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REMARKS ON THE FLOW OF TIME IN THE
NOVELS OF HENRY FIELDING

I

The reader of any of the three novels written by Henry Fielding (*Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones*, *Amelia*) frequently comes across allusions to the time at which the incidents of the story take place. He is often explicitly acquainted with the hour at which the characters enter or leave the scene of action, usually with the part of the day, and sometimes with the day of the week, but rarely with the month or season of the year, exceptionally with the date or the month, and never with the year in which the action in the novels commenced, developed and concluded. These references to time are supplemented by passages that establish the sequence of events by indicating the number of hours or days which have elapsed since some incident described in the previous paragraph or chapter. On the basis of this information the reader is usually able to reconstruct the succession of days in the novel and to measure, with striking accuracy, the periods of time which intervened between any two occurrences in the book.

The first attempt to analyze Fielding's attention to the flow of time, which is so conspicuously manifested in his novels, was undertaken by Frederick S. Dickson in the study "*The Chronology of Tom Jones*".¹ Dickson elaborated a detailed time-scheme of the adventures of Tom Jones on the journey from Allworthy's house via Upton to London and during his stay there up to his marriage with Sophia Western, and assigned definite dates to all the days described in *Tom Jones*, books VII to XVIII. Starting from the author's allusions to the progress of the Jacobite Rebellion² and from his remarks on the full moon, which rose at five o'clock on the evening of Jones and Partridge's departure from Gloucester,³ he fixed the date of the latter event on November 29, 1745, and taking into account the duration of each book indicated in its heading, identified the dates of all preceding and following incidents in *Tom Jones*, books VII to XVIII, in the period between November 24 (Tom's expulsion from the house of his foster-father) to December 29 (Tom's marriage with Sophia Western) of that year. In his article he emphasized the existence of a carefully prepared time-scheme in the novel, and the air of reality that the author endeavoured to impart to his work by meticulously checking the movement of celestial bodies in the autumn months of 1745.

The chief merit of Dickson's analysis lies in the attention which it drew to the prominent role of the time element in the structure of Fielding's works. Since the publication of the article, literary critics have offered various interpretations, according to their general conception of Fielding's art, of the principle which they found behind the intricate time-plan of *Tom Jones*. They chiefly followed the ideas of Wilbur L. Cross, who stressed the author's realism of detail due to his assumed role of a "historian", and the influence of drama on his technique of novel-writing.⁴ Another view, formulated most comprehensively in the work of Ethel M. Thornbury,⁵ explains the time-plan, among other aspects of Fielding as novelist, by his indebtedness to the theory of epic poetry, a part of the Renaissance theory of art prevailing, chiefly through the works of Boileau, Le Bossu and other French critics, in English literary criticism at the time of Fielding's life. According to these two conceptions the flow of time in *Tom Jones* was reduced either to a continuity substituted for the dramatic unity of time (Haage⁶) or to an epic unity of time derived by the critics of the Italian Renaissance analogically to the corresponding dramatic unity (Thornbury⁷).

In order that we may appreciate the respective merits of these arguments, ascertain the basic trends inherent in Fielding's handling of time and assess their importance for the "new province of writing" which the author proclaimed to open with his novels, we must first obtain a broader view of Fielding's practice than the analysis of only one novel can afford.

Especially revealing in this respect is the author's treatment of time in *Joseph Andrews* and in *Amelia*. As in the latter part of *Tom Jones*, the period of time occupied by incidents in these two novels may be arranged into an uninterrupted succession of days, which begins with the first serious conflict, is maintained throughout the complicated story in spite of differences in the structure of the three works, and comes to an end with the resolution of the plot in the final discovery. The sequence is founded on the alternation of day and night in the heroes' lives, in a few instances on the indication of the number of days which are interposed between two consecutive actions, or, still less often, on the regular distribution of Sundays among the days of the week.

In *Joseph Andrews*, after four preparatory chapters which form a concise history of the life of the principal character, the action begins with the death of Sir Thomas Booby (in book I, chapter 5). On the seventh day after this, Joseph was summoned to the widow of his deceased master, preserved his chastity in spite of her two attempts to seduce him, wrote two letters to his sister Pamela and, finally, was dismissed from Lady Booby's service (chapters 5 to 10 of the first book). At 2 o'clock in the morning of the eighth day he was robbed of all his property by highwaymen, brought to the inn of the Tow-wouses and met by Abraham Adams (chapters 11 to 14). In his company he spent the ninth day and the following three days, recovering from his wounds (up to the end of book I).

On the thirteenth day Joseph and Adams departed for the parish of Booby Hall; Parson Adams met Mrs. Slipslop, heard the first part of the story of Leonora, was smeared with hog's blood, lost his way, delivered Fanny from the hands of her ravisher and defended her and himself in court (book II, chapters 2-12). At 1 a. m. on the fourteenth day the two heroes were reunited at an alehouse where Joseph

and Mrs. Slipslop had taken refuge from a violent storm, and after an interlude with Parson Trulliber set out on their further journey (chapters 13–16). Having been deceived by the promises of a practical joker, they spent the following night at an alehouse not two miles away, and on the fifteenth day continued their walk (in book III) up to the house of Mr. Wilson and spent a considerable portion of the ensuing night listening to the tale of their host's life (chapters 2–3). The sixteenth day was full of adventures, beginning with the killing of Wilson's little dog before the departure of the travellers, culminating in their fight with the hounds and in Adams's involuntary bath, and ending with the discussion of Adams with a Catholic priest at the New Inn (chapters 4–8). The action on the following day, the seventeenth in succession since Sir Thomas's death, opened with the abduction of Fanny and her subsequent rescue by the attendants of Peter Pounce, and closed with the conclusion of the journey (at the beginning of the fourth book).

The travellers arrived in their parish simultaneously with the coach of Lady Booby. On Sunday, the eighteenth day, after the banns of marriage between Joseph and Fanny had been published for the first time, Lady Booby ordered her lawyer to have the young couple removed from the parish (chapters 1–3). On the following day she frequently changed her mind, but on Tuesday, having heard the second publication of the banns, was glad to receive the news of the detention of the lovers and of their appearance before the justice of the peace. In the afternoon, however, after Mr. Booby, her nephew and the husband of Pamela, had arrived at her house and saved the couple from being committed to jail, she had to swallow her anger and listen to Mr. Booby's encomium on Fanny's beauty (chapters 4–6).

The following day, the twenty-first in succession, was again crowded with events: Joseph repudiated the remonstrances of his brother-in-law against his planned marriage with Fanny, defended his sweetheart against the advances of an impertinent servant of Beau Didapper, listened to the sermon of Parson Adams on Providence and to the unfinished history of Leonard and Paul, protected Fanny from the insolent behaviour of Beau Didapper, learned from the pedlar's account that he was brother to Fanny, and was summoned with the whole company to Lady Booby to inform her of that discovery (chapters 7–13). After the adventures in the small hours of the twenty-second day the story reached its turning-point when Mrs. Andrews recognized Fanny as her own child and Mr. Wilson met with his son Joseph (chapters 14–15). On the same day the company proceeded to Mr. Booby's house. A coach was dispatched on the twenty-third day and returned with Mrs. Wilson on the next evening. On Sunday, the twenty-fifth day, the banns between Joseph and Fanny were published for the third time, and their marriage was celebrated on the twenty-sixth day after the death of Sir Thomas Booby (in chapter 16).

As in *Tom Jones* and *Amelia*, the last few paragraphs of *Joseph Andrews*, written in the present tense, provide a glimpse into the future of the main characters.

The time-reckoning in the final chapter of *Joseph Andrews* is based on the unchanging rotation of the seven days of the week, i. e. on the assumption that Saturday (the day of Mrs. Wilson's arrival) falls on the sixth day after the preceding Sunday. It is a violation of the author's practice in the rest of the novel, according to which the sequence of days is maintained by an uninterrupted succession of events or by explicit statements on the duration of pauses. As in the other two novels, as soon as the author disentangles the plot, he hurries through the remaining scenes up to the final picture of virtue rewarded without conforming to the rules which he observed for the action proper.

In comparison with the smooth flow of *Joseph Andrews* the time-scheme of *Amelia* is more intricate.

