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SATIRE IN THE NOVELS

OF HENRY FIELDING

by

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B.S., Northern Illinois State Teachers College, 1949

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1950

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INTRODUCTION

From a critical point of view, the works of Henry Fielding have received abundant examination at the hands of a long line of distinguished writers. However, I know of no one who has written in any detail of the satire contained in the novels. There have been many who have mentioned that the novels do contain satire, but on the whole the majority of people writing on Fielding have been more interested in his ability to draw characters or his genius in organizing a plot. Many have turned to what they thought was a crude or low side of Fielding and have attempted to interpret his work in the light of a Victorian or a holier than thou vein, but in most instances, with the exception of Jonathan Wild the Great, his satire has been brushed aside with a passing comment.

To Scott and Thackeray, Fielding was disreputable and to Ruskin he "licked his chops over nastiness." But Byron calls him the "prose Homer of Human Nature" and Coleridge said, "Upon my word, I think the Oedipus Tyrannus, The Alchemist and Tom Jones the three most perfect plots ever planned."[1]

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[1] M. P. Willocks, A True Born Englishman, pp. 275-276.

While these and all the other comments to be found are of great interest there are few comments to be found on the vast amount of satire to be found in Fielding's novels.

Since this paper concerns itself with the satire in Fielding's novels perhaps the best place to begin the discussion is with a definition of what is meant by satire. For this reason the first part of my paper is devoted to a discussion of the meaning of satire. Next I have given a short history of satire, in order to show the important place that satire has held in the history of literature. In presenting this history I have tried to establish the fact that satire is divided into two schools, that of Horace and that of Juvenal. In doing this I have attempted to give examples of the works of the various satirists to show that these two types of satire have been found existing along-side of each other from the origin of the schools on through Skelton to Swift and at last to Fielding himself.

The second chapter is a somewhat lengthy summary of the four novels to be discussed. In this chapter I have taken each novel and given an all-over picture of the satire to be found in it. I have also discussed the characters and commented on the various aspects of construction, but in the main I have tried to draw a generalization about the main features of the satire.

After this general discussion of the novels I have attempted to determine what Fielding thought of the people

and society around him. In order to do this I have gone to each of the novels and tried to analyze his feelings toward ministers, lawyers and doctors. The next and last division that I have made is in his attitude toward the city life as compared to rural life. Of course, with Fielding high society was usually city life, while the rustic, as a rule, represented low society.

Fielding was not one to judge on the surface of things, but rather he plumbed deeply into the inner workings of man and saw beneath the outside cover a human being. He had a regard for the individual and almost a radical social outlook toward the treatment of the classes.

Furthermore, he had a deep hatred of hypocrisy and affectation and could see with keen humor the ridiculous situations that resulted when man assumed qualities that did not befit him. It has been my aim, then, to show this characteristic of Fielding. But while Fielding saw and strongly denounced "the glaring evils of the times," he had genteel and compassionate feelings for the struggle of mankind against the forces of evil.

I have also given examples of the technique he uses in developing his satire, a technique of contrast. When Fielding tells us what he dislikes in his society he tells us also what he does like, for in all of his novels he gives

examples of the good with examples of the bad.

Fielding, then, was a man who had a genius for seeing into the inmost workings of humanity, who saw and denounced the evils of his day, who showed the good as well as the bad, but above all he was a man who never despaired of mankind. He looked on the faults of man with compassion and understanding.

CHAPTER I

The Meaning and History of Satire

It is not easy to put into exact words a precise definition of literary forms, for one form shades off into another. It is well known, for example, what is meant by a lyric, but it is often difficult to determine whether a given poem should be called a lyric or not.

Perhaps one could not do better than to begin with a definition that belongs to an age when satires as separate productions were a living and vital form of literature in England. This is Dr. Johnson's definition: "...a poem in which wickedness or folly is censured."

The Oxford Dictionary gives this definition:

> ...,in early use a discursive composition in verse treating of a variety of subjects: in classical use, a poem in which prevalent follies or vices are assailed with ridicule or with serious denunciation.

But, the Oxford tells us, an extension of meaning is sanctioned by general usage, "the ultimate arbiter of correctness," and it is therefore pointed out that:

> ...satire has been used from the seventeenth century in its wider sense to include the employment in speaking, as well as in writing of sarcasm, irony, ridicule, etc. in denouncing, exposing or deriding vice, folly, abuses or evils of every kind.

One might say as does Richard Garnett,[2] that satire in its literary aspect may be defined as the expression in adequate terms "of the sense of disgust or amusement excited by the ridiculous or the unseemly, provided that the utterance is invested with literary form." The general aim and end of satire, Basil Willy[3] maintains, is to show the incompatibility between traditional moral standards and actual ways of living.

True satire doubtless contains the important features of all of these definitions. True satire could be all that Garnett wants and at the same time show the incompatibility between traditional moral standards and actual ways of living.

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[2]O. Smeaton, English Satires, p. xv.

[3]Lecturer in the Faculty of English, Cambridge University and author of The Eighteenth Century Background.

But Middleton Murry[4] brings in another qualification and asserts that humour is a distinctly recognizable element of true satire and that without humour, it becomes invective. However, I believe, with Garnett, that satire may portray either disgust or humour and that the disgust which the author shows may be, and probably is, a sincere condemnation of his society. An outstanding example of satire of this type may be found in the lucid and terse satire of Swift, who almost constantly belittles and condemns humanity. The satiric denunciation of a writer burning with indignation at some social wrong or abuse is capable of reaching the very highest level of literature, as it does in the case of Chaucer and in the case of Swift. The writings of a satirist of this type, and to an extent of every satirist who touches on the social aspects of life, present a picture more or less vivid, though perhaps not impartial, of the age to which he belongs, of the men, their manners, fashions, tastes, and opinions.

Thackeray, in _The English Humorists_, when speaking of the satirist says;

> He professes to awaken and direct your love, pity, your kindness, your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture, your tenderness for the

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[4] J. M. Murry, _The Problem of Style_, p. 64.

> weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy. To the best of his means and ability he comments on almost all of the ordinary actions and passions of life.

Regardless of the method of attack, disgust or humor, the satirist accomplishes his purpose by reference to an ideal. Satire is based on contrast. The satirist is engaged in measuring the aberration from the ideal. The aberration, however, is all on one side for the satirist does not hold a middle point of vantage. In an ideal sense he must in spite of this position remain cool, for his activity is predominantly intellectual. It is true that his ideal of reference is framed in accordance with his emotions, but the measurement of the aberration from it is, in the ideal sense, an affair of unbiased calculation. The emotion of the satirist should be suppressed and concealed: the emportment of the lampooner or the thundering of the preacher is impossible for him, for his appeal is to the rational part of man. He is engaged in a demonstration, and his aim is so to arrange the facts that his hearers, in spite of themselves, are driven to refer them to his own ideal.

The strength of the satirist lies, then, in employing his verbal armory for humorous or indignant attacks upon the faults of society. These faults may be faults deserving censure, whether superficial or deep-lying. The satirist of importance does not waste much of his force

upon transient foibles; his work must be universal. It must transcend the limits of its own period in virtue of its truth to human nature. Themes like money and sex, which are among the constant objects of satire, are as vital today as they were in Rome or in eighteenth century England. But things like local politics or personal grudges die with their time.

Since many satirists through the centuries have transcended their own periods, satire has been ranked as one of the cardinal divisions of literature. Its position as such, however, is due rather to the fact of its having been so regarded among the Romans, than from its own intrinsic importance. Until the closing decades of the eighteenth century -- when the classics were esteemed of paramount authority as models -- satire proper was accorded a definite place in letters, and was distinctively cultivated by men of genius as a branch of literature. It might be wise at this point to examine some of the history of satire in order to gain a background and insight into the importance of satire in the literary world.

The earliest cultivators of the art were probably the men with a grievance, or as Garnett says, "The carpers and fault finders of the clan."[5]

[5]See the article written by Garnett on "Satire" in the <u>Encyclopedia Brittanica</u>.

The first attempts were, in all probability, merely personal lampoons against those they disliked or differed from. Satire was evident in the literature of Greece, and Garnett claims for the Greeks the honour of elevating satire from an instrument of private animosity to an element of public matter, the high point being the comedies of Aristophanes. But Rome rather than Greece is usually thought of as the home of ancient satire. Quintilian claims it altogether for his countrymen in the words, "Satira tota nostra est."[6] But regardless of Quintilian's claim, it is amongst the Romans, with their deep ethical convictions and powerful social sense, that satire becomes one of the cardinal divisions of literature.

The names of Horace (65-8 B. C.) and Juvenal (60-140 A.D.) are two very important ones in the history of satire, this importance lying in the influence they had on later satirists. It is in these two Roman satirists that the two most prevalent types of satire in the eighteenth century have had their roots.

Horace in his works demonstrated that satire could be potent and incisive without reliance upon indignation and venom. The truth, even an untasty one, can be told with a smile:

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[6]H. H. Chamberlin, Horace Talks, p. 13.

If madness marks mistaken search for gain
And doing the contrary is good and sane,
Believe me, far more screwy is the head
Of a Perelliua going in the red
By drawing up a bond in any way
Which you, his debtor, never can repay.[7]

His attitude toward life, as a spectator and a critic of that life, is evident in all of his works. Throughout all, by a prevailing spirit of geniality and tolerance toward human imperfections, Horace without seeming too obviously to preach or denounce, succeeds in pointing out to an errant society the more excellent way.

Contrary to the gentle method of Horace, Juvenal writes because anger compels him. The world around him teems with abuses; evildoers flourish:

What can I do at Rome? I am not a good hand
at lying,
If a book is bad, I can't praise it, nor ask for
it everywhere:
I know not the motions of the stars: and
I will not and cannot promise
The death of a father: and never have I looked
into the entrails of frogs.
Let others take to a wife the notes that her
lover sends her,
And know what his message is:
Nobody shall be a thief
By my aid: and for these reasons, a companion
to no one at all...[8]

Professedly, everything done and felt by man is to provide him with materials and make up for the farrage of

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[7]Horace, Book II, Talk III, "Stoic Harangue" from the translation by Edward Rand, Professor of Latin, Harvard University, pp. 220-243.
[8]Juvenal, Satire III, translated by Miriam De Ford, pp. 89-106.

his writings. Juvenal lashes out at the capricious cruelty of mistress to slave, the immoral woman and the woman who parades her learning by merely quoting Virgil. He bitterly attacks and denounces such delinquencies as infidelity, amours with gladiators and avoidance of legitimate motherhood. Miriam De Ford, in her book, Rome as Viewed By Juvenal, says:

> Juvenal wrote in all sixteen Satires, divided into five books. The most famous are the third (imitated by Samuel Johnson in his "London"); the sixth, a masterpiece of misogyny; and the tenth, on "the vanity of human wishes." The part of the fourteenth Satire dealing with the education of children is also celebrated.

Indeed there is little that does not meet with the whip of Juvenal's satire. His robust and fiery denunciation of humanity is totally different from that of Horace, who was mellow and compassionate toward human faults. Juvenal had little or no compassion. His pungent ferocity is comparable to the remorselessness of the satire of Swift.

