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HENRY FIELDING'S REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgements i

Table of Contents ii

Summary iii

Chapter One Introduction 1

Chapter Two Thematic Concerns 30

Section I Character of Women 30

Section II Women's Place at Home 53

Section III Women's Place in Society 74

Chapter Three Women in Plot and Structure 93

Section I Women Freeing Men from Imprisonment 93

Section II Plots of Women's Power 107

Section III The Narrators and the Plot 122

Chapter Four Vitality of the Women Characters 144

Section I The Exuberance of Women 145

Section II The Martial Vitality of Women 160

Section III The Metaphoric Energy of Women 173

Chapter Five Fielding's Mock Genres and Femininity 183

Section I The Elevation of Women 184

Section II The Deflation of Manhood 195

Section III Gender Tension in Mock Tropes 208

Chapter Six Conclusion 222

Notes 241

Works Cited 242

Summary

This dissertation investigates Henry Fielding's representation of women and argues that there is a stronger feminist instinct in the deep structure than most critics have perceived. The overall argument is that there is a feminocentric agenda embedded in Fielding's writing, in thematic terms and more subtly in stylistic, structural and generic terms. What I attempt is a revisionist reading of Fielding from a gendered perspective, like the studies of some other feminist critics, against Fielding's conventional masculinist image and the male ethos often attached to his writing. However, departing from those critics who see Fielding as a pro-women male writer from the social-historical or social-psychological points of view, for example, Angela J. Smallwood and Jill Campbell, I will try to establish Fielding's feminocentricity mainly through a stylistic and structural study of his works. In addition to some discussion of Fielding's thematic concerns with the gender issues to acknowledge his sympathy with women, I dedicate most of the research to the exploration of women's dominant roles in the narrative movement, the imaginative energy which is conferred on women, and the elevation of women in the mock genres. The dissertation follows a trajectory of discussing, firstly, Fielding's thematic concerns with the gender issue; secondly, women's roles in plot and structure development; thirdly, the imaginative energy conferred upon female characters and fourthly, what the mock-genres have to do with gender. It consists of six chapters, with Chapter One as the introduction and Chapter Six the conclusion, and Chapter Two to Five the main body, each dedicated to one of the topics listed above.

Chapter One Introduction

This dissertation investigates Henry Fielding’s representation of women, and argues that there is a stronger feminist instinct in the deep structure than most critics have perceived. The overall argument is that there is a feminocentric agenda embedded in Fielding’s writing, in thematic terms and, more subtly, in stylistic, structural and generic terms. The starting point for this research into Fielding’s representation of women was initiated by a perception of the prominence of women characters in his writing, particularly the major novels. Feminism does not necessarily involve warfare and antagonism between men and women. Theoretically, I share the understanding with Karen Offen that feminism is the ideology held by “any persons, female or male” who “recognize[s] the validity of women's own interpretations of their lived experience and needs and acknowledge[s] the values women claim publicly as their own”. Fielding, in his time, already demonstrates some initial concerns with women’s experience. Fielding also shares the prototype, in many ways, the other two criteria of feminism defined by Offen, i.e., to “exhibit consciousness of, discomfort at, or even anger over institutionalized injustice (or inequity) toward women as a group by men as a group in a given society”, and to “advocate the elimination of that injustice by challenging, through efforts to alter prevailing ideas and/or social institutions and practices, the coercive power, force, or authority that upholds male prerogatives in that particular culture” (1988, 152). What I attempt is a revisionist reading of Fielding from a gendered perspective, like the studies of some other feminist critics, against Fielding’s conventional masculinist image and the male

ethos often attached to his writing. However, departing from those critics who see Fielding as a pro-women male writer from the social-historical or social-psychological points of view, for example, Angela J. Smallwood and Jill Campbell, I will try to establish Fielding's feminocentricity mainly through a stylistic and structural study of his works. In addition to some discussion of Fielding's thematic concerns with the gender issues to acknowledge his sympathy with women, I dedicate most of the research to the exploration of women's dominant roles in the narrative movement, the imaginative energy which is conferred on women, and the elevation of women in the mock genres.

The stylistic, structural and generic approaches that I adopt are based upon the understanding that ideologies are embedded in the way an author tells a story. D.H. Lawrence provided perhaps the most well-known expression of this in his dictum that readers should "[n]ever trust the artist", but "trust the tale" (1951, 13). That idea and approaches based upon it have been used by other critics in the field. For example, April London examines women's roles in the plot and structure of *Tom Jones* and determines that "Fielding's structuring of the novel . . . supports his presentation of Sophia as the self-conscious controller of her own history" (1987, 327). London's mention of the "structuring" of Fielding's works points to her approach. In a slightly different vein, Patricia Meyer Spacks (1987, 273-83) and K.G. Hall (1994, 62-73) research into the underlying imaginative patterns with which Fielding creates his women characters. Critics such as Nancy Armstrong and Laura L. Runge are interested in the relations between the genre of the novel and gender. Armstrong identifies the

novel as "a modern gendered form of subjectivity developed first as a feminine discourse in certain literature for women" (1987, 14). Runge continues from Armstrong but argues that the "gendered association" of the genre "contributed to and enabled the inferior status of novel writing" (1995, 364). My own stylistic study explores Fielding's representation of women via scrutiny of textual evidence in terms of diction, syntax and rhetorical devices, particularly those which deviate from other relevant authors of his time. I also look into the plot and structure for developmental patterns and narrative movements, which often contradicts with what is overtly stated, and find out the motivational force behind the plot development. How Fielding's mock-genres reflect the gender issue is also a subject of my study. With these approaches I hope to understand not only what Fielding says about women, but also how he actually handles the gender issue.

Feminist studies of Fielding have remained relatively few and underdeveloped, especially compared with those concerning Richardson. The unpopularity of Fielding with feminist critics can be ascribed in part to certain dominant critical trends. Traditionally, Fielding criticism has centered on such issues as his morality and his form of writing, where Fielding is paired with Richardson and they are placed at two ends of the spectrum. Samuel Johnson remains influential in evaluating Fielding in contrast with Richardson. According to Albert J. Rivero, there has been "the long-standing debate between those who regard Fielding's morality as beyond dispute and those who see it as always suspect" (1998, 1). "When Samuel Johnson weighed in on the side of Samuel Richardson's fictions of virtue rather than Fielding's representations

of vice", Rivero goes on, "he ensured that future champions of Fielding the moralist would have to conduct the critical battles on Johnsonian ground" (1). Rivero is right that it has taken over two hundred years for critics to mold the image of Fielding from Johnson's version of the corruptor of "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" to the twentieth century version of Fielding the mellow moralist, the "Christian Censor" and the more recent "historical" Fielding, a man and magistrate "struggling to make ends meet, embroiled in political controversies", as defined by Martin C. Battestin in his 1989 biography (1-5). In formal terms, Johnson's assertion that Richardson "knew how a watch was made" while Fielding could only "tell the hour by looking on the dial-plate" still influences and shapes subsequent criticism. Ian Watt, in his still influential *The Rise of the Novel*, categorizes Richardson's writing as "formal realism" against Fielding's "realism of assessment", arguing from Johnson's view that "Richardson had picked the kernel of life . . . while Fielding was contented with the husk" (1957, 261). Watt has shifted from a mechanical to an organic metaphor, but his point is the same as Johnson's. Although William Park proposes to study the "common ground" shared by Fielding and Richardson (1966, 381), the trend of polarizing the two writers remained, and remains, prevalent in the field. As a result of these familiar lines of enquiry, Fielding's representation of women has not been an issue of concern among critics, not to mention feminist critics, who only started to consider Fielding late in the 1970s. Among anthologies of Fielding criticism published up to the 1980s, Reviro recognized three as significant. They are *Henry Fielding: The Critical Heritage* (1969) edited by Ronald Paulson and Thomas Lockwood, *Fielding: A Collection of Critical Essays*

(1962), edited by Ronald Paulson, and *Modern Critical Views: Henry Fielding* (1987), edited and introduced by Harold Bloom. Except for the reception pieces collected in the first volume from Fielding's contemporaries, among the twenty two essays in the latter two volumes which were written from the 1920s to the 1980s, analysis of female characters is only sporadic, and feminist criticism has no say.

In line with the habit of viewing Fielding and Richardson as polar opposites, feminist critics "looking for sympathetic and authentic representations of women's lives", as Smallwood puts it, automatically turn to Richardson's novels, because "Richardson's technique of 'writing to the moment' presents vividly imagined psychological and sexual experience in terms of female character's subjectivity" (1989, 4). On the other hand, "Fielding's fiction is supposed to be male-centered, and comic and satiric in its external observation of characters" (4). In spite of her acknowledgement of Fielding's "loving presentation of romantic heroines", Katharine M. Rogers insists that "while Richardson was a radical feminist, Fielding accepted the male chauvinism of his culture" (1976, 256-57). Even among the more recent feminist critics, Laura L. Runge claims that Fielding attempts to secure "greatness . . . by denying femininity and initiating a tradition that celebrates the novel as the 'comic Epic-Poem in Prose'" (1995, 364-65). The identification of Fielding's masculine mentality by Rogers and the assumption that his genre is a male one by Runge are typical in the field. Smallwood observes that there have been several "givens" causing feminist critics' antagonism to Fielding's writing: "Chief amongst these 'givens' is the firm identification of Fielding's writings with an overwhelmingly masculinist ethos . . .

it has been accepted merely on the strength of the biographical facts of Fielding's semi-aristocratic family background and his classical education at Eton". Another given is "the habit of linking Fielding with Richardson and thinking about the two of them in polarized terms, treating the two fathers of the English novel best seen as somehow each other's opposite"[1]. Still another is "the shape of the canon of his work", in which priority of study is still given to Fielding's novels while his other writings such as political pamphlets and plays are selectively neglected (1989, 3-4). Such "givens" have proved sufficient for many to dismiss Fielding as a misogynist, and they may either deprive feminist critics of their interest in him or lead to their accusation of his anti-feminism. However, the preoccupations are not convincing because they are formed on the basis of a partial understanding of Fielding's writing. To furnish a holistic view of Fielding's attitude towards women, we must challenge the established concepts about the writer and scrutinize the comprehensive canon of his works.

