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## Satire's Club: Reality, reason, and knowledge in Joseph Andrews

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SATIRE'S CLUB: REALITY, REASON, AND KNOWLEDGE

IN *JOSEPH ANDREWS*

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A Thesis

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

English Composition

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by

Heather Anne Law Davis

March 2009

SATIRE'S CLUB: REALITY, REASON, AND KNOWLEDGE

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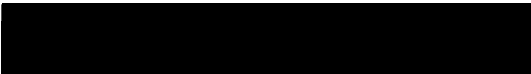
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by

Heather Anne Law Davis

March 2009

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3/10/09  
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## ABSTRACT

Satire has been credited with possessing the power to deconstruct the distinctions we make between opposing concepts and thus lead us to reevaluate established views. Structuralist Ferdinand de Saussure claimed that language relies on sets of opposites, or binary pairs, to create meaning. Building on this idea, deconstructionist Jacques Derrida explored the hierarchies he believed were inherent in all binary pairs, arguing that one concept in each pair occupies a superior position in our consciousness. In his satirical novel *Joseph Andrews*, Henry Fielding critiques the validity of the binary pairs high/low, serious/comic, and good/evil by presenting his readers with individuals and situations that simultaneously correspond to both sides of each dyad. Despite his questioning of traditions, social norms, and the stability of language through these critiques, Fielding upholds the validity of certain binary pairs - reason/emotion, reality/appearance, and knowledge/ignorance - in order to build a foundation of shared values from which to appeal to his audience, often rewarding readers for applying logic, perspicacity, and education to interpret his humor.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER ONE

Near the end of Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*, in an aside enclosed in parentheses, the narrator comments that it is "usual with the human Mind to skip from one Extreme to its Opposite, as easily, and almost as suddenly, as a Bird from one Bough to another" (262). Here Fielding explicitly calls attention to one of the central preoccupations of his novel: an observation that language, which governs human thought, relies on networks of opposing concepts that may be structurally unsound. His narrator's characterization of the contrasts recognized by people between concepts as "Extreme[s]" suggests he considers them to be overgeneralizations, while his imagery reinforces an awareness of the instability of language. The bird, or "human Mind," feels safe when it has found a branch sturdy enough to cling to. Yet the bough of a tree may bend or break; it is also connected to many other boughs, as well as to a trunk, without which it—and the rest of the tree's boughs—would not exist.

As a satire *Joseph Andrews* makes judgments. Although satire is notoriously difficult to define, satire scholars tend to agree that satirists must define specific targets



on their terms in order to persuade the reader that they are deserving of censure. Patricia Spacks cites "satiric emotion," the feeling of uneasiness evoked by satire that drives readers "toward the desire to change," as its most definitive element (16). Northrop Frye identifies two distinguishing characteristics of satire: "one is wit or humor founded on fantasy or a sense of the grotesque or absurd, the other is an object of attack" (224). If we amalgamate these observations, we can say that satire promotes a sense of uneasiness and attempts to persuade by indirect, humorous attack on its target. Satire consistently points to contrasts to define and evaluate its targets, thereby engaging readers in the mental activity of recognizing binary oppositions—tensions between terms generally considered opposites.

*Joseph Andrews* contains numerous specific illustrations of Fielding's awareness of the human tendency to think by means of binary oppositions. In many instances his novel challenges the judgments individuals make as they attempt to evaluate people and events. As Spacks explains,

If . . . the satiric center of the novel is the human tendency to be sure of oneself in exactly the situations where one should doubt, Fielding's

repeated demonstration that language is not a safe guide to meaning—but that men (and women) treat it as though they could impose meaning at will on their experience—participates in the satiric statement. (26)

For example, Fielding regularly critiques his readers' expectations regarding what is high, serious, or good by demonstrating how it may be low, comic, or evil. The second part of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion of how he achieves such inversions and how these critiques contribute to his apparent satiric motives.

Nevertheless, Fielding, like other satirists, consistently relies on his readers' shared acceptance of certain dyads and the hierarchies associated with them in order to make their judgments. The most powerful of these dyads in the case of *Joseph Andrews* are reality/appearance, reason/emotion, and knowledge/ignorance. Fielding's reliance on these accepted dyads establishes a framework by which he evaluates other dyads that he frames as weaker and perhaps less valid. In order to be successful, his satire must appeal to readers who either share his beliefs about reality, reason, and knowledge or can be persuaded to accept them. Since satirists tend to rely on shared value

systems to persuade readers that their judgments are justified, examining some specific shared values may help to clarify more precisely what makes a work a satire. Doing so can assist with pinpointing the kinds of rhetorical moves satirists make as well as what makes them more or less successful with particular audiences.

Fielding's awareness of the instability of language in *Joseph Andrews* has affinities with certain concepts in Ferdinand de Saussure's influential *Course in General Linguistics*. Saussure emphasized that language is essentially a system of contrasts created out of delimited relationships between thought and sound; two amorphous substances. He writes,

One might think of it as being like air in contact with water: changes in atmospheric pressure break up the surface of the water into series of divisions, i.e., waves. The correlation between thought and sound, and the union of the two, is like that. (111)

In this analogy the waves represent units of linguistic meaning; language relies on contrasts between different segments of sound (distinct waves) to denote meaning. However, Saussure points out, the particular sounds that

represent meanings are ultimately arbitrary and changeable, meaning that one cannot assign a stable meaning to a sequence of sounds.

Saussure also claims that each meaning temporarily assigned to a sound sequence only carries value by virtue of its differences from other meanings in a linguistic system. "That is to say," he explains, "they are concepts defined not positively, in terms of their content, but negatively by contrast with other items in the same system. What characterizes each most exactly is being whatever the others are not" (115). This fundamental mechanism in the way meaning is made in language requires language users to assign values to "signs," each of which Saussure describes as comprising both a "signified" and a "signal." The signified is the concept, and the signal is the sound-or-written symbol representative of sound-that stands for it. A sign is created when a community of language users establishes and perpetuates a relationship between a signal and a signified.

Saussure elaborates,

. . . the arbitrary nature of the sign enables us to understand more easily why it needs social activity to create a linguistic system. A

community is necessary in order to establish values. Values have no other rationale than usage and general agreement. (111-112)

In the case of *Joseph Andrews*, examining the values upheld by Fielding as satirist in order to ensure that his satire makes its point (or even makes sense) can tell us something about his anticipated audience and its values. If satirists understand the basic beliefs underlying their audiences' opinions, they can appeal to them. Fielding seems to be aware that sometimes people make questionable distinctions between concepts, but he also seems to expect that sometimes his audience will share his distinctions between reality and appearance, reason and emotion, and knowledge and ignorance. Just as importantly, he must anticipate that they will agree that the former term in each pair is superior to the latter. In other words, he appears to assume certain shared values rooted in concepts accepted to be in binary opposition—certain distinctions on which arguments in the novel rely.

In *Dissemination* Jacques Derrida examines more closely the concept of value as it relates to linguistic contrasts. His work builds on the structuralist concepts outlined by Saussure and emphasizes that we cannot define one term in a

binary pair without defining the other. He echoes Saussure's point that in order to create meaning, we have to emphasize differences, suggesting that meaning is basically arbitrary and self-perpetuating. Something is clean because it is not dirty and vice versa. Derrida, however, also argues that terms defined in opposition to one another have unequal status because one of the terms will always be valued more than the other. He writes,

Another way of working with *numbers*, dissemination sets up a pharmacy in which it is no longer possible to count by ones, by twos, or by threes; in which everything starts with the dyad. The dual opposition . . . organizes a conflictual, hierarchically structured field which can be neither reduced to unity, nor derived from a primary simplicity, nor dialectically sublated or internalized into a third term. (25)

Like Saussure, he sees language as a series of contrasts, and he goes on to discuss the "hierarchically structured field" he speaks of here in more detail. Derrida stresses the importance of recognizing the archetypal hierarchically structured dyad of presence versus absence in order to set

up other hierarchies composed of two terms in binary opposition. For example, "light" and "darkness" are simple opposites. We conceive of "darkness" as the absence of light, and in this binary pair (as in others), light is the positive concept. It is a thing that exists, whereas darkness is defined in terms of its absence.

This point that Derrida makes regarding the more "real" and primary concept in the binary pair applies to the dyads we find in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*. In the knowledge/ignorance dyad, for example, ignorance is the absence of knowledge. Although one might also flip this around and say, "Knowledge is the absence of ignorance," we still think of ignorance as a lack and of knowledge as the presence of some kind of positive matter. The arguably even more abstract reality/appearance dyad hinges on the idea that perception can be flawed and also sets up a hierarchy based on veracity. Reality exists, while appearance is only an illusion or a distortion of reality. We generally consider reality to be superior to illusion, even if we enjoy fantasy. People do not like to be lied to.

The reason/emotion pair is a little more difficult to explain in terms of an absence versus presence paradigm, but there is a sense that emotion is chaotic and that

reason imposes order on the wild impulses of emotion, thus controlling and making sense of them. We tend to conceptualize the person who is behaving emotionally as "irrational," as having a lack of self-awareness because of a lack of ability to step back and analyze his or her feelings rationally. The rational person, however, does not lack emotions. Rather, we say, he or she controls them. We sometimes claim that a rational person lacks emotions, but this may be more a figure of speech than a literal statement. The reason/emotion dyad as Fielding deals with it applies specifically to human behavior, and the ways in which we conceive of the rational person and the emotional person place the rational person in a superior position. One can say that a person lacks logic and instead acts based on emotional impulse, yet it would be more difficult to convince someone that a rational person truly lacks emotions. In this binary pair emotion is defined by a complete lack of reason—by chaos. Reason, on the other hand, represents a stable process that makes sense out of chaos.

Derrida also refers to a liminal space, the continuum, so to speak (if there is one), between one side of the binary pair and the other. He elaborates on this concept by



using the example of the *pharmakon*, an ambiguous word with a variety of contrasting meanings. *Pharmakon*, a term used by Plato in the *Phaedrus* to define writing, can be translated as "remedy," yet it has more sinister connotations as well. As Derrida explains, even a remedy for a disease can harm the body and can be considered unnatural because illness and death are natural. Writing, as a type of *pharmakon*, "is beneficial; it repairs and produces, accumulates and remedies, increases knowledge and reduces forgetfulness" (97). But for all its usefulness, Derrida claims that Plato suggests, writing can incorrectly shape and even supplant how people perceive reality. Of the liminal space within a binary pair, Derrida writes,

It keeps itself forever in reserve even though it has no fundamental profundity nor ultimate locality. We will watch it infinitely promise itself and endlessly vanish through concealed doorways that shine like mirrors and open onto a labyrinth. (128)

Derrida imagines this space but argues that no one can ever reach it because every word in language reflects other words defined and defining it in opposition. If we need to rely on language to make sense of reality, language becomes

a necessary evil, capable of destroying our understanding while at the same time making it possible for us to understand. The terms "remedy" and "poison" may seem to be opposites, yet the paradoxical term *pharmakon* inhabits the liminal space between these two terms because a *pharmakon* (chemotherapy, for instance, as a contemporary example) can be both a remedy and a poison; it can't be pinned down definitively as either one or the other. When Derrida draws attention to the complex meaning of *pharmakon*, he demonstrates that sometimes individual words fail to represent single, stable ideas.

Satire, on the other hand, typically has been associated with the idea that one can reach a middle road and has been viewed as having the power to circumvent identification with one extreme or its opposite. Some scholars, in fact, have praised satire for its power to unsettle audiences by challenging the hierarchies set up in binary pairs. In "Using Literature to Neutralize Pernicious Dichotomous Thinking," David Maas argues, "The major focus of Molière's comedies was to mock excesses in thinking, behavior, or emotion, and to emphasize the rational middle course" (76). This "middle course" loosely corresponds to Derrida's image of a liminal space between the items in a

binary pair. Maas, though, refers to the "middle course" as both superior and "rational," privileging reason over, and in opposition to, emotion. Maas's argument demonstrates both the usefulness and the tenacity of the reason/emotion opposition. It also contrasts with Derrida's argument as it assumes one can evaluate two opposing terms separately and then arrive at a balance between them.

Unlike Maas, Derrida, in his discussion of the *pharmakon*, suggests that binary oppositions and the hierarchies associated with them may be false. Although we generally privilege one term over the other in a binary pair, the terms are inextricably linked because they rely on one another. Returning to the example of light versus darkness, although we conceive of darkness as an absence of light, we would be unable to define light if we truly had nothing with which to contrast it. Thus, Derrida argues, the less valued term in a binary pair may not be merely a negative. Similarly, Fielding points out in many parts of *Joseph Andrews* that our ideas regarding the mutual exclusivity or conflict of the terms in a binary pair and regarding the superiority of one of the terms in a binary pair may not be as stable and as correspondent to reality as we would like to think. While Fielding's satire

sometimes assumes that certain binary hierarchies exist, in the remainder of this chapter, I will examine episodes from the novel that exemplify Fielding's critique of the dyads high/low, serious/comic, and good/evil. This kind of critique, I would argue, creates the impression that satirists can rise above erroneous distinctions and travel a middle road between contrasting terms.