The history begins with the appearance of Captain Booth before Justice Thrasher on the morning of April 1st (chapter 2). Having been found guilty of violence, the hero of the book spent the remainder of the day and the subsequent twenty-four hours in prison, chiefly in the company of his fellow-prisoner Robinson (chapters 3—5). On the third day he was invited to visit Miss Matthews, another inhabitant of the prison-house, heard the story of her life, gave her a detailed account of his own adventures, and spent the following night in her room (up to book IV, chapter 1). A week had elapsed before Amelia arrived and took her husband home (chapter 2). The next morning (which fell on the eleventh day, if the amount of time allotted by the author to Booth's stay with his mistress is taken literally) the hero began to recover from the pangs of remorse that had resulted from his unfaithfulness. Two or three days had passed before two letters, one from Miss Matthews and the other from Dr. Harrison, again disturbed his peace of mind (chapter 3). After the visit of Colonel James on the same day (the fourteenth or fifteenth since the imprisonment of Booth) the hero decided to visit his former mistress on the next Sunday, the only day of the week on which he could walk outside the verge of the court without danger of being arrested by the agents of Dr. Harrison's lawyer. However, two days after the first letter, he received another communication from her and solicited the assistance of Colonel James in this affair. The next morning the colonel acquainted him with the success of his mission to Miss Matthews, but the following day he unexpectedly declined to speak with him. Booth again determined to wait till the following Sunday (chapters 4—5). He could not have arrived at this decision earlier than Friday, because no Sunday had intervened between his last resolution of the same kind and the day of the colonel's perplexing behaviour. For this reason, only one day had elapsed without any adventure before Booth called at the colonel's house, most probably on the twentieth or twenty-first day following his apprehension by the night watchmen.

In order to avoid the cumbersome introduction of two numbers for each day, a new sequence may be conveniently begun at this date. One afternoon, which occurred on Tuesday at the latest, Amelia received a note from Mrs. James and paid her an unsuccessful visit. She fell ill the next morning, but had sufficiently recovered to welcome Mrs. James on the tenth day, i. e. on the thirteenth day of the new series (chapter 6). The next evening Booth and Amelia renewed their old friendship with Sergeant Atkinson (chapter 7). On Sunday, the fifteenth day, Colonel James refused to see the young captain and on the following day sent him an unfriendly letter (chapter 8). On Wednesday Amelia went to the oratorio, on Thursday she became acquainted with Mrs. Bennet and on Saturday she was introduced by Mrs. Ellison to the company of the noble lord (at the end of book IV).

On Sunday, the twenty-second day of the new sequence, Booth was again refused entrance to James's house (book V, chapter 1). He spent part of the following week looking after his sick child (in chapter 2 of the first edition) and on the next Sunday called on the mighty lord and drank tea with Mrs. Ellison and Mrs. Bennet (chapter 2). Mrs. Bennet and the lord visited him the following day, the thirtieth in the new sequence (chapter 3). Sergeant Atkinson spent the next three days in the house in order to protect Booth against the agents of Murphy, Dr. Harrison's lawyer, who was reported to watch for Booth even within the protected area (chapter 4). On the thirty-fourth day, after the immediate danger had been averted, the captain fought a duel

with Colonel Bath outside the verge of the court, but was lucky enough not to meet any member of Murphy's gang (chapters 5 and 6). The next day he spoke privately with Sergeant Atkinson, met Colonel James at the house of Colonel Bath, and since he feared to leave his asylum, invited him to dinner at his lodgings (up to book VI, chapter 1). On the thirty-sixth day he again called on Colonel Bath, was informed of the visit of a mysterious stranger to their apartments and disapproved of Amelia's going to a masquerade at Ranelagh (chapters 2-6). On the following day Mrs. Bennet displayed her scholarly talent before the captain and his wife, and Atkinson acquainted Booth with further threats voiced by Dr. Harrison's lawyer (chapters 7 and 8).

The thirty-eighth day was marked by the first crisis in the novel. Amelia received a mysterious warning letter, had the true character of the noble lord displayed before her in the history of Mrs. Bennet, discovered the secret of Atkinson's marriage, was frightened by the news of her husband's arrest, and obtained Colonel James's promise of assistance (up to the end of chapter 7 of the eighth book). On the following day she was warned of James's base design on her virtue and welcomed Dr. Harrison, who subsequently released the unfortunate captain from prison (up to the end of book IX, chapter 2).

The next few days form an anticlimax to the preceding events. On the fortieth day Colonel James entertained his brother-in-law, the Booths and Dr. Harrison to dinner (chapter 2), the following day Amelia acquainted the old doctor with her apprehension concerning the colonel (chapters 4-5), after a night scene at the Atkinsons she failed to see him on the next morning, but immediately made amends for her forgetfulness, and spent the evening in the presence of her husband, Dr. Harrison and his two friends at Vauxhall (chapters 6-9). The following morning Dr. Harrison visited Amelia on her urgent request and was informed of her reluctance to accept James's invitation to a masquerade (up to the end of chapter 1 in the tenth book). The masquerade took place in a day or two, i. e. on the forty-fourth or forty-fifth day (chapters 2-3). The next day Dr. Harrison left London for a week (actually he returned back on the fifth day), and Booth, playing cards with Captain Trent, contracted a debt of fifty pounds (chapters 4-5). On the following day Trent relieved him of his uneasiness by indefinitely postponing the day on which the money should be repaid (chapters 6-7). Amelia quarrelled with Mrs. Atkinson and on the next morning moved with her husband to another lodging (chapter 8).

Everything is now prepared for the grand finale. On the following day, the forty-eighth or forty-ninth in succession, Trent reminded the captain of his debt and asked for its immediate settlement (in the third chapter of the eleventh book), and Amelia, in order to comply with this request, sold almost all her belongings. The forty-ninth (or fiftieth) day opened with the bribing of the influential man (in chapter 5) and concluded, after many adventures, with the third and final arrest of Captain Booth (at the end of the eleventh book). The events of the following day resolved the plot of *Amelia* (up to the end of book XII, chapter 7), but the heroine had not received the news of her wealth before the fifty-first (or fifty-second) day. The following day Booth, his wife and Dr. Harrison dined with Colonel and Mrs. James, and Amelia wrote a letter to her dishonest sister. About a week afterwards the whole company moved to Amelia's home in the country.

The dinner at the house of Colonel James, which marks the end of the action in *Amelia*, took place at the earliest between the seventy-first and seventy-third day described in the book, i. e. on some day between June 10 and June 12. The dating

of *Amelia* to the period between April 1, 1733, and May 1733, established by F. Homes Dudden,⁸ should be modified in this sense.

The time-plans of *Joseph Andrews* and *Amelia* are founded on the numerous references to time in Fielding's narration. Information about the flow of time supplied by the characters inside the story is extremely rare and at great variance with the time-schemes derived from the author's remarks. In *Joseph Andrews* the young hero writes in his first letter to Pamela, on the seventh day after Sir Thomas's death, that his "worthy master Sir Thomas died about four days ago",⁹ curiously forgetting the exact number of days and making a very poor guess instead. Lady Booby is more definite in her dating, even if less correct, in her conversation with Mrs. Slipslop after the arrival of Mr. Booby and Pamela. She remarks on the twentieth day since her husband's departure from this world: "Since his death, thou knowest, though it is almost six weeks (it wants but a day) ago, I have not admitted one visitor, till this fool my nephew arrived."¹⁰ Since Fielding certainly did not intend to characterize the persons who uttered the above-mentioned statements as particularly oblivious or absent-minded, he himself must have been at fault in his references to time.

Other oversights in Fielding's time-schemes or in the correspondence between the dating of his incidents and historical events, enumerated in the comprehensive biography of F. H. Dudden, are the change of the end of June into the November days of the Jacobite Rebellion within three weeks¹¹ and anachronisms such as Garrick's stay in London before Christmas 1745,¹² masquerades at Ranelagh before its opening in 1742,¹³ the existence of the Universal Register Office in the early thirties of the eighteenth century,¹⁴ and the allusion to Dr. R[anby], who "had the first character in his profession, and was sergeant-surgeon to the king"¹⁵ in the young days of the Man of the Hill, who was eighty-nine in the year 1745.

There is also a glaring disproportion in the time which elapsed between the death of Mr. Booby's mother and his marriage in Richardson's *Pamela* and in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*. According to Samuel Richardson, Pamela wrote almost thirty letters addressed to her parents in that time and kept a diary for more than seven weeks before her nuptials. Joseph Andrews received Pamela's letter announcing the death of her mistress before he acquainted her with a similar misfortune in their house, but as both he and Pamela were indefatigable letter-writers, he could not have waited for the news and could not have postponed his answer for a long time. Nevertheless, when he met his supposed sister on the twentieth day after Sir Thomas's death (or, according to Lady Booby, on the forty-first day), she was already married.