There have been a number of critical discussions viewing Fielding as positively connected with the gender issue from the mid 1970s onwards. These can be classified into several categories, which are mainly concerned with 1) Fielding's sympathy with women in thematic terms, 2) his mode of imagining women and the underlying structure of his works, 3) gender ambiguity and gender as a social construct, and 4) his "comic epic poem in prose" and women. In what follows I will review the major critical opinions with regards to Fielding's representation of gender in roughly the past three decades and will also suggest where my own contribution stands in relation to them.

Critics in the 1980s started to discover the pro-women side of Fielding's works mainly from thematic points of view by challenging the Richardson-Fielding polarity. For example, Anthony J. Hassall argues with Katherine M. Rogers (1976) against her division of Richardson's attitude towards women as "sensitive feminism" and Fielding's as "conventional sympathy". He points out such a division "does serious injustice to Fielding who, we are told, 'accepted the male chauvinism of his culture', and it does less than injustice to Richardson, who is celebrated as a 'radical feminist'" (1981, 168). Margaret Lenta observes a general "tendency in recent years to praise the novels of Richardson at the expense of those of Fielding on the grounds that the former are 'feminist'" (1983, 13-25). In his defense of Fielding against Rogers's indictment of Fielding's "male chauvinism", B. A. Goldgar studies Fielding's great personal sympathy for the whores of London, and his calling for suppression of prostitution from the perspective of a magistrate, concluding that "Fielding's ambivalence is inherent in the question itself", for prostitutes "are the objects of compassion, as well as detection" (1985, 265-73). Others show an emerging change of understanding of Fielding's gender ideology. For example, Mary Ann Schofield argues that "Fielding's treatment of Amelia herself and her rather unique and passive way of influencing Booth, offers some new versions of and views on the woman question for the period" and finds that "Fielding is moving toward a less chauvinistic attitude toward his women" in *Amelia* (1985, 45).

Among the studies recognizing Fielding's pro-women attitude in thematic terms in the late 1980s, Smallwood's *Fielding and the Woman Question: The Novels of*

Henry Fielding and the Feminist Debate 1700-1750 (1989) is possibly the most important. The monograph is acknowledged by Rivero in his 1998 *Critical Essays on Henry Fielding* as "the first book on Fielding written from a feminist critical perspective". Rivero distinguishes it as presenting "a Fielding whose views on women are at least as enlightened as those of Richardson". He commends that thanks to Smallwood's efforts "we now have a more nuanced and accurate picture of Fielding, neither the supremely masculine artist relished by some male critics nor the misogynist monster of earlier feminist lore" (7). Rivero's recommendation of Smallwood's monograph does it justice, for the book redefines Fielding's gender ideology, with its conscientious research into the history and culture of his age and its antiestablishment arguments, for instance, the shattering of "givens" in the field.

Smallwood's central argument is that "an active debate about the social position of women, and about sexual difference and gender roles in eighteenth century society, forms a major theme running through the whole of Henry Fielding's creative writing" (1). She maintains that "the vast majority of critical studies of Fielding, and of the eighteenth century novel in general, have taken no account" of the view that "feminist argument was very positively alive throughout the period of Fielding's writing career and must now be counted as a significant part of the context of his work" (2). She holds that "Fielding's writings reveal similarly liberal views on the woman question" as those of "Sophia", a radical pamphlet writer in 1739 and 1740, who argues that "there is no logical reason why women should not be considered worthy of holding positions of public responsibility, filling university chairs or even

commanding armies" (2). According to Smallwood, Fielding's writings "make steady, positive reference to an ongoing feminist debate, and indicate extensive support for attitudes such as those 'Sophia' expresses. Fielding's last two novels give a much more telling emphasis to their female protagonists, Sophia and Amelia, than most critics have allowed; and all his novels are directed towards raising in their first readers a sharp awareness of the gendering of moral conduct as a pressing social evil" (3).

Building upon the denial of the Richardson-Fielding dichotomy, I argue for Fielding's pro-women attitude not only in the themes but in the deep structure of his fictions and suggest that his view of women's behavior revealed in his representation of them is more enlightened than that of his contemporaries. Take modesty for an example—Sophia's reaction to Blifil's courtship does not annul her self-confidence, while Pamela's to Mr. B's advances merely conforms to the expectation of "*shamefacedness*" as prescribed in *The Whole Duty of Woman* (1695, 9). Fielding extends his personal sympathy to women of different social strata and shows concerns with women's roles in such sensitive issues as marriage, education and politics. He recognizes women's good qualities but does not idolize them, and he advocates equality between men and women in marriage, family and education. Schofield's opinion of women's failure to control is not justifiable:

> Though Fielding's women characters try various methods of control and influence over the male, *Amelia*, instead of exploiting and exploding the perimeters of women, instead of freeing them from the chains of impotence that had been set for them by the male society, evidences more imprisonment at the conclusion . . . (55)

On the contrary, there are several important moments in which women free men from

imprisonment in *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones* and *Amelia* and there is a detectable pattern, underlying the imprisonment themes, of shifting "the chains of impotence" from women to men and thus empowering women. Contrary to Schofield's conclusion that "Amelia is paradoxically a willing slave to her husband and yet a free, influential woman" (56), Amelia is a female warrior and preserver, who fights to liberate, educate and domesticate her husband at her own self-sacrifice.

My argument that there is feminocentricity in Fielding's works is partly grounded in Smallwood's discoveries that Fielding is deeply concerned with what she terms "the woman question" and that he is a pro-feminist. Since Smallwood defines Fielding's concerns with the gender issues of his times through historical studies, I will look into the cultural context in England from the late seventeenth to the mid eighteenth century by examining the publications related to gender, because that is more important than merely defining Fielding's attitude to women to decipher how he achieves his articulation of sympathy in comparison with the viewpoints in conduct books, misogynistic writings and radical feminist pamphlets. Fielding seems not only to be aware of the "areas of inequality" between men and women as identified by Smallwood but also endeavouring to critique the inequality in such areas as marriage, education and politics. This can be revealed in his four major novels, as well as in the works of other genres written by him—his plays and journalistic pieces. Even for the study of thematic matters, my emphasis is laid on the close analysis of textual evidence rather than investigation of the historical context. My critical attention focuses on the formal and technical elements rather than the moral contents of Fielding's works as

indicated by the title of the third part of Smallwood's book, "Comedy, Morality and Sexual Differences in Fielding's Fiction" (83). Smallwood's argument that both Sophia and Amelia are heroines transcending conventionality is true, but it can be extended by looking at the power conferred upon them in causing things to happen. A stylistic approach is useful in dealing with Fielding's representation of women to find out how women control or influence the plot and structure, and how lively women are imagined to be in his writing. Such an approach takes us away from Smallwood's emphasis on the moral aspects of men's effeminacy to an examination of the appropriation of gender features between men and women and the corresponding alternation in power. Another useful move is to place "the attack upon primitive masculinity" in *Jonathan Wild* as seen by Smallwood with a contextualization of the gender issue among the mock genres and a consideration of how the mock-heroic style serves to deflate manhood and elevate women.

The second category of criticism looks, as I do, into Fielding's mode of imagining women and the structure of his works. Patricia Meyer Spacks and K.G. Hall study the underlying imaginative patterns with which Fielding creates his women characters. Spacks, comparing *Fanny Hill* and *Amelia*, considers how male authors imagine women in eighteenth-century England and she epitomizes the male imagination of women in "changelessness". She regards Amelia as a generally changeless character and attributes her "changelessness" to the "eighteenth-century male imagination in dreaming of women" (1987, 282). Hall agrees that *Amelia*, is "as Steeves suggests, 'the story of a weak man and a strong woman'" and Amelia "does

differ from her fellow women and is a paradigm, in her husband's words, 'the deity I adore" (1994, 62). Hall continues to define Miss Mathews as "an archetypal wicked woman" and Mrs. Bennet as "a vain and hypocritical person in spite of her apparent learning" (63-4), who form moral foils for the heroine.

Part of my research is concerned with the imaginative engagement that Fielding demonstrates in his characterization of women, but the energy conferred upon them by the author is a telling angle. Women characters are imagined by Fielding with exuberance, self-development and vitality, instead of forming "a myth of womanhood" in Spacks's term, through which Amelia, for example, is "only to become more unmistakably what she was from the beginning" (280). It is true that Fielding's contrastive means of presenting characters of opposing nature works in the creating of women in *Amelia*, but the heroine cannot be just treated as an idolized figure, nor are the other women archetypes standing for certain moral qualities. The character traits of the women are not monolithic as Hall has claimed, and they have their own distinctive roles to play in Fielding's fictional world.

Another two critics of this category are April London and John P. Zomchick, who are interested in the influence exerted by women characters in the textual movement by means of the operation of the domestic and public roles juxtaposed in them. London's essay "Controlling the Text: Women in *Tom Jones*" (1987, 323-33) appears to push for a more pro-feminist reading of Fielding. London holds that "in *Tom Jones* . . . it is the female characters who embody the choices offered to the protagonist and who thus determine not only the course of the novel's action but also the form of

its ending" (328). She contends that *Tom Jones* plays a key role in "the literary and cultural transition marked by the feminization of discourse in the eighteenth century", which she thinks is facilitated by "the adaptation of a key metaphor, that of property" (323). Zomchick explores women's social roles as revealed in the structure of *Amelia*. Although dealing with the law issues, Zomchick points out that "*Amelia* represents the relation between the public and private spheres, notably the effects of the public sphere on private happiness" (1993, 130). He believes that "Amelia is both the embodiment of the values that the juridical discourse claims to protect and the negation of its conditions of representation" (141). He perceives that Fielding assigns his heroine no place outside home — "where law is the ideal woman cannot be. She must occupy the sphere governed by benevolent paternalism rather than by liberal individualism" (141).