The medieval world, inexhaustible in the capacity and relish for abuse, full of rude laughter and humour -- prompt to make a jest of the priest, and, for all its chivalry, to catalogue the foibles of women -- had the satirical spirit in abundance. The two outstanding examples of satirists in medieval England are Chaucer and Langland. They typify the two classes of satire discussed -- the followers of Horace and the followers of Juvenal. Indeed, it is possible to recognize the two strains

through the whole course of English literature. The school of Horace is amply represented in Chaucer, Donne, Marvell, Addison, Fielding, Arbuthnot, Young and Goldsmith, while Langland, Skelton, Lyndsay, Dryden, Pope, Churchill and Johnson are representative of those who assailed vice and crime in the manner of Juvenal.

Langland is a sad, world-weary dreamer, who sorrows over the vice, the abuses, and the social misery of his times, finding, as he says, no comfort in any of his surroundings for all is Christian in name only. Contrasted with this is the humorous brightness, the laughter, and the light of the surroundings associated with his great contemporary, Chaucer. His satire, like that of Horace, is kindly and quaint and not bitter and fiery like that of Langland and Juvenal. Chaucer raps his age over the knuckles for its faults and foibles, but while he does it, he is genial and pleasant.

John Skelton (1400-1529), more than any of his predecessors, might be called the first professional satirist. With his caustic pen, he followed the path of Juvenal. He touched all the ills of his time, both high and low. His position in the church, a clergyman, did not restrain him from criticizing that institution. His poem, The Boke of Colyn Clout, is a general satire of ecclesiastics. He charges the clergy with idleness and greed: the sheep are unfed, but the wool is gathered from them:

Yet take they cures of soules,
And woteth never what they rede,
Pater noster nor crede;
Construe not worth a whystle
Nether Gopel nor Pystle;
Theyr Mattins madly sayde
Nothing devoutly prayde;
Their learning is so small
Their prymes and houres fal
And lepe out of their lyppes
Like sawdust or drye chippes.[9]

Why Come Ye Not to Court? is directed against the greatest member of the order, Wolsey. It dwells upon the haughtiness of Wolsey, in contrast with his humble origin, and finally Skelton consigns the cardinal to Hell with the conviction that he will keep the fiends too busy to attend to other mortals:

God save his noble grace,
And grant him a place
Endlesse to dwell
With the devyll of hell!
For, and he were there
We nede never feere
Of the fendys blake;
For I undertake
He wold so brag and crake
That he wolde thn make
The devyls to quake...
...and set hell on fyer
At his own desyer.[10]

In John Donne (1573-1631) we have another example of the school of Horace. In his Satire IV, he attacks the court and tells of a man he met who was clad in a jerkin which once

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[9] J. Skelton, Works of John Skelton, English Poets, Vol. II, "The Boke of Colyn Clout," p. 43.

[10] J. Skelton, Works, "Why Come Ye Not to Court?", p. 78.

had been violet and is now "teem-taffaty." "This thing," as Donne contemptously calls him, has travelled and speaks all tongues, yet speaks no language:

> He knows who loves; whom; and by what poison
> Hastes to an office's reversion;
> He knows who hath sold his land, and now doth beg
> A license, old iron, books, shoes and egg--
> Shells to transport:...[11]

The period of the Restoration produced many satirists. This period with its religious vigour, its parliamentary war, and its Cavaliers and Roundheads was fertile ground for the growth of satire. During this period we have the rise of the school of Juvenal, with men like John Aldhelm and Samuel Butler.

But all these writers of the period simply prepared the way for the man who is often regarded as the greatest satirist of English literature. As Saintsbury says, "The epoch of John Dryden has been fittingly styled the 'Golden Age of English Satire.'"[12] Legouis and Cazamian in speaking of this period say that the Elizabethan period was perhaps richer, numerically speaking, in certain types of satirical composition, "but the true perfection, the efflorescence of the long-growing plant, was reached in that era which extended from the publication of Dryden's Absalom (1681) to the issue of Pope's Dunciad (1742)."[13]

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[11]J. Donne, The Complete Works of Donne, "Satire IV", p. 192.
[12]G. Saintsbury, Life of Dryden, p. 28.
[13]Legouis and Cazamian, History of English Literature, p. 207.

Indeed it is during this sixty-year period that we have the works of Dryden, Swift, Defoe, Steele, Addison, Arbuthnot and Pope. But all of these except Steele and Addison were followers of Juvenal.

While satire is present in nearly all of Pope's verse, there are certain compositions which are outstanding, among them his Satires and the Dunciad. The Satires are written in opposition to Sir Robert Walpole and display a deep bitterness toward Walpole's policy. As Minto puts it, "we see gathered up in them the worst that was thought and said about the government and court party when men's minds were heated almost to the point of civil war."[14] In the Prologue and Epilogue are contained some of the most satiric portraits drawn by Pope.

> For caustic bitterness, sustained but polished irony, and merciless sarcastic malice, the characters of Atticus, Bufo, and Sporus have never been surpassed in the literature of political or social criticism.[15]

Defoe is worthy of mention, if for no other work than his satire, "The True Born Englishman." He ridicules the English as a mongrel of races--"Your Roman-Saxon-Danish-Norman-Englishman."

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[14] W. Minto, Characteristics of English Poets, p. 158.

[15] J. Saintsbury, Life of Dryden, p. 30.

In this work he attacks the peerage by ennobling the bastard sons of Charles II and hits at the unreasonable multiplication of sects:

> In their religion they are So une'vn
> That each man goes his own byway to Heav'n.[16]

There is, however, no other English writer in whom the satiric element, founded by Juvenal, is so predominant as in Swift. His three principal works, The Battle of the Books, A Tale of a Tub, and Gulliver's Travels are all satires and the latter reaches the apex of bitter denunciation of humanity in the person of the Yahoos.

There is the widest possible difference between satire as it was practised by Swift and satire as it is found in Addison and Steele. In them is no trace of the ferocity and virulence found in Swift. Addison's dissection of a beau's head and of a coquette's heart could hardly be surpassed in pungency, but it is not virulent or ferocious. Perhaps the harshest thing that Steele ever wrote was written about the sex, "whose champion it is his glory to have been" for nothing so raised his anger as the corruption of that which ought to be good:

> A coquette is a chaste jilt, and differs from a common one, as a soldier, who is perfect in exercise, does from one that is actually in service.[17]

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[16] D. Defoe, The Works of Daniel Defoe, "The True Born Englishman," pp. 91-117.

[17] L. I. Bredwold, R. K. Root, G. Sherburn, Eighteenth Century Prose, p. 75.

It is among these men, Defoe, Pope, Swift, Addison and Steele that we find Henry Fielding (1707-1754) writing his novels. And it is here in Fielding, the follower of the traditions of Horace, that we find a satire that is cutting but at the same time kind and compassionate.

CHAPTER II

A General View of the Novels

Now that we have looked at the history of satire and noted the two schools of thought and the various followers of each school we can turn to Henry Fielding and the nature of his satire.

A good insight into what Fielding thought of satire and of the job of a satirist is expressed in a remark he once made of his friend Hogarth:

> I esteem the ingenious Mr. Hogarth as one of the most useful Satyrists any Age hath produced. In his excellent Works you see the delusive Scene exposed with all the Force of Humour, and, on casting your Eyes

> on another Picture, you behold the dreadful and fatal Consequence. I almost dare affirm that those two Works of his which he calls The Rake's and the Harlot's Progress, are calculated more to serve the cause of Virtue and for the Preservation of Mankind, than all the Folio's of Morality which has ever been written.[18]

Fielding's feeling that the most useful satirist presents a true picture of the vices and evils around him and portrays the dreadful consequence of those evils and vices is obvious in this comment.

In one of his plays, Fielding tells what he thinks are the fit subjects of satire. Although two of his characters discuss this topic, they certainly express Fielding's thought, for these very topics can be found in all of the novels.

> 2nd Player: "What subjects would you write on?"
> 1st Player: "Why no subject at all, Sir; but I would have a humming deal of satire, and I would repeat in every page that courtiers are cheats and don't pay their debts, that lawyers are rogues, physicians blockheads, and ministers are..."
> 2nd Player: "What, what, Sir?"
> 1st Player: "Nay, I'll only name them, that's enough to set the audience a-hooting."[19]

In another of his plays he has his character say:

> ...sooner than to extract gold from him, I would engage to extract religion from a hypocrite, honesty

[18] G. M. Godden, Henry Fielding, A Memoir, p. 369.

[19] Henry Fielding, "The Historical Register for 1736," (II,i.), The Complete Works of H. Fielding, Esq.

from a lawyer, health from a physician, sincerity
from a courtier.[20]

The preface to Joseph Andrews gives a good insight into the source of Fielding's satire. He tells us:

> For as vanity puts us on affecting false characters, in order to purchase applause; so hypocrisy sets us on an endeavour to avoid censure, by concealing our vices under an appearance of their opposite virtues.

It is evident from this that the type of satire to be found in Fielding is an expose of the evils and vices he saw in his everyday life and that these ills are caused by affectation which in turn proceeds from one of two causes: vanity or hypocrisy.

This, then, is what one would expect to find, and does find, as the source of Fielding's satire and the type of people that Fielding has his players mention as the fit subjects for satire, are the very subjects that he uses in all of his novels. Each of his works contains the insincere courtier, the dishonest lawyer, the blockheaded physicians, and the religious hypocrite.

In addition to these members of professional groups, Fielding also speaks vehemently of the evils of the city and the city dweller. He draws a sharp line of distinction

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[20]Henry Fielding, "The Mock Doctor," (II, 5), Works.

between the unspoiled rural dweller and the affected, dandified urban dweller. He makes it plain in his preface to Tom Jones, that his "inclination is rather to the middle and lower classes" than to the highest life which he says, "presents very little Humour or Entertainment."[21] He continues with a biting remark regarding the "high French and Italian seasoning" which he believes spoils the city dweller. This is positive evidence of where he thinks one will easily find "affectation and vice."

It is primarily, then, with these sharp distinctions made by Fielding between the classes of society, between the city and rural people, and with the various professions that this paper is primarily interested. But before proceeding with this division of Fielding's satire, let us stop and look at the four novels to be considered, in order to get a general view and all-over picture of each novel.

Joseph Andrews[22] is the first of Fielding's attempts at a satirical novel. The chief reason behind the publishing of it was the publishing of Pamela.[23]

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21. For the whole discussion on topic see the preface to Fielding's novel, Tom Jones.
22. Fielding's first novel was published in 1742.
23. It could be said that Fielding's reason for publishing Joseph Andrews was economic. The Licensing Act of 1737, ended his career as a playwright and forced him to find another vehicle for his writing. However, between the end of his plays and the publishing of his novel there appeared a great deal of work in periodicals and pamphlets. He also turned to the study of law at this time.