Fielding's errors in the allusions to the flow of time conclusively demonstrate the non-existence of any comprehensive time-plan premeditated by the author in advance, together with the plot of his novels. Most of them are due to the fact that Fielding was not much interested in the exact number of days which he described, but at the same time was not satisfied with only an approximate correlation of the time of various occurrences. He took great care to connect each incident with the rest

of the story through specified time links, combining all events of the action proper into an unbroken chain, so that he developed the action of his novels on a virtual day-by-day basis with a few short pauses inserted in the progress of the story. The principal and most conspicuous feature of the succession of days in his novels is its uninterruptedness (the absence of gaps in the series of connecting links and the absence of undefined or long intervals between two consecutive incidents) rather than its exact duration.

In the first part of *Tom Jones* the author introduced the material antecedent to the main story (the love of Tom and Sophia) in a narrative disrupted in time, but he endeavoured to compensate for this irregularity by forging the time link between the incidents of each book in its heading. As he considered the headings as fairly adequate bridges between the time of insufficiently connected incidents, he substituted them for the connecting links supplied otherwise in his narration even in some chapters of the latter part of the novel. Of all his five works divided into books (the three novels, *Jonathan Wild* and *The Journey from this World to the Next*) he adopted this device only in *Tom Jones* because — *Jonathan Wild* being a “biography”, not a “history” — he apparently saw no reason for its application to narratives in which he preserved the continuity of time by regular means.

The uninterrupted flow of time in Fielding’s novels, a pattern imposed by the author on his material as a constructional principle, does not reflect any definite historical succession of days characterized by means of outstanding events and dates. Fielding is a historian of manners rather than of occurrences in the past, writing about contemporary men and women in contemporary circumstances and introducing historical persons and events largely for the purpose of social and personal criticism. In his anachronisms, Garrick appears in order to receive high praise for his art, Dr. Ranby, for his professional dexterity and good nature, the Universal Register Office is advertised for material reasons, and the immorality of the masquerades at Ranelagh is severely censured. As the author inadvertently revealed by his frequent references in *Amelia* to the Universal Register Office, a family enterprise whose date of establishment he was well aware of, he paid no scrupulous attention to the dating involved in the historical allusions of his novels. He did not even apparently realize that the succession of days or years described in his books might be identified with an exactly defined period in the past on the basis of his own remarks. Even if he had consulted an almanac for the hour at which the full moon rose in the late autumn weeks of the Jacobite Rebellion in *Tom Jones* (the assumption on which Dickson founded his chronology), he certainly ignored the exact date of the event.

Fielding’s disregard for the niceties of dating combined with the existence of the continuous flow of time in his novels produced further incompatibilities, in addition to the above-mentioned anachronisms, between the chronology of his works and of historical events. We become aware of them as soon as we apply the unequivocal allusions to history to time in the novels and attempt to reconstruct the dates for the days described in them. The action of *Joseph Andrews*, dated from this standpoint, took place before the publication of the book on February 22, 1742,

and after the unsuccessful battle of Cartagena (in the first half of April in the preceding year), which was hinted at in the conversation of Parson Adams with the sportsman in the seventh chapter of the second book.¹⁶ Another clue for the dating of the novel is the text of the deposition of James Scout and Thomas Trotter accusing Joseph Andrews of felony committed on a Sabbath-day in October. These allusions fix the action, at least partly, to October 1741. Sundays in that month fell on the 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th day and the two festivals observed by the Church of England, the feast of St. Luke and that of St. Simon and St. Jude, occurred on Sunday, October 18th, and Wednesday, October 28th, respectively. In the novel, however, the holiday in October, on which the banns between Joseph and Fanny were published for the second time, occurred on Tuesday. Similarly, Fielding did not apparently realize that the plot of *Amelia* is implicitly assigned to the year 1733 and that April 1st, 1733, the beginning of the action in the novel, actually fell on Sunday. These discrepancies again point to the idea that the principal conclusion to be derived from Dickson's analysis of *Tom Jones* is the existence of a continuous flow of time, measurable in days, rather than the scrupulous historicity of the time-setting.

The most convincing argument for this conclusion is Fielding's utter disregard of the division of the week into seven days, with different daily routine on Sundays. All the days of the week are of the same importance for the author, unless some action has to take place on a Sunday, such as the publishing of banns in *Joseph Andrews* or Booth's walks outside the verge of the court in *Amelia*. In such a case, Sundays are superimposed on the normal day-by-day progress, on the continuous sequence of days, and parts of the week are only briefly mentioned or even completely omitted in order that the author may be able to proceed with his action without unnecessary digression.¹⁷

In *Joseph Andrews* Sundays are required only for the publication of the banns of marriage between Joseph and Fanny. The banns are published for the first time on the earliest day possible (the eighteenth day since the death of Sir Thomas, one day after the travellers' arrival at the parish), which is thus turned into a Sunday. Since the author lacks sufficient store of incidents for a whole fortnight, a holiday is conveniently inserted on Tuesday, the twentieth day, and the banns are published for the second time. The only two days explicitly mentioned after the resolution of the plot on Thursday are the following Sunday (the day of the third publication of the banns) and Monday (the wedding day). Other Sundays in the novel would occur on the fourth and eleventh day, which fall within the pauses in action and are not described.

Frederick S. Dickson himself drew attention to the absence of Sundays (and according to his dating, of Christmas) in the lives of the heroes of *Tom Jones*. As Sundays are not needed for the action, they are left out of account. W. C. Cross¹⁸ arrived at a similar conclusion, when he admitted that correspondence with reality was in this case discarded in order that the continuity of action, uninterrupted by a day of rest, might be preserved.

The best example of Fielding's treatment of Sundays can be found in *Amelia*. Sundays appear in the narrative after Booth's dismissal from prison, when his confinement within the verge of the court for six days

in a week acquires importance for further development of the story and especially for its first major crisis, provoked by the hero's arrest outside the protected area. The first Sunday was introduced in the novel in order that Booth might visit Colonel James, who lived outside the verge of the court, and acquaint him with his affair with Miss Matthews. The next two Sundays described in the book, in a fortnight's time and after three weeks, were inserted in the novel because Booth had to be refused entrance into the colonel's house and transfer his hopes to the friendship with the noble lord. Booth's visit to the lord, who lived in the part of the town prohibited to the hero on six days of the week, was the reason of the introduction of another Sunday. As no further visits of people outside the verge of the court were required, Sundays disappeared from the novel after this incident. On the thirty-fifth day after the first Sunday in the novel, Booth called on Colonel Bath within the protected area and in the afternoon walked in the Park, as if he had forgotten which day of the week it was. The following Sundays (which should have occurred on the forty-second and forty-ninth day after the first Sunday, i. e. on the forty-third and the fiftieth day of the sequence) were also described as week-days, because after the release of the hero from the bailiff's house they had lost their function in the story.

Another interesting proof of the superimposition of Sundays on the regular progress of the narrative is a minor oversight on the part of the author. Fielding, anticipating Booth's freedom after the arrival of Dr. Harrison, dropped Sundays from his narrative so early that at the time of Booth's second imprisonment he depicted Colonel James inviting the captain and Amelia to dinner on a day on which Booth was confined to the verge of the court. Preparing a new menace to Amelia, which should absorb the readers' attention after the exposure of the Ellison intrigue and after the *éclaircissement* with Dr. Harrison, the author did not realize that he had not yet brought to an end that part of his novel in which Sundays were needed as the only days of Booth's visits to the new villain of the piece.

We tried to demonstrate that Fielding's numerous references to time cannot be reduced to his tendency towards closest possible correspondence between the time in the novels and in reality, a correspondence which Dickson sought in *Tom Jones* and expressed in his dating. The distribution of the action in *Joseph Andrews* and *Amelia* over an uninterrupted sequence of days, analogous to the time-plan in the latter part of *Tom Jones*, and the constant care devoted by the author to time as one of the links between incidents of his novels suggest the idea that the continuous chain of days, along which the story is developed even if it runs along one line only or deals with matters extraneous to the main plot of the book, is a principle inherent in Fielding's conception of the "history" (i. e. the novel) as a literary kind. In order that we may ascertain the sources of this principle, we shall first devote our attention to the similarities and differences between Fielding's handling of time in his novels and dramas.

