personae, in this essentially dramatic satire, include Beau Tibbs, Mrs. Tibbs, and the pawnbroker's widow. Letters LIV, LV, LXXI, and VXXIII center around these characters, whose language and points of view are appropriately but ironically presented. The qualities of most of them are derived from Goldsmith's reminiscences of his family and friends as well as from some self-study and from his general observations on society. Here Goldsmith applies his theory on "low" humor admirably.

We learn that Altangi's friend in Black has a contract of marriage with the rich widow for having been so observant in seeing the bread was rising, but in the last letter we are told of the dissolution of the treaty over a difference in opinion concerning the proper point to start carving a turkey. The other couple, Beau and Mrs. Tibbs, appear as individuals, as a couple, and as part of a social group. Basically, they represent a frame of attack on the superficialities of the aristocracy--their dress, conversation, and pleasures. For example, Beau Tibbs's attire is a carica-

ture of that worn by some sham, any one of many vain, hypocritical noblemen.

his hat was pinched up with peculiar smartness...round his neck he wore a broad black riband, and in his bosom a buckle studded with glass; his coat was trimmed with tarnished twist; he wore by his side a sword with a black hilt; and his stockings of silk, though newly washed, were grown yellow by long service.⁽⁶⁰⁾

After describing his conquests of various aristocrats, Beau Tibbs cautions Altangi and Drybone not to report his social success, using his cant phrase--"a great secret," but he ends the meeting with a request for a small loan. When Altangi visits the Tibbs's home, we see its stark shoddiness, meet Mrs. Tibbs, a "slattern and a coquet," and leave with the Chinese caller after dining on "hallucination" delicacies. Yes, the lower classes, too, have their illusions. The well-known visit to Vauxhall Gardens brings a conflict between Mrs. Tibbs and the pawnbroker's widow, who disagree on where to sit, what to see, and how to react to the entire entertainment--all a mockery of the taste of the times, yet light and gay and amusing. Through these vivid, although minor personae, Goldsmith introduces additional gleams of light on our nature.

Names apparently intrigue Goldsmith, but his approach varies. Some represent the character's dominant trait and at times reflect Goldsmith's ironic attack on the "comedy of humors," in which each person is supposed to be motivated by a preponderant humor that gives him a characteristic eccentricity, or suggest a take-off on Restoration stock names; some show his interest in the nonsense effect gained by a play on alliterative sounds, reminding us in this respect of Edward Lear; and others seem to evolve from a picture in his mind. When we consider the impact of foreign names on us as we try to learn them, then we can appreciate Altangi's use of descriptive phrases to identify people, combined with Goldsmith's humorous choices. A "touchstone" list of names will suggest the effect Goldsmith achieves: Jenny Tinderbox, proud beauty--now and unmarried tutoress; Miss Squeeze, the pawn broker's unwed daughter--determined to marry only for money; Mr. Shrimp, the Man in Black's rival in love; Sophronia, sagacious woman--admirer of brains; Tim Syllabub, a droll person; Prince Bonbenin-bonbobbin-bonbobbinet-Englightener of the Sun; and Cracovius Putridus, a learned man.

Throughout The Citizen of the World Goldsmith's imagination plays on many subjects, and he demonstrates a variety of methods of treatment, including burlesque,

60. *Ibid.*, III, 204.

mockery, lampooning, ridicule, caricature, farce, and drollery. Along with the primary device of the traveller as the commentator, he uses fables, apothegms, epigrams, diaries, allegories, situational satire, conversation, debate, and exempla. Rhetorical devices, including diminution, exaggeration, suspense, and such figures as the apostrophe, a rhetorical question, and chiasmus are all used ingeniously by Goldsmith for his comic-ironic-satiric purposes.

Viewing The Citizen of the World as a mighty sphere of irony dominated by the foreign visitor--the embodiment of Chinese wisdom, grounded in maxims--Goldsmith explodes him ironically just as he does the English for their misconception of the nature of man and the society in which he must live. Altangi's beliefs about his own culture, his philosophy as applied to the trials of life, his ideals--all are undercut consistently by their juxtaposition with other moral, social, and religious standards until he realizes the merits of other countries' mores. Somewhere in the middle, Goldsmith suggests, is the representative human being--a combination of wisdom, sympathy, good-humor, and self-knowledge, but above all, the incarnation of person who can see beyond the limits of himself--the real citizen of the world.

To suggest the nature of his satiric treatment, so varied, so ingenious, so controlled, I have selected specific essays to exemplify the formal rhetorical oration (rare in Goldsmith), the mock heroic, the art of diminution and ridicule.

Essay LXXXVII deals with the folly of Western countries for employing Russians to fight their battles. Here is a definite style for a definite end--to persuade people to accept the author's argument on a controversial subject. In this case Goldsmith chose to write an essay in the rhetorical tradition, sharing this approach with such beacon names as Aristotle, Cicero, Quintilian, St. Augustine, Bacon, and Hobbes. In this arrangement Goldsmith follows the rhetorical order of introduction, statement or question, division, proof, refutation, and conclusion--although writing a brief essay.