Much of the plot of *Joseph Andrews* centers on class distinctions, and Fielding frequently challenges his readers' concepts of high and low with regard to social status. Additionally, by writing in an elevated tone about what most would consider fairly ordinary and down-to-earth matters, he suggests that the definitions English men and women use to classify subject matter are unstable. The chapter in which the narrator introduces Joseph Andrews is titled "Of Mr. Joseph Andrews his Birth, Parentage, Education, and great Endowments, with a Word or two concerning Ancestors." The lofty tone and diction of this title suggest the reader will hear about a noble hero and that the narrator will reinforce the idea that one's bloodline and breeding determine his or her character. The emphasis on birth, parentage, education, endowments, and ancestors in the title implies that a person worthy of

being the central focus in a novel needs these attributes, yet within the very first paragraph of the chapter, Fielding writes,

As to his Ancestors, we have searched with great Diligence, but little Success: being unable to trace them farther than his Great Grandfather, who, as an elderly Person in the Parish remembers to have heard his father say, was an excellent Cudgel-player. (17)

Almost as soon as Fielding has created the expectation that Joseph's character will be treated in typical heroic fashion, he frustrates this expectation by having the narrator state that he, in fact, knows next to nothing about Joseph Andrews's family history. Significantly, Fielding—at least superficially—redefines the qualities that elevate a character's status as he goes on to describe Joseph's modest education, his virtue, and his innate insightfulness.

When Fielding introduces Lady Booby, he begins leveling attacks on the idea that honor belongs to the upper classes. Of her behavior towards Joseph, the narrator tells us,

Whenever she stepped out of her Coach she would take him by the Hand, and sometimes, for fear of stumbling, press it very hard; she admitted him to deliver Messages at her Bed-side in a Morning, leered at him at Table, and indulged him in all those innocent Freedoms which Women of Figure may permit without the least sully of their Virtue.

(23)

Although he refers to her actions as "innocent Freedoms," Fielding's inclusion of the word "leered" in this passage signals the unseemly nature of her attentions to Joseph. Additionally, the fact that the narrator must explain why Lady Booby's actions did not sully her virtue implies they did. If "Women of Figure" can behave in this manner without damaging their reputations, that must mean women who are not "of Figure" cannot. Thus, the reader must consider the suggestion that having high status may allow someone to get away with low behavior—behavior that would not be overlooked if the person who engaged in it lacked money and a distinguished lineage.

While Fielding's narrator's early description of Lady Booby's behavior hints at the instability of the high/low dyad, chapter 13 of book 2, entitled "A Dissertation

concerning high People and low People, with Mrs. Slipslop's Departure in no very good Temper of Mind, and the evil plight in which she left Adams and his Company," deals explicitly with this topic and allows the narrator to indulge in a philosophical tangent about the contradictions and discrepancies surrounding his culture's definitions of class. For the reader he first clarifies, "High People signify no other than People of Fashion, and low People those of no Fashion" (136). His statement that class hinges on nothing more than fashion challenges the notion that stable definitions of high and low exist, at least with regard to one's position in society. Fashions are fleeting and whimsical. A bit further, he continues,

[T]hese two Parties, especially those bordering nearly on each other, to-wit the lowest of the High, and the highest of the Low, often change their Parties according to Place and Time; for those who are People of Fashion in one place, are often People of no Fashion in another . . . .

(137)

Here the narrator acknowledges that notions of social status are relative to context and not absolute. Thus, someone at the bottom of the pecking order in one social

context may in another context be at the top. This is similar to Saussure's discussion of the interrelations among all words and other units of meaning in a language. Class is determined by one's relationships to others, which of course makes it unstable and impossible to define in isolation.

These are only a few of many examples that demonstrate Fielding's preoccupation with the high/low dyad and the attempts he makes in *Joseph Andrews* to challenge his readers' perceptions of the meanings of and especially the values attached to these terms. Perhaps significantly, although the narrator continually emphasizes Joseph's humble background and suggests it has made him a virtuous person, we learn near the end of the novel that Joseph is actually the long-lost son of a man who earlier describes himself as "descended of a good Family" and "born a Gentleman" (175). The fairytale ending in which Joseph discovers his noble parentage could imply that while being brought up in luxury might lead one to vice, there is something to be said for coming from a good bloodline. Moreover, the narrator at this point contradicts his profession of having no knowledge of Joseph's ancestors at the beginning of the novel, destabilizing the work he has



done to convince the reader he is telling a true story based on his observations of and conversations with others about actual events.

In addition to focusing on the high/low dyad, *Joseph Andrews* also contains several incidents in which Fielding challenges the serious/comic dyad, encouraging the reader to laugh at usually grave and sobering situations involving rape, incest, and death. In book 2, chapter 9, Adams rescues Fanny from her would-be rapist, yet in the following chapters the two of them end up accused of attacking and robbing her attacker and are dragged into court. The narrator describes the fight scene between Adams and the would-be rapist with detachment and makes several humorous remarks on the actions of the two men. He uses an analogy that compares them to roosters, explaining,

As a Game-Cock when engaged in amorous Toying with a Hen, if perchance he espies another Cock at hand, immediately quits his Female, and opposes himself to his Rival; so did the Ravisher, on the Information of [Adams's] Crabstick, immediately leap from the Woman, and hasten to assail the Man. (120)

This analogy makes a jest of the situation on at least two levels. First, comparing the men to barnyard animals known for mindless, purely instinctual behavior pokes fun at the fight, which Fielding describes using more elevated language elsewhere, by dragging it down to the level of a primitive brawl. Second, using the term "Cock" pulls the elevated tone down even further by playing on the word as a slang term for "penis" and appropriately using it to describe a man about to use his. (According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, this definition of the word was used as early as 1618).

A further challenge to the serious/comic dyad comes near the end of the novel, in a series of complicated plot twists revealing the parentage of Joseph and Fanny. The reader learns that the hero and heroine may be brother and sister and their affection for one another consequently incestuous and taboo. While several of the characters are eating dinner together soon after this discovery, Joseph's sister Pamela tells him that "if he loved *Fanny* as he ought, with a pure Affection, he had no Reason to lament being related to her.—Upon which *Adams* began to discourse on Platonic Love; whence he made a quick Transition to the Joys in the next World . . ." (289-290). Although, of

course, discovering that one's beloved may be a sibling would be tragic, Fielding uses the characters' circumstance to reveal the hypocrisies and unrealistic ideals of those around them. He encourages the audience to laugh at this scene by following up Pamela's ridiculous assertion that Joseph should feel brotherly love rather than erotic love for Fanny until, presumably, their wedding with Adams's "discourse," which obviously would not be very comforting to Joseph and Fanny given their situation.

Furthermore, a bit later, the narrator informs us,

As soon as Fanny was drest, Joseph returned to her, and they had a long Conversation together, the Conclusion of which was, that if they found themselves to be really Brother and Sister, they vowed a perpetual Celibacy, and to live together all their Days, and indulge a *Platonick* friendship for each other. (295)

On the one hand, this statement sounds noble. The two lovers will foster the "higher" sentiments they feel for one another despite the fact that they will never be able to satisfy their carnal desires. However, the situation also sounds humorous for a number of reasons. First, Joseph and Fanny vow to "live together all their Days." It would

be a bit strange for a brother and sister who felt no sexual feelings for one another to make such a pledge. This is the vow typically made by husbands and wives. Second, the narrator tells his readers that the pair will "indulge" a friendship. Fielding's decision to use this word calls into question the nobility of their plan. Finally, Fanny's and Joseph's confident assertion that they will maintain a "Platonick friendship" does not seem to have been thought through very carefully. One finds it difficult to believe they could so easily renounce their romantic feelings for one another. The tensions revealed in the terms of the vow they make to one another, on the contrary, suggest that the vow represents the young lovers' resolve to accommodate themselves to the situation but also to reassure one another of their abiding passion.

In addition to challenging the high/low and serious/comic dyads, Fielding challenges his readers' perceptions of good versus evil in *Joseph Andrews*. These challenges go beyond criticism of hypocrisy (although, as Spacks points out, "over and over *Joseph Andrews* calls our attention to people's deep conviction of their own rightness") and examine situations in which ideological distinctions between good and evil become unclear (25).

Early in the novel, Joseph is attacked by thieves and taken to an inn where he believes he may die. He tells a clergyman named Mr. Barnabas that he will regret leaving Fanny behind, to which Mr. Barnabas replies "that any Repining at the Divine Will, was one of the greatest Sins he could commit; that he ought to forget all carnal Affections, and think of better things" (51-52). Although what Barnabas says reflects Christian doctrine, Fielding asks his readers to examine the doctrine as well as Barnabas's decision to relate it to Joseph in this situation. According to Barnabas, Joseph's love for Fanny is purely carnal—and thus sinful—yet the narrator has provided detailed descriptions of Joseph that portray him as unfailingly noble, pure, and kind. Joseph's feelings for Fanny have been contrasted with the lustful designs of Lady Booby. Therefore, the reader may wonder whether it would be wrong for Joseph to regret abandoning Fanny. Also, although Barnabas apparently believes he has a duty to inform Joseph that his feelings are wrong, his decision to do so seems cruel as Joseph apparently cannot help feeling the way he does.

A little further along in this scene, Joseph says that he cannot forgive the thieves who attacked him and that he

would kill them if given the opportunity. Barnabas assures him that it would not be wicked to kill his attackers for the sake of justice but that he must "forgive them as a Christian ought . . . Joseph desired to know what that Forgiveness was. 'That is,' answered *Barnabas*, 'to forgive them as—as-it is to forgive them as—in short, it is to forgive them as a Christian'" (52). Fielding's portrayal of Barnabas suggests that Barnabas himself does not fully understand what he believes and how he defines Christian forgiveness. Joseph sees a discrepancy between his desire to kill the thieves and having an attitude of forgiveness towards them; however, Barnabas's statement that killing the thieves would serve justice highlights an ideological quandary. How can a person forgive someone yet rightfully desire to kill him or her? In this exchange between Joseph and Mr. Barnabas, Fielding draws attention to the complexity of distinctions between good and evil.

Near the end of the novel, Fielding again calls attention to the good/evil dyad with a scene concerning loss in which Adams and Joseph discuss Fanny's kidnapping. The title of the chapter that includes this scene, "Containing the Exhortations of Parson Adams to his Friend in Affliction; calculated for the Instruction and

Improvement of the Reader," sets readers up to look for an improving message of some sort, which suggests that Fielding wants his audience to pay particular attention to the chapter. Like Barnabas earlier in the novel, Adams chides Joseph for lamenting the loss of Fanny, but unlike Barnabas, he implores Joseph to rely on both reason and faith to master his emotions. At one point he tells him,

Joseph, if you are wise, and truly know your own Interest, you will peaceably and quietly submit to all the Dispensations of Providence; being thoroughly assured, that all the Misfortunes, how great soever, which happen to the Righteous, happen to them for their own Good.—Nay, it is not your Interest only, but your Duty to abstain from immoderate Grief; which if you indulge, you are not worthy the Name of a Christian. (231)

Adams's exhortations in this passage raise questions about a number of ethical issues. When he advises Joseph to know his "own Interest," he suggests that thinking of himself and his own salvation (i.e., selfishness) would be virtuous. When he tells him that "Misfortunes . . . happen to the Righteous . . . for their own Good," he suggests that misfortunes might not be inherently evil or bad—as the

word "misfortune" implies—but, rather, necessary for personal improvement. The language Fielding uses in this passage also draws the reader's attention to various conundrums. Adams, sounding like one of Job's "comforters," says the righteous experience misfortunes for their own good, implying that misfortunes perform a corrective function . . . yet if someone were actually righteous, he or she would not need to be corrected. Adams also refers to "immoderate Grief" as an indulgence that Joseph must refrain from, implying that "Grief" is neither good nor evil in itself but must be measured by imprecise degrees. Where should Joseph draw the line between a proper amount of grief and immoderate grief?

According to Spacks, in "the best satire he [the satirist] is likely to create level upon level of uneasiness: as our insight increases, we see ever more sharply our own involvement in tangles which it is our responsibility to unravel" (17). One can definitely see this principle at work in *Joseph Andrews* as Fielding unsettles commonplace distinctions between high and low, serious and comic, and good and evil. Nevertheless, as I will discuss in the following chapters, in order to affect readers in this way, Fielding must cling to particular



values based on binary hierarchies shared by those who appreciate his satire.

## CHAPTER TWO

One of the main binary pairs influencing the structure and meaning of *Joseph Andrews* is reality/appearance. The reader repeatedly must accept that the narrator has legitimately uncovered and exposed truths hidden beneath characters' appearances in order to accept the narrator as reliable and derive meaning from the text. I have chosen to use the term "appearance" rather than "perception" because it emphasizes the generalizations that can be made regarding truth. "Perception" implies that appearance is subjective because it draws attention to the way one sees things, suggesting that multiple views exist. "Appearance," on the other hand, refers to absolute, inherent qualities of the observed object, making it an agent that "looks" a certain way. Linguistically speaking, "a perception of reality" can equal "reality" if one accepts a single correct way of evaluating a truth, while "an appearance of reality" does not equal "reality." In other words, saying that something "appears true" automatically challenges people to figure out whether it is true, while saying that something is "perceived to be true" leaves open the possibility that the perception is correct since the

observer has thoroughly investigated the matter. Some say "seeing is believing," but satire draws its strength from skepticism of this overgeneralization.