Richardson came out in 1749 with his history of Pamela and stated that the object of the novel was to teach "religion and morality in so easy and agreeable manner as shall render them equally delightful and profitable." But to Henry Fielding, Pamela was an "essay in vulgarity--of sentiment and morality alike--which has never been surpassed." To Fielding, whom W. E. Henley calls "a scholar and a gentleman of the world,"[24] Pamela was a new-fangled blend of sentimental priggishness and obvious unreality. In Pamela, he perceived affectation. He also saw affectation in the excessive praise of it on the part of the public. Accordingly, his sense of the "ridiculous" was aroused and found vent in his first satirical novel, Joseph Andrews. The beginning of the novel is clearly a parody of Richardson, since Joseph is merely a caricature of his sister Pamela. That Pamela, through all her trials, could really have cherished any affection for her unscrupulous admirer seemed to Fielding to be a sentimental absurdity, and the unprecedented success of the book sharpened his sense of the ridieulous. To show how utterly foolish the whole thing was, Fielding decided to depict a young man in circumstances of similar importunity at the hands of a dissolute woman of fashion. He takes for his hero Pamela's brother Joseph, who for the first ten chapters of the book goes from bedroom scene

[24]W.L. Cross, The History of Henry Fielding, Vol. 2, p. 386.

to bedroom scene protecting his "Joseph-Hood."

But the process of invention carried Fielding beyond a mere parody and he now attempts, as he tells us, a novel which "should be better and more true to life" than Richardson's. But dropping the satire of Richardson does not mean that he dropped the idea of satire entirely. From the ridiculous in Richardson, he turned to the ridisulous of his own day, to reality, to the life around him. The novel then becomes The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams.[25]

It is not without reason that Fielding added the name of Mr. Adams to the title page. If he is not the real hero of the book, he is undoubtedly the character whose fortunes the reader follows with close interest. Whether he is smoking his pipe, or losing his way while pondering a passage of Greek, or groaning over the fatuities of the man of fashion in Leonora's story, or brandishing his famous crabstick in defense of Fanny, he is always the same delightful mixture of benevolence and simplicity, of credulity and of ignorance of the world. He lives upon Aristotle's Politics but he knows nothing of the politics of his own day; he is perfectly familiar with the cities of ancient Greece, but he knows nothing of the city of London. He sets out to sell a collection of sermons

[25]The full title given to the novel by Fielding was The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and His Friend Mr. Abraham Written in the Manner of Cervantes.

which he forgets to carry with him; and in a moment of excitement he tosses into the fire a translation of Aeschylus which has cost him years to make. He gives advice to Joseph on resignation to the Divine Will, but he is overwhelmed with grief when his child is reported to be drowned. He speaks with profound wisdom upon marriage, school discipline, faith and good works, but he is an easy victim to every rogue he meets, and is willing to accept the good faith of Mr. Pounce, or to give the benefit of the doubt to Parson Trulliber. Regardless of his faults, he has a native dignity that cannot be taken from him. As he appears in the pages of the novel, in his short great-coat and his ragged cassock, with his old wig and battered hat, a clergyman whose social position is hardly above that of a footman, he is a far finer figure than Lady Booby or any of the other so-called "great people" in the book.

The novel is, as Digeon says, a character novel rather than a novel of action.[26] The story abounds with character sketches from that of Parson Adams to that of Mrs. Slipslop.[27] Next to Parson Adams--though of a very different sort--she is perhaps the most interesting character in the novel. With her easy changes from servility to insolence, her sensuality,

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[26]See A. Digeon, The Novels of Fielding, p. 78.

[27]The names Fielding uses for his characters are usually very expressive; Slipslop, Miss Grave-airs, Peter Pounce, Blue-skin, Tow-wow, and Lady Booby are just a few.

and her distorted vocabulary, she adds humour and lifelike reality. Peter Pounce, too, with his dialogue on charity; Parson Trulliber with his hogs and his greedy disposition; Mrs. Tow-wouse the shrew, are pictures from life as Fielding found it.

Aside from these more or less important characters, there are many minor figures which give Fielding ample opportunity to give vent to his sure touch for satire. Nothing, for example, can be more admirable than the different manifestations of meanness which take place among the travellers of the stagecoach. When the coach comes upon Joseph, who has been robbed of everything including his clothes, lying naked and bleeding in the ditch, each passenger has his say about the treatment that should be afforded a "fellow-man in need." There is Miss Grave-airs, who protests against the indecency of his entering the vehicle; there is the lawyer, who advises that the wounded man should be taken in, not from any humane motive but because he is afraid of being involved in legal proceedings if they leave him to his fate; there is the wit, who seizes the situation for a fast round of double-entendres; and lastly there is the coachman, whose only concern is the shilling for his fare, and who refuses to lend any of his many great-coats lest they "be made Bloody." Generosity and

humane motive are left for the postillion lad, who strips off his only outer garment, "at the same time swearing a great Oath," for which he is duly rebuked by the passengers, "that he would rather ride in his Shirt all his life than Suffer a Fellow-creature to lie in so miserable a Condition." Fielding expresses the epitome of his satire in his report that this lad "since has been transported for robbing a Hen-roost."[28]

The book obviously contains a wealth of characters who give Fielding ample opportunity to reveal his deep and thorough knowledge of mankind. No other work of Fielding's gives a fuller insight into the actions and manners of the time; in every chapter the author expresses his distaste for the superficial actions of the people of his day. The abundance of characters in this novel makes up life as Fielding saw it, and as he says in the preface, he described "not Men, but Manners; not an Individual, but a Species."

The next novel of Fielding appeared in the third volume of The Miscellanies in 1742.[29] This third volume is wholly occupied with _The History of the Life of the Late Mr._

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[28] H. Fielding, _Joseph Andrews_, p. 45.

[29] The only two important things in _The Miscellanies_ are _A Journey From This World to the Next_ and _Jonathan Wild the Great_. As Digeon says on page 92 of his book, _The Novels of Fielding_, "_The Miscellanies_ were old compositions, fragments, rough sketches, some of which were printed without his having had the inclination or the time to revise or finish them. He rapidly emptied his drawers of anything which he could find in them."

Jonathan Wild the Great.[30] Under the name of a notorious thief-taker hanged at Tyburn in 1725, Fielding has traced the "Progress of a Rogue to the Gallows," showing by innumerable subtle comments that the so-called greatness of a villain does not materially differ from any other kind of greatness, which is independent of goodness. The author is careful to explain that his satire, in this book, is in no wise directed against genuine worth. He is far from considering "Newgate as no other than Human Nature with its Mask off," but he thinks "we may be excused for suspecting, that the splendid palaces of the Great are often no other than Newgate with the Mask on."[31] Thus Jonathan Wild the Great is a prolonged satire upon that so-called greatness, in which benevolence, honesty, charity and like virtues have no part.

The prototype of Fielding's Jonathan Wild became notorious in London between 1718 and 1725, acquired an evil reputation and finally died on the gallows amid great public

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[30] The actual title under which this novel was published was The Life of Jonathan Wilde the Great, Thief-taker General Of his Rise and Progress in Roguery; his first Acquaintance with Thieves, by what arts he made himself Their Head, or Governor; his discipline over them and several classes of Thieves under his Command. In which all his Intrigues, Plots, and Artifices, are accounted for, and Laid Open, Intermixed with Variety of Diverting Stories; taken chiefly from his own private Journals, and daily transactions of his Life, as found amongst his papers since his first being apprehended.

[31] H. Fielding, Jonathan Wild the Great, The Preface.

applause. The many stories that sprang up after his death added to his monstrous reputation, and he had such great influence on the popular mind that his name became synonymous with the word evil. The connotation was continued in the writing of the propagandist of the Opposition to Walpole. Because of the connotation of his name, the Opposition writers found the satirical coupling of Jonathan Wild and the Prime Minister an effective political device.[32] The thief and the statesman were paralleled frequently. Since Fielding was sympathetic with the ideals, if not the policies of the Opposition, and since he had his own grudge against the statesman, since the passing of the Licensing Act, he made the usual attack on Walpole. The political satire in _Jonathan Wild_, however, has an ethical, more than a partisan basis. For Fielding, Jonathan Wild stands for something more fundamental than a corrupt statesman; he is the personification not merely of political but of general evil. To him, Wild symbolized the conflict between greatness and goodness. Jonathan Wild personifies greatness, Thomas Heartfree goodness. Wild conducts a thoroughgoing campaign to rob, disgrace and murder Heartfree, whose resistance is almost wholly passive. In the end Wild goes to the gallows and Heartfree returns to

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[32] For further discussion of this see W. Irwin, _The Making of Jonathan Wild_, p. 22.

a life of peace and prosperity.

The action centers in the unsuccessful attack of greatness on unassertive but unconquerable goodness. Jonathan Wild, as portrayed by Fielding, achieved a greatness unparalleled in history or romance. His ruling passion was an insatiable ambition which robbed him of complacence and of happiness. Nothing ever satisfied him but the whole. "The truest Mark of Greatness," Fielding remarks, "is Insatiability."

In one part of the book Wild, finding himself restless, begins to meditate on ways and means of attaining greatness. He considers mankind as properly divided into two classes, "those that use their Hands, and those who employ Hands." Of the second division, "the genteel Part of Creation," there are those who employ hands for the general good and those who employ hands for their own use and advantage. In the latter group belong "Conquerors, absolute Princes, Prime Ministers, and Prigs." The degree of greatness depends solely upon the number of hands employed. Alexander was greater than one of his captains only because he headed a larger number of hands. A prig would be as great as a prime minister if he had as many tools. Accordingly, Wild determines to assemble a gang which will rob for him and which he will control by judicious hanging and transporting. With this resolution begins his ascent to real greatness.

For the pursuit of greatness nature had endowed Wild with many gifts, all of which he fostered and improved. He was bold, cunning and resolute. He was further aided in dealing with men by his extraordinary ability to make capital of another's weakness. He knew the good Heartfree to be gullible and easily imposed upon. Wild was not solely content to plunder Heartfree of all his jewels and plunge him into ruin; he did his utmost to debauch the man's wife and to send him to the gallows. During most of his campaign to ruin the jeweler, Wild kept his victim's esteem simply by pretended services and professions of friendship.

A genius for hypocrisy was the talent which Wild most valued in himself and in others. Although he held good nature and good actions in contempt, he carefully cultivated an affectation of virtue and modesty, and relied on his appearance to serve him as well as, or better than, the real thing. The word honesty he believed to be a corruption of the Greek word for ass.

Although his lust was tremendous, he was incapable of entertaining the tender passion which simple people called love, either for a woman or for mankind in general. His feeling toward all human creatures except himself was a composite of contempt, suspicion and hatred.

With such a character it is little wonder that Wild's

life was a triumph of greatness. Certain heroes and conquerors, "who have impoverished, pillaged, sacked, burnt, and destroyed the Countries and Cities of their fellow Creatures, from no other provocation than that of Glory," may have done more widespread destruction, but none could have outdone Wild in his own province. Fielding concludes his history by saying:

> Indeed, while Greatness consists in Power, Pride, Insolence, and doing mischief to Mankind--to speak out,--while a Great Man and a Great Rogue are Synonymous Terms, so long shall Wild stand unrivalled on the Pinacle of Greatness. Nor must we omit here, as the finishing of his Character... than Jonathan Wild the Great was, what so few Great Men are, though all in Propriety ought to be--hanged by the Neck 'till he was dead.