In Fielding's fictions, women's power to motivate the plot development in the deep structure goes further than their roles in property transfer in marriage. London's understanding of "Sophia's critical acumen by the narrative implications of her role as interpreter and arbiter of Tom's history" (329) is surely right, but when London shows how Sophia takes control of Tom's history, she undercuts her own conclusion:

> The subsumption of female by male through the agency of the "natural" right of property and the "affections it engages" is common to all of Fielding's novels. In *Joseph Andrews* and *Amelia*, the heroines similarly provide funds for the purchase of the estates to which the contented couples retire, and in both this provision allows Fielding to mark out the limits of female power within his moral universe. (331)

The point that the willing ceding of a woman's property usually occurring in marriage means the renunciation of her power may lead to a misconception that women in

Fielding's fictions control only in order to be controlled. If this is the case, women still cannot transcend their conventional domain of the house, despite all their struggle for freedom to choose a husband and effort to make up for the man's deficiencies. It is perceivable in Fielding's novels that the transfer of women's property in their marriage functions to domesticate men, and a married woman remains a proper guardian for her family, as in the cases of Sophia's posture "like a Queen" and Fanny's "excellent management" of Joseph's dairy in the concluding chapter of both novels. Similarly, in Zomchick's definition of Amelia as the bridge between the private and public spheres, he undervalues the power Fielding confers the heroine by simply admitting that "The law enters the domestic sphere through the vulnerable and valuable body of the woman" (141). The potential energy contained in the unconventional actions performed by Amelia's seemingly "vulnerable" person shows that she is not only a bridge between but also a preserver of the private and public worlds.

The third category of critical discussions is concerned with gender ambiguity and gender as a social construct. Terry Castle and Jill Campbell work on gender ambiguity in eighteenth-century English culture and its reflection in Fielding's works. Castle's essay "Masquerade and Allegory: Fielding's *Amelia*" (1986, 177-252) perceives that Fielding's formal method resembles "the World-Upside-Down plate", where there is "the generalized topsy-turvydom of the fictional world" (205-6). It concludes that "Amelia's unprecedented moral fluidity is but a realization of the masquerade's adulterating influence on the fictional world—and the mysterious power of the figure to insinuate, in the place of moral certainty, a tropology of ambiguity and

complexity" (242). Another of Castle's essays focusing on gender ambiguity in Fielding is "'Matters not Fit to be Mentioned': Fielding's *The Female Husband*" (1995, 67-81). The essay discusses the paradoxes which Castle detects in Fielding's novella. She thinks that the work is "burdened with incoherence, wild swings in tone and moral and stylistic evasions" and that the heroine, Mary Hamilton, is the target for Fielding's "general critique of dissimulation and hypocrisy, but also for some of his more revealing antifeminist sentiment" (68). Castle extends such "antifeminist sentiment" to other aspects of Fielding's understanding of gender and asserts that Hamilton "embodies matters which preoccupy him in his plays and fiction: the hypnotic power and subversiveness of the masquerade, the ambiguous relation between sexual identity and the 'trappings' of sex, the conundrum of gender and gender boundaries" (69).

Continuing from Castle's study of the masquerade, Campbell's 1995 monograph *Natural Masques: Gender and Identity in Fielding's Plays and Novels* interrogates gender ambiguity and political instability, which she holds are evident both in Fielding's works and in eighteenth-century British society. After surveying critics such as Ian Watt, Nancy Armstrong, J. Paul Hunter and Peter J. Carlton, Campbell, echoing Smallwood, argues that "the novels of the 'feminine' or even 'feminist' Richardson are seen as actively engaged in the redefinition of female identity, while those of the manly and classically educated Fielding, seen as contending with the growing disjunction between inherited heroic models and contemporary society, seek to create new definitions of male roles" (5). "The effect", she continues, "is not only to extend the tradition of separate accounts of the novel's early developments, focused on

either Richardson or Fielding, but also to establish two separate histories of gender's changing construction over time, histories dominated, in the eighteenth century, by the emergence of the 'new feminine ideal" or by changing models of male heroism" (5). She insists throughout the book that Fielding's works offer a site to study the histories of the two genders together. The most striking feature of Fielding's concerns with gender, Campbell detects, is his consistent rendition of the two genders as two inseparable components of the same entity —"he treats the definition of one gendered identity as inextricably bound up with the definition of the other" (7). She argues that "the interconnections between political, economic, literary, and sexual forms stressed by Fielding's works are not seamless or precisely synchronized in their response to historical change" and the tensions between such social forms "and at least temporary disjunctions appear within individual character (in novels as in life), making character dynamic, even in the ways that it is constructed or determined by historical circumstance" (8). Unlike Castle, Campbell is interested both "in the inconsistencies and disjunctions within Fielding's views at any one time" and "in the dramatic changes that take place in his choice of literary genre, his political stance, and his representation of conventional gender roles in the course of his relatively short career" (8).

Gender ambiguity can also be a means to explore Fielding's pro-women ideology. Rather than Castle's perception of "the World-Upside-Down plate" in *Amelia*, there is covert female control in Fielding's seemingly male world. Castle's analysis of two problematic characters in *Amelia*, Bath and Mrs. Atkinson, emphasizes their lack

of consistency but ignores the gender issue embodied by them, which is very important. Bath's "travesty", when dressed in "a Woman's Bed-Gown and a very dirty Flannel Night-Cap" and attending his younger sister's sick bed, in Castle's opinion, "is a specimen of aberrance—comical enough, yet indicative too perhaps of other even less explicable inversion in *Amelia*'s moral landscape" (205-6). However, the scenario might also be read not just as a case of "aberrance", but as conveying the message of gender complementarity, similar to Fielding's presentation of feminine traits in the faces of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, and Booth's attending to Amelia's childbirth. As for Mrs. Atkinson, Castle sees her as being "often surrounded by a vaguely suspicious aura" and a "figure of the sexually compromised bluestocking" who "condenses, after all, two disparate eighteenth-century visions of nightmare femininity"(222). She perceives the character as "to represent World-Upside-Down energies, in that she embodies certain kinds of chaos and intractability the narrator has elsewhere castigated" (222). Nevertheless, she admits that "the narrator remains mute about her essential character" and that Mrs. Atkinson's "narrative role becomes more significant" in her first person narrative of her life story. All of what Castle calls the "intensifying ambiguity" of the character can also be attributed to the narrator's submission to the power she exerts in the narrative movement. A much empowered narrator of her own tale, Mrs. Atkinson manipulates her narration with a kind of energy far outdoing that of the male narrator of the whole novel.

The Female Husband is also important for my argument. The text reveals how Fielding's interest in the traversability of gender boundaries is derived from a pro-

feminist mentality. The fluidity of sexual identity in Fielding operates towards the conception of gender as a social construct, as in the case of Hamilton, rather than a natural designation. Although he does not explicitly state this conception, and could probably not have stated it, the structure of the story reveals it. In representing Hamilton's relationship with her different "wives", we can easily feel the author's potential awareness of the reversibility of gender roles, and Mary Price's positive answer to the court's interrogation whether Hamilton "had behaved to her as a husband ought to his wife" also proves this point. In the deep structure of the Hamilton-Price union, there is a story of a woman truly in love who suffers from separation from her "husband". At the conclusion of her essay, Castle claims:

> Ruffled and periwigged, the "female husband" awakens classic masculine fears of the Amazon, the woman who is more than woman. But at the same time, unnervingly, she awakens an equally classic *human* fascination—for that which is potentially both woman and man, or neither. (81)

Undercutting Castle's assertion that the novella bespeaks an "imaginative tension" between the misogynistic fear of masculine woman and the pleasure that men get from indeterminable sexual entities, there is the author's sympathy for women and serious concern with the gender issues, under the guise of critique and accusation.

A scrutiny of the texts related to gender matters, including Fielding's works and comparable episodes from his predecessors and contemporaries, supplements Campbell's gender study from political, economic and other social perspectives. Campbell talks about Fielding's "somewhat obsessive recurrence to certain stock figures representing the dangerous disruption" of "conventional gender roles" "in the

company of his contemporaries" (10). For example, she mentions Pope's depiction of Colley Cibber in *The Dunciad* as "an empty vessel of regressive or failed masculinity" and Gay's "casting men in women's and women in men's roles" in some of his plays, particularly *The Beggar's Opera*. Actually, an investigation of the stylistic devices used in representing the figures of fecund goddess or mother in such mock-heroic works as *Mac Flecknoe*, *The Dispensary* and *The Dunciad* can disclose the authors' antagonism to women. Such antagonism forms a contrast with Fielding's elevation of women in his mock-tragedies *Tom Thumb* and *The Tragedy of Tragedies*. Similarly, Gay's demonstration of sexual ambiguity in *The Beggar's Opera* functions less to deflate manhood than *Jonathan Wild* does. Campbell understands the merging of gender roles in Fielding's mock writings in a different light:

> Indeed, Fielding often associates women's appropriation of masculine powers with a confusion between these presumably separate zones within public life, so that women somehow become responsible for the reduction of the ideals of government to the low motives of commercial self-interest, the translation of heroic drama into metaphors of shopkeeping, and so on. (23)

Textual evidence reveals that Fielding accepts quite willingly "women's appropriation of masculine powers" by means of presenting diminutive men and magnified women, nor does he hold that women are responsible for any form of social reduction. Besides the relationship between gender and social identity, Campbell also pays attention to the style of Fielding's works. In her 2005 essay "Fielding's Style" (407-428), she elaborates on the syntax and punctuation of two sample passages from *Tom Jones* arguing that "Fielding's prose style does not aim to empty out or transcend human personhood, in all its physical and socially-determined specificity" (423). My stylistic

discussion discovers something different from Campbell's conclusion that the opening paragraph of Chapter One of Book Thirteen suggests "the writer's privileges as the recipient of an elite education and participant in male literary circles" (411), because both explicitly and implicitly, the author's longing for literary immortality is concretized in female personae, whether mythical or historical. The reliance on women to express Fielding's literary ideals serves as an important stylistic evidence for his pro-women attitude.

Also under the category of gender ambiguity are Dror Wahrman and Felicity A. Nussbaum, who discuss Fielding's perception of gender as a social construct. Wahrman's "Gender in Translation: How the English Wrote Their Juvenal, 1644-1815" (1999, 1-41) discusses from a unique point of view "socially constructed gender" which "was operationally separated from biologically grounded sex" in the eighteenth century. In the comparative analysis of representative translations of "Juvenal's Sixth Satire" from 1644 to 1815, Wahrman considers Fielding's "Part of Juvenal's Sixth Satire Modernized" of the 1720s as being more liberal in terms of "the flexibility and contingency of gender boundaries" (11) than the translations of his predecessors and contemporaries, for example, John Dryden and Thomas Sheridan. Nussbaum, in her essay dealing with "anomaly and gender", refers to Fielding's commendation of his sister Sarah Fielding's *David Simple* as consisting in "a vast Penetration into human Nature". She holds that "These virtues that Henry assigns to Sarah are more typically masculine and the overarching stance he claims for her largely eludes the eighteenth-century women writers" (2003, 62). Nussbaum's opinion of Sarah Fielding's characters

is quite reminiscent of Henry Fielding's characterization:

> Like other equivocal sexualities such as Amazons and fops, Sarah Fielding's characters are both "male" and "female", yet also neither. In exposing the way that the social constructs gender, and in loosening its connection to genre, Fielding destabilizes the sexual oppositions of boldness and softness, of manliness and effeminacy, on which misogyny and its collusion with English national identity rests. (82)

In Henry Fielding's works there is a similar trend to render sexual features in men and women as indeterminate. In his presentation of various beaus in his plays and novels, and that of the Amazons such as Molly Seagrim and Susan the Chambermaid, it is easy to detect the feminine traits in men and masculine ones in women.