As discussed earlier, the opposition in the English language between reality and appearance privileges reality. In the Enlightenment era the idea that one could arrive at "Truth" through proper investigation was a major governing principle, and perhaps this contributed to the popularity of satire during this period. In *The Difference Satire Makes*, Frederic Bogel writes, "The assumption . . . seems to be that if we can just perceive vice clearly, we will reject it, and that the only reason we do not perceive it clearly is that it disguises itself" (51). This statement strongly reflects one kind of rhetorical work that pervades Fielding's novel. Continually, and often humorously, the narrator exposes characters' weaknesses while highlighting the ways in which they disguise them. Spacks also mentions that in *Joseph Andrews* "Fielding repeatedly calls attention to his own language or to that of his characters to dramatize the gap which may exist between language and substance, form and content" (26). This ultimately extends to the reality/appearance dyad, in that "substance" and "content" relate to "reality," while "language" and "form"

relate to "appearance." If Fielding does what Spacks argues he does, his arguments can make sense only if the reader perceives a division between reality and appearance; his arguments can persuade only if the reader accepts that the narrator has the ability to arrive at a valid perception of reality that directly contrasts with the appearance he has called into question.

Like Spacks, Robert Alter, in *Fielding and the Nature of the Novel*, argues that Fielding challenges the stability of language. He writes,

The typical rhetorical strength built on this definiteness of verbal reference by English writers, from Addison to Jane Austen, is firmness and efficiency of assertion. Fielding, on the other hand, more often develops strategies to call the received usage into question, revealing to his readers the untidy clutter of ambiguities, equivocations, and needed qualifications which have been swept under the neat rug of a supposedly assured term. (38)

While Alter suggests that Fielding does something unique by directing his critical eye towards language itself, Fielding cannot escape the system of values he appears to

critique, for Fielding's "strategies to call the received usage into question" mean nothing if the reader does not agree on some level that a perceivable gap between appearance and reality exists. Other writers may, as Alter implies, point out gaps between how people behave and their essential natures, while Fielding removes himself one step further in order to point out gaps between how language behaves and its essential nature. Despite engaging in this work, Fielding upholds the conviction that one can observe from some distance an existing space between two types of perceptions, one of which is correct, or real.

In his discussion of affectation in the preface to *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding very specifically outlines his attitudes regarding false appearances:

The only Source of the true Ridiculous (as it appears to me) is Affectation . . . Now Affectation proceeds from one of these two Causes, Vanity, or Hypocrisy: 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. (6)

Clearly, according to this statement, Fielding considers reality superior to appearance because he considers affectation, behavior that conceals reality with false appearances, deserving of ridicule. Fielding does more complex rhetorical work, however, here and as the passage continues. By using the words "characters" and "applause," he signals to his readers that he recognizes his own vanity in writing a novel and that therefore he is capable enough of accurate perception to evaluate his own motives despite the fact that recognizing personal weaknesses can be difficult. Furthermore, in next presenting an argument that hypocrisy is worse than vanity, Fielding anticipates the objection that his vanity as a writer might make him unqualified to judge the affectations of others. He specifies,

. . . the Affectation which arises from Vanity is nearer to Truth than the other [that which arises from hypocrisy]; as it hath not that violent Repugnancy of Nature to struggle with, which that of the Hypocrite hath. It may be likewise noted, that Affectation doth not imply an absolute Negation of those Qualities which are affected: and therefore, tho', when it proceeds from

Hypocrisy, it be nearly allied to Deceit; yet  
when it comes from Vanity only, it partakes of  
the Nature of Ostentation . . . . (6-7)

Thus, Fielding suggests, although he is guilty of a certain level of affectation, he is not as bad as the hypocrites he satirizes and he is not deceitful. Fielding's preoccupation with removing himself as far as possible from the objects of his satire reveals that he views his novel as making judgments about human behaviors whose weight depends on his audience's acceptance of his clear perception and impartiality.

Within the narrative of *Joseph Andrews*, there are also many situations that illustrate Fielding's reliance on his audience's acceptance of a clear dichotomy between reality and appearance and his manipulation of this circumstance to support specific arguments. The speech of Mrs. Slipslop, for instance, contributes to the novel's satire on multiple levels. When the narrator first introduces Slipslop, he says she frequently argues with Adams and insists that Adams defer to her because she has been to London many times and thus has more experience. The narrator continues,

She had in these Disputes a particular Advantage  
over Adams: for she was a mighty Affecter of hard

Words, which she used in such a manner, that the Parson, who durst not offend her, by calling her Words in question, was frequently at some loss to guess her meaning, and would have been much less puzzled by an *Arabian Manuscript*. (21)

In the next paragraph Slipslop uses the word "concisely" where it would make more sense to use "soon," "confidous" where it would make more sense to use "confident," and "necessitous" where it would make more sense to use "necessary."

On one level Fielding exposes Slipslop's vanity by describing her in this way; she lords it over Adams, an educated man, and Adams understands that he must avoid offending her. Fielding levels another blow at Slipslop by placing what would later be called malapropisms in her mouth to demonstrate that her vanity is based on ignorance. At the same time he shows how language can be misused and that it is assembled somewhat arbitrarily. After all, the suffix "-ous" can be used in English to end an adjective. Slipslop's mistake has a certain logic. Ultimately, however, Fielding ends up illustrating the stability of meaning despite the instability of language. Slipslop knows what she means, and the reader can guess from the context



what she means, even if Adams is often puzzled by her "hard Words." Fielding, like Saussure in his *Course in General Linguistics*, shows that signals, or words, are arbitrary, but by making it possible for the reader to interpret what Slipslop says, he reinforces the idea that concepts are absolute—that people can use different words to mean the same thing.

Fielding also counts on his audience's acceptance of the reality/appearance dyad in the often-discussed scene where a coach carrying travelers comes upon Joseph Andrews lying naked in a ditch after being beaten and robbed. The travelers include "a Lady," "an old Gentleman" whom the narrator also refers to as "the Man of Wit," and "A young man, who belonged to the Law" as well as the coachman, the postillion, and the lady's footman. The lady claims she is too modest to allow a naked man to ride in the coach with her and denies that she knew her silver flask contained spirits when she hands it over to a robber, who says it holds "some of the best *Nantes* he had ever tasted" (47). Fielding leads the reader to doubt the Lady's presentation of herself by contrasting her self-consciously "modest" behavior (crying out "O *J-sus*" upon realizing Joseph is naked, holding her fan in front of her eyes) with her lack

of humility, charity and virtue. She apparently believes she is too good to share the same coach as Joseph and is not moved by his pathetic state, claiming she has nothing restorative that she might offer him when asked by the "Man of Wit" if "she could not accommodate him [Joseph] with a dram" (47). Additionally, her protestation that the fact that her flask is filled with brandy must be "the Mistake of her Maid, for that she had ordered her to fill the bottle with *Hungary Water*" demonstrates that she is very concerned with maintaining a respectable appearance even in the midst of a robbery and suggests that she values her respectability more than human life (47).

Although the character attempts to present herself as modest and innocent, her actions, as described by the narrator, betray her worldliness. The satirical elements of the scene require the reader to make judgments based on Fielding's presentation of the woman. Fielding upholds the distinction between reality and appearance by calling attention to discrepancies between the superficial modesty of the woman's actions and her calculating, prideful nature. If the reader were to accept the woman's actions and words at face value, there would be nothing satirical about the scene. For the scene to serve as a criticism of

the woman and the kinds of people she represents, the reader needs to perceive that the woman's "true" self differs from her public presentation of self. Furthermore, to agree with the point made by the satire, the reader cannot place the narrator's representation of the woman on the same level as the woman's representation of herself. Although both are representations, the reader must accept the carefully constructed scene as pointing out some sort of truth about the woman and human nature—a reality that contradicts attempted deception.

Near the end of book 1, chapter 15, *Joseph Andrews's* narrator begins a discourse on vanity that echoes Fielding's discussion of affectation in the novel's preface. Here, relatively early in the novel, the narrator explicitly states that vanity masquerades as other sentiments, claiming,

O Vanity! How little is thy Force acknowledged,  
or thy Operations discerned . . . Sometimes thou  
dost wear the Face of Pity, sometimes of  
Generosity: nay, thou hast the Assurance even to  
put on those glorious Ornaments which belong only  
to heroick Virtue. (60)

This passage demonstrates that Fielding's narrator believes there is a division between reality and appearance; otherwise, the point about vanity cannot be made. It underscores the novel's argument for the superiority of reality over appearance as well. A vain person is concerned with his or her appearance, yet appearance masks and misleads by disingenuously taking on the forms of qualities the reader would most likely find commendable (pity, generosity, and virtue). When the narrator says, "How little [are] . . . thy Operations discerned," he implies that he often discerns the operations of vanity when others do not. Otherwise, how could he be aware of the lack of discernment in others? This reinforces the satirist's role as one who perceives realities hidden by appearances and suggests the reader who comprehends the satirist's exposés of vanity shares his superior vantage point that most people cannot, or choose not to, reach.

In his narrator's discourse on vanity, Fielding also illustrates the narrator's argument by using elevated and expansive language and by having the narrator address vanity in a dramatic apostrophe. While decrying the odiousness of vanity, the narrator shows off his rhetorical skill and is so bold as to square off with the vice itself

rather than simply with another human being who displays it. Then, the narrator deflates the entire preceding passage by stating,

I know thou [Vanity] wilt think, that whilst I abuse thee, I court thee; and that thy Love hath inspired me to write this sarcastical Panegyrick on thee: but thou art deceived . . . I have introduced thee for no other Purpose than to lengthen out a short Chapter; and so I return to my History. (60)

This allows Fielding to strengthen his ethos as a satirist by analyzing and digging below the surface of his narrator's opprobrious appearance. By drawing attention to yet another contrast between reality and appearance, he elevates his position as a discerning observer.

In addition, by calling the discourse on Vanity a "sarcastical Panegyrick," Fielding draws the reader's attention to his use of irony. The reader who has already interpreted the passage as ironic receives a confirmation that he or she is intelligent or somehow more enlightened because he or she has already discerned the criticism disguised as praise. Fielding has further exploited his audience's perceptions of and belief in a division between

reality and appearance by giving them an opportunity to practice their own discernment of sarcasm. Since ironic or sarcastic language literally says one thing but means another, it is a classic example of the reality/appearance binary as applied to language. There is a payoff for readers who accept the reality/appearance dyad and the "reality" of the narrator's purpose in discoursing on vanity; if they accept that the narrator has successfully exposed vanity without falling victim to it himself, they will likely feel clever for figuring out the essential meaning of the passage.

In a later scene that addresses the reality/appearance dyad by skewering discrepancies between professed beliefs and actual behavior, Adams argues with a gentleman who says cowards should be executed. Their conversation goes on for some time, with the gentleman making such claims as:

I have disinherited a Nephew who is in the Army, because he would not exchange his Commission, and go to the *West-Indies*. I believe the Rascal is a Coward, tho' he pretends to be in love forsooth. I would have all such Fellows hanged, Sir, I would have them hanged. (118)

Adams disagrees with the gentleman's harsh sentiments, yet when they hear a woman screaming, Adams comes to her rescue, while the gentleman hurries home. To criticize the gentleman's conduct, Fielding sets up a scene in which the man's words are contrasted with his actions. The target is not necessarily cowardice, although Adams certainly appears in a better light than the gentleman because he decides to act heroically. Fielding's satire seems to be directed more towards the gap between the gentleman's speech and his behavior—his hypocrisy. Because the gentleman has spoken out so vehemently against cowardice and shown so little sympathy towards his nephew, he is indicted by his own failure to act according to his standards. Once again, Fielding demonstrates that the way a person wishes to appear may be deceptive, emphasizing the need to discern between appearance and reality.

The satirical impact of this scene is strengthened when, of the frightened gentleman's actions, the narrator concludes,

[T]he Man of Courage made as much Expedition towards his own Home, whither he escaped in a very short time without once looking behind him: where we will leave him, to contemplate his own

Bravery, and to censure the want of it in others.

(119)

The narrator ironically calls the gentleman a "Man of Courage," which, as in the earlier discourse on vanity, contrasts reality and appearance. Readers must recognize from the context that the narrator does not really believe the gentleman to be a man of courage, relying on deductive reasoning to discern what the narrator really thinks by considering the gap between what the gentleman said about bravery and the gentleman's flight. Also, although it would be difficult for readers to miss the point being made by the contrast between the gentleman's severe words and cowardly actions, the irony of the phrase "Man of Courage" strengthens the bond between the narrator and readers who appreciate his irony, uniting them in their agreement that the gentleman in question is a flagrant hypocrite.