A rhetorical, yet balanced, question introduces the problem emphatically: "You tell me the people of Europe are wise; but where lies their wisdom?"⁽⁶¹⁾ Following this is a similarly constructed sentence, although not expressed as a question, but also showing consideration for sound and shift in elements, i.e., "valiant to valour," as "wise to wisdom" in the first sentence. Then in sentence three comes the actual

61. Ibid., III, 325.

statement of the problem: "They are engaged in war among each other, yet apply to the Russians, their neighbours and ours, for assistance."⁽⁶²⁾ After declaring his position he begins an examination of the strength of England's potential enemy, Russia. He views the country geographically and historically, alluding to specific individuals, Johna Basilides and Peter the Great. His refutation of arguments usually put forth by the supporters of the policy now practiced by western powers includes several analogies with nature--the plague of famished locusts and the descent of myriads of desert ants. His final peroration integrates the migrations of animals and men:

Goths, Huns, Vandals, Saracens, Turks, Tartars, myriads of men, animals in human form, without country, without name, without laws, overpowering by numbers all opposition, ravaging cities, overturning empires, and, after having destroyed whole nations, and spread extensive desolation, how have we seen them sink oppressed by some new enemy, more barbarous and even more unknown than they!⁽⁶³⁾

Repetition, balance, allusions, directness, and emphasis are here, but the flash of satire is held until the closing paragraph. In this oratorical essay Goldsmith is judging man and finds him wanting wisdom in seeing things as they really are, a basic idea of The Citizen of the World.

In the fall of 1760 a theatre feud between Drury Lane and Covent Garden centered around the leading performers in Gay's The Beggar's Opera--Beard and Mrs. Brent representing Covent Garden and Lowe and Mrs. Vincent, Drury Lane. It is this situation that prompted Goldsmith to write "The Preparations of Both Theatres, for a Winter Campaign," Letter LXXIX.

The purpose and tone of this mock-satiric essay is made clear from the beginning:

The mimetic troops, different from those of the state, begin their campaign when all the others quit the field; and, at a time when the Europeans cease to destroy each other in reality, they are entertained with mock battles upon the stage.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Then the field of battle is described as the artillery is assembled by the dancing master with "quivering feet," the carpenter preparing "his paradise of pasteboard," the hero and the heroine putting on their armours--i.e., a brass guard for his forehead and a copper tail for her, still to be scoured, and even such reinforcements as

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 325-326.

63. *Ibid.*, pp. 327.

64. *Ibid.*, pp. 294-295. See also Letter LXXXV for further satiric commentary on theatrical rivalry, partially perpetuated by the panegyric verses on the performers.

messengers or letter carriers and Alexander the Great's stooge on a stool.⁽⁶⁵⁾

The actual battle scene opens with the singing female heralds, the rival Pollies, being contrasted in a panegyric seesaw of their manner, appearance, and gesturing. The sound and movement of battle are heightened by Altangi's appraisal: "If I ever go to one of their playhouses, what with trumpets, hallooing behind the stage, and bawling upon it, I am quite dizzy before the performance is over...the whole mind being filled with a dead march, a funeral procession, a catcall, a jig, or a tempest."⁽⁶⁶⁾

Goldsmith, speaking through his main persona Altangi, emphasizes the basic point of this mock epic--an attack on sentimental tragedy. Stating his amazement that no one writes properly for the stage since most playwrights are more concerned with stage business--trapdoors and scene shifting and "whining scences"--than with real drama, Altangi submits a model mid-final scene, actually a parody of sentimental endings in the form of a tragic pantomime. He is of the opinion that his model scene can only result in the "rapture of insensibility" and save the viewers from "all fatigue of thinking."⁽⁶⁷⁾

From Goldsmith's reviews of plays, the chapter on the stage in the Enquiry, and his Essay on the Theatre; or, A Comparison between Sentimental and Laughing Comedy (1773) we learn of his intense interest in the stage, including acting, directing, and writing. Everywhere appears his scorn for the extreme emphasis on staging and sound effects, but especially is his irony levelled at sentimental drama that prompts our tears instead of our laughter. For him the comic impulse stems from man's frailties and follies and these he ridicules.