There could be no stronger denunciation of an age than this novel which again cries out against affectation of virtue, against hypocrisy.

In 1749, Fielding published what is commonly thought of as his masterpiece, The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling. His "Fare" he says, using the language of a table menu, is "Human Nature," which he will first present "in that more plain and simple manner in which it is found in the country," and afterwards "hash and ragoo" it with all the "high and French and Italian seasoning of Affectation and Vice which courts and Cities afford."[33] He takes his character from

[33]H. Fielding, Tom Jones, p. 18.

his experience or, as he terms it, "conversation." He does not intend to present "Models of Perfection." He holds that mankind is constitutionally defective, and that a single bad act does not, of necessity, imply a bad nature. He paints nature as he sees it, "behind the Scenes of this Great Theater of Nature," he paints humanity as he finds it, extenuating nothing, and setting down nothing in malice, but reserving the full force of his satire for affectation and hypocrisy.

Whether it is just a coincidence, or whether it is deliberate, there is a closeness of basic theme in the works of Richardson and Fielding.[34] That Fielding's first novel, Joseph Andrews, was written as a parody on Richardson's Pamela, there is no doubt. But again in the publication of Fielding's Tom Jones (1749) and Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe (1747) there is a striking similarity. Richardson began his novel in 1744 and Fielding began to write his in 1746. The dates do not preclude the suggestion that Fielding knew of the existence of Clarissa Harlowe and of his rival's plans, at the time he began to work on Tom Jones. Even if Fielding had not composed Tom Jones with Clarissa Harlowe in his mind, it would be impossible to miss the great

[34]This idea is discussed by Digeon in The Novels of Fielding. On page 134 he states, "I look forward to the day when an authentic document will be discovered, proving that Tom Jones was really written to oppose Clarissa."

similarity that lies in the basic plot of each work.

The plot of Richardson's novel revolves around Clarissa, who wants to avoid an odious marriage which her pitiless father, brother, sister and uncles are trying to force upon her. To avoid the marriage she elopes with Lovelace. But Lovelace is a debauchee who treats her infamously. In the end she dies of grief and despair, unwilling to seek a reconciliation with him, and unable to win one with her family.

In Fielding's novel, Sophia Western, also wishing to avoid an odious marriage, which her brutal father and half-crazy aunt want to force upon her, runs away from home. The dissolute young man, Tom Jones, whom she loves, rejoins her after numerous escapades. He proves to be better than his reputation, just the opposite of Lovelace; Sophia is reconciled to him and when her father learns that the young man's bastardy is honourable, he allows his daughter to marry him.

The similarity of these two works is obvious; it seems more than possible that Fielding's Tom Jones is a reply to Richardson's Clarissa Harlowe, just as his earlier novel was to Pamela. Richardson declares that it was not his purpose to write a mere novel of romance; his purpose was to teach a moral lesson. This was a pretention which Fielding could no more admit than he had admitted it in the case of Pamela.

But what of the moral of Clarissa, that moral which Richardson declared to be the "essence" of his book? It is not very clear what this moral is, and his contemporaries did not conceal their perplexity from the author. Actually, Lovelace won all hearts, and Clarissa was deemed now prudish and affected, now rash and a coquette, and it was the good who were punished in this moral novel. Richardson, with indignation and astonishment, was reduced to explaining that the virtuous Clarissa would find her reward in Heaven.[35]

Fielding did not fail to see all this inconsistency, to point it out to his rival--or to cause others to do so--and to write a novel showing how silly Richardson actually was. In the preface to Tom Jones, he speaks in terms which it is impossible to misunderstand, of characters which are "all of a piece," completely vicious or entirely virtuous, angelically perfect or diabolically depraved. He says, "Nor do I indeed conceive the good purposes served by inserting characters of such angelic perfection or such diabolical depravity, in any work of invention."[36]

Tom Jones, then, is a novel written along the same plot lines as Clarissa Harlowe, but differing from it in

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[35] Richardson's Correspondence, Vol. VI, p. 83, Letter to Lady Bradshaigh.

[36] H. Fielding, Tom Jones, p. 446.

that the characters are wholesome, everyday people. In contrast to Lovelace, a creature diabolically depraved, a symbol of vice, Fielding draws his Tom Jones, a real person, a human mixture of vices and virtues. Tom Jones, brought up by Mr. Allworthy, who found him one day on his bed, is a hardy country-bred youth, a lover of open air life and wide spaces, a natural man. He is full of vigorous and lusty life. His animal spirits are strong and simple; he knows no better way to celebrate his guardian's recovery than to get drunk; he would be running after women were it not that he is in love, and even so his love is not always strong enough to triumph over his temperament and to make him a prude by refusing a good opportunity. His heart is lined with good intentions, and yet, for all his good will, he is seen by turns lying, poaching, drinking, quarrelling, fighting, sleeping in prison, under the stars, or anywhere else on the slightest invitation; and even going so far as to accept money from Lady Bellaston. But in all of this, his faults are never more than errors, because he learns life by living it. His actions throughout the novel are a peculiar mixture of good and evil with a predominance of good. Fielding's Tom is a man, not a caricature of one.

Being a dramatist, Fielding could not conceive of a novel without a complicated plot. Of itself the plot of

Tom Jones was to him a source of amusement and just pride. The history originally came out in six long volumes in which he depended upon his plot to hold the interest of the reader. From the first the reader becomes interested in the mystery of Tom's parentage, and as the novel progresses the reader is equally interested in other mysteries which rise one by one out of the narrative. And yet all of these individual mysteries, these individual plots, are woven into one unit, each belonging with the other and making a harmonious whole. At the end they are all cleared up by a succession of discoveries accomplished in perfect ease and with fine strokes of humour and social satire.

In this novel Fielding lashes out at many of the vices than infected his times. He cries out against the bastardy laws, against the game laws which he calls foolish and cruel, against the prisons which he says can do nothing but corrupt their wretched occupants. He insists that it is wrong to send first offenders there. He declares the criminal law to be too severe and the rights of the accused seldom respected by the court. This list of practical reforms that he advocates might be prolonged. The object of Fielding is always the same; whether he be concerned with personal or with social morality, his efforts are always directed against hypocrisy and selfishness, and toward truth

and equity.

The last of Henry Fielding's novels, published in 1751, was Amelia, in which he paints a picture of domestic life seen against a background of London vice, crime and folly. The background is low, for to follow Captain Booth one has to penetrate into the magistrate's court, the sponging house and the debtor's prison. On the other hand, Fielding shows the rich and the great and all the glaring evils of power and wealth. He shows men and women whose main occupation is the pursuit of innocent women, the fighting of duels, and the ruin of great estates at the gambling tables.

On the very first pages he cuts out with all his satirical powers against the "trading justice," men with no knowledge whatsoever of the law and no decency in sentencing the poor and helpless and permitting the guilty rich to go free.

In Amelia, human nature is shown in its vilest form, but here too is the radiance of love, honour and forgiveness--in the person of Amelia herself. She is love manifest, the love that nothing can kill. The scene where Booth confesses to Amelia his affair with Miss Mathews in the debtors' prison proves this beyond a doubt:

> Indeed, I firmly believe every word you have said--
> but I cannot forgive you the fault you have confessed--

> and my reason is because I have forgiven it long ago.[37]

To hear her say this makes her seem a sort of martyr with a halo. It almost sounds like the type of character that caused Fielding to call Richardson's characters sentimental prigs. But Amelia is no unearthly saint, no El Greco figure with an emaciated body. She is a beautiful woman, gay and humourous. She is ready to face circumstances in a way that a Clarissa would never do. When Booth has run up a gambling debt of fifty pounds, it is she who goes off to the pawn shop with her few trinkets, and even at last with clothes.

The portrait of Colonel Bath gives Fielding a chance to lash out at the stupid idea of honour prevalent at this time. Bath is a monster of a man, nearly seven feet high, with a huge wig stretching across his shoulders. One word is forever issuing from his lips--the word "Honour." For Bath the whole duty of man consists in challenging to a duel every male who opposes him, or even contradicts his opinions. He is a dotard, with a kind heart, whose sole idea of argument is a sword-thrust or a pistol-shot.

The whole book gives Fielding an opportunity to bite deeply at the faults of his day. The plot trails through all sorts of vice, crime and folly. It abounds in evil personages

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[37] H. Fielding, _Amelia_, p. 281.

such as My Lord, Colonel James and Captain Trent. This above all of his other works is truly a social satire.

The novel, however, has many obvious mechanical faults. Fielding wrote this last novel when he was under great physical and financial strain. It came at the end of his career, when he was exhausted and worn out from the work of a London Justice. There is a carelessness in many details that was not like Fielding. One of the chief faults in the first edition, that caused the great "paper war," was the loss of Amelia's nose. The author told what a great beauty she was, but he placed her in an accident that caused her to lose her nose and then forgot about it in any following chapters. The second edition corrected this oversight and sent her to a famous surgeon, who repaired her beauty. But this oversight was all the critics and his enemy, Richardson, needed to lash out at him.

Dr. Samuel Johnson was thoroughly captivated with the book, notwithstanding that he paradoxically asserted that the author was a "blockhead"--"a barren rascal." He read the book through, as he says, "without stopping" and pronounced Mrs. Booth to be "the most pleasing heroine of all the romances."[38] Richardson, on the other hand, found "the

[38] Paul De Castro, Notes and Queries, Nov., 1917.

characters and situations so wretchedly low and dirty" that he could hardly finish the volume.[39] With the professional reviewers the novel fared very ill and the whole thing resulted in Fielding's apology for his "dearest child."

He has apparently summarized most of the criticisms in a mock-trial of Amelia before the "Court of Censorial Enquiry," the proceedings of which are recorded in Numbers Seven and Eight of the Covent-Garden Journal. The novel is charged with the Statute of Dulness, and the heroine is indicted with being a "low character, a Milksop, and a Fool;" with lack of spirit and with fainting too frequently; with dressing her children, cooking, and other "servil Offices;" with being too forgiving to her husband; and lastly, as might be expected, with being "a Beauty without a nose." Dr. Harrison and Colonel Bath are arraigned in much the same fashion. After some evidence against Amelia has been presented by "a Great Number of Beaus, Rakes, fine Ladies, and several formal Persons with Bushy Wigs, and Canes at their Noses," a grave man steps forward and begs to be heard. Fielding then delivers a final apology for his last novel and for his "favourite child."

> I do not think my Child is entirely free from faults. I know nothing human that is so; but surely she doth not deserve the Rancour with

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[39] Richardson's Correspondence, Vol. VII, p. 18, Letter to Mrs. Donnellan.