As mentioned earlier, in book 2, chapter 13, of *Joseph Andrews*, "A Dissertation concerning high People and low People, with Mrs. Slipslop's Departure in no very good Temper of Mind, and the evil plight in which she left Adams and his Company," Fielding blurs distinctions between high and low social classes, challenging the hierarchy maintained by people's acceptance of a distinction between



these two stations. In order to challenge this dyad, his narrator relies on the reality/appearance dyad to point out discrepancies between people's pretensions to social status and their behavior. This chapter goes beyond exposure of hypocrisy, though, and serves to reinforce the supremacy of reality over appearance. For example, in the chapter's second paragraph, the narrator says, "Now the World being thus divided into People of Fashion, and People of No Fashion, a fierce Contention arose between them, nor would those of one Party, to avoid Suspicion, be seen publickly to speak to those of the other" (136). This suggests that those of high status (people of fashion) have a tenuous hold on their status and must cultivate appearances to maintain it. Unfortunately for those who wish to maintain their status, appearances are merely "fashion." Appearance is contrasted with reality—substance—when the narrator explains that "high" people are defined by neither their physical stature nor their character.

Fielding's narrator comments explicitly here on how the definition of "fashion" has shifted over time. He explains,

Now this word *Fashion*, hath by long use lost its original Meaning, from which at present it gives

us a very different Idea: for I am deceived, if by Persons of Fashion, we do not generally include a Conception of Birth and Accomplishments superior to the Herd of Mankind; whereas in reality, nothing more was originally meant by a Person of Fashion, than a Person who drest himself in the Fashion of the Times; and the Word really and truly signifies no more at this day.

(136)

The *Oxford English Dictionary* confirms that in Fielding's day "fashion" could mean "Of high quality or breeding, of eminent social standing or repute" and cites this usage as being employed as early as 1489. Another meaning, also used as early as 1489, is "A prevailing custom, a current usage; esp. one characteristic of a particular place or period of time." However, the dictionary adds that the first meaning was most often qualified in early use by such adjectives as "high," "great," and "good," gradually "merging into the current sense." By drawing attention to the evolution of the word's meaning, Fielding both points to the instability of language and uses this observation to underscore his narrator's argument about the instability of status. His narrator's comment also suggests that in applying the term

"fashion" to those at the top of their social hierarchy, the English-speaking world at some point recognized the arbitrary nature of class divisions before making "fashion" itself nearly synonymous with "nobility." Telling, too, is the narrator's insistence that the word "really and truly" means what it did before. He emphasizes the difference between what people think "fashion" means and the truth he perceives regarding how society evaluates people. The implication is that people should be evaluated based on something essential—their character—rather than their wealth, prestige, or sartorial accoutrements.

In this chapter the narrator also discusses the ephemeral and relative nature of status, which further emphasizes the division between appearance and reality, or form and substance. He says,

[F]or these two parties, especially those bordering nearly on each other, to-wit the lowest of the High, and the highest of the Low, often change their Parties according to Place and Time; for those who are People of Fashion in one place, are often People of no Fashion in another: And with regard to Time, it may not be unpleasant to

survey the Picture of Dependance like a kind of  
Ladder. (137)

Something real would be consistent and unchanging—stable. Appearances, like fashion, are not real because they shift relative to context. As the *Oxford English Dictionary* specifies, fashions are typically considered “characteristic of a particular place or period of time.” Fielding relies on his audience’s perception of this difference to support his narrator’s argument that the perceived division between high and low status is false; one binary hierarchy is maintained in order to undercut another.

Complicating while still upholding the reality/appearance dyad, in book 2, chapter 17, Fielding introduces a scene in which Parson Adams and an innkeeper debate regarding the behavior of a squire who made various promises to Adams and then failed to keep them, placing him in a difficult situation with no money to pay for his, Joseph’s, and Fanny’s lodging. When Adams complains that the squire “hath in his Countenance sufficient Symptoms of that *bona Indoles* [good character], that Sweetness of Disposition which furnishes out a good Christian,” the innkeeper tells him, “Ah! Master, Master . . . if you had

travelled as far as I have, and conversed with the many Nations where I have traded, you would not give any Credit to a Man's Countenance" (158). This irritates Adams, who attempts to argue that people's true natures can be perceived by studying their faces. Given Adams's recent experience, however, the reader would likely interpret his ideas as somewhat naïve, and this again contributes to the novel's satiric comment on the divide between reality and appearance. In this chapter Fielding has set up yet another situation that draws the reader's attention to a dichotomy between these two concepts. Adams, generally a good and trusting character, has been taken in because he has failed to make a distinction between appearance and reality. This in turn serves to strengthen Fielding's ethos because he has accurately perceived a weakness connected to virtue: people who fail to recognize others' deceptions because they are too trusting may be ineffective and unable to do as much good as they might otherwise be able to. Importantly, though, Fielding's ultimate target does not seem to be Parson Adams or trust itself. Rather, the scene specifically targets excessive trust—a failure to take the middle ground between unconditional trust and universal suspicion. Adams would not be the kind person he is if he

trusted no one, and Fielding clearly sets him up as a protagonist in the novel. However, Adams's tendency to be duped by others suggests a want of perspicacity—a need to make wiser decisions based on the truth that appearance does not equal reality.

As the scene continues, Adams and the innkeeper begin discussing whether classical education or travel provides a superior understanding of human nature, each motivated at least in part by vanity to assert the greater value of the source of his knowledge. This opposition is an instance of another major binary pair examined in the novel, the substance/language dyad; as discussed earlier, this also connects to the reality/appearance binary pair. Adams makes an eloquent argument for the importance of a classical education (language and appearance), demonstrating the appeal of appearance and the allure of believing in a paradigm that unites language and substance. Nevertheless, his gullibility leads the reader to perceive Adams's ideas as ideals, not realities. The scene ultimately prompts the reader to make a decision about what constitutes Truth. Adams argues that the ideals he has learned by reading are more real than the experiences of the innkeeper, which raises the following question: is experience itself in some

way false if it fails to conform to essential truths?  
Adams's argument, perhaps intentionally, echoes Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates describes the realm of the gods as the home of true beauty and wisdom, which are merely reflected on Earth (Plato 32-48). This scene also calls attention to the damaging effects of vanity as the vanity of Adams and the innkeeper keeps them from making concessions to one another in their argument, preventing them from coming to an objective, balanced conclusion.

Fielding draws his readers' attention to the topic of vanity yet again in book 3, chapter 3, when a gentleman named Mr. Wilson, who will turn out to be Joseph Andrews's father tells Adams, "Men are equally vain of Riches, Strength, Beauty, Honors, & c. But, these appear of themselves to the eyes of the Beholders, whereas the poor Wit is obliged to produce his Performance to shew you his Perfection . . ." (186). In other words, the "Wit" who writes a poem or play (or novel) works harder to satisfy his vanity. This comment, if the reader agrees with it, could, like Fielding's argument about vanity and hypocrisy in the preface, serve as a defense of Fielding, who spends much of *Joseph Andrews* pointing out the vanities of various characters and discrediting the value of appearance. It

also reinforces that Fielding recognizes the vanity associated with writing and with making clever insights, thus, as in the preface and after the narrator's earlier apostrophe to "Vanity," raising Fielding's ethos by showing his ability to perceive his own flaws. As the gentleman continues discussing vanity in this scene, Adams cries out in dismay because he cannot find his sermon on vanity, which he desperately wants to show off to the gentleman. Adams, unlike Fielding, fails to perceive his own vanity, which again suggests that a virtuous person may be blinded by an inability to see correctly, or with the level of perception *Joseph Andrews* consistently advocates.

Also in this scene Wilson remarks, "Vanity is the worst of Passions, and more apt to contaminate the Mind than any other . . . the vain Man seeks Pre-eminence; and every thing which is excellent or praise-worthy in another, renders him the Mark of his Antipathy" (186). Vanity, he suggests, is particularly sinful because by focusing on personal appearance one becomes cut off from others; vanity makes relationships between people less genuine and ultimately leads to competition rather than cooperation. In this scene Wilson is, significantly, speaking from experience. He comes to these conclusions about vanity



after describing his downward spiral into dissolution as a young man. This gives his words more weight because they are based on realities he has lived through. In fact, of all the characters in *Joseph Andrews* (excluding, perhaps, the narrator) Wilson most closely resembles Fielding, and his experience echoes Fielding's real-life experience, reinforcing the weight of his judgments for the reader who knows about Fielding's background. Furthermore, the work Fielding does in this scene and in earlier discussions of vanity suggests a concern with whether simply perceiving vanity makes someone a better person, even if he or she cannot entirely escape indulging in vanity.

In book 3, chapter 4, "Moral Reflections by Joseph Andrews, with the Hunting Adventure, and Parson Adams's miraculous Escape," Joseph addresses the reality/appearance dyad by discussing the superficial actions people take to improve their appearances in the eyes of others (such as building beautiful homes and buying expensive paintings) and argues that they should perform good works instead if they wish to be perceived as good. Of the possessions of the wealthy, he tells Adams, "[W]e rather praise the Builder, the Workman, the Painter, the Laceman, the Taylor, and the rest, by whose Ingenuity they are produced, than

the Person who by his Money makes them his own" (203).

Joseph points out that the things for which wealthy people wish to be admired bring them no honor if they merely buy them, complaining that such people nevertheless continue to surround themselves with what looks good instead of doing what is good. Joseph's innocence and naiveté strengthen the satiric statement here as they suggest how simple it is to perceive divisions between reality and appearance, thereby insinuating that those who fail to recognize these distinctions do so willfully or perhaps are not very intelligent. And what reader would choose to identify with the rich posers Joseph criticizes in this scene, particularly when this would, the novel suggests, make them deceitful or foolish? By placing such comments in Joseph's mouth, Fielding skillfully barricades rejections of the value system he has set up within the novel. Joseph is candid, genuine, and real. He does not concern himself with appearances.

In this scene Joseph continues, "Indeed it is strange that all Men should consent in commending Goodness, and no Man endeavour to deserve that Commendation; whilst, on the contrary, all rail at Wickedness, and all are as eager to be what they abuse" (204). This line obviously reminds the

reader of the gaps between what people do and what they say. People generally do what gives them instant gratification. Joseph contrasts their actions, which result in temporary, hollow rewards, with good deeds, whose effects are deeper and longer lasting. Through Joseph's words Fielding leads the reader to consider assessing actions according to their results. Wealthy hypocrites, Joseph claims, only desire things that are impermanent and that momentarily improve how other wealthy hypocrites perceive them. Interestingly, though, Joseph makes a very broad claim in saying that "all Men . . . consent in commending Goodness . . . all rail at Wickedness, and all are as eager to be what they abuse." It is unclear why he makes such a comment, as he, Adams, and Fanny have just discovered a generous monetary gift slipped in with the provisions given to them upon leaving the home of the Wilsons (whom Joseph still does not know are his parents). One wonders whether Joseph includes Wilson and himself among "all Men." Fielding may or may not have made Joseph's claim broad intentionally, but Joseph's impetuous words draw a line between Fielding and his character and emphasize that Joseph is, after all, merely a character manipulated by Fielding to make a point. Fielding has

already established by now in the novel that he is aware of his own flaws and the vanity to which writers can fall victim.

Finally, in one of *Joseph Andrews*'s more frequently quoted scenes, Fielding places Adams in a situation that both exposes his rather benign hypocrisy and raises questions about reason versus emotion, the binary pair I will discuss in detail in the following chapter. In book 4, chapter 8, Abraham Adams lectures Joseph on restraining his passionate feelings for Fanny, saying he should be willing to give her up, as the biblical Abraham was willing to give up Isaac. Then, Adams hears that his own son has been drowned and laments. Joseph unsuccessfully attempts to comfort him by using "many Arguments that he had at several times remember'd out of [Adams's] own Discourses both in private and publick, (for he was a great Enemy to the Passions, and preached nothing more than the Conquest of them by Reason and Grace) . . ." (270-271). Ironically, the Abraham and Isaac parable fits Adams's case much more tightly than Joseph's, making the satiric statement even more obvious.

Adams believes in the absolute ideals he preaches but finds difficulty following them himself when

occasion demands. He must say what sounds correct and do what appears right for a parson, but this scene hints that he occasionally clings to the ideal of self-control at times when this ideal ought to be superseded by a greater ideal: love for others. The title of the chapter in which this scene appears anticipates that readers will be led to assess Adams's actions with the phrase "with some Behaviour of Mr. Adams, which will be called by some few Readers, very low, absurd, and unnatural." This indicates that Fielding expects his readers to understand that Adams's despair over the death of his son reveals a more virtuous character than would a stolid reaction. Additionally, when contrasted with Adams's earlier conversation with Joseph about conquering passion, his reaction to the report of his son's death critiques Adams's sense that he must appear a certain way in order to serve as an example to others. That is, in the earlier conversation, he preaches his ideals to Joseph, criticizing Joseph for loving Fanny too much, even though he truly believes—or at least feels—there are some exceptions to this rule.

This scene is more complex and ambiguous than many of the others in which Fielding deals with the reality/appearance dyad. Adams's behavior conflicts with

his words but is not portrayed as hypocritical; rather, Fielding simply portrays Adams as somewhat unaware of his true beliefs. Fielding drives this point home when he has Adams tell Joseph "Thou art ignorant of the Tenderness of fatherly Affection . . . No Man is obliged to Impossibilities, and the Loss of a Child is one of those great Trials where our Grief may be allowed to become immoderate" even though he earlier used the Abraham and Isaac story to support his argument about Joseph and Fanny (272). When Adams tries to differentiate parental love from love for one's mate, his wife argues that he does love her passionately and that she wouldn't accept anything less.