The uninterrupted flow of time, linking the incidents of Fielding's novels, differs in several aspects from the condensation of the plot of his dramatic works within a period of twenty-four or thirty-six hours. The duration of his dramatic action is implied in the nature of events represented on the stage and in sporadic allusions to the length of pauses, and the story is advanced in time chiefly by intervals inserted between some of the scenes and acts. In his novels, on the other hand, the author extends the action to weeks and even months and combines the incidents by their explicit and exact time setting. Whenever he changes the scene of his narrative and dismisses all the characters in the chapter from the focus of his attention, he ushers in the new hero or heroes either at the very instant at which the previous scene closed, or at a specified time before that moment, producing a scene parallel in time with one already described. Owing to the presence of a narrator in the novel, broadly contemporaneous events at two or more different places need not be represented as successive in time, but if they are described as such, they always immediately follow one another without any intervening period.

Another conspicuous feature of Fielding's novels, essentially different from his handling of time in plays, is the development of the story through numerous regressions that explain scenes or allusions already described or inserted in the preceding paragraphs or chapters. This is a special case, affecting the flow of time, of a general tendency towards the delineation of character and the presentation of action through a series of contrasting stages which are gradually revealed before the reader. The novelist abandons the dramatic formula of building new incidents on the basis of antecedent action for a network of surprising occurrences, by which the reader's interest is directed to what has actually happened and why it has happened rather than to future events. In his novels, chiefly of the later period, the author withholds many substantial facts from the reader to reveal them in a sudden discovery frequently underlining the critical observation inherent in the incident. The ultimate source of this device, applied in the presentation both of characters and of the action of the novels, should be sought in Fielding's conception of contrast as the most suitable means for revealing both the mixture of light and shade, present in every human character, and the ugly reality of brutal selfishness, maliciousness or intemperate lust, veiled under the pretence of high ideals and resounding phrases.

In Fielding's plays, on the other hand, the contrast between good and evil is not yet concentrated within one character. The attention of the audience is directed to the action of characters in different circumstances and to whether and when the villains will be exposed rather than to the problem of what the characters actually are. The intrigues of the heroes and villains are, with few exceptions,¹⁹ represented on the stage, so that the unmasking takes by surprise only the participants in the story.

In *The Temple Beau*, *The Coffee-House Politician*, *The Mock Doctor* and *The Wedding-Day* the author employed the pattern of the drama of discovery and supplied the hero, living in a society in which money was equal to happiness, with noble parents and sufficient fortune in order to

gain for him the lady of his heart. At that time, however, he still confined the moment of surprise strictly to the denouement, which was, in agreement with the formula of Molière, usually introduced into the play from the outside. In *The Miser*, another adaptation of Molière, he suppressed the final discovery (Anselm) and substituted for it the caprices of Mariana, and in *The Author's Farce* he employed the pattern with a touch of parody.

As a novelist, however, Fielding employed the principle of the drama of discovery, which he had learned in his plays, in all his works, and resolved their plots by giving the heroes sufficient material means for future undisturbed happiness. In *Tom Jones* he overstepped this framework and prepared the catastrophe by an ingenious network of allusions which awake suspicion in the reader without providing him with sufficient ground for the discernment of the hidden truth. At the same time, however, he gradually narrowed the scope of the reader's vision by introducing only such characters on the scene which were least informed of the actual state of affairs. Instead of an omniscient spectator, who is anxious to learn the outcome of the future clashes of the *dramatis personae*, the reader of this novel, and even more so of *Amelia*, becomes a fellow-traveller of his hero or heroes, an observer who knows slightly more than the principal character and so is able to judge the conduct of some other participants in the action, but who is not sufficiently removed from the story to see through the motives and plans of all the characters (especially the depth of depravity in the villains) and through the intricacies of the plot. The amount of discoveries increases sharply from one novel to the next, results are followed by explanation of their causes, allusions are offered instead of descriptions and even pieces of deliberately misleading information are inserted in the narrative to deceive the reader. The narrator in the novel enacts the same role as the authors in Fielding's plays-within-play (*Pasquin*, *The Historical Register for the Year 1736*). He is first of all a commentator of the action, a critic of society founded on the respect for wealth instead of humanity, a Trapwit afraid that the audience will lose the moral of his satire, but at the same time an overscrupulous stage manager, who excludes not only murder, but also a substantial part of the intrigue from the scene, achieving the maximum of surprise by its later revelation.

Fielding himself proclaimed the principle of the belated disclosure of facts as early as in *Joseph Andrews* when he apologized to his readers for the unexpected appearance of Fanny in Joseph's life.²⁰ The turn in the action that shed new light on Joseph's behaviour towards Lady Booby was so abrupt that it was felt to be a reflection of a fundamental change in the plan and general character of the novel.²¹ At that time the principle might still have been an afterthought, but in the progress of Fielding's work as a novelist it was employed more and more often in the construction of his novels, and in *Amelia* it allowed the author to introduce hardly enough incidents on the scene at the time of their occurrence to maintain the reader's interest.

The revelation of a fact whose existence was long before known to the hero but was not suspected by the reader is a not infrequent means used by Fielding for the development of the story in his novels. It may be found, in fairly analogous circumstances, at the beginning not only of

Joseph Andrews, but also of *Tom Jones*. In *Joseph Andrews* the titular hero is shown to have rejected the advances of Lady Booby because he had been long enamoured of Fanny Goodwill, and in *Tom Jones* Tom does not display any signs of deep affection towards Sophia in response to the manifestations of her emotions as he is the lover of Molly Seagrim at that time. The relation between Joseph and Lady Booby in the first novel is parallel to the scenes between Richardson's Pamela and Mr. B., which the author postulates to be present in the background of the reader's mind and which he exposes to scathing parody by assigning the role of the seducer to a woman and that of the virtuous virgin to a man. In *Tom Jones* the author induces his readers to expect a romance, in which the young couple, unequal in birth and fortune, will achieve happiness after they have surmounted all sorts of obstacles. He actually employs the formula, but fills it, as he claims in the introductory chapter of the fourth book, with truth instead of monstrosities, with a new scale of values in which fidelity, the supreme virtue of romances, is relegated to a subordinate position and its place is occupied by good nature.

The appearance of Sophia in Tom's life in the early books of *Tom Jones* clearly illustrates the manner in which Fielding produced expectation in the reader in order to thwart it by the subsequent incident. The idea of unfulfilled expectation was so favoured by the author that it was sometimes employed for purely formal purposes. When Mrs. Bennet²² warned her father against his second marriage and revealed the character of her future step-mother, she was promised an enquiry into the matter, only to learn, in the first sentence of the next chapter, of his marriage on the following morning. The broken promise, superfluous for the delineation of her father's character, was introduced by the author chiefly as a bridge between two chapters. Another piece of erroneous anticipation in the reader is produced by Amelia's urgent and mysteriously worded letter to Dr. Harrison²³ at the end of the ninth book of *Amelia*. Having provided that part of his novel with an appropriate conclusion, as enigmatic and unexpected as the final incidents of the three preceding books, the author quietly pricked the bubble in the following chapter by revealing that all this ado was about a ticket for a masquerade.

The element of surprise and of frustrated expectation was also employed in the structure of Fielding's novels for the description of separate and simultaneous adventures of two or more protagonists. If the author developed the story along several parallel lines, he frequently refrained from the description of events in the succession in which they had actually happened. He preferred first to display the critical moments of the story and then account for their details by going back in time and narrating the incidents which led to the crucial events. In this way he reversed not only the normal order of motive and action, as he did in other surprising revelations, but also the time sequence of events in the novel. In the central part of *Tom Jones* and in the whole of *Amelia* the author applied the formula of incidents followed by long explanations almost to every major crisis, with the exception of the final discovery. Of all the persons that appeared at Upton during and after the fatal night, only the hero, his companion, and Mrs. Waters were expected to be there, while the arrival of Sophia and her maid, her father, Mr. Fitzpatrick, and his

wife had to be accounted for either in long retrospections or in an interpolated narrative. Another major intrigue, the infamous scheme of Lord Fellamar and the timely arrival of Squire Western, is introduced by the visit of Mrs. Honour at Tom's lodgings and by her account of the results of the crisis. The reader is subsequently acquainted with what happened at the house of Lady Bellaston, and only then learns of the consequences of Mrs. Fitzpatrick's decision to restore Sophia to her father, taken by the niece of Aunt Western twenty chapters before. Similarly, the two imprisonments of Booth, in *Amelia*, are first presented to the reader in an account of Sergeant Atkinson and in Booth's letter and then are followed by their explanation in chapters which go back in time. The same pattern is applied to many minor incidents in the novels, the first of these being the story of Betty the chambermaid in *Joseph Andrews*.

The explanation of incidents after the crisis has already been solved was adopted in *Amelia* even for the interpolated narratives (Booth's account of the appearance of Amelia's mother at the house of Amelia's nurse and of the subsequent reconciliation of the old lady with her daughter). At the time of the composition of the last novel it had become a standard method of telling the story, irrespective of whether the narrator was the author himself or one of his characters.