Both Wahrman and Nussbaum's opinions throw much light on my study of Fielding's idea of socially constructed gender. Wahrman's judgment that Fielding "manifested throughout his text less anxiety about gender transgressions than other Juvenal translators" (19) establishes Fielding's basic stance for gender, yet this needs to be developed into a more definite gender ideology. Wahrman makes an important inference from the following excerpt from Fielding's verse:

> Have you not heard of fighting Females,
> Whom you would rather think to be Males?
> Of Madam *Sutton*, Mrs. *Stokes*,
> Who give confounded Cuts and Strokes?
> They fight the Weapons through complete,
> Worthy to ride along the Street.
> (Part of *Juvenal's* Sixth Satire, Modernized in Burlesque Verse, Lines 364-69, 1972, 111)

Supported by Dianne Dugaw, Wahrman holds that "in the context of 1720s, Fielding's invocation of contemporary female fighters served to validate the observations about such masculine women, not to condemn them" (15). This nicely evidences that in the

representation of mock battles in his later novels, Fielding imagines women to be as competent as, and often better fighters than, men, with Molly Seagrim's churchyard battle and Susan the chambermaid's fight with Partridge as cases in point. Against Wahrman's understanding of Fielding's version as typical of "early eighteenth-century tolerance of the crossing of gender boundaries", I would argue that Fielding's idiosyncrasy in gender representation is consistently different from writers of his age, whether in physical mock wars, or in figurative love wars between men and women. From Nussbaum's point about the destabilization of gender, it can be further argued that women often prevail behind the scene in Fielding's seemingly male world.

The fourth category of critical works studies the relations between the genre and gender issues in Fielding's "comic epic poem in prose". Two monographs are worth mentioning in particular: one is Henry K. Miller's *Henry Fielding's Tom Jones and the Romance Tradition* (1976), and the other is James T. Lynch's *Henry Fielding and the Heliodoran Novel* (1986). Both books explore the influence of the European romance tradition on Fielding's "new province of writing". Miller agrees with Ben Edwin Perry's idea that "Romance and epic are basically the same genre, as much so as ancient and modern drama" (8) and proposes the dichotomy that "a 'romance' of literary magnitude would be prose-epic, whereas the great works of Homer and Virgil . . . would be verse-epics" (8). Thus he identifies Fielding's novels with romance. Lynch introduces the Heliodoran novel as "a literary hybrid, a refinement of romance that flourished primarily during the first half of the seventeenth century among writers who sought to apply the rules of epic poetry to prose fiction", which has been named

after Heliodorus's *Aethiopica*, a postclassical Greek romance that was rediscovered in the mid-sixteenth century (13). He then argues that "Henry Fielding's major novels —*Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones* and *Amelia*—are affected by a synthesis of romance and epic remarkably similar to that in the Heliodoran novel" (15). A common discovery Miller and Lynch have made is the connection between romance and the feminine ethos. Miller states that "the essential feature" of the so-called "heroic romance" of the seventeenth-century France, "unlike any earlier romances of the tradition . . . was that it specifically aimed at and flattered the concerns of a female coterie" (10). Employing the term "salon romance" instead of "heroic romance", Miller specifies its themes as "feminine social and 'psychological' concerns, the minute punctilios of 'moral' conduct and social propriety, the internal state of the heart, and the casuistry of love—usually platonic love . . ." (10) and ascribes such "effeminization" of literary and moral values to the increasing market of women readers (14). He then attributes the "rise of the novel" in "the fantasies of an effeminate middle-class genius, Samuel Richardson" to the "transmogrified romance" in the form of "'erotic-pathetic' ladies'" novels of the early eighteenth century, such as those of Manley and Haywood (11). Subsequently, Miller reads Fielding's novels as a confrontation with Richardson's by claiming that Fielding "chose an alternative tradition and 'translated' into comic terms the masculine chivalric romance, which was in essence a summation of the older romance tradition" (11).

Lynch, on the other hand, relates femininity to the romance by summarizing the features of the Heliodoran novel:

> The principal characters in the Heliodoran novel are heroic lovers and, as such, are complementary in nature. Both are of noble birth, although typically they do not enjoy the fullness of their birthrights until they are married. Their nobility, nevertheless, is evident even when they are disguised, because of their remarkable beauty, chastity, and courage. Unlike chivalric novels or traditional verse epics, the Heliodoran novel focuses on the journey of both lovers, not on the peripatetic adventures of a knight serving a lady who remains inactive (the chivalric pattern) or the struggles of a soldier returning from wars to his homeland or to a new land (the pattern of the Homeric and Vergilian epics). The Heliodoran novel celebrates the active wills of hero and heroine. Both are buffeted by fortune; both are subject to the amorous passions of others. The principal action depends on their mutual happiness. (37)

The patterns of the Heliodoran novel described here fit *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, where Joseph and Fanny, Tom and Sophia resemble the Heliodoran heroes and heroines in terms of their birth mystery, road adventure and final union. Amelia and Booth are also subject to similar experiences, differing only in that they start as a married couple. More importantly, Lynch observes that "From the *Aethiopica* onward, the heroine is very often more prominent than the hero. Usually, she is remarkable for her wit and ingenuity, as well as her beauty and chastity . . . Later Heliodoran heroines . . . display a willfulness that keeps the plot in motion" (37). Isabelle in *Ibrahim*, comments Lynch, "is self-conscious of her role as a romance heroine. She is willing to suffer tempests, shipwrecks, pirates, enslavements, even death and separation—all to assert the strength of her fidelity and her love" (38). While femininity prevails in the Heliodoran novel, masculinity becomes subordinate. "The hero in the Heliodoran novel," points out Lynch, "is generally less interesting than the heroine, perhaps because in trying to create epics of love, the authors found it necessary to curtail masculine heroism" (38). A hero's qualities as a faithful lover are emphasized over his physical prowess, for example, in Cervantes's *Persiles y*

Sigismunda (1617), and military adventures are motivated by love for the heroine, as in the case of *Grand Cyrus* (1649) by Georges de Scudéry (38).

It can be inferred from Miller and Lynch that there is a feminocentric tradition in the romance, of which Fielding is an heir. Miller does Fielding certain justice by defining the tie of femininity to the novels and acknowledging Fielding's inheritance from the romance tradition. However, given that *Joseph Andrews* is not successful in the sense of parodying *Pamela* for it strays from its original intention of parody, and *Tom Jones* and *Amelia* are progressively appealing to the feminist ethos, and given that Fielding also had a large female reading public to cater to, his viewpoint that Fielding's novels are a masculine reaction to Richardson's is not justifiable. It still operates within the critical convention of viewing Richardson and Fielding as polar opposites. My exploration of Fielding's mock-genres finds that they function to elevate women and deflate men. The lopsided power relations between the heroine and hero in the Heliodoran novel as observed by Lynch also exist in Fielding's works. Very similar storylines to Lynch's lists in the Heliodoran novel run through Fielding's major novels, with the life histories of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones centering on the heroes' loss and regaining of love, and Booth engaged in familial matters despite his identity as an army officer. However, how Fielding surpasses the precursory writers of the mock-genres in the gender issues rather than inheriting from them will furnish a more meaningful discussion.

My research, then, both builds upon and departs from what the critics of Fielding's gender ideology have discussed. The dissertation argues that there is

stronger feminist instinct in the deep structure of Henry Fielding's works than most critics have perceived. In doing so, it follows a trajectory of discussing firstly, Fielding's thematic concerns with the gender issue; secondly, women's roles in plot and structure development; thirdly, the imaginative energy conferred upon female characters and fourthly, what the mock-genres have to do with gender. It consists of six chapters, with Chapter One as the introduction and Chapter Six the conclusion, and Chapter Two to Five the main body each dedicated to one of the topics listed above. Chapter Two discusses Fielding's thematic concern with gender issues, as it is necessary to establish at the beginning, through contextual studies, his basic attitude towards women as individuals, and their positions, to borrow other scholars' term, in "the public and private spheres". Based upon the establishment of Fielding's stance in Chapter Two, Chapter Three progresses into his deploying of women in plot and structure, which can reflect his sympathy for women more crucially than in his conscious thematic concerns, since the moral of a novel comes out of its fictional structure and the meaning of a literary text is embedded in its narrative movement. Chapter Four advances from the broader picture of Fielding's underlying empowerment of women to the more specific one—that of the imaginative engagement in creating the female characters in an attempt to discover the idiosyncratic vitality that Fielding endows them with. After the complementary discussion of Fielding's feminism in the deep structure in Chapter Three and Four, Chapter Five moves on to the genre matters, to deal with how his representative mock-genres accommodate the gender issue, out of the consideration that there is a tie between the "comic epic poem

in prose" and femininity. The whole dissertation seeks an integrated structure with chapters built upon one another.

What follows is an outline of each chapter in the main part of the dissertation: In Chapter Two I argue that Fielding's attitude toward both his women characters and women in general is fundamentally sympathetic, since he responds favorably to the more feminist positions taken in discussions and debates concerning the social role of women and relations between the two sexes which took place before and during his time of writing (1728-55). Section One studies Fielding's perceptions of the character of women by examining how he responds and reacts to the superior woman trope in his time and what behavior codes he imagines his women characters to accept. It investigates his understanding of women's role as mother and man's partner, and complementarity of masculine and feminine traits in men and women. Section Two deals with women's place at home as wives and daughters in relation to their fiancés, husbands, and parents through Fielding's representation of marriage, with regard to the freedom of choice of a spouse and prerequisites of a happy marriage. Section Three discusses women's place in society in terms of women's education and their capability to learn, women and the travel plot, and women and politics.