This dramatic situation near the end of the novel serves to delineate some specific arguments related to the reality/appearance and reason/emotion dyads. It suggests that people should work to discover the discrepancies between their behavior and words (reality and appearance) but that love should be pursued without restraint. This raises additional complicated questions about how one distinguishes love and, ultimately, how one can perceive truth. *Joseph Andrews's* treatment of reason and emotion idealizes an orderly system in which humans can distance themselves to make valid judgments regarding reality as

well as decide when and where to give in to emotional impulses.

### CHAPTER THREE

If identifying contrasts between reality and appearance is at the heart of satire, faith in humanity's ability to separate reason from emotion is what makes it possible for readers to accept the satirist's identifications of such contrasts. In *Joseph Andrews* Fielding uses a variety of persuasive strategies rooted in assumptions that he can convince his readers of his rationality and that his readers prefer to perceive themselves as rational. In "Satire, Speech, and Genre," Charles Knight writes,

In satire the addressee and addresser must agree that the author's attack and the reader's condemnation are justified by the values articulated or implied by the satire . . . satire that is merely emotive—expressing the speaker's emotion without gaining the listener's agreement—is unsuccessful as satire. (31-32)

Knight also acknowledges that satirists distance themselves and their audiences from their targets of attack, suggesting that satirists rely on demonstrating their



capacity to make detached, logical judgments unbiased by personal emotions.

Fielding's use of irony plays a major role in his exploitation of the reason/emotion dyad. As D.C. Muecke illustrates in *Irony and the Ironic*, in order for a writer to use irony effectively, his or her reader must be adequately perceptive. The reader must make deductions based on signals within the text or within the context in which the text is presented to ascertain the writer's actual meaning. Writes Muecke,

The ironist, in his role of naïf, proffers a text but in such a way or in such a context as will stimulate the reader to reject its expressed literal meaning in favour of an unexpressed "transliteral" meaning of contrasting import.

(39)

When, for example, *Joseph Andrews*'s narrator calls the gentleman discussed in the previous chapter who runs from a dangerous situation a "Man of Courage," the narrator briefly poses as a naïf in speaking as if he accepts the gentleman's assessment of himself, but the context reveals his sarcasm. The gentleman's incongruous actions lead the reader to a "transliteral" meaning (that the gentleman is a

cowardly hypocrite) because they contradict the extreme position that he takes on the necessity for courage. By requiring their readers to do this type of work, ironists indicate that they consider their readers capable of drawing conclusions based on subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle, clues, implying that they view their readers as rational. And because exercising reason in interpreting an ironic statement results in a reward—arrival at an elusive but “true” meaning—ironists reinforce the value of reason. In addition, the ironist demonstrates an understanding of how reason works by constructing an ironic statement, elevating his or her status in the eyes of readers and giving them further incentive to associate themselves with (i.e., agree with) the ironist.

As discussed in the previous two chapters, Fielding’s narrator in *Joseph Andrews* makes ironic statements about various characters in order to illustrate their true natures, values, and motivations. In *Fielding and the Nature of the Novel*, Alter asserts, “Reading Fielding, and even more, rereading Fielding, we are repeatedly made aware of the way he maneuvers us into seeing characters, actions, values, society at large, from exactly the angle of vision he wants” (32). By doing so through the use of irony,

Fielding invites his readers to take the same angle of vision. By setting up situations in which they must interpret concealed meanings, he positions them to be flattered when they interpret these meanings correctly. If readers can think like the satirist (Fielding), they receive an emotional reward in the form of a sense of their own cleverness. Thus, thinking like the satirist, perhaps unconsciously, becomes associated in readers' minds with a pleasant sense of superior perspicacity. This may make them more susceptible to accepting the arguments put forth by the satirist because understanding the satirist equals demonstrating intelligence.

Another aspect of irony that relates to the reason/emotion dyad is the tone of detachment often affected by ironists. In response to Freud's statement that irony is similar to joking and that it gives readers "comic pleasure," Muecke writes,

The word "comic" suggests a certain "distance," psychologically speaking, between the amused observer and the comic object; the word "liberation" suggests "disengagement," "detachment," and these in turn "objectivity" and "dispassion." Taken together they constitute what

might be called the archetypal Closed Irony stance characterized emotionally by feelings of superiority, freedom and amusement and symbolically as a looking down from a position of superior power or knowledge. (47)

Like the sense of superiority based on intelligence that readers achieve in interpreting irony and the position of superiority based on intelligence that satirists create for themselves in constructing ironic statements, a sense of superiority based on rational detachment also accompanies satirists' use of irony. In *Joseph Andrews* the narrator's calm and detached tone places him above the action of the novel. He is not involved with the characters personally, so his words presumably are not clouded by emotion. If the reader considers reason superior to emotion, at least when it comes to getting at the truth of matters, he or she will be more likely to accept the narrator's judgments—to consider them rational and therefore authoritative. As Knight says,

[M]uch satire . . . is based on a shared understanding between satirist and audience regarding the purposes and properties of the satiric attack; satire entertains, coerces, or

argues the reader into accepting that understanding. (33)

Satirists who, like Fielding, rely on irony can persuade their readers by recognizing and validating their membership in a group of like-minded, discerning, rational individuals.

Before turning to the narrative of *Joseph Andrews* to illustrate Fielding's privileging of reason over emotion, Fielding's attitudes towards the concept of good nature and towards "exquisite Mirth and Laughter" as expressed in the novel's preface need to be considered (5). Despite Fielding's challenges to certain binary hierarchies discussed in my first chapter and his championing of certain emotions (such as love and charity), his satire nevertheless suggests that reason and honest self-reflection should guide judgments concerning appropriate emotional responses. Fielding certainly expresses his admiration of charitable behavior in *Joseph Andrews*, and in the novel's preface he says, "As to the Character of Adams . . . It is designed a Character of perfect Simplicity; and as the Goodness of his Heart will recommend him to the Good-natur'd; so I hope it will excuse me to the Gentlemen of his Cloth . . ." (8-9). However, he demonstrates Adams's

and other characters' good nature or lack thereof in the novel by inviting his readers to judge their behavior with him through their interpretation of ironic statements. This invitation to judge requires Fielding and his readers to make rational decisions about whether certain behaviors correspond to certain values. Once a "correct" judgment has been made, readers may react with indignation—but this indignation must first be justified. According to Alter,

Because through irony Fielding can simultaneously engage the world of immediate experience and imply its moral and aesthetic inadequacy, his irony is inseparable from the meticulously preserved decorum of his style: they work together to control with nice precision how we are to think and feel about his fictional events.

(41)

Alter's claim that Fielding's irony and style control not only readers' thoughts but also their feelings about how his characters behave supports the notion that while Fielding views some emotions as positive, he elicits agreement about *which* emotions are positive through ironic appeals to reason. I would add that Fielding's ability to "control" his readers in this way depends on their

agreement that reason can serve as a guide to ethical decision making and controlling one's negative emotions.

Regarding Fielding's discussion of "exquisite Mirth and Laughter" in *Joseph Andrews's* preface, although he praises the persuasiveness of burlesque's emotional release, he also evaluates humor as a tool from a rather rational viewpoint. Fielding explains,

And I apprehend, my Lord *Shaftesbury's* Opinion of mere Burlesque agrees with mine, when he asserts, "There is no such Thing to be found in the Writings of the Antients." But perhaps, I have less Abhorrence than he professes for it . . . as it contributes more to exquisite Mirth and Laughter than any other . . . Nay, I will appeal to common Observation, whether the same Companies are not found more full of Good-Humour and Benevolence, after they have been sweetn'd for two or three Hours with Entertainments of this kind, than when soured by a Tragedy or a grave Lecture. (5)

This rationalization for his attitude toward "Burlesque," implies a somewhat calculating approach to humor and signals that he believes his audience will value a logical

explanation of how and why he uses it. Additionally, throughout *Joseph Andrews*, in order to arrive at the emotional reward of laughter, readers need to use reason to interpret irony. They are allowed to laugh once they have accurately perceived. Thus, while reason and emotion truly may not be as experientially divided as their linguistic opposition suggests, Fielding portrays reason as separate from and superior to emotion (even though emotion in his view has its place) by choosing irony as the primary vehicle through which he communicates his judgments to his readers and positions his readers to determine whether situations are indeed humorous. On the topic of comic writing, Fielding also notes that "Life every where furnishes an accurate Observer with the Ridiculous" (4). To enjoy the comic release associated with perceiving the ridiculous, he suggests, one must first observe accurately, which implies the necessity of rational detachment.

Many specific instances in *Joseph Andrews* reveal Fielding's reliance on the reason/emotion dyad. His narrator's introduction of the character of Mrs. Slipslop, for instance, includes various appeals to the reader's belief in a divide between reason and emotion. He explains that Slipslop considers her understanding of theology



superior to Parson Adams's and uses "hard Words" to elevate her rhetoric in arguments with the parson; he then adds that Adams "durst not offend her, by calling her Words in question" (21). The reader soon learns that Slipslop's "hard Words" are malapropisms and realizes that Adams, presumably out of delicacy for Slipslop's feelings and an unwillingness to elicit a vehement challenge from her (as she "always insisted on a Deference to be paid to her Understanding"), never attempts to correct her (21). The narrator's description of their relationship indicates how regard for emotions can result in misunderstanding and lack of clarity. In constructing this description Fielding suggests that those who value clear reasoning should not allow pride or fear to prevent them from accepting or speaking the truth.

Fielding also creates distance between himself and the language of particular characters as he manipulates language to construct Slipslop's comical malapropisms. More than once, he has Slipslop attach the suffix "-ous" to create a nonexistent adjective, demonstrating his knowledge of linguistic rules as well as the types of errors that result from the overgeneralization and misapplication of these rules. Slipslop also tells Adams that Lady Booby "is

going to *London* very *concisely*," using an actual word incorrectly but logically choosing an adverb. Fielding's representation of Slipslop's language invites readers to laugh, provided they understand Slipslop's misuses of language. Thus, he distances himself from and gives his readers an opportunity to join him in looking down upon Slipslop, who becomes the object of an elaborate joke. In using reason to comprehend Slipslop's meaning and Fielding's joke, readers must associate with Fielding as fellow literate thinkers who possess the logical capability to recognize and understand the errors of others.

Finally, the substance of what Slipslop says contributes to her characterization as someone who exercises reason in a slipshod manner and lacks self-awareness and, therefore, someone to be laughed at. To begin with, she is unquestioningly conventional. She tells Adams that she has heard a gentleman in London say that Latin is only fit for preachers and that she can't imagine Joseph becoming anything more than what he is. People cling to convention for emotional reasons—it is more comfortable and safer. Slipslop cannot see beyond the social hierarchy and conventions that Fielding satirizes vigorously throughout the novel. Slipslop uses words that she

apparently believes sound prestigious to elevate her status, but she doesn't seek to improve her understanding. If she valued reason, perhaps she would learn to communicate more clearly. Instead, she awkwardly brandishes multi-syllabic words with the aim of acquiring emotional rewards, assuming others will perceive her as more refined and learned.

In book 1, chapter 10, *Joseph Andrews's* narrator relies on the reason/emotion dyad when he describes Lady Booby's state of mind as she contemplates what to do about Joseph, who has refused to yield to her advances. He tells the reader,

Love became his Advocate, and whispered many things in his favour. Honour likewise endeavoured to vindicate his Crime, and Pity to mitigate his Punishment; on the other side, Pride and Revenge spoke as loudly against him: and thus the poor Lady was tortured with Perplexity; opposite Passions distracting and tearing her Mind different ways. (39)

Emotions, whether good or evil counselors, cloud Lady Booby's reasoning, preventing her from making a wise decision. With this personification Fielding demonstrates

the chaotic and destructive power of emotion that is not controlled by reason. Lady Booby, a wealthy woman accustomed to getting what she desires, has not developed self-control, a quality associated with emotional detachment. Her behavior signals to the discerning reader that she is an object of Fielding's satire because she does not possess the narrator's and the reader's rational detachment.

The narrator continues to describe Lady Booby's mental torture, comparing the confusion in her mind to the confusion created by the arguments of two imaginary lawyers: "Serjeant Bramble" and "Serjeant Puzzle" (39). On a more superficial level, he seems to challenge the power of reason here because one would imagine both lawyers making logical arguments that confound the jury as they both make sense. Rhetoric, after all, traditionally relies not only on ethos and pathos but also logos, appealing to an audience's appreciation for and reliance on reason. However, the narrator implies that the attorneys envelop the truth in "Doubt and Obscurity," suggesting one could reach the truth if it weren't for *mere rhetoric* designed to persuade the jury. Fielding's meaning becomes almost paradoxical because of these conflicting attitudes towards reason. His

narrator appears to draw a classic distinction between the use of logos in rhetoric and a purer form of reason. Fielding anticipates will be valued by his readers. Rhetoric is used to protect individual interests and can take advantage of our desires to feel safe, intelligent, moral, etc. Reason, by contrast, must be disinterested—detached from emotion, including one's own emotional needs and desires. But one wonders whether Fielding or the reader can attain this level of disinterestedness if the motives of Fielding to support certain judgments through his satire and of the reader to accept those judgments are the emotional rewards associated with doing so.