The belated disclosure of facts by the author and the instances of unfulfilled expectation or denial of explanation in Fielding's novels are essentially undramatic means of the presentation of a story, even if the plot revealed before the reader is exactly analogous to a plot of a play. As a considerable part of the action is transferred into explanations, the flow of time in the novels is characterized by many retrospections, which are utterly impossible in a drama. *Tom Jones* is the only novel of Fielding, in which, chiefly in the last books, the story runs on several progressively parallel lines, intersecting in many meetings of the protagonists, without the introduction of new incidents as an explanation of events already described. As in Fielding's dramas, the continuous flow of time in the final days of action must be laboriously reconstructed, instead of being one of the unifying principles. The blurred picture of the sequence of days in the last books of the most perfect novel of Henry Fielding is not "a partial reversion from the dramatic to the epic manner with which he began *Tom Jones*",²⁴ but just the opposite, a shift from the epic method, characterized in the author's conception by the continuous flow of time, to the dramatic combination of incidents condensed by the nature of action into the framework of a few days.

The story of *Amelia* is also developed along several lines, but successive scenes hinging upon different characters are almost exclusively restricted to retrospective explanations of motives. To a greater degree than in the two preceding novels, the story develops in sudden turns which demand extensive clarification in the following chapters, while in some places it is a mere framework for long digressions filled with the protagonists' biographies, mostly irrelevant to the principal action. As the main purpose in life of the hero and heroine, who are almost constantly present in the focus of the narration, seems to be limited to averting the ever-impending danger, often unsuspected up to the last moment, a considerable proportion of decisions and actions takes place behind the scenes. For this reason, the

critical moments, for which the reader is totally unprepared, must be supplemented by extensive retrospections.

The presentation of the story in the last novel through a series of discoveries, of vague promises of future action, which are either disappointed or fulfilled many chapters later, and of unprepared turns of events, supplemented by retrospective explanations, gradually replaced the straightforward narrative known to the author from Cervantes and from the writers of picaresque novels, and illustrated most conspicuously in *Joseph Andrews*. The first novel of the author, primarily a tale of adventures on the road, a satire on the greed, lust and vanity of contemporary men and women, is still a narrative almost devoid of gaps in the action and of simultaneous scenes. Reflecting the structure of the novel to which it refers in its subtitle (*Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes, Author of "Don Quixote"*), *Joseph Andrews* proceeds along a series of mutually unconnected incidents, arranged in a simple succession in time. The author, conforming to the ancient epic pattern, manifested in Homer's *Odyssey*, of only one action at the same time, begins a new scene only after he has finished the preceding one. Incidents simultaneous with other events are still, at least in a few cases, described by a character in the novel instead of the omniscient narrator (the departure of Joseph from the Tow-wouses, recounted to Adams at the next inn by the coachman who witnessed the scene), material antecedent to the final discovery is related by the participants in the action (the life of Mr. Wilson, the story of the pedlar and the confession of Gammer Andrews), and relatively long periods in the lives of the leading characters are completely omitted in order to avoid the description of simultaneous actions. (The reader leaves Joseph at the Tow-wouses, learns of what happened to him from the coachman's account at the next alehouse, catches a glimpse of him before the company resumed their journey, and meets him sitting by the fire in the next inn. Two chapters later Joseph again disappears from the narrative after he has put his head out of the coach in order to bring back his learned friend into the highlight of the story, and emerges before the eyes of the reader as late as the small hours of the following morning, with no adventures worth relating, while Parson Adams has in the meantime proceeded through six chapters of exciting events.)

We have tried to show that the influence of the dramatic time-scheme on the flow of time in the three novels was, with the exception of the last part of *Tom Jones*, negligible. By introducing an ever-present narrator into his novels Fielding acquired the freedom to accelerate the flow of time in the description of action, slow it down for dialogues which reveal the difference between the appearance and the inside of the characters, and stop it altogether during his commentaries. He extended the formula of the revelation of his static characters through several contrasting stages to the action of his novels, developing them through unexpected turns explained in numerous retrospections. Shifting the emphasis from action to character he replaced the dramatic concentration of the plot into separate scenes, linked by the nature of the action, by long continuous stretches of the narrative centred round one hero and connected with one another by exact time links.

The title of Fielding's first novel, *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams, Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes, Author of "Don Quixote"*, points to other sources of Fielding's novels in addition to the drama and offers a more adequate explanation of the continuity of time than its substitution for the dramatic unity of time. Long before Fielding tried his hand at novels, he was an ardent admirer of Cervantes, especially of his masterpiece, *Don Quixote*. He attempted to transplant the novel into English soil as early as during his studies at Leyden when he put his pen to a comedy centred round the characters of the immortal Knight of the Rueful Countenance and his equally famous squire Sancho Panza. His esteem for Cervantes, manifested later by the introduction of the revised *Don Quixote in England* on the stage and by the subtitle to *Joseph Andrews*, abated during the composition of *Amelia*, but at that time some of the structural principles which he had derived from the work of Cervantes were firmly rooted in his literary method.

If we restrict the analysis of Fielding's dependence on Cervantes to the problem of the time-scheme in the novels, we become immediately aware of some striking parallels between *Joseph Andrews* and *Don Quixote*. Cervantes, respecting the tradition of the writers of picaresque tales since *Lazarillo de Tormes* and *Guzman d'Alfarache*, related the incidents of Quixote's and Panza's adventures as following one another in time and connected through the persons of the two protagonists, and inserted long pauses between the several expeditions of the knight. He followed the practice of his predecessors who paid no attention to the external dating of their stories or to correct information on the time of action and were usually satisfied to connect the successive adventures of their hero by references to pauses of unspecified duration. The only indications which elucidated the relative timing of events of the picaresque tales with greater exactness were the remarks on the part of the day in which incidents took place. They were, however, chiefly confined to one unified piece of action, while the connecting links between incidents, links which were without any importance for the action, were left undefined in time.

Cervantes complicated the pattern by omitting allusions to the duration of pauses almost completely. In his account the adventures of Don Quixote seemed immediately to follow one another without any gaps in the action during the second expedition and with definite short intervals of inactivity in the second part of the book. By this linking of events the author actually put the story on a day-by-day basis without being aware of it. As he also inserted casual references to the duration of the expedition into the utterances of his characters, he produced many inconsistencies between the flow of time indicated in the speeches of the protagonists and the number of days described or mentioned by the author.

Fielding accepted the method of the first part of *Don Quixote* for *Joseph Andrews* almost without any changes. He limited the actual action in the Richardsonian part of his novel to one day, put his story on a day-by-day basis as soon as he dispatched Joseph from the home of Lady Booby, and observed the formula even in the final section, after the travellers had

arrived at the place of their destination. He modified the Cervantesque pattern only by reducing the pauses in action, by allowing his hero four days to recover from his injuries and meet with his future companion on the journey instead of a whole fortnight as in Cervantes, and three days to return to his new home instead of six.

Although Fielding paid greater attention to the particulars of the story than did his avowed model, he copied *Don Quixote* in such minute detail that he also introduced into the utterances of his characters two allusions to the duration of action, both of them unintentionally incorrect. The second allusion, uttered by Lady Booby, forms a conspicuous parallel to the references to the length of the action in *Don Quixote*, inserted into the mouth of Sancho Panza. (Although only two days and nights were described, Sancho speaks of having been in the service of Don Quixote for not yet a month;²⁵ and at the end of the second expedition, which could be confined within a month, he refers to the duration of their journey as eight months.²⁶) Like his Spanish predecessor, Fielding arbitrarily restricted the duration of his novel to a certain period without being aware that the definite links between the time of successive incidents determine the total volume of time with absolute accuracy.

The exact time links between the incidents of *Joseph Andrews*, confined to the narration of the author, constitute the principal difference between the handling of time in the novel of Cervantes and the work of the English novelist. Cervantes advances the story in time by allusions to time in the utterances of characters, in the dating of letters or in the remarks of the narrator, all of which are intended to complement each other, but — in the total absence of any references to the days or nights which intervened between two or more events in one chapter — are in fact contradictory. The time-setting of *Don Quixote*, inserted in the utterances of the two protagonists, is an accidental part of the structure, bearing no relation to the separate incidents, so that it could have been added to the work even after the story had been finished. Fielding, assigning most of the events to a definite part of the day or even to a definite hour, provided such firm links between the various parts of the story that he excluded all possibilities of inserting an undefined number of days between any two incidents in his novel. He transmuted the potential pattern of days, inherent in Cervantes's novel but contradicted by the superimposed references to the flow of time, into a virtual succession in which the flow of time was maintained by unified pieces of action connected in time by exact references to the duration of pauses. Having learned the formula of the continuity of time during the construction of *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding applied it to the adventures on the road in *Tom Jones* and to the subsequent stay of the hero in London, and, although less consistently, to the action of *Amelia*.