Chapter Three investigates women's role in the plot and structure. Section One dwells on the recurrent plot of men's imprisonment and women's procuring their freedom, which can be found in each of Fielding's major novels. It is interesting to notice the reversal of traditional "man outside and woman inside house" gender roles by releasing women from the restriction of home and confining men to prison, a sort of

figurative home forced upon them. Section Two detects the women-driven plot template in some of Fielding's plays and novels with women performing the function of launching incidents, promoting the development of the storyline and acting to finally lay the truth bare as action initiators, obstacle setters and mystery resolvers, and explores stages of development of the template in his writing career. Section Three studies the subtle relations between the narrators and the plot in Fielding's major novels. On the one hand, the fictional world created by the "omniscient" male narrator in the overall plot appears to be presided over by men, yet the male world is subject to female control. On the other hand, female narrators in the interpolated tales also claim submission to male authorities, but the plot movement still uncovers their dominance.

Chapter Four tackles the vitality of women characters with an attempt to discover the energy with which Fielding imagines them, and therefore his denial of their being the weaker sex. Section One foregrounds the exuberance of the women characters, particularly Sophia and Laetitia in their vividly depicted portraits, as well as their idiosyncratic speeches and actions. Section Two studies the martial vitality of women by comparing ways in which men and women fight. Fielding ascribes similarly fierce fighting energy to some women characters as he does the men, and this provides us with an unconventional perspective to discuss his representation of women. Section Three works on the feminine energy as revealed in the metaphors by exploring the lively images in the description of some women characters, the transgressions of gender boundaries through associating men with female animals and women with male ones, and the military metaphors in presenting love affairs.

Chapter Five studies femininity and mock genres, which are favoured by the seventeenth- to eighteenth-century male literati and thus become unique to address the gender issues. Section One detects elevation of women in Fielding's mock tragedies *Tom Thumb* and its extended version *The Tragedy of Tragedies* in comparison with the misogyny shown in the mock-heroic works of such preceding poets as Dryden, Garth, Pope and Swift. Section Two shows that the deflation of the hero in *Jonathan Wild* undermines the heroic mode and thus belittles manhood, which the heroic celebrates. Wild's failures in conquering the women constantly diminish him to a clownish figure and more critically illustrate the gender aspect of the form of writing. Section Three investigates how the mock tropes, for example, the genealogy trope, the tropes to express time of day, and the mock-pastoral passages in the "comic epic poem in prose" undermine and devalue heroics and masculinity.

Chapter Two Thematic Concerns

What might be called the woman question (Smallwood 1-3) is a common and explicit thematic concern in *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones*, *Amelia* and even *Jonathan Wild*. Fielding's attitude toward both his women characters and women in general is fundamentally sympathetic, since he responds favorably to discussions and debates concerning the social role of women and relations between the two sexes which took place before and during his time of writing (1728-55). He seems to be supportive of women's freedom of choice in marriage and against marrying for property. He shows that he is paying attention to women's education and their role in social life. These aspects are underpinned by his conception of the nature of women. In this chapter I will study Fielding's perceptions of the character of women, their place at home and their place in society with reference to views of his predecessor and contemporary pamphleteers, for the purpose of illustrating his empathy towards women.

Section I Character of Women

Fielding, in pursuing his purpose of exploring "Human Nature" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. I, Ch. i, 32), views the character of women in an elaborate way. In this section I will examine Fielding's understanding of the character of women by means of how he represents them and where his representation belonged in contemporary discussions of women. His conception of the nature of women both agrees and reacts to the superior woman trope in his time and he adds new meaning to women's codes of behavior, for instance, modesty. He hails the virtue of women as mothers and insists that outward

beauty reflects the inner perfection. Fielding's admiration of women's physical features and acknowledgement of their social roles conform to what Offen terms as "relational feminism", which emphasized women's rights *as women* . . . in relation to men" (1988, 135). One central agenda in Fielding's works is to demonstrate the complementarity of masculine and feminine traits, and he shows an ambiguous attitude towards female usurpation of male sexual identity, as can be revealed by *The Female Husband*. He advocates that both men and women should be subject to sexual ethics and regards some feminine virtues in men such as modesty as praiseworthy.

Although the idea of superior women is commonly found in Fielding' works, he diverges from the tradition of writing about unworldly, idolized women, and portrays women of superior wisdom and moral integrity as ordinary daughters and wives. This perspective probably owes something to the voluminous publications praising or defending women, particularly by female authors, from 1680 on. An incomplete but representative list would include: *The Wonders of the Female World, or, a General History of Women* (1683), *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies, for the Advancement of Their True and Greatest Interest. By a Lover of Her Sex* (1694) and *The Female Advocate; or, a Plea for the Just Liberty of the Tender Sex, and Particularly of Married Women* (1700). Such writings aim at raising people's consciousness of women's capacity and feats and carry express resentment about the unfair treatment which they suffer. In *The Female Advocate*, the author "Eugenia, an unmarried woman", thought to be the pseudonym of Lady Chudleigh (Smallwood 180), holds that, if the argument "*Woman was made for the Comfort and Benefit of Man"*

(original italics) is true, woman was made for “a much nobler Comfort” than drudgery, as an intellectual “Companion”, “a social help, not a servile one” for man (20). Fielding shares the same opinion of women’s role in marriage, which I will discuss in the second section of this chapter. “Eugenia” goes further, to develop the concept of superior women, by refuting the argument that woman needs to serve man because “man was made first”:

> Now there are some Divines that tell us, that in the frame of this lower World God proceeded from the less to the more perfect; and therefore, according to them, the Woman’s being created last will not be a very great argument to debase the dignity of the Female Sex. (21)

The indication that woman is by nature more perfect than man may find an echo in Fielding’s well-known portrayal of Sophia Western as a “paragon”, both in a physical and a spiritual sense, who is in possession of “Beauty, Youth, Sprightliness, Innocence, Modesty and Tenderness” (*Tom Jones*, Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 155-56) and in Booth’s fond reminiscence of the “Sweetness, Softness, Innocence, Modesty” of Amelia (*Amelia*, Bk. II, Ch. ii, 71). Compared with the heroines, the heroes in the two novels are apparently outshone, particularly in the spiritual sense. Although Tom Jones is portrayed as “one of the handsomest young Fellows in the World” (Bk. IX, Ch. v, 510) and endowed with many virtues, his lack of prudence often leads him into escapades, and as for Booth, we find him a flaccid character in spite of his good appearance and nature. The impeccability of Sophia and Amelia in contrast with the defects of their male counterparts may reveal the author’s belief in the perfection of women.

Fielding’s imagination of perfect women goes beyond such traditional virtues

as those possessed by Sophia and Amelia. Certain spiritual qualities of his female characters, for instance, modesty, acquire a new tone in his hands. Modesty, which seems to be the most desirable female virtue of the time, is termed as "*The Science of Decent Motion*" (original italics) and "a guider and regulator of all decent and comly Carriage and Behavior" (8), according to *The Whole Duty of a Woman*, a conduct book published in 1695. Fielding, consistent with his "relational" stand of gender role, celebrates the virtue, as indicated by his judgment in *Champion* of March 15, 1739/40, "Nothing can be more becoming than Modesty in Women. Indeed, she who wants it is a Kind of Monster in Nature, a sort of frightful Prodigy" (233). He generally describes his heroines as having modesty and villainous women as lacking it. However, he opposes excessive modesty in women and this can be found in what he says immediately after the above quoted judgment:

> [Y]et even this amiable Quality may be carried too far, may be distorted into Affectation and Prudery, and make a Woman, what Sir *Richard Steel* calls, *outrageously virtuous*. (233)

This explains why modest women in his novels have moved from some commonly held behavior codes representative of the quality, such as "*shamefacedness*" mentioned in the *Whole Duty* (9), which can be illustrated in *Pamela* when Pamela said she "was so confounded" at her master's frivolous words that "you might have beat me down with a feather" (Letter VII, 51). Unlike Pamela, who claims "[L]ike a fool, I was ready to cry, and went away curtseying and blushing, I am sure, up to the ears" (51) when facing Master B's addresses, Sophia is not bashful when being pursued by a man, and what appears to be a modest behavior in her is only a show of self-protection.

Confronted with Blifil's courtship, in answer to his "Torrent of far-fetched and high-strained Compliments", she just gave "downcast Looks, half Bows and civil Monosyllables", which were taken by him "for a modest Assent to his Courtship" (294). Sophia's behaviors in the scenario are not out of modesty in the conventional sense but an intention to conceal her scorn for the man. Blifil's misinterpretation of Sophia can demonstrate that female modesty is often taken for granted. On the other hand, Blifil's "unbecoming Modesty which consists in Bashfulness" is the target of the author's ridicule (Bk. VI, Ch. vii, 294), representing inappropriate modesty, whether in men or in women. Modesty in Fielding's women does not appear to annul their self-confidence, a quality against which women are warned in *The Whole Duty*. The heroines, in particular, act and talk with a touch of confidence suitable for their dispositions.

Fielding's representation of women talking departs from the social norm as well. On the surface he seems to be in concord with the tradition of regarding talkativeness as unwelcome in women. Mrs. Western's lengthy comments on political and domestic affairs, Honour's garrulity about birth and social status, and Laetitia's tit-for-tat argument with Jonathan Wild are the targets of the author's bitter satire. Nevertheless, modest women are also entitled to their share of eloquence in Fielding's works. An observation of how Amelia presents herself in her quarrel with Mrs. Atkinson may prove this point. Facing her rival's accusation that she is "a prude", Amelia responds:

> I do not know what you mean by Prudery . . . I shall never be ashamed of the strictest Regard to Decency, to Reputation, and to that Honour in which the

> dearest of all human Creatures hath his Share . . ." (Bk. X, Ch. viii, 445)

After a few more rounds of verbal conflict, Amelia continues:

> Though you have several times . . . insulted me with that Word, I scorn to give you any ill Language in Return. If you deserve any bad Appellation, you know it, without my telling it you. (Bk. X, Ch. viii, 446)

Contrasted with Mrs. Atkinson's chicanery, which is probably a negative instance of woman's eloquence, Amelia speaks for herself with dignified language and a measured tone. Unlike the common understanding that women should either keep silent or talk about trivial matters, what can be inferred from Amelia's case is that women can talk with seriousness and justice without being pedantic. A reference to John Essex's extraction from Archbishop of Cambray's *Tenth Book of the Adventures of Telemachus* in *Young Ladies' Conduct* (1722) may reveal how differently Fielding's women talk from contemporary expectations:

> She speaks not but for Necessity; and if she opens her Mouth, the sweet Perswasions, and the native Graces, distil from her Lips; so as soon as she speaks, every one is presently silent, and she Blushes at it; she is hardly prevail'd with to suppress what she had a Mind to utter, when she perceives they hear her attentively. (128)

The passage presents an idealized woman speaker, in whom bashfulness is still a prevalent virtue. Fielding's modest women share the same graceful manners when speaking, but they speak much more confidently. It could be concluded that, in Fielding's view, virtuous women are not necessarily timid and shy, and women's self-confidence does not interfere with their modesty. This, I would argue, is very positive in the conception of women because it surpasses the social expectation of excessive humility of the female sex and therefore poses a challenge to the dominant belief that

women are inferior to men.