Near the end of this passage, the narrator ironically states, "If it was only our present Business to make Similies [sic], we could produce many more to this Purpose: but a Similie (as well as a Word) to the Wise" (39). As a novel *Joseph Andrews*, of course, makes its points through representative examples. Readers who apply reason to figure this out are encouraged to continue to look for "hidden" points and in doing so prove that they are rational and intelligent individuals, not just emotionally engaged by the story on the surface. Fielding pointedly emphasizes this with the phrase "a Similie . . . to the Wise," drawing

a connection between wisdom and the device of simile. Similes, he implies, are for the wise, who possess the reason to benefit from them by connecting them with their likenesses.

In describing the escape of a thief from an imprudent constable in book 1, chapter 16, the narrator introduces another simile that reveals his attitude towards reason. Regarding the constable's failure to foresee that the thief might slip out through an unguarded window, he says, "But human Life, as hath been discovered by some great Man or other, (for I would by no means be understood to affect the Honour of making any such Discovery) very much resembles a Game at *Chess*" (61). This comment suggests that one must use reason and be able to step back and see the big picture. He continues, asserting that "while a Gamester is too attentive to secure himself very strongly on one side of the Board, he is apt to leave an unguarded Opening on the other" (61). One cannot, he implies, become too attached to or focused on any particular position. Since emotion has been equated with attachment and reason with detachment, the narrator suggests that emotion can prevent us from making intelligent decisions that take into account all variables. In more contemporary terms, one might

imagine him adding, "You can't be afraid to sacrifice a bishop for the greater good." For the protection of ourselves and the protection of others, we can't afford to be too emotionally attached to any individual player or plan. Those who leave openings unguarded get outwitted. Though this attitude may not precisely reflect Fielding's more sentimental viewpoint and the value he places on certain emotions, it does contribute to his characterization of his narrator as rational and trustworthy. At the same time Fielding approaches the entire argument with an ambiguous sense of irony. After all, life is much more significant than a game despite the similarities . . . or is it? In illustrating this humorous connection, Fielding rises above the argument, suggesting he is so rational that he has forgone any serious attachment to life itself.

This passage of the novel relates to Fielding's work as a writer, as it supports the idea that one can step back and examine life as if it were a game. By stepping back from and controlling a fictional world representative of real life, Fielding attempts to show the reader truths through a detached observer of events. To accept his observations the reader must value the viewpoint of the

rational, detached observer. But Fielding also hints at his awareness of the differences between a novel and real life in placing the reader in a position to question whether life can be compared to a game. Games and novels are basically frivolous, and Fielding knows this even though he uses fiction to make serious arguments. As Spacks has pointed out, Fielding remains preoccupied with the shortcomings of language. Just as a novel cannot be trusted to fully represent reality, language cannot be trusted to fully represent meaning.

Book 2, chapter 1, of *Joseph Andrews*, "Of Divisions in Authors" presents Fielding's narrator's pragmatic analysis of the convention of dividing books into chapters, demonstrating his rational disinterestedness through his ability to avoid romanticizing the art of writing. The narrator compares the spaces between chapters to resting places and the titles of chapters to signs above inns, connecting the physical architecture of *Joseph Andrews* to its plot, which centers on a journey. Thus, Fielding portrays the narrator (and himself) as someone rational who can see and analyze structural elements, creating clever connections that an attentive reader will appreciate. The narrator adds,



As to those vacant Pages which are placed between our Books, they are to be regarded as those Stages, where, in long Journeys, the Traveller stays some time to repose himself, and consider of what he hath seen in the Parts he hath already passed through; a Consideration which I take the Liberty to recommend a little to the Reader: for however swift his Capacity may be, I would not advise him to travel through these Pages too fast: for if he doth, he may probably miss the seeing some curious Productions of Nature which will be observed by the slower and more accurate Reader. (76)

Here Fielding rather obviously signals that he wants his readers to be attentive but expects some of them to be inclined to read the novel too quickly, perhaps out of a desire for pleasure and entertainment without regard for didactic content. Fielding emphasizes the depth of his writing in this passage and offers his readers a reward for looking more closely at what *Joseph Andrews* has to say: if they acknowledge his accurate observations, they must be accurate readers. Therefore, readers are drawn by their desire to be defined as accurate (i.e., intelligent and

rational) to look for Fielding's underlying arguments and agree with them. Fielding's use of the phrase "Productions of Nature" also hints at what his novel satirizes and emphasizes his simile comparing the book's physical structure to its plot structure. "Nature" can refer both to scenery and to human nature, which Fielding pointedly pokes fun at throughout the novel. "Productions" brings to mind the similarities between God as a creator and the writer as a creator. The phrasing is effective in underscoring Fielding's literary talent and tendency to use double meanings to appeal to a perceptive audience.

In this chapter Fielding's narrator also tells the reader, "A Volume without any such Places of Rest resembles the Opening of Wilds or Seas, which tires the Eye and fatigues the Spirit when entered upon" (76). The words "Wilds" and "Seas" evoke impressions of untamed emotion and lack of control. Books divided into chapters, the narrator implies, are orderly, organized, and even energizing. Someone who is fatigued cannot take action; a fatigued reader cannot make sense of a disorganized, unbroken narrative. Novels, then, should be organized in a way that makes them easier to analyze and actively engage with. This attitude reflects the Enlightenment-era preference

for reason. Organization and control are preferable to emotional confusion. Fielding, however, also appears to acknowledge in this passage that people prefer order because they receive a spiritual (emotional) benefit from perceiving that some kind of design is at work. He demonstrates the emotional rewards that can come from possessing a sense of detachment and control through rational observation while appealing to his readers' desire to see meanings beneath the surface of his words.

At the end of the chapter, Fielding suggests he is not too attached to his creation when his narrator explains several practical reasons for dividing a book into chapters. He even compares an author to a homely butcher and his book to meat, saying, "I will dismiss this Chapter with the following Observation: That it becomes an Author generally to divide a Book, as it doth a Butcher to join his Meat, for such Assistance is of great Help to both the Reader and the Carver" (78). This earthy, self-deprecating comparison serves to enhance his ethos as an author and reiterate that he possesses an attitude of detached rationality. Its offhand tone suggests that what he has written in the chapter represents an improvisation that did not take too much effort and signals to his readers that

they should avoid taking what he says too seriously. Overall, the chapter presents a sort of blueprint for how readers should approach *Joseph Andrews*: they should use their brains to find all of the humorous insights in the novel, but they should not assume Fielding is incapable of self-deprecation. It allows readers to step back from the story with Fielding and feel like they are part of a conversation and a rational understanding. Its conclusion also cleverly (though deceptively given that Fielding clearly does care about how his novel is received and its impact) presents Fielding as an accurate observer who can make insightful comments regarding human nature because he has the humility and rationality to not worry too much about the status of his novel and whether readers perceive him as a simple tradesman or an artist.

Fielding demonstrates the dangers of giving in to emotional appeals in the episode of the novel, discussed in the previous chapter on reality and appearance, in which Adams is taken in by a squire who makes various promises to him that he fails to fulfill. In book 2, chapter 16, the squire flatters Adams by telling him he is a uniquely humble clergyman—something of which Adams is proud. Adams in turn trusts the squire and expects him to help him as he

has promised by sending his horses. The fact that the squire turns out to be a liar warns the reader that one can easily be taken in by flattery without suspicion of others' motives and what seems too good to be true. As discussed earlier, this part of the novel emphasizes the reality/appearance dyad, but it also supports the theme of reason governing emotion that Fielding deals with throughout *Joseph Andrews*. Suspicion and reason are connected in that they relate to doubt and faith. We cannot, Fielding implies, have blind faith in other people, especially if they attempt to flatter us. They are to be examined from a certain distance via reason rather than immediately trusted as close friends.

Fielding reveals his narrator's impatience with meaningless banter in this scene when the narrator explains, "And now after many Civilities too tedious to enumerate, many Squeezes by the Hand, with most affectionate Looks and Smiles on each other . . . the Gentleman took his Leave of them" (152). The narrator suggests that these civilities, meant to massage the ego and satisfy emotional needs, are a waste of time and can be used to deceive. As the gentleman turns out to be a liar, the reader realizes that his solicitous behavior towards

Adams is designed to take advantage of credulous people who want to "get along" and foster interpersonal harmony and who place emotional satisfaction above rigorous inquiry. Of course, Adams is a sympathetic character in many ways, but Fielding demonstrates his weaknesses in situations such as this where Adams's tendency to trust in human nature leads to his being duped.

Additionally, in the scene discussed earlier in which Adams tells the host of the inn where he has spent the night after being promised assistance by the disingenuous gentleman that the gentleman "hath in his Countenance sufficient Symptoms of that *bona Indoles*, that Sweetness of Disposition which furnishes out a good Christian," Fielding emphasizes Adams's trusting nature and contrasts it with that of the host, who has traveled the world (158). Adams's ensuing argument with the host about the value of the classics versus the value of personal experience reveals that Adams bases much of his belief system on what is, perhaps, an emotional attachment to the classics, whereas the host bases his belief system on what he has observed and the experiences he has had with people. As their argument develops, it focuses on the relative value of the work performed by men of learning and the work performed

by tradesmen. When Adams tells the host that the learning of the clergy allows them to influence others, prompting them to adopt virtuous behaviors, the host replies that he does not "remember ever to have seen" the behaviors to which Adams refers (160). This angers Adams, again highlighting his emotional attachment to his beliefs in a situation where someone else has made a valid observation. Furthermore, the argument between the host and Adams, in contrast with the friendly back-patting presumably engaged in by Adams and the gentleman who flattered and lied to him, illustrates for the reader how wisdom can be gained when people voice their dissent rather than avoiding conversation that might hurt each other's feelings.

As the novel continues, Joseph, Fanny, and Adams encounter Mr. Wilson (later revealed to be Joseph's father) who presents a critical view of the "misuse" of reason. In book 3, chapter 3, Wilson describes his past experiences with men who claimed to be governed by reason, did not believe in God, and followed the "Rule of Right"—i.e., free-thinkers, members of a prominent movement in the eighteenth century that, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "rejected Christianity on the grounds of reason." Fielding criticizes humanity's application of

reason to some extent here; Wilson uses phrases such as "deepest Points of Philosophy," "infallible Guide of Human Reason," and "utmost Purity of Morals" to describe how these men viewed their reliance on reason, which sound hyperbolic, especially in light of the men's actual behavior (one runs off with a friend's wife, another fails to pay back a loan to Wilson) (184). Through Wilson's description of these free-thinkers, Fielding implies that there is a higher truth beyond what they can or are willing to see. They, in fact, fail to fully apply reason because they vainly consider their own beliefs infallible, and thus they are blinded as much by faith as other types of believers. The words "deepest," "infallible," and "utmost," suggest the men's failure to take a rational middle road, their weakness in accepting extreme ideals, and their arrogance in considering themselves qualified to make moral decisions.

Moreover, the free-thinkers described by Wilson use reason as a tool to satisfy their emotional desires. Order breaks down as they follow their belief that "there [is] nothing absolutely good or evil in itself; that Actions [are] denominated good or bad by the Circumstances of the Agent" (185). One of the free-thinkers tells Wilson that



the man who ran off with his friend's wife may have been justified because of his "unruly Passion" for the woman. This suggests the men do not truly respect reason because they do not apply it rigorously enough, using it to examine whether they might be mistaken. Rather, they only apply it to the extent that it allows them to rationalize their behavior, which is ultimately governed by emotion. Thus, as in the "Serjeant Bramble" and "Serjeant Puzzle" scenario, Fielding's argument here is not against reason itself—it can't be because he speaks through a narrator whom he consistently works to portray as rational. This passage points out, though, that reason can be abused and corrupted to justify selfish behavior stemming from emotional excesses. Nevertheless, one wonders just how unbiased any human being can be. Fielding's narrator's judgments are supposedly based on reason and clearly appeal to his audience's shared reverence for reason and strong desire to feel they are rational, so there is once again a bit of a paradox here in that Fielding takes advantage of his audience's emotional desire to consider themselves rational in order to make them more receptive to the arguments he makes in *Joseph Andrews*.

A final example demonstrating Fielding's privileging of reason over emotion in his novel appears in book 4, chapter 7, where his narrator discusses "Habit" and specifically the habits women fall into in their dealings with men (261). One could argue that people often maintain habits out of their emotional desire for safety, and in this chapter of *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding illustrates how people can be undone by their reliance on habit. The narrator explains,

Now, Reader, to apply this Observation to my present Purpose, thou must know, that as the Passion generally called Love, exercises most of the Talents of the Female or fair World, so in this they now and then discover a small Inclination to Deceit . . . . (261)

Women, he claims, are ruled by their emotions and try to protect themselves by adhering to certain rules and ideas their mothers pass down to them, which include the idea that men should be feared and the rule that women should hide their affection for them. And, he adds, rather than behaving reasonably when they find evidence to refute the value of these rules and ideas, they jump straight from fearing men to loving them.