> which she hath been treated by the Public. However, it is not my Intention, at present, to make a defense; but shall submit to a Compromise, which hath been always allowed in this Court in all Prosecutions for Dulness. I do, therefore, solemnly declare to you, Mr. Censer, that I will trouble the World no more with any Children of mine by the same Muse.[40]

Whether sincere or not, this last statement gave the greatest of satisfaction to Richardson. He wrote triumphantly, "Mr. Fielding has over-written himself, or rather under-written; and in his own journal seems ashamed of his last piece; and has promised that the same Muse shall write no more for him." 40a

Henry Fielding's sister, Sarah Fielding, gives the best defense and explanation of the work that Fielding attempts in _Amelia_. In her novel, _The Cry_, she says:

> Comic authors have difficulty in escaping from their prison. The public desires nothing but laughter and jests from them. Let them paint the most agreeable images of human nature, let them ever so accurately search the inmost recesses of the human heart, there is a general outcry up against them, that they are spiritless and dull.[41]

This is of value in that it is a confession of a new intention in Fielding's last work, something more than a mere repetition of the intention of _Tom Jones_. There is no longer the idea of a "comic epic poem in prose." _Amelia_ is, as Digeon calls it, "a psychological novel in the most modern

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[40] Number Eight of the _Covent-Garden Journal_.

[41] Sarah Fielding, _The Cry_, pp. 169-170.

[40a] See Hornbeak, K., _Correspondence of Richardson_, p. 92.

sense of the term." It is a study into the hearts and minds of the characters, a study into the workings and motives behind the actions of the characters. It is at times heavy with moral, religious, and social criticism, so much so that the author often delays the action while he digresses in his criticism. But even this fits into the author's avowed purpose, "to expose some of the most glaring evils, as well public as private, which at present infest this country." That Amelia has its faults is obvious, but that its depth and its good points have been overlooked by readers of its own day and of ours is also obvious.

This, then, is the general picture of the novels and the all-over picture of Fielding's satire. It is evident from this discussion that Fielding was well aware of the evils of his day, but that while he was aware of them and censored his society for them, condemnation of those evils was made with compassion and with understanding. It can be readily seen that he was not one who despaired of ever improving humanity. He did not follow the tradition of Juvenal or Swift. Fielding tells us in his novels that there is good around us. All the world is not evil and even that which often appears to be evil is not so if we take the trouble to look beneath the outer actions and see the motives that prompt the actions. But above all else he asks us--almost commands us, to leave

off our "holier than thou" attitude, to put aside our hypocritical coverings and become natural and free of affectation.

Since we have now looked into the novels themselves let us turn to the specific satire of the professional groups and to the city and rural life.

CHAPTER III

The Professions and Society

The few lines from Fielding's play, The Mock Doctor, quoted earlier, list the specific people whom Fielding deemed worthy of satirical treatment. In the last section of this paper it is my intention to present remarks that Fielding makes in his novels about these professional groups and about city and rural society in order to determine what his attitude was regarding them. First, let us see what he had to say of the legal profession, the penal institutions and the laws of eighteenth century England.

It no doubt appears strange to look at the many satirical remarks that Fielding makes regarding lawyers and the practice of the legal profession when one realizes that Fielding himself was a member of the legal profession. On January 11, 1749, Fielding was appointed as Justice of the Peace for Middlesex and Westminster counties.

London in 1749 was anything but a safe place. The alleys, courts and lanes were, as Fielding says, "like a vast wood or forest in which a thief may harbour with as great security as wild beasts do in the deserts of Africa or Arabia." Gangs of robbers, well-organized and daring, attacked quiet citizens with cutlasses and bludgeons, often in full daylight. In January, 1749, they broke open the Gatehouse Prison and carried off one of their fellows, leaving the turnkey desperately wounded. London at night was under mob rule, so that "even with warrants in their pockets, the officers of Justice often dared not make an arrest."[42] The only force for the suppression of such criminals was the Watch, "chosen," as Fielding says in <u>Amelia</u>, "out of those poor old decrepit people who are from their want of bodily strength rendered incapable of getting a livelihood by work." He further tells us that these were helped by constables who were often only to be found in the alehouses and had in

[42]B. Willis, <u>Eighteenth Century Background</u>, p. 127.

any case to apply to the military when called upon to act.[43]

Even the average Justice of the day, as M. P. Willocks in his history of Fielding, called A True-Born English Man, tells us, was far from being what his name implied. In his history he tells of the

> famous Bow Street runner who gave evidence against one Justice whose 'plan" used to be to issue out warrants, and take up all the poor devils in the streets, and then there was the bailing them, Two and fourpence, which the Magistrate had...[44]

But the author of Amelia, who lashed out in the very first pages of that novel against the "Trading Justice," could scarcely belong to that very type of justice that he abhorred. As Fielding himself says:

> By composing, instead of inflaming the quarrels of porters and beggars (which I blush when I say hath not been universally practised), and by refusing to take a shilling from a man who most undoubtedly would not have had another left, I had reduced an income of about five hundred pounds a year of the dirtiest money on earth to little more than three hundred pounds; a considerable portion of which remained with my clerk.[45]

Wilbur Cross in his book The History of Henry Fielding gives many interesting insights into the life of Fielding as a justice. He gives many examples of cases that came before

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[43] H. Fielding, Amelia, The Preface.

[44] M. P. Willocks, A True-Born Englishman, p. 278.

[45] H. C. Biron, "Henry Fielding as an Eighteenth Century Magistrate,", The Living Age, No. 3944 (1920), p. 348.

Fielding and proves beyond a doubt that Fielding believed in the "quality of mercy".[46] But Fielding himself makes it obvious in Jonathan Wild the Great and in Amelia that he was well aware of the deplorable evils that existed in London. As a justice, he came close to many types of vice and wickedness and it is only natural that the novelist in Fielding should attempt to tell and correct these "glaring evils." Amelia is a product of these days as a justice, and it is in Amelia that is found the most satirical and denouncing remarks of those charged with the administering of peace, law and justice. In the second chapter of Amelia, called "Observations on the Excellency of the English Constitution, and Curious Examinations before a Justice of Peace," he compares the "lower officers in our civil government to be disposed" in as ridiculous manner as a master of a family who would:

> "put his butler on the coach-box, his steward behind the coach, his coachman in the butlery, and his footman in the stewardship, and in the same ridiculous manner should misemploy the talents of every other servant."

He says he has always assumed the practice of the office of justice of peace required a certain amount of knowledge of

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[46]See W. L. Cross, The History of Henry Fielding, Chapter XXI.

law, "because, in every case which comes before him, he is to judge and act according to law."

Since this knowledge is only come by through reading, and the "statutes which relate to the office of a justice of peace, making of themselves at least two large volumes in folio," he cannot conceive how Mr. Thrasher, the trading justice of Amelia, could possibly be an administrator of justice when he had "never read one syllable of the matter." It is not conceivable that a person of Fielding's wide knowledge and close observation of mankind could possibly draw a Mr. Thrasher without having some knowledge of a Mr. Thrasher. He is not one individual--not a character in this novel, but he is as Fielding says, "a species" of many justices whom Fielding knew.

The lack of knowledge might be overlooked in these lower officers if goodness and honesty were on their sides, but even in this, they are great offenders against justice. Fielding tells us that in the case of Thrasher wrong often had "five hundred to one of his side" while "right had a much worse situation." In speaking of Thrasher, Fielding says, "To speak the truth plainly, the justice was never indifferent to a cause, but when he could get nothing on either side."[47] To prove this point Fielding has several

[47]The point here is obvious. Fielding of course means that Thrasher was indifferent only when both parties before him obviously lacked money.

cases brought before the justice which establish beyond a doubt that goodness and innocence have no chance. When an Irishman is brought before the justice his proof of innocence is ignored and the judge says, "Sirrah, your tongue betrays your guilt." The next case was that of a woman charged with street-walking, who offered to get witnesses to prove her innocence, only she had no money with which to pay the messengers. The lack of money brought a sentence to Bridewell for a month. To contrast all of this Fielding has a "Genteel young man and woman" brought before the justice. They were caught in "a situation which we cannot as particularly describe here as he did before the magistrate," but on a wink from his clerk, the justice claimed that "the fact was incredible and impossible." The witness against the young couple was then sent to prison for want of sureties when the lady in question declared she would swear the peace against him "for that he had called her a whore several times." The most satirical remark of the whole chapter is summed in this one statement about the justice:

> In short, the magistrate had too great an horror for Truth to suspect that she ever appeared in sordid apparel; nor did he ever sully his sublime notions of that virtue, by uniting them with the mean ideas of poverty and distress.[48]

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[48] See Chapter II of Amelia.

In the same distasteful category as the Trading Justice of Amelia is the drunken justice of Joseph Andrews.[49] As Fielding tells us, "the justice now being in the height of his mirth and his cups, bethought himself of the prisoners; and telling his company he believed they should have good sport in their examination, he ordered them brought into his presence." Later Parson Adams asks for the privilege of speaking in his own defense and says that it is not possible that he can be condemned to jail without the opportunity of speaking for himself. The justice answers:

> No, No, you will be asked wh t you have to say for yourself, when you come on your trial; we are not trying you now; I shall only commit you to gaol: if you can prove your innocence at 'size, you will be found ignoramus, and so no harm done.

No harm done--an innocent man to lie in jail for many months, but no harm done. Soon a friend of Parson Adams comes to his aid and tells the justice that the gentleman before him is actually a clergyman and the justice replies, "Nay if he is a gentleman, and you are sure he is innocent, I don't desire to commit him, not I;..." and seeing Fanny, he says, "I will commit the woman by herself, and take your bail for the gentleman; Look into the book clerk and see how it is to take bail." In a spirit of great pride and as if it were

[49] H. Fielding, Joseph Andrews, Chapter XI.

much to his credit the justice boasts, "No body can say I have committed a gentleman, since I have been in the commission."

If Fielding makes the Trading Justice and the drunken justice appear ridiculous, his picture of the prison to which delinquents were dispatched is no less so. He shows the various people and the descriptions that he gives of them add to the portrayal of the ridiculous. The custom of garnish,[50] and the treatment given to those who cannot afford to comply with the custom is vividly portrayed.

It would be rather illogical to assume that Fielding does not know the prisons of his day and that he is not speaking the truth.[51] The prison scene in Amelia was obviously written in indignation from what Fielding actually knew. On Booth's entry, the keeper at once demands garnish, the very

[50] Garnish was an unauthorized fee demanded of a newcomer by old prisoners and by the jail keepers.

[51] An interesting note is to be found in W. L. Cross, History of Henry Fielding, III, 270. It reads, "...and Lord Lyttelton referred to Fielding as the remorseful inmate of the sponging house who sought aid from him." The veracity of such accounts Cross denies, believing that Fielding's financial difficulties were greatly exaggerated by those who knew the writer less well that they supposed. A recently discovered eighteenth century pamphlet asserts that Fielding was once imprisoned. The pamphlet, discussed by Howard P. Vincent, "Henry Fielding in Prison," Modern Language Review, XXXVI (Oct. 1941), pp. 494-500, is entitled An Historical View of the Principles, Characters, Persons, &c. of the Political Writers in Great Britain...in a Letter to Monsieur M--s from Monsieur B--s, Private Agent these Twenty Years past from the C--t of F--e, in England. (London, 1740). The anonymous author infers that Sir Robert Walpole once saved Fielding from gaol where he would have "roted... had it not been for the generosity of the Minister." Since the pamphlet is a satirical attack on Fielding at the time he was engaged in acrimonious political warfare, the statement is scarcely to be considered seriously.

extortion that set Howard investigating prison conditions in later years. Here in prison we find a man wounded at the siege of Gibraltar who has been acquitted of the crime of stealing three herrings, but who cannot pay the gaoler's fee and is therefore left in prison to rot. With his head on a girl's lap, an old man lies dying. She had stolen a loaf because they were both starving. The poignant picture of Blear-eyed Moll could hardly be more disgusting and at the same time more useful in describing the low life and vice found in the prison. Miss Mathews is in the comfortable, hotel-like part of the jail, since she has money, on a charge of killing her lover. Fielding is truly crying against the inhumane system that keeps an innocent man in jail for lack of money, allows an old man to die for lack of food, and allows an accused murderess to live in comparative sumptousness.