Fielding supplements the superior woman trope even by the most radical feminist of his time, for example, the idea explicitly articulated in *Woman not Inferior to Man* (1739) by "Sophia, a person of quality". After reviewing positively women's intellectual capacity and their ability to govern, to "teach sciences" and to "hold military offices", the author proceeds:

> Our *souls* are as *perfect* as theirs, and the *organs* they depend on are generally more *refined*. However, if the bodies be compared to decide the right of excellence in either sex; we need not contend: The *Men* themselves I presume will give it up. They cannot deny but that we have the advantage of them in the internal mechanism of our frames: since in us is produced the most beautiful and wonderful of all creatures . . . (60)

The most important advantage of women raised here by "Sophia" is that they are mothers, and this is also a favourite theme in Fielding. It can be best illustrated by Amelia, who is portrayed with her children all the time. Sophia eventually becomes a mother of "two fine Children, a Boy and a Girl" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. XVIII, Ch. xiii, 981). Mrs. Heartfree, presented as "the Mother with one Child in her Arms, and the other at her Knee" (*Jonathan Wild*, Bk. II, Ch. ix, 77), forms a typical picture of universal motherhood. More crucially for us, Amelia and Mrs. Heartfree are mothers who provide for the family, with the husband no longer capable of being the bread-winner. Fielding's conception of woman's superiority as mother has gone beyond the physical sense of generating and raising the young as emphasized by "Sophia". He sees her as a superior figure performing preservative and restorative roles. Such a point can be supported by Amelia's keeping Booth from ruin and bringing the whole family back to

the country and Mrs. Heartfree's protecting and restoring her husband's jewelry.

Another advantage of woman hailed by "Sophia", woman's physical beauty, which, she holds, can mirror inner perfection, is also celebrated by Fielding but differently. In the pamphlet "Sophia" continues,

> And how much have we not the advantage of them in the outside? What beauty, comeliness, and graces, has not heaven attach'd to our sex above theirs? I shou'd blush with scorn to mention this, if I did not think it an indication of our souls being also in a state of greater delicacy: For I cannot help thinking that the wise author of nature suited our frames to the souls he gave us. (60)

Fielding agrees that physical beauty as a great female advantage. In his introduction to Sophia he mentions that "Her Mind was every way equal to her Person; nay, the latter borrowed some Charms from the former" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 157). The second clause of this remark echoes "Sophia's" point. His heroines all possess both beauty and virtue and they are to a large extent "paragons" as in the case of Sophia. Amelia, according to Booth, has "Superiority in Beauty, which I believe all the World would have allowed" (*Amelia*, Bk. III, Ch. xii, 148), and she is also praised by Dr. Harrison as having "a Sweetness of Temper, a Generosity of Spirit, an Openness of Heart—in a Word, she hath a true Christian Disposition" (Bk. IX, Ch. viii, 387). Similarly, women characters with undesirable qualities also have matching features to mirror their inner self. For instance, the prudish Bridget Allworthy is said to resemble the central figure in "Morning" from William Hogarth's *The Four Times of the Day* (1738) (*Tom Jones*, Bk. I, Ch. xi, 66), who is self-righteous but obviously not a good-looking woman. However, in Fielding's novels the outside does not always reveal the inside—Lady Booby, Miss Mathews and Laetitia are portrayed as attractive women, but in terms of

spiritual qualities, they are marked by viciousness in one way or another. This again marks a step away from "Sophia" and may indicate Fielding's consciousness of exploring "human nature" in depth instead of stereotyping it according to the characters' appearance.

Fielding's descriptions of women in action furnish a unique perspective to study his representation of them. Women fighting in a mock-heroic battle is a familiar scenario in the literature of Fielding's time as well as in his own, but he seems to be ambivalent towards bellicosity in women, a quality that is traditionally detached from the female sex but hailed by some contemporary women writers. For instance, the warlike "Amazons" are celebrated in *Female Rights Vindicated; or the Equality of the Sexes Morally and Physically Proved* (1758). A more radical case is *Wedlock a Paradice; or, a Defence of Woman's Liberty against Man's Tyranny. In Opposition to a Poem, entitul'd, The Pleasures of a Single Life, & c.* (1701). In the verse the struggle between the two sexes is brought to a battlefield, where women win and make men their "slaves", and consequently the husband "Cook'd the Kettle" and the son "spun" at home while "the good Wives and Daughters rang'd the Field" and hunt (12). Although Fielding seems skeptical of the morality of the fighting women, he portrays their fighting scenes with imaginative energy. Molly Seagrim, who is compared to an "Amazonian Heroine", is elaborately presented in her churchyard battle against the village mob (*Tom Jones*, Bk. IV, Ch. viii). Jenny Jones's "Artillery of Love" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. IX, Ch. v) and Laetitia Snap's scramble with Jonathan Wild (*Jonathan Wild*, Bk. I, Ch. x) are described in great detail with much verbal density. By endowing the

women with outstanding physical strength and fighting skills, he confers power upon them. Compared with men's combats, like those of Parson Adams, Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, the mock-heroic battles fought by women are more powerful and destructive. This may suggest that when women are empowered, their fighting spirits are not secondary to men's and Fielding's perceptions of women fighting somewhat echo the radical feminism owned by the author of *Wedlock a Paradice*.

After discussing Fielding's response and reaction to the superior woman trope formed mainly by women authors preceding and during his age, it is necessary to examine how woman is imagined by men, probably a more direct influence on him. *The Whole Duty of Man*, which was first published in 1659, and of which the British Library holds five reprints published over the next ten years, starts to undermine, in spite of its preaching of the wife's submission to the husband, the husband's authority in the household:

> But it may be here *asked*, what if the husband command something, which though it be not unlawfull, is very inconvenient and *imprudent*, must the wife submit to such a command? To this I *answer*, that it will be no disobedience in her, but duty, calmly and mildely to shew him the inconveniences thereof, and to perswade him to retract that command; but in case she cannot win him to it by fair intreaties, she must neither try sharp language, nor yet finally refuse to obey, nothing but the unlawfulness of the command being sufficient warrant for that. (311)

In this influential book written from man's perspective, the passage is worth noting especially as it immediately follows teachings such as wives "render obedience to their husbands in the Lord", and "God must be obeyed rather than man, and the wife must not, upon her husband's command, do any thing which is forbidden by God"

(311). It subverts, on one hand, the notion of equating the husband to God in a household, and on the other hand, that of seeing woman as an inferior creature. Here woman is already taken, obliquely, as someone who might possess superior reason and endurance, and advised to fulfill the role of a self-conscious superintendent in domestic life.

Fielding reflects this kind of influence in handling family relations and his heroines usually play the part of an advisor and guide. A perfect role model in performing wifely and motherly duties, Amelia goes far beyond being just submissive to Booth. She runs to Gibraltar to care for his needs, strives to secure him a post after he is laid off, puts up with his escapade, and facilitates the family's return to the country with her inheritance. Indeed, her duty is to smooth out chaos brought about by her "imprudent" husband. Amelia's shuttling between home and the Bailey finds a parallel in Mrs. Heartfree, who "applied herself to all possible Means to procure her Husband's Liberty" (*Jonathan Wild*, Bk. II, Ch. vii, 70) after she learns that he is imprisoned. Mrs. Heartfree's overseas adventures are inconsistent with her image when she is first introduced into the book as "a mean-spirited, poor, domestic, low-bred Animal, who confined herself mostly to the Care of her Family. . . " (Bk. II, Ch. i, 51) The contradiction is indicative of Fielding's awareness of the difference between what a woman of a certain social stratum is expected to be and what she can be. Sophia is another telling case for she secures an imprudent man from ruin, by violating the social role cast upon her. Her running away from home dislocates her from the author's lengthy descriptions of how obedient she is as a daughter, which

may foreshadow her mentality as a wife. In all, Fielding adopts a similarly subtle stance to Richard Allestree's and echoes the claim that "the worse a husband is, the more need there is for the wife to carry herself with gentleness and sweetness" (*The Whole Duty of Man*, 312).

Complementarity between the sexes, I would argue, is central in Fielding's gender ideology, as he treats men and women as equal in physical and moral terms. By representing femininity in men and masculinity in women, Fielding tends to view both sexes on an egalitarian basis as persons. Tom Jones, who is generally held by readers and critics as a man of masculine generosity, gallantry and imprudence, also incorporates effeminacy in his "personal Accomplishments":

> It was, perhaps, as much owing to this, as to a very fine Complexion, that his Face had a Delicacy in it almost inexpressible, and which might have given him an Air rather too effeminate, had it not been joined to a most masculine Person and Mien; which latter has as much in them of the *Hercules*, as the former had of the *Adonis*. He was besides active, genteel, gay and good-humoured, and had a Flow of Animal Spirits, which enlivened every Conversation where he was present. (Bk. IX, Ch. v, 510)

The "almost inexpressible Delicacy" and "an Air rather too effeminate" appear contradictory with "a most masculine Person", and Hercules and Adonis obviously clash with each other as they embody two opposite physical orientations in men. It is also useful to notice that in the paragraph preceding the above quoted passage, Fielding says Tom Jones's "Face, besides being the Picture of Health, had in it the most apparent Marks of Sweetness and Good-Nature" (510). "Sweetness" as a physical or dispositional feature is usually an attribute of women, but here it is ascribed to the hero together with his "Health". The juxtapositions of feminine and

masculine beauty in Fielding's favourite character are especially significant, because they serve to suggest his ideal of manhood, which consists not merely in masculinity but in integration of this with femininity. A certain part of this ideal, for instance the union of "Sweetness" and "Health", may find a projection in his molding of the heroines like Fanny and Sophia, who indeed possess both the traits.