Ethel M. Thornbury, discussing the epic elements in *Joseph Andrews*, draws attention to the fact that Cervantes "gives us an elaborate discussion between Don Quixote and Sancho Panza about the matter of time taken for the adventures to prove that the unity of time has been observed".²⁷ She alludes to the twenty-eighth chapter of the second part of *Don Quixote*, in which Cervantes makes Quixote refer to the duration of his previous expeditions as "hardly two months" instead of eight months

which he inserted into the speech of Sancho at the end of the first part. By this device, characteristic for his handling of time, Cervantes complies with the requirement that the action of an epic work should be confined to the period of one year, although he appends a new long chain of adventures to a story which he regarded as complete when he finished it ten years before.

The idea of the epic unity of time, to which Cervantes tried to conform in his novel, is a product of the critical thinking of the Italian Renaissance. J. E. Spingarn,²⁸ following the development of the three unities in literary criticism of that period, showed that the Italian critics of that era limited the time required for dramatic action to twenty-four or even twelve hours, mainly because they strived after an absolutely perfect illusion of reality in the presentation of a dramatic plot. From this standpoint they interpreted the Aristotelian analysis of the practice of contemporary Greek drama, which confined its action to one day or slightly over that limit, as a principle inherent in the character of dramatic action. Some of them argued for the restriction of the time of action even to twelve hours, because they believed that dramatic action should be single and continuous, uninterrupted by a night, and even of the same duration as its performance on the stage, or else it would be incredible. The Aristotelian argument for the limits imposed on the dramatic action (that the length of the action should be restricted to what could be retained by the spectator's memory at one stretch of time) was replaced by the requirement of the closest correspondence between reality and its scenic representation.

The principle of maximum verisimilitude in the representation of a play, which was also responsible for the unity of place, another innovation on Aristotle, gave rise to the normative restriction of the dramatic action to one day. An analogous limit was sought for the duration of action in epic poetry in the practice of Homer and other ancient epic writers, and was mostly found in the period of one year. As it, however, openly contradicted the statement of Aristotle that epic poetry differs from tragedy "in its length — which is due to its action having no fixed limits of time",²⁹ and as it could impart no illusion of reality to the narration of an epic poet, it was not universally accepted. Nevertheless, as one of the rules which were established by the Renaissance theory of literature, it was complied with by writers who either strived to attain the epic character in their work or who wanted to avoid attacks of dogmatic critics. The congestion of the plot into one year was thus totally absent from the picaresque novels, which did not appeal to the epic theory for the justification of their structure, but appeared in such different works as *Don Quixote*, *Ibrahim* by Madeleine de Scudéry³⁰ and, with the exception of the first part of *Tom Jones*, the novels of Fielding.

As a novelist, Fielding often claimed the ancient epic poetry to be the model of his work. He appealed to the literary jurisdiction of the author of *Iliad* and *Odyssey* as early as in the preface to *Joseph Andrews*, where he formulated the theory of a new literary kind derived from the Homeric poems and denoted as "comic prose epic", and as late as in the defense of *Amelia*, in *The Covent-Garden Journal*,³¹ in which he claimed to have observed, with meticulous care, the rules of good writing established by Homer and Virgil. The structure of epic poetry, which he tried to imitate, was also reflected in the handling of time in his novels; it was the other source of the continuity of time besides the Cervantesque formula of the day-by-day progress of the adventures on the road.

The restriction of the time of action in Fielding's novels to a few weeks

or months (i. e. the observance of the epic unity of time) was derived from the uninterrupted flow of time founded on the practice of Homer, one of "those great judges whose vast strength of genius hath placed them in the light of legislators, in the several sciences over which they presided",³² modified by the influence of Cervantes, rather than imposed by the author on his works in order to comply with the requirements of critics. Unlike the critics who analyzed the time-schemes of the classical epic only to find and establish the arbitrary limits of the duration of action, limits analogous to the dramatic concentration of the plot within one day, Fielding was chiefly interested in the absence of gaps in the narrative. In *Joseph Andrews*, in which he learned the technique of the day-by-day development of the story, he inserted, under the influence of Cervantes, an allusion to the total volume of time occupied by the action, but even in this reference he restricted the duration of the plot to a Homeric period of forty-seven days. In the composition of *Tom Jones* Fielding was undoubtedly aware that Le Bossu had proclaimed the epic unity of time only an optional feature of the epic, and yet he thought it necessary to defend the gaps in the narrative by the innovatory character of his novel instead of the authority of the French critic, because he considered the time-scheme in the first part of the novel mainly as a deviation from the ancient rules observed in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Similarly, in all of Fielding's plays the time of action is restricted to twelve, twenty-four or thirty-six hours, and the place is confined to one town, chiefly because the author imitated the practice of most of his predecessors and contemporaries on the English stage, and also the Greek drama referred to by Aristotle as limited to something near the period of one day.

The different attitude adopted by the author towards contemporary critics and his literary models explains the apparent discrepancy between his critical invectives against the unities and their observance in his dramas and novels (except for the first six books of *Tom Jones*). Fielding was always violently opposed to the requirement of the greatest possible correspondence between the flow of time in dramas and novels and in reality, the requirement which was still the principal argument for the unity of time in his age. In the first part of *Tom Jones*, in which he was constantly returning to the problem of the flow of time in order to account for its disrupted character, he proclaimed the discord between the time in reality and in its representation as his principle:

"My reader then is not to be surprised, if, in the course of this work, he shall find some chapters very short, and others altogether as long; some that contain only the time of a single day, and others that comprise years; in a word, if my history sometimes seems to stand still, and sometimes to fly. For all which I shall not look on myself as accountable to any court of critical jurisdiction whatever: for as I am, in reality, the founder of a new province of writing, so I am at liberty to make what laws I please therein."³³

He applied the same standard to the dramatic unity in the article on William Mason's *Elfrida, a Dramatic Poem, Written on the Model of the Ancient Greek Tragedy*, an article which he published in the sixty-second number of *The Covent-Garden Journal* under the signature of "Tragicomicus". The presence of the "continued chorus" on the stage and the

strict observance of the three unities in the play under review were severely attacked by the novelist, an admirer of Shakespeare, who could not leave without reply the censures of his favourite Elizabethan in the five introductory letters to Mason's work.

The next step from the condemnation of the identity of time in drama and reality was the denunciation of the unity of time as confining the action strictly to twenty-four hours. In his attack on critics, in *Tom Jones*, Fielding asked with a touch of irony:

"Whoever demanded the reasons of that nice unity of time or place which is now established to be so essential to dramatic poetry? What critic hath been ever asked, why a play may not contain two days as well as one?"³⁴

In the same essay he bitterly inveighed against the unities, among many other neo-classical "rules", for still another reason than the lack of authority:

"...many rules for good writing have been established, which have not the least foundation in truth or nature; and which commonly serve for no other purpose than to curb and restrain genius, in the same manner as it should have restrained the dancing-master, had the many excellent treatises on that art laid it down as an essential rule that every man must dance in chains."³⁵

The last two of the three main arguments of Fielding against the unity of time, i. e. the absence of any authority which he would have recognized as competent to demand its observation, the contrary practice of authors, such as Shakespeare, whom he held in high esteem, and the restraint imposed by it on the creative mind appeared already in *The Universal Register for the Year 1736*. In this dramatic satire, modelled on Buckingham's *Rehearsal*, he strictly observed the parallelism of the time of action and its performance in the principal play, but moved his action freely in time in the play-within-play. In order to explain this freedom, he put the following discussion into the mouths of his characters:

"SOURWIT. Then, I must tell you, sir, I am a little staggered at the name of your piece; doubtless, sir, you know the rules of writing, and I can't guess how you can bring the actions of a whole year into the circumference of four and twenty hours.