That he abhors the idea of treatment based on class is shown when he protests because Molly is taken "to that house where the inferior sort of people may learn one good lesson," and that is, "respect and deference to their superiors; since it must show them the wide distinction Fortune intends between those persons who are to be corrected for their faults, and those who are not."[52] Prisons can do

[52] H. Fielding, Tom Jones, p. 115.

nothing but corrupt their wretched occupants. It is wrong to send first offenders there, as he says when speaking of sending Molly away, "...many women have become abandoned... by being unable to retrieve the first slip."[53] The law is too harsh; the rights of the accused are but seldom respected by the court. The justices of the peace are too often ignorant and the clerks they hire are even more so. All of these things, the unjustness of the law, the prison system, the custom of garnish, and vice itself are worthy of his contempt and fit for his satirical denunciation. All of them are an indictment of his times, neither savage nor cynical, but quiet and deadly.

To cite the many references to the unjustness of the law and the incompetence of its administrators found in Jonathan Wild the Great would be an impossible task, but of all oddities that one would expect, the one that appears most unlikely is the presence of a "good justice." After Heartfree has been sentenced to death, the conviction being based upon the perjury of Wild and his friend Fireblood, the justice had the occasion to have Wild's accomplice brought before him charged with robbery. The magistrate, "who did indeed no small Honour to the commission he bore," examined closely the evidence before him and duly considered the

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[53]Ibid.

charges committed to him since he was "intrusted with Decisions affecting the Lives, Liberties and Properties of his Countrymen." It was this justice who had such a regard for the responsibilities of the office thrust upon him who used "his utmost Endeavors to get the case of the unhappy convict (Heartfree) represented to the Sovereign" and who granted an immediate reprieve. It may seem odd that among the violent denunciations Fielding makes of Newgate, the jail-keepers, the dishonest lawyers, the bungling justices, that one should find "this good justice" worried about satisfying "his conscience," but this is Fielding's method of showing what man could be if he would try to be honest and unaffected.

Jack Swagger is Fielding's prototype of the lawyer called today an "ambulance-chaser." He followed all persons into Newgate and promised, upon receipt of money, all sorts of wild and fantastic help. Perhaps the best characterization is given of him in the scene between Molly and Jonathan Wild the Great. Wild paid a visit to Molly and Molly took advantage of Wild's fumbling with her to pick his pockets. Fortunately Molly appeared at Heartfree's shop the next day where Wild searched her and found the money, only two hundred pounds were missing. An explanation was demanded and Molly told Wild that she spent one hundred pounds on clothes and

the other she gave to Jack Swagger, who was, as Fielding so ably says, "a great Favourite of the Ladies, being an Irish Gentleman, who had been bred clerk to an attorney, afterwards whipt out of a Regiment of Dragoons, and was then a Newgate-Sollicitor and a Bawdy-house Bully."[54]

Nothing in Jonathan Wild the Great is more satiric in the Fielding sense of the ridiculous than the picture of Newgate when the Great man is confined to that "castle." The ascension of Wild to the position of head of the prigs is as wonderfully drawn in the ridiculous style.[55] The whole is summed up in the speech of "a very grave Man, and one of much authority among them" (the prigs), who told them:

> Nothing can be more justly ridiculous than the conduct of those, who like Children, lay the Lamb in the Wolf's way, and then lament his being devoured. What a Wolf is in a Sheep-fold, a Great Man is in Society.[56]

There were certain clothes that went with the office of Chief Prig, and Wild, in true greatness, struts through the walks of Newgate in his newly acquired finery. But there was more bravado than real use or advantage in these trappings:

> As for the Night-Gown, its outside indeed made a glittering Tinsel appearance, but it kept him not warm; nor could the Finery of it do him much Honour,

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[54]H. Fielding, Jonathan Wild the Great, p. 92.

[55]A prig was a pick-pocket.

[56]H. Fielding, Jonathan Wild the Great, p. 187.

> since everyone knew it did not properly belong to him, nor indeed suited his Degree; as to the Waistcoat, it fitted him very ill, being infinitely too big for him, and the Cap was so heavy, that it made his Head ake."

Nothing could be sillier than the appearance Wild made in this finery and nothing could be more hypocritical than Wild's pretension of enjoyment in it. But what is the most important thing in the story of the clothes is the ridiculous position of the fellow inmates of Wild at Newgate in that they allowed a person such as Wild, or any person for that matter, to impose upon them.

What, then, is the opinion of Fielding, regarding these pictures he draws in his novel, of the corruptness of the legal and penal system of eighteenth century England? His belief that many of the justices of his day are not only ignorant of the law they are charged with administering but that they are dishonest and incapable of fairness cannot be questioned. The clerks they employ are often as stupid as the justices and the bailiffs and men of the watch employed to safeguard the peace are morally and physically incapable of doing it. The lawyers are dishonest and guilty of taking clients' money under false pretenses, and they are often bullies and leaders of vice rings and more likely to create trouble than they are to stop it. But all of Fielding's remarks are not derogatory. He does show a good justice

and it is in the characterization of this one that we are able to find the qualities that Fielding believed were admirable attributes of a justice.

The next division of the professional group to be discussed is that of medicine. On the whole Fielding was contemptuous of physicians and surgeons and one would be fairly safe in saying that the only surgeon of any value in Fielding's novels is the one who cured the nose of the "fair Amelia;" the rest of them are, as he calls them, "blockheads."

Perhaps the most amusing incident regarding the practice of medicine is found in Joseph Andrews in that scene in the inn of Tow-wouse between the surgeon treating Joseph and Parson Adams. After some bantering back and forth between the doctor and the Parson regarding the learning of physicians, Adams finally asks the Doctor's opinion of Joseph's case, to which the surgeon replies:

> Sir, his case is that of a dead man -- the contusion on his head has perforated the internal membrane of the occiput, and divellicated that radical small minute invisible nerve which coheres to the pericranium; and this was attended with a fever at first symptomatic, then pneumatic, and he is at length grown deliruus, or delirious, as the vulgar express it.

A short time later Parson Adams visits Joseph to find him not close to death but hungry and in want of "a piece of boiled beef and cabbage." It was plain to Adams that Joseph's

wounds were by no means dangerous and that there was no sign of fever.

The summary of the training of a doctor apparently was to travel, to have read Galen and Hippocrates, and to have a knowledge of Greek and Latin, for as the Doctor boasted, "I could have repeated Homer by heart once--but I have almost forgotten these things."

Another interesting scene is presented in Amelia. One of the Booth children was ill with a high fever, and a doctor and his assistant the apothecary were called in. The first thing they did was to arrange "in battle array all over the room" a tremendous apparatus of phials and gallypots. After taking the child's pulse the doctor called for a pen and ink and "filled a whole side of a sheet of paper with physic, then took a guinea, and took his leave." The following morning the child was no better, and another doctor was recommended to Mrs. Booth, who according to Mrs. Elsion was a very worthy physician. Before the second doctor arrived the first one came back and proceeded to announce that the child was in a grave condition and repeated his performance of the day before. However, the new doctor, Dr. Thompson, arrived and took over the care of the child and much to the relief of Amelia he had the patient well in three days' time.

In the episode of the two doctors in Amelia, Fielding

takes a positive stand, in that he makes a choice between the two. Even the reputations of the two doctors is much discussed and the main thing against Dr. Thompson, in the opinion of the other doctors, is that he refuses to follow the old-fashioned ideas and is somewhat of an innovator in the method of his treatment. As Fielding tells us, "The doctor's objection to him is, that he is a man who would overturn the whole method of practice, which is so well established, and from which no one person hath pretended to deviate." Furthermore, he is one "who pretends to know more than the whole college." Here Fielding takes sides with the followers of the new Humanists School against the old Historical School. To Fielding the following of natural treatment was better than the old methods of the Historical School following the fashion of antiquity. He also hits at the ideas of the followers of the school of Humoralism, which placed such importance upon the chemical and humours side of medicine.[57] To Fielding the

[57]During the eighteenth century medical doctrines and systems became so very numerous that it is rather a difficult matter to list them. At the beginning of the century there was the school of Organicism, led by Hoffman, then the Historical School led by Manget, the Humoral School led by Stoll and Pringle, the Spasmatic School led by Cullen of Edinburgh, and the School of Vitalism led by Barthez, and lastly the naturalist school, favored by Fielding, led by Charles Bonnet. For an excellent discussion of these various schools and of medical practice in the eighteenth century, see Charles G. Cumston, <u>An Introduction to the History of Medicine</u>, pp. 319, 367.

best thing to do was to do as Dr. Thompson did, "to blow up the physical magazine." As Fielding tells us, the first thing that Dr. Thompson did was to command all the powders and potions to disappear. Then he stopped the treatment of the "blisters." His treatment was to have the child blooded, to give it some cooling physic and a clyster. In speaking of the first doctor's treatment, Doctor Thompson says, "There was a much readier and nearer way to convey such stuff to the vault, than by first sending it through the human body."

Here again Fielding's true self is revealed, approving the "good old common sense" approach of things. He is against those who run off in wild tangents and impossible theories and in favor of those who follow a natural, sensible solution to problems.

Fielding is not the follower of tradition; because something has always been does not say that it is good; it as often proves that for the present day it is bad. This is not only true in his feelings toward medicine but is evident in his constant appeal for reform in law and the penal system.

Again in his treatment of the clergy it is this same vein that he follows. It is again affectation and vanity that cause him to cry out at the hypocritical members of the clergy.

There are three outstanding pictures or types of clergyman that Fielding abhorred. First we have the picture of the

clergyman who is a minister on Sunday only and the rest of the time is "more rightly called a farmer." The second type is the one who is more interested in everything about him but his charge as a minister. This one is vastly interested in all sorts of worldly topics and performs his priestly duties in a perfunctory manner. The third type is represented as the parson who changes his dogma and doctrines to suit his purpose.