More evidence for Fielding's ideology of sexual complementarity can be found in his depictions of Joseph Andrews and Fanny, where we detect a tendency to merge sexual differences. In portraying Joseph's countenance, Fielding writes, "His Hair was of a nut-brown Colour, and was displayed in wanton Ringlets down his Back. His Forehead was high, his Eyes dark, and as full of Sweetness as of Fire. His Nose a little inclined to the Roman. His Teeth white and even. His lips full, red, and soft" (Bk. I, Ch. viii, 38). Comparatively, Fanny's portrait is almost Joseph's duplicate:

> Her Hair was of a Chestnut Brown and Nature had been extremely lavish to her of it, which she had cut, and on *Sundays* used to curl down her Neck in the modern Fashion. Her Forehead was high, her Eyebrows arched, and rather full than otherwise. Her Eyes black and sparkling; her Nose, just inclining to the *Roman*; her Lips red and moist, and her Under-lip, according to the Opinion of the Ladies, too pouting. Her Teeth were white, but not exactly even. (Bk. II, Ch. xii, 152)

The close resemblance between the hero and heroine's facial features presents a unisex look for the two, and characteristics of the opposite sex seem to fuse into each other. Joseph's "Sweetness" goes along with "Fire" in the eyes, and his "Tenderness" and "inexpressible Sensibility" (38) lodge in a masculine person with exact proportion of limbs and "broad and brawny" shoulders. Fanny is given a plump and sturdy stature to carry her "almost incredible Sensibility", and her bashfulness and

"Sweetness" are "beyond either Imitation or Description" (153), which corresponds with the previously discussed union of "Sweetness and Health". As in *Tom Jones*, Fielding also seems to emphasizes, instead of repressing, feminine features in the hero of *Joseph Andrews*, and once again he holds that a necessary ingredient comprising the masculine appeal is a proper portion of feminine temperament.

Masculinity, on the other hand, is found in many female characters. For example, in talking about Molly's appearance in *Tom Jones*, Fielding writes, "her Beauty was not the most amiable Kind. It had indeed very little of Feminine in it, and would have become a Man at least as well as a Woman" (Bk. IV, Ch. vi, 174). Mrs. Western is also presented as having a "masculine Person, which was near six Foot high, added to her Manner and Learning, possibly prevented the other Sex from regarding her, notwithstanding her Petticoats, in the Light of a Woman" (Bk. VI, Ch. ii, 273-74). From the mocking tone in describing man-like women, Fielding presumably renders masculinity in women not as natural as femininity in men, and it is thus more open to skepticism. In *Champion* of January 1, 1739/40, he creates a scenario where an assembly of women gather at "Lady Townly's" to discredit the assumptions made in the pamphlet *Man Superior to Woman; or, A Vindication of Man's Natural Right of Sovereign Authority Over the Woman* (1739). Consistent with what he does in his novels later, Fielding imagines the assembly as a mock-heroic battle: "Flambeaux were lighted, Chairs called, Horses put to, and everything transacted as in Times of the greatest Calamity" (101). Thus Fielding establishes a tone of burlesque for the occasion. In her address, the "eloquent Belinda" remarks:

> Is it their [men's] Dress that terrifies us? We have long rivalled them in that, nay, at the same time that we have mounted our Horses in Male Apparel, with fierce cock'd Hats, they have curled their Hair, and spread their Skirts in Imitation of Hoof-petticoats; so that perhaps the Appearance of Fierceness, if it have any Weight, is on our Side. (102)

Here Belinda's articulated pride in women dressing up like men, a manifestation of traversing gender roles, and her admiration of "Fierceness", an appearance not desired even in men in general, renders female appropriation of masculine traits rather dubious. Meanwhile, men's imitation of women's way of dressing, a conscious attempt to effeminize themselves rather than bearing feminine traits in their natural disposition, is also being presented with ambiguity. Fielding seems to be portraying men and women performing as the opposite sex with a lot of indeterminacy in attitude. W. B. Coley points out that "this reversal in fashion, amounting more or less to cross-dressing, alleges a profound (and disapproved) change in gender roles . . . and connects the alleged effemination of men with the effeminate (i.e. pacific) foreign policy of the government" (*Champion*, lxiii). However, Coley has only talked about the "effemination of men" but has ignored the masculinization of women. In spite of the possible political reference, Fielding presents in the passage a different kind of gender equilibrium, where men and women cut into each other's sexual roles. From the gender indeterminacy revealed in the passage may derive the perception of gender not as a naturally designated role but as a social construct.

Fielding's representation of homosexuality offers us a vantage point to perceive his complicated attitude toward the merging of gender differences. In his fictionalized account of a true case of lesbianism, *The Female Husband* (1746), Mary

Hamilton, who appears to be George Hamilton, is represented as "she" and "he" in one. Beauty, a generally feminine attribute, renders Hamilton attractive in her assumed male identity for the women who are involved. The narrator recounts that "As she was a very pretty woman, she now appeared a most beautiful youth" (33), and the sixty-eight-year old lady Rushford takes Hamilton "for a beautiful lad of about eighteen" (37) and is "proud of the beauty of her new husband" (38). By this means Hamilton is represented as an embodiment of female and male beauty in the same person. The Hamilton-Rushford union reverses sexual roles in the marriage mode of wealthy old man and beautiful young woman, a possibility which itself suggests consideration of gender equality. This kind of reversal in male-female relations may be proved by the mutual transference of gender features between the bride and groom:

> [The bride] was not so well pleased with a repartee of her great-grandson, a pretty and a smart lad, who, when somebody jested on the bridegroom because he had no beard, answered smartly: There should never be a beard on both-sides: For indeed the old lady's chin was pretty well stocked with bristles. (38)

A man without beard and a woman with bristles carry the cross-gender issue further than the dichotomy of "breeches" and "petticoat" and enable a possibility of transferring masculinity to a female body and femininity to a male. This in turn implies the reversal of their power relations. What is more, the comparison of Hamilton with the castrato in the widow's comment that "you might sing as well as *Farinelli*, from the great resemblance there is between your persons" (36) equates the male impostor, physically altered, with the female one by projecting their

assumptions of the opposite sex into each other. In her analysis of *The Female Husband*, Terry Castle makes the following inference:

> And those mixed reactions she [Hamilton] elicits -- recoil and fascination, fear and attraction, the desire to deny and the desire to commemorate -- are a sign of a larger ideological tension in Fielding: between his wish for "natural" distinctions between the sexes – a theology of gender – and his countervailing, often enchanted awareness of the theatricality and artifice of human sexual roles. (1995, 69)

Castle emphasizes the simultaneity of fear and fascination aroused by "the female husband" in the author's basically antifeminist mentality by referring to the "incoherencies, wild swings in tone, and moral and stylistic evasions" (68) in the text, but I would argue that behind the presentation of "the theatricality of human experience" (Castle, 80) there is a consistent line of thinking dealing with the comparability of both men and women usurping traits of the opposite sex, rather than just women appropriating men's privileges. This can be shown in his portrayal of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, and in his description of mock-heroic battle scenes dominated by women as I have previously discussed.

The structural ambivalence in the narrative movements of *The Female Husband* further suggests a complicated attitude in Fielding's writing toward the trans-gender issue. The novella contains a travel motif and follows a main storyline of Hamilton's five sex adventures, the last three of which end up in marriage. Hamilton's first seduction by a Methodist woman and her subsequent determination "to dress herself in men's clothes" to teach the sect cast her in a mould of degeneration. Indeed, because Fielding's antipathy to Methodism comes into play, the

plot presumably belongs to the fallen woman type, and harsh exposure and criticism of the female impersonator remain consistently the key note. However, as the story progresses toward the end, the episode elaborately describing what happens between Hamilton and Mary Price diverges from the expected mode of such a genre. Instead of presenting how much more injury the female impersonator brings to the seduced woman in this third marriage than the former two, the narrative turns in a different direction by presenting how a loving wife is separated from her husband. It tells how hurt Mary Price was by the lawsuit against her husband – she "threw herself into the greatest agonies of rage and grief" and "fell into fits, out of which she was with great difficulty recovered" (49). It defends her by saying "but what was more unjustifiable, was the cruel treatment which the poor innocent wife received from her own sex, upon the extraordinary accounts which she had formerly given of her husband" (49). It portrays her giving well-measured testimony in the court:

> At the trial the said *Mary Price* the wife, was produced as a witness, and being asked by the council, whether she had ever any suspicion of the Doctor's sex during the whole time of the courtship, she answered positively in the negative. She was then asked how long they had been married, to which she answered three months; and whether they had cohabited the whole time together? to which her reply was in the affirmative. Then the council asked her, whether during the time of this cohabitation, she imagined the Doctor had behaved to her as a husband ought to his wife? Her modesty confounded her a little at this question; but she at last answered she did imagine so. Lastly, she was asked when it was that she first haboured any suspicion of her being imposed upon? To which she answered, she had not the least suspicion till her husband was carried before a magistrate, and there discovered, as hath been said above. (50)

The simple, direct and matter-of-fact narrative style endows the scenario with a kind of legal seriousness. Their marriage on trial, with Mary Price appearing as a credible

witness, looks like a happy and satisfactory one. Even the sexual reference furnishes an impression that the female husband fulfils the man's role as in a heterosexual union. All these points seem to be out of keeping with the author's claim of writing the novella, "to caution . . . that lovely sex" to "preserve their natural innocence and purity" (51). Therefore, within the fallen woman plot, there is a sub-storyline of women falling truly in love and their juxtaposition indicates Fielding's mixed feeling of antagonism and sympathy toward lesbianism. Jill Campbell holds that "*The Female Husband* shows Fielding at once at his most violently defensive about the scandal of female appropriation of male identity and at his most explicit about the appropriability of a masculine identity constituted by clothing and force of the phallus" (1995, 59). The Mary Price episode, besides implying "the appropriability of a masculine identity", clashes with the main narrative movement and provides a covert feminist perspective on the scandal.