This passage of *Joseph Andrews* reveals quite a bit about Fielding's attitudes towards reason and emotion (not to mention his attitude towards women). In describing women's tendency to jump from fear to love, the narrator says it is "usual with the human Mind to skip from one Extreme to its Opposite, as easily, and almost as suddenly, as a Bird from one Bough to another" (262). Fielding uses the word "human" here rather than "female," emphasizing that women aren't the only ones who tend to fixate on extremes. But it would be reasonable to assume that Fielding uses women as an example because he knows his audience associates men with reason and women with emotion. Because of their dueling emotional needs for safety and love, Fielding's narrator implies, women are unable to see their own situations clearly and end up deceiving themselves. This suggests that emotional needs, which lead to ingrained habits, confuse people and prevent them from acting intelligently and seeing truth, which Fielding and his audience value.

William Empson, in his essay "Tom Jones," writes of irony as it is used in Fielding's satire,

Other things being equal, ironies will be more or less forceful in proportion to the amount of

emotional capital the reader or observer has invested in the victim or the topic of the irony. Saying that does not mean leaving the realms of art and irony and entering those of pure subjectivity and individual preference; the areas of concern that most readily generate irony are, for the same reason, the areas in which most emotional capital is invested: religion, love, morality, politics and history. The reason is of course that such areas are characterized by inherently contradictory elements: faith and fact, flesh and spirit, emotion and reason, self and other, ought and is, theory and practice, freedom and necessity. (55)

In *Joseph Andrews* Fielding acknowledges many of these contradictions and, as Empson suggests, draws the strength of his irony from their emotional impact. Not only does he benefit from offering his readers opportunities to feel intelligent if they accept what he presents as rational perspectives on various situations, but he also benefits from providing "rational" judgments that are emotionally satisfying because they impose order on pairs of "contradictory elements." If one can rise above such

contradictions with Fielding and evaluate them rationally,  
they become less confusing—and less frightening.

## CHAPTER FOUR

In addition to the reality/appearance and reason/emotion binary pairs, the value system Fielding establishes in *Joseph Andrews* also relies on a contrast between knowledge and ignorance in which knowledge is the opposite of and superior to ignorance. In many places Fielding presents the novel's narrator as knowledgeable and provides his readers opportunities to share jokes with him based on their shared knowledge. As with the binary pairs discussed earlier, Fielding appeals to his readers' expected desire to feel superior by making allusions to certain ideas, topics, and facts, setting up situations where they can congratulate themselves for understanding the humor. The implication, as I will discuss in further detail, is that in order to fully appreciate the satire, one must have a certain amount of knowledge, likely acquired through perception. Satire's exclusive club, in other words, only admits knowledgeable, rational, perceptive individuals whose superiority makes them fit to judge humanity. In *Joseph Andrews* Fielding works to persuade readers that they can belong to this club if they

appreciate his humor. And, in general, appreciating his humor implies accepting his judgments.

Robert Elliott's *The Power of Satire* traces the roots of satire back to magical rituals, suggesting that early satirists were believed to gain power over their subjects through special knowledge. Elliott writes,

Some [early] satirists achieve their malefic ends merely by uttering their invectives (or mockery or riddling verses—whatever form their satire takes); the power seems to reside in the words themselves, often in a special concatenation of words, rhymes, and rhythms. (50)

He implies that members of various societies believed knowledge of the right "words, rhymes, and rhythms" could allow a satirist magically to inflict harm upon others and comments that this association may have shaped the way later generations perceived and perceive satire. Though it is not portrayed as "magical," Fielding's knowledge of the objects of his satire in *Joseph Andrews* certainly provides him with some power to critique them. By lampooning specific types of figures based on his knowledge of their beliefs and habits, he degrades them in the eyes of those who agree with his satirical statements.

Elliott offers additional helpful discussion of societies' ideas regarding the destructive nature of satire and its early basis in the satirist's "magical" powers. He explains,

Ridicule is, as far as one can tell, ubiquitous, used by every people as a means of influencing behavior . . . In any society in which high value is placed upon the opinions of others, ridicule will clearly be a potent deterrent to deviant behavior; the more a person dreads shame, the more he will avoid situations which might bring upon him the bad name conveyed by public mockery.

(69)

This implies that one's knowledge of the correct way to behave can protect him or her from the attacks of satirists. In addition, the satirist's knowledge of how his or her audience believes people should behave provides him or her with the ammunition to attack someone who does not conform to shared, traditional ideals. Elliott adds,

The people who experience the malign effects of ridicule and satire are likely to account for them by recourse to magic. Even we, who do not believe in magic, may yet believe that belief



itself can have a "magical" effect; yet we feel obliged to put such matters into terms more appropriate to our own time. (86)

We have all heard the expression "knowledge is power." What Elliott has to say about satire's connection to efficacious magic and ritual suggests that we may view satirists as powerful because of their knowledge of language and of the objects of their satire. Their knowledge of language allows them to choose the words that will be most effective; their knowledge of the objects of their satire allows them to mock and critique their specific attributes, gaining power over their objects through their ability to name them.

Peter Briggs's "Notes Toward a Teachable Definition of Satire" also sheds light on the connections between knowledge and effective satire. In his article Briggs claims that "the real power of satire is the power to define its adversary," explaining that eighteenth-century English satirists were largely influenced by Locke's ideas regarding human error and language (30). He also says, "Locke's general solution to the vagaries of language was to urge forbearance among disputants and a more careful attention to the exact definition of disputed terms" (35). Briggs goes on to compare satires to dictionary

definitions, highlighting similarities in how they categorize information related to their objects and words. In order to do this work, a satirist must gather knowledge about his or her object. If satirists' readers believe they have characterized their objects accurately, those readers must then consider the satirists knowledgeable about the objects they have chosen to attack. This, in turn, gives satirists power over their objects. If they are successful, satirists can influence others' perceptions of the objects of their satire by demonstrating knowledge and insight, reducing their objects' status while elevating their own.

Charles Knight, too, in "Satire, Speech, and Genre" argues that knowledge plays a major role in satire and claims that satire, in fact, relies on shared knowledge to be effective. Knight states, "The referential function of satire implies an audience sufficiently informed of the context for the message to be comprehended" (36). By referring to known objects or opinions, satirists establish themselves as knowledgeable and invite their audiences to perceive themselves as more informed than others. Readers who understand the satire because of their knowledge can enjoy the idea that there are others who will not comprehend the satirist's references. Because we tend to

perceive knowledge as an advantage and ignorance as a disadvantage, such readers will be more likely to enjoy the satire and therefore more open to the arguments it presents. Fielding's references in *Joseph Andrews* run the gamut from allusions to Greek mythology to mentions of popular actors. Hence, he appeals to a wide knowledge base, offering ego-boosting rewards to people with knowledge of numerous facets of English culture.

Near the beginning of *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding's narrator introduces Abraham Adams in a manner that establishes both Adams and Joseph as knowledgeable protagonists. In book 1, chapter 3, he says,

Mr. Abraham Adams was an excellent Scholar. He was a perfect master of the Greek and Latin Languages; to which he added a great Share of Knowledge in the Oriental Tongues, and could read and translate French, Italian, and Spanish. He had applied many Years to the most Severe Study, and had treasured up a Fund of Learning rarely to be met with in a University. (19)

The narrator uses positive value terms such as "excellent scholar," "great share," and "Fund of Learning" to emphasize that one of Adams's best traits is his education.

In this description of Adams, Fielding builds rapport with readers who also value knowledge, signaling through his description that Adams will be a protagonist. After making this statement about Adams, the narrator adds a caveat, though: Adams is "entirely ignorant of the Ways of this World, as an Infant just entered into it could possibly be" (19). Thus, Adams's knowledge is mostly book learned and is limited by his good-natured outlook on humanity. This connects to the reality/appearance dyad in that Adams's inability to perceive the bad in others prevents him from becoming as knowledgeable as he might be. In this brief description Fielding emphasizes the value of formal education yet establishes gaps in knowledge from books and knowledge of the world as potentially harmful (if forgivable).

After introducing Adams, Fielding's narrator describes an encounter between Adams and Joseph where Adams quizzes Joseph to ascertain his level of biblical knowledge. When Adams discovers that Joseph is biblically literate and asks him how he has learned so much, Joseph replies that "ever since he was in Sir Thomas's Family, he had employed all his Hours of Leisure in reading good Books" (20). Adams, whom the narrator has already established as university

educated, confirms that Joseph has book learning and, perhaps more importantly, has a desire for knowledge. Adams ties this desire to "Industry and Application," emphasizing that one gains knowledge through virtuous behavior (20). Once again, in ascribing knowledge to a protagonist, in this case Joseph, Fielding sends an obvious message to his readers that he values knowledge and the search for it and provides an opportunity for them to identify with his protagonists if they too are avid readers.

Following Joseph's explanation of where he acquired his education, Adams asks Joseph whether he regrets not having been born to parents who could afford to indulge his desire to learn. When Joseph replies that he "hoped he had profited somewhat better from the Books he had read, than to lament his Condition in this World," Adams comments, "I wish some who have read many more good Books, nay and some who have written good Books themselves, had profited so much by them" (20). In making this comment Adams affirms that knowledge alone is not enough—one must also be rational and discerning in order to effectively apply the knowledge he or she has gained. Joseph appears to claim that he has developed a detached, rational attitude through his learning when he says "he was perfectly content with

the State to which he was called" (20). In this early characterization of Joseph, Fielding ties together the major values of his novel and associates them with the titular protagonists. Joseph is both knowledgeable and rational, and he is capable of accurate perception. Adams acts as a foil in this scene in order to showcase these important qualities in Joseph and to commend them directly.

In the same chapter where his narrator describes Parson Adams and the above conversation with Joseph, Fielding introduces the character of Mrs. Slipslop. Although I have discussed the scene introducing Slipslop in detail with respect to the reality/appearance and reason/emotion dyads, it is also relevant to Fielding's treatment of knowledge versus ignorance. In this scene Adams is contrasted with Slipslop, who demonstrates her ignorance repeatedly through her speech. When the narrator says, for instance, "Adams therefore took an Opportunity one day, after a pretty long Discourse with [Slipslop] on the Essence, (or, as she pleased to term it, the Incense) of Matter, to mention the Case of young Andrews," Fielding casually reveals Slipslop's ignorance through her misuse of the term "Incense" and invites the reader, who presumably knows the difference between "Essence" and "Incense," to

laugh at her error. Even if Slipslop's various malapropisms are fairly obvious, the reader can feel superior to Slipslop and, by extension, other ignorant people. Since his narrator also describes Slipslop as too proud to accept corrections, through her speech Fielding effectively tells his readers, "We know better than people like Slipslop. We are more knowledgeable because we are open-minded and receptive to learning. We ask when we do not understand something instead of pretending to know."

Other elements of Slipslop's character also relate to the knowledge/ignorance dyad and set her up as a minor antagonist whom Fielding will use as a vehicle to criticize stubborn conceit, blind allegiance to the opinions of "people of fashion," deceit, and a lazy approach to learning. For example, she states that she does not believe Joseph should be permitted to pursue further education right after Adams has established that Joseph's desire for knowledge is a good thing that he ought to pursue. Additionally, Slipslop bases her opinions about learning on hearsay from members of the upper classes. She claims,

And why is Latin more necessitous for a Footman than a Gentleman? It is very proper that you Clargymen must learn it, because you can't preach

without it: but I have heard Gentlemen say in  
London, that it is fit for no body else. (22)

(Fielding also satirizes the "Gentlemen" who informed Slipslop by pointing to their lack of education.) Finally, although she does not engage in study, Slipslop seems to recognize that others value it because she tries to present herself as educated. Slipslop doesn't truly value learning like Joseph; she only values the appearance of it, which links back to the reality/appearance dyad. Even a mildly perceptive reader can see through the "educated" image Slipslop attempts to present.

In the scene in *Joseph Andrews* in which Joseph is picked up by a coach after being robbed and left naked in a ditch, Fielding includes a paragraph containing extensive wordplay pertinent to the knowledge/ignorance dyad. Once Joseph has boarded the coach, the lawyer on board makes "several very pretty Jests, without departing from his Profession" (47). His "Jests" use legal terms to insinuate Joseph would impregnate the lady in the coach if the two of them were left alone. In this paragraph Fielding shares an inside joke with those familiar with legal terms which draws on his own legal background, perhaps specifically showing an affinity with fellow attorneys. At the same time



Fielding once again demonstrates his ability to engage in linguistic acrobatics and sets his readers up to interpret his meaning and feel sophisticated in doing so. The reader who possesses the knowledge to understand the lawyer's double entendres can laugh at them along with Fielding and vicariously enjoy the prospect of getting away with discussing risqué material in polite company.

This paragraph demonstrates a more complex attitude towards knowledge, though. Fielding suggests the lawyer is somewhat silly by having the narrator describe his comments as "Gibbrish" (47). If the narrator understands the jokes but considers them "Gibbrish," he is signaling to the reader that he doesn't fully approve of them and perhaps considers them somewhat "easy"—simple to construct and not as clever as the lawyer seems to think they are. But the possibility also exists that the narrator is either somewhat innocent and doesn't get the dirty jokes or is playing the innocent, ironically signaling to the reader that there is something amusing about the "Gibbrish" that is naughty and cannot be openly acknowledged. If this is the case, in calling it "Gibbrish" he emphasizes that it is not and highlights the language, calling attention to the jokes and how they play on double meanings and similarities

between words with slightly different meanings. The ambiguity of this passage allows Fielding to demonstrate his specialized knowledge as an attorney and tell sexual jokes without directly approving of them. Thus, he builds a relationship with the reader through their shared knowledge of the "secret" humorous message, yet he also anticipates criticism of this humor as sophomoric and acknowledges such criticism as valid. On a third level, Fielding seems to be poking fun at unscrupulous lawyers and their ability to twist words for "perverted" purposes. The reader who knows that attorneys do this can see the humorous implications in having an attorney deliver a speech full of double entendres. Through this comment on attorneys, Fielding suggests that knowledge should be used with discernment and honesty. The object of derision in this passage shifts repeatedly, likely because of the lawyer's closeness to Fielding himself. To avoid undercutting his authority, Fielding must separate himself from the silly, mean-spirited and possibly offensive lawyer character, persuading the reader that he possesses the intelligence of an attorney without the stereotypical deceitfulness and willingness to play dirty tricks.