MEDLEY. Sir, I have several answers to make to your objection; in the first place, my piece is not of a nature confined to any rules, as being avowedly irregular, but if it was otherwise, I think I could quote you precedents of plays that neglect them; besides, sir, if I comprise the whole actions of the year in half an hour, will you blame me, or those who have done so little in that time? My Register is not to be filled like those of vulgar news-writers, with trash for want of news; and, therefore, if I say little or nothing, you may thank those who have done little or nothing."³⁶

And again:

"MEDLEY. Ay, sir, I intend to have every thing new. I had rather be the author of my own dulness, than the publisher of other man's wit; ..."³⁷

The principal reason why Fielding discarded the dramatic unity of time in the play-within-play must be sought in the idea behind the piece. The

government and the imperfections of the age are mercilessly exposed to ridicule in a succession of episodes, each of them directed against a different vice and employing a different cast of players. The key to the allegory is provided in the title of the play, a history of contemporary manners, chiefly of the upper classes of contemporary English society. The vices of their members are presented in separate scenes connected by the principal play, which performs the role of the future commentaries of the novelist. The unity of time in such a play would be as absurd as the congestion of the adventures of a picaresque or quixotic hero within the period of twenty-four hours.

The lesson which Fielding learned in *Pasquin* and *The Universal Register* (two of his most successful dramatic works) was not lost upon him. In the first part of *Tom Jones* he did not even hesitate to abandon the practice of Homer, whose *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were reduced by his favourite French critic 'Le Bossu to forty-seven and fifty-eight days respectively, for the biographical pattern which he learned in *Jonathan Wild* and which excellently suited the purposes of his complicated plot and his method of the gradual unveiling of characters through contrasting stages. The justification of his disregard for the continuity of time, which he inserted in the introductory chapters to the second and third book of *Tom Jones*, reaffirms almost verbally the arguments of *The Historical Register*:

"Though we have properly enough entitled this our work, a history, and not a life; nor an apology for a life, as is more in fashion; yet we intend in it rather to pursue the method of those writers, who profess to disclose the revolutions of countries, than to imitate the painful and voluminous historian, who, to preserve the regularity of his series, thinks himself obliged to fill up as much paper with the detail of months and years in which nothing remarkable happened, as he employs upon those notable eras when the greatest scenes have been transacted on the human stage.

Such histories as these do, in reality, very much resemble a newspaper, which consists of just the same number of words, whether there be any news in it or not . . .

Now it is our purpose, in the ensuing pages, to pursue a contrary method. When any extraordinary scene presents itself (as we trust will often be the case), we shall spare no pains nor paper to open it at large to our reader; but if whole years would pass without producing any thing worthy his notice, we shall not be afraid of a chasm in our history; but shall hasten on to matters of consequence, and leave such periods of time totally unobserved."³⁸

In the development of the complicated and proportionate story of *Tom Jones* Fielding recognized the danger of the rigid application of the "epic" handling of time (synonymous for him with the Homeric formula) on unsuitable material, discarded, at least partly, the principle of continuity, substituted for it a network of gaps which moved the action forward in time, and combined the incidents into the central plot without any subsidiary connection by the time of their occurrence. This disregard for both the restrictive rules of contemporary critics and his own principle was, however, confined to the first part of his most elaborate novel. In the rest of the book and in his two other novels Fielding adopted the continuous flow of time as an inherent feature of the epic structure which he strived to imitate in his work.

NOTES

- ¹ Published in *The Library*, July 1917, pp. 218—224.
- ² In *Tom Jones*, book VII, chapter 11.
- ³ *Ibid.*, book VIII, chapter 9.
- ⁴ Wilbur L. Cross arrived at the conclusions in his discussion of *Tom Jones* in *The History of Henry Fielding*, New Haven 1918, vol. II, pp. 188—195.
- ⁵ Ethel M. Thornbury, *Henry Fielding's Theory of the Comic Prose Epic*, Madison 1931 (Wisconsin University Studies, vol. XXX).
- ⁶ Richard Haage, *Charakterzeichnung und Komposition in Fieldings "Tom Jones" in ihrer Beziehung zum Drama*, Hamburg 1936 (Britannica, Bd. 13), pp. 119—170.
- ⁷ Thornbury, *op. cit.*, p. 112 seq.
- ⁸ F. Homes Dudden, *Henry Fielding, His Life, Works, and Times*, Oxford 1952.
- ⁹ *Joseph Andrews*, book I, chapter 6. (The numbers of pages refer to *The Works of Henry Fielding, Esq.*, ed. by Leslie Stephen, London 1882.)
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, book IV, chapter 6, p. 296.
- ¹¹ *Tom Jones*, book V, chapter 10.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, book XVI, chapter 5.
- ¹³ *Amelia*, book VI, chapter 5.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, for the first time in book VII, chapter 5.
- ¹⁵ *Tom Jones*, book VIII, chapter 13; vol. I, p. 448.
- ¹⁶ "...I don't see they [the soldiers] are so forward to shoot our enemies. I don't like that affair of Carthage: if I had been there, I believe I should have done other-guess things, ..."; *Joseph Andrews*, p. 122.
- ¹⁷ Such as the chapter on doctors in *Amelia* (book V, chapter 2 of the original edition).
- ¹⁸ Cross, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 193.
- ¹⁹ Such as the scheme of Hilaret in *The Coffee-House Politician*, alluded to in Act III, scene 13 and revealed in Act IV, scene 7.
- ²⁰ *Joseph Andrews*, book I, chapter 11.
- ²¹ The latest views on this problem were discussed in J. Hornát's "*Pamela, Shamela a Josef Andrews*" [*Pamela, Shamela and Joseph Andrews*], *Časopis pro moderní filologii*, vol. XLI, pp. 1—22 and 92—107.
- ²² In *Amelia*, book VII, chapter 2.
- ²³ "Something hath happened since I saw you, which gives me great uneasiness, and I beg the favour of seeing you as soon as possible, to advise with you upon it." *Amelia*, p. 467.
- ²⁴ Cross, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 192.
- ²⁵ *Don Quixote*, part I, book III, chapter 2.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, part I, book IV, chapter 25.
- ²⁷ Thornbury, *op. cit.*, p. 103.
- ²⁸ J. E. Spingarn, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, New York 1899.
- ²⁹ *Aristotle's Art of Poetry*, ed. by W. Hamilton Fyfe, Oxford 1940, p. 14.
- ³⁰ The similitudes between the epic theory of Henry Fielding and Madeleine de Scudéry, who also claimed Homer and Virgil as her models, were discussed by Arthur L. Cooke in "*Henry Fielding and the Writers of Heroic Romance*", P. M. L. A., vol. LXII, p. 984—994.
- ³¹ It begins in *The Covent-Garden Journal*, January 19, 1752.
- ³² *Tom Jones*, vol. I, p. 184.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 48.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 183.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 184—185.
- ³⁶ *Dramatic Works*, vol. III, p. 205.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. III, p. 206—207.
- ³⁸ *Tom Jones*, vol. I, p. 47—48.

POZNÁMKY K UPLÝVÁNÍ ČASU V ROMÁNECH HENRYHO FIELDINGA

Ve svých poznámkách vychází autor ze zjištění, že ve všech třech románech Henryho Fieldinga (s výjimkou prvních šesti knih *Toma Jonese*) lze sestavit všechny epizody do přesného chronologického sledu a stanovit počet dní, které uplynuly mezi kterýmikoli dvěma událostmi v ději. Ve svém zkoumání podstaty tohoto jevu vychází z kritiky jeho dosavadních interpretací autorovou snahou o podrobné zasazení průběhu do určitého historického časového úseku, vlivem dramatické soustředěnosti děje a dramatické jednoty času nebo vlivem teorie epiky, zvláště tzv. epické jednoty času.

Srovnáním četných narážek na uplývání času a na historické události odhaluje autor více rozporů v časovém plánu románů, než bylo dosud známo. Z povahy těchto technických chyb vyplývá, že důsledné a jednoznačné časové určení každé epizody má především za úkol vytvořit časovou kontinuitu celého románu. Historické jevy, které je možno jednoznačně datovat, uvádí Fielding do svých děl jen proto, aby jimi dokreslil obraz soudobé anglické společnosti, tj. jako předmět společenské kritiky, nikoli jako prostředek k přesné časové lokalizaci děje. Jak ukazují závažné nesrovnalosti, Fielding si nebyl vědom toho, že svými zmínkami o skutečných postavách a událostech a časovým navazováním nových epizod na předchozí děj umožňuje datování každého dne popsaného v jeho románech.

Zvláště názorný příklad Fieldingovy snahy spojovat epizody v souvislý časový řetězec nezávisle na kalendářní posloupnosti dnů vidí autor v nedostatečném počtu neděl a svátků. Neděle se ve Fieldingových románech neopakují každých sedm dní, ale vyskytují se jen tehdy, když si jejich přítomnost vyžaduje povaha popisovaného děje (ohlášky v *Josefu Andrewsovi* nebo Boothovy vycházky v *Amelii*).