In the person of the Rev. Trulliber, Fielding gives us a picture of a hypocritical egoist, a coarse cruel individual unworthy of the name of Parson.[58] He was, as Fielding comments, "A parson on Sundays, but of all the other six he might be rightly called a farmer." His chief interest in life was to raise bigger and better pigs, to which animal Fielding likens him, "His own size being with much ale rendered little inferior to that of the beasts he sold." The whole description of Trulliber and his home, a pig sty "a few feet from the parlour window," and his treatment of his wife, whom he calls a fool and one constantly "committed to blunders," is evident condemnation of the clergyman who pretends to be a Pastor. But more deeply drawn than the home life of Trulliber is the picture of the inner man. The old saying, "Don't do as I do but do as I say" is a very apt description of his

[58] See H. Fielding, Joseph Andrews, Chapter XIV.

philosophy. While he claims knowledge of the scriptural lesson against worldly store, he is proud beyond reason of the vast amount of wealth he possesses, for as he says, "Though I am but a curate, I believe I am as warm as the vicar himself, or perhaps the rector of the next parish too; I believe I could buy them both." When Adams asks Trulliber for a small loan and tells him of the great "opportunity of laying up a treasure in a better place than any of this world affords," Trulliber is overcome with anger. He claims that he knows as well as anyone where to lay up his treasure and calls Adams a robber, a thief, and an imposter.

The discussion on charity is indeed interesting, for it tells so much of Fielding himself. Fielding, who was the most charitable and kindest of men, as his biographers give evidence in numerous places,[59] uses his whip in a most humble way and has Adams calmly say:

> I am sorry that you do not know what charity is, since you practice it no better; I must tell you,

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[59]Fielding's later biographers are in general accord concerning his philanthropy. G. M. Godden, Henry Fielding, a Memoir (New York, 1908), p. 2, says that "No man ever more heartily preached and practiced the virtue of openhanded charity." Wilbur Cross, The History of Henry Fielding, II, 302-303, cites several instances when Fielding relieved the financial difficulties of others, and adds that his charities often exceeded his means. Gerard E. Jensen in "Notes," The Covent Garden Journal (New Haven, 1915), II, 230, asserts that Fielding was deeply interested in "two glorious benefactions," a foundling hospital and a lying-in hospital.

> if you trust to your knowledge for your justification, you will find yourself deceived, though you should add faith to it without good works.[60]

Adams further tells him that there can be no belief in the Scriptures in a man who acts as Trulliber does, for "there is no command more express, no duty more frequently enjoined, than charity. Whoever therefore is void of charity is no Christian." Fielding does not add, "is no clergyman," for the greater sting to one who professes to preach the scriptures is the stigma of not being a Christian.

Here too, Fielding shows the clergyman who preaches the love and peace of Christ, but on the slightest provocation is ready to enter into a brawl or a fisticuff. "His wife, seeing him clench his fist, interposed and begged him not to fight, but shew himself a true Christian, and take the law of him." The contrast is splendidly drawn as Fielding says:

> As nothing could provoke Adams to strike, but an absolute assault on himself or his friend, he smiled at the angry look and gestures of Trulliber, and telling him he was sorry to see such men in orders, departed...[61]

This last sentence of Adams is a summary of what Fielding himself thought of the man who used his duty as a clergyman secondarily to all his other worldly wants. He was sorry to see...such men in orders.

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[60] H. Fielding, Joseph Andrews, p. 176.
[61] Ibid.

The Rev. Mr. Barnabas serves as the second example of the poor type of clergyman.[62] He is the type that takes such great pride in being an "educated gentleman" but lacks the simple piety and goodness which Fielding believed to be so essential to a clergyman. Barnabas was conversent with the ancient Greeks, he had travelled widely, was able to discuss medicine and was able to give advice on all legal matters, but he was unable to do the simple duties of his profession in a manner that would become a man worthy of the name of clergyman. When he is called upon to give the comfort of the church to a dying man, he is more interested in first having his dish of tea with the landlady and afterwards a bowl of punch with the landlord with a long and lengthy discussion of crops, weather and law. When he at last went to see the dying Joseph, he was sure that Joseph was "out of his head" and therefore he could do nothing for him. When he was at last prevailed upon to visit the sick man again he "proceeded to pray with all the expedition he was master of; some company then waiting for him below in the parlour where the ingredients for punch were all in readiness..." He is also the type of parson who looks for worldly reward for the performance of his duties and says he cannot afford to give his time to charity patients. This remark of Barnabas

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[62]H. Fielding, Joseph Andrews, Chapter XIII.

offers Fielding the chance to expound his feelings on the wealth of the clergy. Fielding tells us in the words of Adams:

> I am myself a great enemy to the luxury and splendor of the clergy...I do not, by the flourishing estate of the Church, understand the palaces, equipages, dress, furniture, rich dainties, and vast fortunes of her ministers. Surely those things, which savour so strongly of this world, become not the servants of one who professed his Kingdom was not of it...[63]

Barnabas also offers Fielding the opportunity to sound his feelings again on the problem of faith and good works. Adams in discussing the sermons of a certain Mr. Whitefield says:

> ...but when he began to call nonsense and enthusiasm to his aid, and set up the detestable doctrine of faith against good works, I was his friend no longer; for surely, that doctrine was coined in Hell, and one would think that none but the devil himself could have the confidence to preach it.[64]

But Barnabas was not interested in such religious things, and called them unorthodox, he said he would "never read a syllable in any such wicked book," but for that matter neither would he read any religious book. However, he was quite conversant with such books as Mr. Jacob's Law Tables, The Attorney's Pocket Companion, and trusted entirely to Wood's Institutes. And, as Fielding reports, the minister's sole reason for interest in such books was to be able to display before the

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[63]Ibid., p. 165.
[64]Ibid., p. 197.

justice and the parish his knowledge under the pretense of interest in public justice.

Fielding also discusses at some length his ideas regarding orthodox teachings when he says that it is beyond reason and derogatory to the honour of God to expect that the all-wise God will condemn the good because they did not believe all the "true orthodox teachings" or that He will reward the evil because they did believe them but failed to keep them. Religion has far more noble purposes, Fielding says, than frequent cheerful meetings among the members of a society, in which they should, in the presence of one another, and in the service of God, make promises of being good, friendly and benevolent to each other, and have no intentions of keeping the promises.

The third type of clergyman that Fielding protests against is the one who changes his preaching whenever the occasion demands it. In the story of Jonathan Wild, when Wild is about to die, Fielding introduces the prison chaplain, who is the example personified of the third type. The clergyman comes to Wild's cell to help him prepare for the "great and terrible journey he is to go on." Wild will have nothing to do with the talk for as he says: "I am not without Hopes of a Reprieve from the Cheat[65] yet: but if I

[65] i.e., the gallows.

cannot obtain it, you shall not frighten me out of my Courage, I will not die like a Pimp...."[66] To distract the Ordinary he suggests a bottle of wine and the minister replies that he could not drink with an atheist and damned man for surely the devil himself would make a third party to such company, particularly since the devil knows that Wild is his and might be eager to claim his dues. The clergyman will have nothing further to do with Wild for as he says, "The Gates are barred against all revilers of the Clergy." Wild then uses all the power of flattery of which he is a master, and changes the minister's attitude toward him. Wild claims that he does not revile the clergy in general but only the bad ones, and certainly not the Ordinary of Newgate, for if the clergy were promoted upon worth, the Ordinary would be "long since a Bishop."

From this point on the Ordinary does change his attitude toward Wild, drinks a bowl of punch with him and then proceeds to tell Wild that he is sure of a place in Heaven, for his offense is not so serious. "You are no Murtherer, nor guilty of Sacrilege. And if you are guilty of Theft, you make some Attonement by suffering for it..." He changes his mind regarding the damnation of Wild to the point where he says: "Pugh! Never mind your Soul, leave that to me; I will render

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[66] H. Fielding, <u>Jonathan Wild the Great</u>, Book IV, Chapter 13.

a good Account of it, I warrant you." The contempt with which Fielding hold this type of clergy-man is so evident that comment is hardly necessary. But Fielding goes further and shows what he thinks of this manner of priest by having the Ordinary deliver a long and nonsensical sermon which is fortunately, as Wild put it, "put a stop to" by the entering of the punch bowl.

As is true in all other professions, Fielding does not fail to produce characters in his novels that have the qualities that he admires. Parson Adams of Joseph Andrews, and Doctor Harrison of Amelia both are endowed with a zeal that is tempered with common sense. They are both truly religious and believe and practice what they preach. They are both aware of human failings and take them into consideration when judging those around them. While it must be conceded that Dr. Harrison is a little more worldly wise and is better able to cope with the villains and rogues he meets, he is not as lovable as the naive Adams. Adams is a trusting, gentle person, with the freshness of soul that belongs to a child. However, one must not for a moment think that Parson Adams is a caricature. Adams is a portrait of a good honest human being with an abundance of faults but with an overabundance of lovable qualities. The important element in each of the men is their love of their fellow men

and their belief in doing what they can for the souls entrusted to their care. Everything they do or say is sincere and it is tempered with good common sense; neither of them has any spot of sham or pretense. One could not do better in trying to state Fielding's idea of a worthy clergyman or of the true value of religion than to say that all that he believes to be worthy or good will be found in these two ministers.

In discussing high society, as it is portrayed in most novels and plays, Fielding claims that one of the chief reasons so many English authors have failed in describing the manners of upper life is that in reality they know nothing of it--"We can not view this higher order of mortals as we would view the rest of human species, in order to see them as they really are we must be either born to wealth or we must acquire it."[67] Since the upper society does not take to "the vulgar art of writing" it is therefore impossible to get a true picture of them in a book. As Fielding says:

> Hence those strange monsters in lace and embroidery, in silks and brocades, with vast wigs and hoops; which, under the name of lords and ladies, strut the stage, to the great delight of attorneys and their clerks in the pit, and of the citizens and their apprentices in the galleries; are no more to be found in real life than the centuar, the chimera or any other creature of mere fiction.[68]

[67] H. Fielding, Amelia, Introduction.

[68] Loc. Cit.

In speaking of high society, Fielding says: "Dressing and cards, eating and drinking, bowing and curtsying, make up the business of their lives."[69]

In Tom Jones, Fielding expresses very well what he thinks of women in high society. In Book XIV of that novel he says:

> What Mr. Pope says of women is very applicable to most of this station, who are indeed so entirely made up of form and affectation that they have no character at all, at least, none which appears. I venture to say, the highest life is much the dullest and affords very little humour or entertainment. The various callings in lower spheres produce the great variety of humourous character; whereas here, except among the few who are engaged in the pursuit of ambition and the fewer still who have a relish for pleasure, all is vanity and servil imitation.

That the women portrayed by Fielding belonging to high society have no redeeming features one need only look closely at such people as Lady Booby, Lady Bellaston, Mrs. Ellison, and Mrs. James. Nothing has gained more comment than the Lady Bellaston episode in Tom Jones.[70] Lady Bellaston is a vivid picture of

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[69] Loc. Cit.