Further exploring and reinforcing the knowledge/ignorance dyad, in book 1, chapter 5, Fielding sets up a scene in which the clergyman Barnabas and a local surgeon eagerly debate what legal measures should be taken against one of the thieves who attacked and robbed Joseph. Of Barnabas and the surgeon, Fielding's narrator says,

To help our Reader therefore as much as possible to account for this Zeal, we must inform him, that as this Parish was so unfortunate as to have no Lawyer in it; there had been a constant Contention between the two Doctors, spiritual and physical, concerning their Abilities in a Science, in which, as neither of them professed it, they had equal Pretensions to dispute each other's Opinions. (59)

As the scene progresses Fielding exposes the folly of the two doctors, who pretend to understand the law and get away with it because there is no one around with the correct knowledge and authority to dispute what they say. This passage in the novel satirizes those who pretend to have knowledge and those who act on incomplete knowledge, so while it reinforces the idea that knowledge is valuable, it

also reinforces the value of reality over appearance by attacking people who represent themselves falsely.

Fielding's narrator specifies the sources where Barnabas and the Surgeon have obtained their knowledge in order to undercut the value of their legal expertise. He explains, "The Surgeon drew his Knowledge from those inestimable Fountains, called the *Attorney's Pocket-Companion*, and Mr. *Jacob's Law-Tables*; Barnabas trusted entirely to *Wood's Institutes*" (60). The hyperbolic phrase "inestimable Fountains" suggests the men's learning is actually rather shallow and emphasizes that one cannot bypass professional training with a teach-yourself shortcut. As someone with real legal knowledge, Fielding has the authority to critique the characters' lack of it. Thus, he reminds his readers of his status as a trained and knowledgeable professional and suggests that having knowledge allows one to discern the lack of it in others. Also, in having his narrator draw attention to the lack of depth of Barnabas's and the Surgeon's understanding, Fielding implies that obtaining specialized, valuable knowledge requires discipline and devoted study, demonstrating that he is someone an audience that values

knowledge can trust. Like Joseph, he has worked hard to increase his knowledge through study and practice.

In this scene the narrator also comments on Barnabas's and the Surgeon's motives in arguing over the case, saying, "To display their Parts therefore before the Justice and the Parish was the sole Motive, which we can discover, to this Zeal, which both of them pretended to be for publick Justice" (60). The two men, like Slipslop, are concerned with enjoying the benefits of appearing knowledgeable without actually doing the work to become so. Furthermore, the fact that the characters have advanced degrees in other fields suggests that highly educated people tend conceitedly to assume they know everything. As a result of being accustomed to their status as experts in their fields, the novel implies, Barnabas and the Surgeon lack the humility to admit their ignorance in other fields. Fielding emphasizes the power of vanity by satirizing those who scramble to elevate themselves in the eyes of others even if they have no knowledge to stand on. He also demonstrates the danger of limited knowledge combined with vanity in mentioning "publick Justice." Because the men do not have adequate knowledge or the proper motivations and the town has no real experts on the law, one assumes that

justice and the public generally are not served in the parish where Barnabas and the Surgeon reside.

An interesting, almost offhand comment from *Joseph Andrews's* narrator in book 1, chapter 16, following the thief's escape through a window, also reveals quite a bit about Fielding's expectations regarding how his audience values knowledge. After commenting on the escape in a manner that insinuates the constable may have been bribed by the thief, the narrator ironically adds,

But notwithstanding these and many other such Allegations, I am sufficiently convinced of his [the constable's] Innocence; having been positively assured of it, by those who received their Informations from his own Mouth; which, in the Opinion of some Moderns, is the best and indeed only Evidence. (62)

This comment calls to mind Jonathan Swift's *A Tale of a Tub*, which parodies "Modern" thinkers. In *A Tale of a Tub*, Swift portrays the Modern writer as ignorant because he relies on whatever inspires him or very superficial knowledge rather than study and research. Among many comments on Moderns, Swift's narrator mentions,

The whole Course of Things, being thus entirely changed between *Us* and the *Antients*; and the *Moderns* wisely sensible of it, we of this Age have discovered a shorter, and more prudent Method, to become *Scholars* and *Wits*, without the Fatigue of *Reading* or of *Thinking*. (337)

With the narrator's comment on Moderns in *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding may be paying homage to Swift's satire of Moderns and perhaps attempting to capitalize on his own readers' fondness for Swift's writing by aligning himself with the great ironist. However, even if this is not the case, Fielding clearly calls attention to a view of Moderns that certain readers will share, acknowledging once again the value of study and research and devaluing incomplete knowledge from a single, unreliable source.

With his narrator's comment on Moderns in this passage, Fielding may be alluding to eyewitnesses in trials and their unreliability as well, again drawing on his legal training and calling attention to the standards of proof practiced in his field. Even if someone witnesses or becomes involved in an event, his or her perception will likely be skewed because it is subjective. Knowledge gathered based on eyewitness testimony can be false. Thus,

Fielding connects a source of knowledge to the ability to perceive reality correctly. He also suggests that one must gather knowledge from various sources to perceive a correct conclusion. Furthermore, his narrator implicitly compliments the reader who perceives that the constable was probably bribed by the thief based on the evidence presented. In the paragraph preceding the "Moderns" comment, he provides several clues that would lead a perceptive reader to figure out the reality of the situation. The reader enjoys a sense of street smarts for discerning what the narrator is insinuating and can feel included, "in the know," because of this. Fielding pits the perceptive reader against the Moderns, giving the reader an opportunity to dissociate with them and the fashionable but superficial ideas they subscribe to.

In book 2, chapter 11, of *Joseph Andrews*, which examines the dangers associated with ignorance, a justice questions Adams, who has been accused of committing a robbery. When the justice's clerk claims that a strange book written "in Ciphers" has been found on Adams's person and Adams explains that the book is a "Manuscript of Aeschylus," the justice does not understand and cannot even tell that the book is written in Greek (128-129). This



scene contrasts Adams, a protagonist in the novel and a keeper of knowledge, with the unlearned justice. The reader who identifies with Adams and admires him for being knowledgeable may be more receptive to the point Fielding makes in the scene. Fielding demonstrates that knowledge can be dangerous to an individual if others are ignorant because it may arouse suspicion. He also may be attempting to reinforce educated readers' identification with Adams by placing him in a situation where others mock him. If an educated reader, for example, has been made fun of for knowing more than others, he or she may feel a stronger attachment to Adams and even Fielding himself for creating such a sympathetic character who suffers for his knowledge. The scene pits the knowledgeable against the ignorant and associates knowledge with morality, as only Adams, a good-natured, charitable parson, understands the manuscript. Because Adams has been falsely accused, he nearly becomes a "martyr" for his knowledge, and because he has been developed as a protagonist in the novel thus far who, like Joseph, has obtained his knowledge through virtuous "Industry and Application," it is implied that he occupies the moral high ground in this scene (20).

Fielding also portrays the ignorance of the justice who considers Adams guilty as dangerous. Because the justice cannot identify the language and author of the manuscript, he assumes that Adams may be plotting against the government. He suggests Aeschylus is a "fictitious Name" and attempts to discredit Adams based on his possessing the book (129). Thus, Fielding demonstrates how ignorance—and particularly ignorance combined with arrogance—can lead to injustice. Like Slipslop, the justice simply draws conclusions without seeking to supplement or expand his knowledge. Fielding further critiques incomplete knowledge when a parson steps forward to identify the manuscript and mistakenly translates the beginning as "the Catechism in Greek" (129). The parson quickly reveals himself to be an unsympathetic character as he accuses Adams of stealing the manuscript and claims Adams does not understand it. When the parson makes a mistake in translation despite having recognized the text's language, Fielding demonstrates how those with imperfect knowledge can also inflict damage. From the events of this scene, one could conclude that "complete" knowledge leads to ethical behavior as it allows one to make just decisions; the judge, for example, would have been able to exonerate Adams

had he possessed the knowledge to discern whether Adams was being truthful. In other words, knowledge and morality are closely linked, while acting based on ignorance is portrayed as essentially immoral. Ignorance, the novel implies here and earlier, stems from pride and laziness, which prevent people from acknowledging their lack of education and completing the arduous work required to expand their learning.

One final passage in the novel that illustrates Fielding's dependence on and reinforcement of the knowledge/ignorance dyad appears in book 4, chapter 8. When Adams's lecture to Joseph against loving too passionately gets interrupted by a report that Adams's son has drowned (which ends up being incorrect), Fielding deals with the idea of self-knowledge and honesty with one's self. After Adams rejoices over his son's return and returns to warning Joseph about giving in to his passions, Joseph tells him that "it [is] easier to give Advice than take it, nor did he perceive he could so entirely conquer himself, when he apprehended he had lost his Son, or when he found him recover'd" (271). As Joseph (and later Adams's wife) points out, Adams has difficulty seeing that he does not practice what he preaches at all with regard to passionate love. As

was discussed in the second chapter of this thesis, because his true beliefs contrast with what he believes he must tell the people of his parish, Adams invents a rationale for his emotional reactions, saying, "Thou art ignorant of the Tenderness of fatherly Affection . . . No Man is obliged to Impossibilities, and the Loss of a Child is one of those great Trials where our Grief may be allowed to become immoderate" (272).

In this scene, again, Fielding connects knowledge to another important value in the novel: reason. Adams's emotional reaction to the news of his son is, of course, natural and correct and inspires sympathy, but this does not mean Fielding advocates that emotion should not be controlled by reason—only that some emotions are inherently good. Fielding suggests that Adams's weakness lies not in pursuing his loving and charitable feelings in some situations even though he preaches stoicism but in failing to pursue them in other appropriate situations because of vanity. Adams might be better at perceiving the similarity between his own emotional needs and Joseph's, and thus might show more empathy towards Joseph, if he were able to detach from his emotional need to be perceived as a perfect parson and view himself more objectively. Others can see

certain traits in him that he cannot because he is too personally invested in upholding his image as a devout person. Self-knowledge in this instance would allow Adams to view Joseph's situation more honestly and compassionately. Although Adams's passionate behavior in response to the news about his son is correct, with Adams's lack of insight Fielding suggests emotion should be mastered by reason, which can serve as a guide to determine which emotions are virtuous in certain situations and which are not. If one can master emotion with reason, one can recognize more situations when it would be fair to take a more charitable view and one can gain greater self-knowledge, which may not be favorable or pleasant. In Adams's case, in order to be completely honest with himself, he would need to accept that he cannot be as obedient to "God's will" as he thinks he ought to be. Hence, Fielding suggests that rationality leads to more and better knowledge and that Adams, while basically a very ethical and kind person, lacks insight in certain areas because he cannot face certain truths about himself.

Although Fielding affirms the value of emotion in this scene and that love in particular should be encouraged without restraint, he implies that people must be able to

recognize their motives. Since there are both good emotions and bad emotions, he suggests, emotion ultimately must be ruled by reason. Joseph, the novel's main protagonist, has actually thought about whether he should love Fanny without restraint and believes this is right. Adams's wife even confirms Joseph's position in turning to the text of the marriage vows—the very words of the wedding ritual performed by parsons—to demonstrate Adams's obligation to love her passionately. Fielding's treatment of this issue emphasizes that self-knowledge can lead to moral decisions since whether one's motives are good or evil determines whether one's actions will be ethical.

Ultimately, Fielding, as a satirist writing in reference to a satiric tradition, works throughout *Joseph Andrews* to reinforce his readers' belief in an orderly procedure for evaluating and judging others' behavior. This organized procedure requires accurate perception that allows one to find realities hidden by appearances, a rational attitude that allows one to remain detached and thus objective until a correct judgment has been made (at which point it may be acceptable to give in to a virtuous emotional reaction), and a desire for thorough knowledge that allows one to make informed decisions. As Empson

explains, "as to the reader of a novel, Fielding cannot be bothered with him unless he too is fit to sit on a magistrate's bench, prepared, in literature as in life, to handle and judge any situation" (55). *Joseph Andrews* also reinforces the idea that people can gain knowledge through the application of reason.

By implying that he shares these values with his readers and by repeatedly presenting examples that support them, Fielding also reinforces the idea that some individuals deserve the authority to critique. He invites his readers to count themselves among an enlightened few and attempts to justify his own judgments. The amount of "evidence" he provides to prove the validity of his judgments, in fact, is somewhat overwhelming. But in technically allowing his readers to draw their own conclusions, often through his narrator's ironic voice, he gives them the pleasure of sensing that they share his enlightened, superior position.

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