V druhé části svých poznámek odmítá autor názor, že časová kontinuita Fieldingových románů je důsledkem dramatického sepětí děje. V divadelních hrách Fielding rozvíjí všechny zápletky před divákem a jde vždy se scénou za postavou, která nejvíce posouvá děj kupředu, kdežto v románech postupně přenáší nejdůležitější události mimo čtenářovo zorné pole a řadí vedle sebe výjevy soustředěné kolem jedné postavy bez zřejmé významové souvislosti, pouze v časovém sledu. Teprve kritické okamžiky děje objasňují smysl minulých událostí, ale samy zase často vyžadují obsáhlého vysvětlení líčením toho, co se v předchozích kapitolách odehrávalo za scénou. Před čtenářem, stejně jako před hrdinou románu, probíhá děj v překvapivých zvratech, jen někdy připravených nejasnými narážkami. Jestliže Fielding rozvíjí román v několika dějových liniích, sleduje zpravidla příhody jedné postavy až ke kritickému bodu a na něj retrospektivně navazuje události v souběžných liniích (setkání postav v Uptonu nebo záchrana Sofie před lordem Fellamarem v *Tomu Jonsovi*). Ve Fieldingových dramatech jsou tedy výjevy spojeny soustředěním na děj, kdežto v románech hlavní postavou a časovým sledem a až dodatečně svým obsahem.

V posledním oddílu autor řeší vztah časové kontinuity Fieldingových románů a epické jednoty času, která omezuje děj epického díla na údobí jednoho roku. Zjišťuje především, že nepřetržitý sled dní u Fieldinga byl ovlivněn časovým plánem Cervantesova *Dona Quijota*, zvláště jeho první části. Cervantes posouvá svůj román v čase jednak střídáním dne a noci, jednak narážkami na uplývání času, kterými omezuje trvání děje na necelý rok. Mezi oběma způsoby jsou četné nesrovnalosti. Fielding v popise dobrodružství na cestách rovněž sleduje putování svých hrdinů den za dnem, avšak odkazy na celkové trvání románu vypouští. Časové údaje mají v jeho pracích za úkol spojovat epizody, nikoli zasadit děj do předem stanoveného časového úseku.

Oprávněný pro novátorský ráz svých románů vidí Fielding v antickém eposu, zvláště v básních Homérových. Ve snaze o epický charakter svých prací podřizuje proto děj homérskému sledu dní, nikoli však požadavku epické jednoty času, vznášenému soudobou kritikou. Jako romanopisec Fielding ostře útočí na klasicistickou jednotu času v dramatech, z níž byl vyvozen její epický protějšek. Rovněž v první části *Toma Jonese*, v níž zaměňuje nepřetržitý sled dní za životopisné rozvíjení děje, kterému se naučil v *Jonathanu Wildovi*, pokládá romanopisec za nutné hájit existenci mezer ve vyprávění spíše než překročení časového limitu. Z toho autor vyvozuje, že časová kontinuita je stavební princip, který není možno ztotožnit s epickou jednotou času definovanou jen jako omezení délky děje, ale který Fielding rovněž pokládá za nutný rys epického díla.

ЗАМЕЧАНИЯ ОТНОСИТЕЛЬНО ПРОТЕКАНИЯ ВРЕМЕНИ В РОМАНАХ ГЕНРИ ФИЛЬДИНГА

Автор исходит в своих замечаниях из положения, что во всех трех романах Генри Фильдинга (за исключением первых шести томов произведения „Том Джонс“) удастся составить из всех эпизодов точную хронологическую вереницу; удастся установить и число дней, которые прошли в течение промежутка времени между любыми двумя событиями, входящими в состав действия. При исследовании сущности этого явления автор исходит из критики существующих до сих пор интерпретаций, объясняющих протекание времени стремлением писателя детально приурочить происшествие к исторически определенному промежутку времени, влиянием драматической сосредоточенности действия и драматического единства времени или влиянием теории эпики, особенно т. наз. эпического единства времени.

В результате сопоставления многочисленных намеков на протекание времени и на исторические события автор раскрывает больше количество расхождений во временном плане романов, чем раньше было известно. Из характера таких технических ошибок вытекает, что задачей последовательного и однозначного определения всякого эпизода относительно времени является прежде всего создание непрерывности времени действия целого романа. Явления, происходящие в определенный исторический период, Фильдинг включает в свои произведения только с целью дорисовать с их помощью картину современного английского общества, т. е. в качестве предмета общественной критики и не в качестве средства точной временной локализации действия. Фильдинг, как об этом свидетельствуют серьезные разногласия, не давал себе отчета о том, что благодаря его замечкам относительно действительных лиц и событий и путем временного присоединения новых эпизодов с предшествующим действием он давал возможность датировки каждого описанного в его романах дня.

Особенно наглядный пример стремления Фильдинга к соединению эпизодов в связную временную вереницу независимо от последовательности дней по календарю автор видит в недостаточном числе воскресений и праздников. Воскресенья в романах Фильдинга не повторяются каждые семь дней, но они появляются только тогда, когда их наличие требует характер описываемого действия (оглашение в произведении „Джозеф Эндрю“ или прогулки Бута в книге „Эмилия“).

Во второй части своих замечаний автор отказывается от взгляда, что непрерывность времени в романах Фильдинга представляет собой результат драматического сочетания действия. Фильдинг развертывает в своих пьесах все завязки перед зрителем и сопровождает сценой то из действующих лиц, которое больше всего продвигает действие вперед, между тем как в романах он постепенно переносит важнейшие события вне поля зрения читателя и ставит рядом сцены, сосредоточенные вокруг одного действующего лица без связи, что касается значения, а только во временной последовательности. Только критические моменты действия раскрывают смысл происшедших событий, требуя, однако, в свою очередь, часто обширного пояснения путем описания того, что в предшествующих главах происходило вне сцены. Перед читателем, подобно как и перед героем романа, происходит действие в неожиданных поворотах, подготовленных только иногда при помощи неясных намеков. Развивая роман несколькими сюжетными линиями, Фильдинг следит за приключениями одного из действующих лиц до критического момента. Им он ретроспективно пользуется в качестве исходного пункта событий, которые он ставит в параллельных линиях (встреча действующих лиц в Аптоне или спасение Софии от лорда Феллмара в произведении „Том Джонс“). В драмах Фильдинга сцены соединены таким образом при помощи сосредоточения внимания на действии, между чем как в его романах это осуществляется благодаря главному лицу и последовательности во времени, и только добавочно благодаря содержанию.

В последней части автор обращает внимание на взаимоотношение непрерывности времени в романах Фильдинга и эпического единства времени. Благодаря последнему действию эпического произведения ограничивается промежуток времени одного года. Автором прежде всего установлено, что непрерывная последовательность дней у Фильдинга подверглась влиянию со стороны последовательности действия во времени романа „Дон Кихот“ Сервантеса, а именно первой его части. Сервантес заставляет свой роман продвигаться во времени путем чередования дня и ночи, с одной стороны, и намеков относительно протекания времени, посредством которых продолжительность действия ограничивается неполным годом, с другой стороны. Между обоими приемами существуют многочисленные разногласия. Описывая путевые приключения, Фильдинг одновременно следит за по-

хождениями своих героев со дня на день; однако, от ссылки на общую продолжительность романа он отказывается. Задачей данных относительно времени в его произведениях является соединение эпизодов и не приурочение действия к заранее установленному промежутку времени.

Обоснованность для новаторского характера романов Фильдинг видит в античном эпосе, а именно в поэмах Гомера. Стремясь к эпическому характеру своих работ, Фильдинг подчиняет поэтому действие гомеровскому ходу дней, отказываясь, однако, от требования эпического единства времени, предъявляемого современной критикой. Фильдинг-романист жестоко нападает на классическое единство времени в драмах, из которого был выведен его эпический антипод. В первой части произведения „Том Джонс“, в которой он заменяет непрерывный ход дней, пользуясь биографическим развитием действия, усвоенным в произведении „Джонатан Уайльд“, романист считает своим долгом лучше защищать наличие пробелов в рассказе, чем выход из рамок временного лимита. Опираясь на приведенные факты, автор приходит к выводу, что непрерывность времени представляет собой принцип структуры произведения. Этот принцип нельзя отождествить с эпическим единством времени, если имеется в виду его определение только как ограничение продолжительности действия, но Фильдинг считает его также необходимой чертой эпического произведения.

Перевод: Я. Павлик.