[70] W. L. Cross in The History of Henry Fielding says on page 217: "Could Fielding have anticipated the objections of his own age and those of the Victorian age to the Bellaston episode, he might have deleted certain phrases and substituted other for them; but he was portraying a young man of his own time... it is true that Tom Jones has suffered most in popularity because of Lady Bellaston... Fielding has here paid the penalty for strict fidelity to the society of which he was a part." For a discussion of the comments of various critics of the Bellaston episode see Cross, op. cit., Chapter XIX.

old age trying desperately to recapture lost youth. Lady Bellaston, who has been able to buy anything she desires, tries to buy youth in the person of young Tom. When Tom reaches London he is dazed by the whirl in which he finds himself; he is penniless in the society of the rich. But he is a lure for lascivious women, and falls a prey to the aging Lady Bellaston. For a fee, he plays the gigolo to the old woman. Lady Bellaston's lust for Tom turns to contempt and hatred and she uses all her influence and her wealth to try to have her revenge on him when she realizes that Tom is honestly in love with Sophia and is using her in order to discover the hiding place of Sophia. It is evident that Fielding held in the highest contempt this kind of upper society who got what it wanted, regardless of the price, moral or otherwise.

In _Joseph Andrews_, we have the same story of the rich trying to do everything possible to secure the satisfaction of their lustful desires. The attempts of Lady Booby to capture Joseph need no comment. Lady Booby and Lady Bellaston establish Fielding's belief that one of the chief occupations of the members of high society is the seduction of the innocent and the satisfaction of their lustful desires at any cost. It is also evident that Fielding believed that the faults of high society were brought about by the position and the

tyranny of all-corrupting money.

Nothing could more vividly portray the attitude of Fielding toward the evils of money than the great changes that take place in many of the characters of _Amelia_. James and his wife, who were once the dear friends of Amelia and Booth change from simple good friends into proud lecherous persons at the end of the book. The whole change takes place when Col. James comes into some money. James, the man who was an honest lover of virtue and Miss Bath, becomes a man who has one principle regarding women and that is, "he never thinks that women's minds are worth considering, only their bodies." Marriage, which he once considered as sacred, he now regards as annoying and bothersome. He is even most anxious to pack Booth off to the Indies in order to enhance his chances of seducing Amelia.

Even Mrs. James now complains of having to walk two flights of stairs to visit her friend and she is only too willing to enter into a plot to aid her husband in his advances to Amelia, if he would be willing to allow her to be her own boss and to remain in London with the "fashionable people." The Booths themselves are also victims of the corrupting influence of money. It is the affectation of wealth in the purchase of a coach that caused the downfall of the Booths on the farm.

But all this evil of money is connected with city life and it is here that Fielding makes his chief complaint against society. Wealth in itself is not bad, but it is in the affectations that people of wealth assume when they live in the city that the evil lies. Squire Allworthy is certainly wealthy but his life is in the country where goodness has a chance to live.

The majority of characters in Fielding's novels are of a country type. These country people on the whole are good and wholesome people, but on the other hand disreputable adventures and people such as Lady Booby, Lady Bellaston, Lord Fellama or My Lord are of the town, which Fielding regards as an agent of corruption.

The country is, as he tells us in Tom Jones, the haunt of those virtues which move the heart and call up pictures of a "Golden Age." He represents it as the refuge of those whom life has wounded and who come to it to find a cure for their misanthropy. The Mr. Wilson of Joseph Andrews is succeeded in Tom Jones by "the Man of the Hill," who tells his story at length; after the turmoils of a town existence, his life in the country is edifying and idyllic. It is among men who live in the bosom of nature that sentiments are found in their native purity, "the plain, simple workings of honest nature."

But Fielding is not a Romanticist and the workings of honest nature are not enough. The inspiration of nature can sometimes be bad, or, at all events, our temperament may lead us to evil, and this is precisely why Fielding, as a good novelist, delights in showing the faults of his heroes. As Tom Jones himself tells us, "Lookee, Mr. Nightingale, I am no canting hypocrite, nor do I pretend to the gift of chastity...I have been guilty with women, I own it; but am not conscious that I have ever injured any; nor would I, to procure pleasure to myself be knowingly the cause of misery to any human being."[71]

Here is the vast difference between the men of the city and the men of the country: do harm to no one. It is in the country that this noble idea of doing no harm has the chance of blossoming forth. To Fielding the rustic is good because while he does have human failings, fundamentally he is good of heart. The country character is kind and his intentions are good. But when he is away from his natural country environment and goes to the city, he becomes spoiled. He attempts to follow the example set for him by the members of high society in city life.

There are certain conclusions that may be drawn from this study of the individual characters found in Fielding's

[71] H. Fielding, Tom Jones, Boox XIV, Chapter IV.

novels. Without a doubt we can say what he thinks of the various professions and what he thinks of high society, but beyond this we can see what his specific attitude is toward mankind in general.

If we were to put this attitude into a few words, it would undoubtedly be; "Do away with affectation." But the word would have to be used in the broad sense in which Fielding himself uses it. It would have to include within its meaning vanity and hypocrisy. This, then, would be the gist of his message and any deviation or addition to the natural self would of necessity become the subject of his satirical denunciation.

What he actually tells the reader is to be natural and not to pretend to any virtue or knowledge which he does not honestly possess. The attempt on the part of man to gain false superiority over his fellow creatures can only result in evil and vice. Therefore it is of paramount importanse to Fielding that all men, regardless of class or occupation, keep within the bounds of naturalness and make use of the God-given quality of common sense.

CHAPTER IV

The Conclusion

In the great invocation to Genius in Tom Jones, Fielding asks:

> Do thou kindly take me by the hand, and lead me through all the mazes and winding labyrinths of Nature....Teach me, what to thee is no difficult task, to know mankind better than they know themselves.

He prays to know, not only the wise and good, but every kind of character, "from the Minister at his levee, to the bailiff in his spunging-house; from the duchess at her drum, to the landlady behind her bar." Looking at the novels of Henry

Fielding one must admit that without any exception his prayer was answered. He had learned, from his own heart and his own experience, how to find his way through these "winding labyrinths" of human nature. Fielding was better able to do this because he belongs in character to those who pride themselves on a common sense approach. His world of feeling is the world of everyone, he walks on solid earth, he takes his pleasure in the satisfactions and joys of the everyday man. He is one who is of the earth, earthly yet no glutton, no low character. In all of his novels he is but a Minos passing judgment on the selfish, greedy, lustful, or cruel sinners of his age.

But his age was an age when the old class barriers were being broken down till at length it came into the minds of a few that all men have an equal right to the "pursuit of happiness," and that there is not one standard of happiness for the rich and another for the poor. He was one of the many who prepared the way for this idea which was to usher in the modern world.

It was his aim to know and to paint "every kind of character" and out of this aim grew individuals who shared in common human nature. Low as she may be called, Amelia is an individual soul, as is the uncouth old parson, and Tom Jones, the Foundling, and Molly Seagrim, the village

prostitute; they all share in common the attributes of human nature. Behind this creative work of Fielding's was an instinct which sprang from the depths of his nature; the sense of the misery and suffering of the human race, in wars, in exactions, in tortures, poverty, ignorance, and the power of tyrants, of these "Great Men" whom he satirizes again and again.

Fielding could not pierce the mists of the future; nor did he like Swift and the followers of Juvenal feel torn and agonized by the misery of the world, but he did look at the life around him with new eyes and judged it in the light of reason. He belonged to the school of thought that said: If you want to better society, then make its members better, one by one, improve the laws, and see them better carried out. In looking at the age with a new view he saw that the evil he found everywhere sprang from the evil in men's hearts, the folly of men's minds. This is evident in all of his novels and is the cause of the downfall of all of his villains.

His works were damned by the prudes of his day for telling too much truth, even in an age that was seldom squeamish. He shows the manners of his own time and his knowledge of the springs of the common man's actions is as true today as it was in 1749, and will be in 2000. Richardson,

who is not a gentleman in the old sense of the word, avenged himself on Henry Fielding by calling him "common." It is precisely this common element in Fielding which is one of the secrets of his greatness. He never allows himself to be overcome by the life which he is observing; he is the opposite of Richardson, who is completely absorbed in the bourgeois existence which he describes. Fielding is detached, like a lawyer or a physician; he observes and judges life, his own and that of others. With penetration he scans it, and with masterful lucidity he reproduces it. In reproducing his first care is for truth. Often this truth appears a little exaggerated, but if you want to attain truth in art your portrayal must often be made too true.

Like his friend Hogarth, he is at pains to isolate the individual characters and engrave them on the memory by repetition. The "rule of right" and the "eternal fitness of things" of Thawackum and Square are instances of this. But while he isolates the individual characters, he also sets before us types of the England of his time. He tells of an England which is about to disappear forever; the England of Hogarth's "Marriage a la Mode," "The Harlot's Progress," and "The Rake's Progress." He draws pictures of an England just before the industrial revolution, the

England of coaches, squires, inn-keepers, and barber-surgeons, the England of the country and village, a little scandalized at London.

Along with this England there appear throughout his novels the recurrence of certain themes, and favorite features, which he regards as particularly true. A poor wretch in need of help is universally repulsed and in the end receives aid from someone more miserable than himself; an innkeeper, amiable to begin with, swiftly changes front when he discovers that his client is poor; a worthy but imprudent man is persecuted because appearances are against him; an overshrewd man arrives after a long process of deduction to logical conclusions which are immediately disproved by facts; a fond lover speaks enthusiastically of his lady, but almost immediately betrays her with a casual acquaintance. One might multiply these themes, each of which, framed in different circumstances, reappears several times in Fielding's work.

But most of these incidents are there for something more than a momentary amusement. They are philosophical. At the bottom of each is a realism even more penetrating than the realism of material detail, a psychological realism, which laughs to see fine theories shattered by the vulgar truths of daily life. The essential thing about Fielding is his effort to plumb deep and reach the truth. Try, he

tells us, to see into yourself, do not stop at the moral or immoral appearance of an action: the prudish Pamela may be an artful little minx, the virtuous Blifil a rogue, and Square, the moralist, a hypocrite. Go deeper than words and judge deeds; go deeper than deeds and judge intentions, which after all are the immediate expression of the real soul.

To this striving after psychological and concrete realism we owe the very foundations of Fielding's satire. It is this probing of his that gives us a deep insight into what is the ridiculous and the affected. And this probing results in a realism that is full of frank gaiety, making his satire different from the satire of the followers of Juvenal. In his satire he patiently peels off layer after layer of the so-called vanities of society and in doing so holds up for the world's inspection the foibles and follies of his own society. But in doing this he maintains his ability to laugh with the reader and achieves a realistic yet comic effect. It is because of this ability to laugh that Fielding never sees dark and dismal days ahead. It is because of this ability that he can see a vast hope of improvement in the world of tomorrow.

No one can doubt that his satire comes from a rigid sequence of cause and effect, and that the cause is always shown to be affectation and hypocrisy. Fielding might fairly

claim that he never casts the smallest ridicule upon the smallest of virtues; it is against hypocrisy, affectation and insincerity of all kinds that he wages war. Regardless of who Fielding is handling, a lord, a judge, an inn-keeper, a lawyer, a minister, or a rustic he deals with them on an equal basis and strips from them the coverings of affectation.

The satire of Fielding is also built on a technique of contrast between the examples of the good thing and the bad. When Fielding gives us a Mr. Trulliber he has a Parson Adams handy. It is this faculty of seeing good some place that gives rise to the outlook of hope that is lacking in Swift and other satirists of the Juvenal school.

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