Another source of irony that Goldsmith uses is diminution. He reduces members of various professions--the lawyer, the clergyman, the author and the educator by pricking his designated incompetents for their motivations and practices. Perhaps his depreciation is directed toward the ceremony of bestowing blue ribbons on knights, whose loyalty henceforth will not be lacking as long as the yards of blue or green riband remain. The creatures he selects for ridicule are not fantastic beings--little people, giants, magic beasts, such as the creations of a Rabelais or a Swift--but they are human beings whose pride or vanity has given them a false perspective

65. Ibid., p.295.

66. Ibid., p.296.

67. Ibid., p.297.

of life. His entire process is a logical one--reductio ad absurdum, not designed to keep the reader in any fantastic counterpart of man but to bring him to a consciousness of the "littleness" of his ideas. Through an outsider's perspective we consider "Little Great Men" in Letter LXXIV, an effective union of language and subject. Altangi points out posterity's need to remember a catalogue of the greats of the past, and he reflects on the number of biographers whose adulation for a great man will make them follow him even after death: "one of his little admirers sits down, big with the important subject, and is delivered of the history of his life and writings... called the revolutions of a life between the fireside and the easy chair."⁽⁶⁸⁾ Altangi, philosophizing at the end, expresses his belief that since he can never be a great man, he must settle for being honest and having common sense. Let diminutive admirers follow diminutive greats who march on to immortality—"catching all the oddities, the whimsies, the absurdities, and the littlenesses of conscious greatness by the way."⁽⁶⁹⁾

Goldsmith's comic sense is best seen in many letters ridiculing man at work and at play. In Letter LXVIII he is concerned with a topic of lively interest, the quacks of the medical profession. Using Altangi's dual position, as a Chinese who knows his own country and as a visitor who is observant, Goldsmith places the medical profession in England in juxtaposition with the place of doctors in various countries. First, the specialists of England are derided--"sciatica doctors" and "inoculating doctors," the defenders from bug-bites and bites of mad dogs. Next, the prolocutor uses illustrations and anecdotes about prime personages, the "formidable triumvirate. One is the unforgettable caricature of Doctor Richard Cook, F.U.N., sometimes called Dumplin Dick:

This great man, short of stature, is fat, and waddles as he walks. He always wears a white three-tailed wig nicely combed, and frizzed upon each cheek...usually drawn at the top of his own bills, sitting in his arm-chair, holding a little bottle between his finger and thumb, and surrounded with rotten teeth, hippers, pills, packets, and gallipots.⁽⁷⁰⁾

Altangi challenges Dr. Rock to a debate on this question: "Which of those three disorders incident to the human body, is the most fatal, the syncope, parenthesis, or apoplexy?"⁽⁷¹⁾ Considering the double entendre of the last words of the proposition,

68. Ibid., p.281.

69. Ibid., p.279.

70. Ibid., p.255.

71. Ibid., p.258.

Goldsmith carries out to the last word the sham or mockery of the entire conception.

One of Goldsmith's most devastating treatments of man's ridiculous pursuits is his satire on the races of Newmarket. Coming from Ireland where horses were considered more interesting than women, Goldsmith naturally had some background for races, but he quickly diminishes the fashionable amusement of horse racing after equating its place among nobility with that of partridge fighting at Java and paper kites in Madagascar. The gap between the horse races that Altangi has not seen and the cart races that he has seen becomes the basis for one of his strongest satires. Placed in juxtaposition are a fancied horse race, with Square Smackem's Slamerkin, his Grace's Crab, and his Lordship's Periwinkle "coming to the goal amongst the shouts of grooms, jockeys, pimps, stable-bred dukes, and degraded generals,"⁽⁷²⁾ along-side a cart race in the country parish of Brentford between a turnip-cart (lowly vegetable--mainly for cattle), a dustcart (trash, ashes, human refuse), and a dung-cart (excrement of animals)--all vehicles to be disdained. Achieved is an effect comparable to the counterpoint technique used by Gustave Flaubert in the Country Fair scene of Madam Bovary. With language selected to give us a sense of speed, we watch the dust-cart come in first to the shouts and caresses of the quality folk of Brentford. In reacting to the outcome of the race, Goldsmith, just as in the passage quoted from the essay immediately above, selects words with double import: "Fortune was kind only to one, who ought to have been favourable to all; each had peculiar merit, each laboured hard to earn the prize, and each richly deserved the cart he drove."⁽⁷³⁾ This in itself is a parody of Gay's parody of Virgil.⁽⁷⁴⁾ There is another unusual dimension of language in this essay, for here Goldsmith, contrary to his general practice, uses two appropriate Latin words: plaustral, meaning "related to a wagon or cart," and patibulary, meaning "a fork-shaped yoke, gallows-like, for punishing criminals."⁽⁷⁵⁾ The use of counterpoint in language; the juxtaposition of scenes; the "high" and the "low" in the level of language; and the rapidity of the movement of the prose--all suggest a masterful hand.

In summarizing Goldsmith's accomplishment as manifested in his literary techni-

72. *Ibid.*, p.323.

73. *Ibid.*, p.324.

74. *Ibid.*, The "parody" is explained fully.

75. Webster's Third New International Dictionary ed. Philip Babcock Gove (Springfield, Mass., 1961), p.1736 and p.1655.

ques, I must emphasize his comic perception. for this determines his material and his varying treatment and control. As he sees man in action, a veritable comedy of living, he comments in a most imaginative way. It appears that whim and circumstance guided him to the discovery of a vein of literature which he explored fully and creatively. The foreign-observer tale, the use of the persona, figurative language, and various satiric devices have been utilized by the literary artist to give the readers a complete, vivid picture of what he intended to illustrate.