A key aspect of Fielding's view of sexual complementarity is his insistence on discussing the complementary social roles of men and women, indicating awareness of indispensability of either sex in society, which is a relational feminist position. Jill Campbell observes that he "consistently treats problems of male identity and of female identity together, as necessarily interlocking parts of a single economy or system" (1995, 7). Such treatment fundamentally empowers women instead of dismissing them as subordinate to men, but whether Fielding is suggesting that deviation from the "traditional gender roles" is a corrupting influence mainly for men is worth discussing. Campbell holds that

> [W]hether he [Fielding] is complaining about the violation of traditional gender roles, as in his satire of women who dominate their husbands and of effeminate beaux, or wistfully suggesting that those traditional roles may transform men into mere puppets of wooden authority and women into disembodied ghosts, he treats the definition of one gendered identity as inextricably bound up with the definition of the other. (7)

Admittedly in Fielding male and female gender identities are mutually defined and thus constructed, yet his satire of dominating women is not only targeted at the women themselves but also the men who are henpecked, and similarly, the figure of the "effeminate beaux" is targeted at both men corrupted by women and corrupting women. Men's "authority", which has been subverted by men's own writing such as the notion previously quoted from *The Whole Duty of Man*, is never a monolithic concept. Because the heroes in Fielding's major novels are constantly strengthened and reformed by the heroines' virtues, we may wonder whether he believes in something like men's "authority". So instead of a male author expressing his concerns with men threatened by women, we find in Fielding a voice commenting on the negative influence of both sexes on each other on equal basis. The lines spoken by the henpecked King Arthur in *The Tragedy of Tragedies*, "For when by Force / Or Art the Wife her Husband over-reaches, / Give him the Peticoat, and her the Breeches." (Act I, Scene III, 558), although delivered from a man's point of view, parallel feminized men with masculinized women and can thus furnish an understanding that both men in petticoats and women in breeches co-exist.

Moral issues, particularly sexual ethics, pose another sphere in which men and women merge their differences. In Fielding's denunciation of lechery, both male and female sexual aggressors are his targets. Sexual intrusions launched by male

characters, for instance, the noble lord on Amelia, and Jonathan Wild on Mrs. Heartfree, are ruthlessly attacked and never successful. Though Tom Jones' sexual escapades are tackled with considerable tolerance, he is only to achieve his happiness by repentance. While Fielding rebukes the idea of male "conquest" in sexual relations, a number of women characters in his novels demonstrate a strong desire to "conquer" men. Lady Booby and Lady Bellaston, the upper-class women who take advantage of their social status to pursue men, are typical cases having their male counterparts in the same social hierarchy. Besides, less affluent women like Harriet Fitzpatrick, Jenny Jones (Mrs. Waters), Miss Mathews, and Laetitia Wild also flaunt themselves as "conqueresses". Their seductions, as Fielding shows, often exert corrupting influence on the men and contribute to their ruin in the same way men do to women. Laetitia Wild is said to have "three very predominant Passions, to wit, Vanity, Wantonness, and Avarice" and "three Sorts of Lovers" whom she entertains in "very different Ways" (*Jonathan Wild*, Bk. II, Ch. iii, 59-60). Her promiscuity rivals and even surpasses that of Jonathan Wild, who receives "a Stab in the tenderest Part" in Newgate when witnessing her flirt with Fireblood (Bk. IV, Ch. xi, 170-71). Both represented in a highly caricatured manner, Laetitia and Jonathan Wild are in a process of mutual corruption: in the end the man is destroyed by his own evil deeds and death blows dealt by the woman as well. By attacking a lack of sexual ethics in men and women in equal terms, Fielding may also imply that women are basically in possession of the same physical energy as men, and they are capable of the equally destructive power if ethics is not properly observed.

Moreover, Fielding assigns some virtues usually held to be feminine to his male characters, in what is presumably an attempt to deemphasize sexual differences in morality. Take chastity for an example. While hailing female chastity in Fanny, Sophia and Amelia, Fielding also attaches great importance to male chastity. "This Character of Male-Chastity," he declares in the opening chapter of *Joseph Andrews*, is "doubtless as desirable and becoming in one Part of the human Species, as in the other" (Bk. I, Ch. i, 20). Joseph Andrews is praised for his chastity, whereas Tom Jones and Booth are made to suffer for a lack of it. Modesty, which is a key virtue of women for Fielding as well as his contemporary writers, is another moral quality that he does not undervalue in men. Corresponding to his opposition to excessive modesty in women and the new values he adds to the virtue, he rejects the view that men should not be modest. As is pointed out by Smallwood:

> Modesty is attributed to both Booth and Atkinson in *Amelia*, and even here Fielding continues to underline his unconventionality of his sense of what is becoming to a man, by connecting with Booth's and Atkinson's modesty momentary associations of the effeminate and the backward . . . (1989, 122)

Indeed, in *Amelia* Fielding's description of the army men's domestic life obscures that of fighting in the battle field, and both Booth and Atkinson are presented as men of modesty who are also capable of performing womanly duties. When Booth tells about his attendance on Amelia's birth bed, he refutes Miss Mathews' scorn for him by "Do you think it a proper Time of Mirth, when the Creature one loves to Distraction is undergoing the most racking Torments, as well as in the most imminent Danger?" (Bk. III, Ch. viii, 128) Willing to reveal and defend his sensibility, Booth conveys one

aspect of Fielding's idea of man's role in domestic life. Between the Atkinsons, there is a sort of gender reversal where the gentle husband keeps pacifying his learned and contentious wife. Over all, Fielding's attribution of feminine virtues to his male characters exemplifies his egalitarian gender politics.

An illustrative example of Fielding's reconciliation of feminine virtues with manliness in men can be found in the incident of Major Bath attending to his sister's sickness, which occurs simultaneously with Booth's nursing of Amelia. The different attitudes towards a similar undertaking by the two male "nurses" provoke reevaluation of manliness and how it is opposed to effeminacy. Contrary to Booth's ease with and defense for a man fulfilling the traditionally thought feminine role—nursing, Major Bath appears violently embarrassed when he is discovered to perform something traversing his usual image. This may be due to the contradiction of such action with his habit, for Major Bath is man whose "Discourse generally turned on Matters of no feminine Kind, War and martial Exploits being the ordinary Topics of his Conversation" (Bk. III, Ch. viii, 126), According to Booth, Major Bath was in "whimsical" dress, "having on a Woman's Bed-Gown and a very dirty Flannel Night-Cap" (128) when he was waiting on his sick sister. Such an appearance of a military man is not meant to be comic, considering the context of *Amelia*, so there is a purposeful projection of femininity by the author into this very self-conscious masculine figure. What is more interesting lies in Bath's protest for his "Dignity":

> Do you imagine that there is any of the Dignity of a Man wanting in my Character? Do you think that I have, during my Sister's Illness, behaved with a Weakness that savors too much of Effeminacy? (129)

His anger results from men's unwillingness to admit their tenderness, which they often take as "Weakness" resulting in "Effeminacy", something they scorn instead of admire. Fielding seems to be critical of this prejudice in the understanding of sexual traits, and therefore he voices a more enlightened view through Booth that "Tenderness for women is so far from lessening, that it proves a true manly Character" (130). Obviously the author achieves the educational end of this incident when Bath is convinced by cases like Brutus and the king of Sweden showing tenderness to women and admits, in overflowing tears, that "Nature will get the better of Dignity" (130). It can be concluded that, similar to modesty in women, excessive emphasis on manliness in men violates nature, so it should be avoided.

Section II Women's Place at Home

Fielding usually employs familial circumstances as the major domain to imagine and represent women, and women characters in his novels generally have their identities constructed as wives and daughters in relation to their fiancés, husbands, and parents. Marriage is a prevalent theme in Fielding to concretize such relations, and in this section I will study his valuation of women's place at home through how he represents marriage. Fielding's representation of marriage runs in accordance with his representation of women and empowered women play a decisive role in the marriage relations he describes. He shows the necessity of marriage by showing confidence particularly in the female sex and attacks sexual relations out of wedlock. In spite of his consideration of personal beauty, comparable social class and

sufficient property as requisites for a happy marriage, Fielding opposes marrying for the purpose of purely gratifying the senses, amassing property and elevating social class. He insists that both men and women should have the freedom to choose a marriage partner as opposed to submitting to the decision of parents or imposition of social superiors. He holds that marital felicity consists in affection founded on friendship and mutual understanding, instead of merely on the wife's compliance to the husband or vice versa.

Fielding views marriage as necessary for the well-being of men and women and for social stability, and he thinks that people should marry upon judicious consideration. Pros and cons of marriage abound in what Smallwood terms "feminist debate" in the first half of the eighteenth century and a strong anti-woman mentality is expressed by some men writers in works preaching "celibacy" (Appendix to Smallwood, 1989, 176-97). A few titles may serve to illustrate the situation: *The Pleasures of a Single Life, or the Miseries of Matrimony* (1701), *The Batchelor's Estimate of the Expences of a Married Life. In a Letter to a Friend* (Edward Ward, 1725?), *None but Fools Marry; or a Vindication of the Batchelor's Estimate* (1730), *An address to the Right Worshipful the Batchelors of Great Britain ... By an old batchelor, æt. 72* (Ralph NAB, pseudo, 1737), and *Celibacy: or, Good Advice to Young Fellows to Keep Single, Being an Answer to Matrimony, or…Good Advice to the Ladies to keep Single* (1739). Writings of this kind often induced counter-attacks defending marriage from the perspective of women, though the last work was initiated by a piece against marriage for the benefit of women, via accusation of

"many terrible husbands".[2] In the tit-for-tat debate, male voices base their anti-marriage argument on the lack of credibility in women, while female voices express their pro-marriage attitude by defending and eulogizing the female sex. Both sides seem to highlight the judgment of qualities of women as the common basis on which they can justify their view, and to a large extent supporters of marriage see women in a positive way. Against the controversies regarding marriage, Fielding as a male writer deals with marriage as a major theme in his plays and novels, reflecting seriously on, to borrow M. Battestin's words, "the proper and improper reasons for entering into it, the nature of the relationship of husband to wife and wife to husband" (2000, 238). His exploration of the marriage theme is also closely connected with exploration of women and his fundamental belief in marriage reflects his positive attitude to the female sex.

Despite Fielding's awareness of human folly and social corruption as revealed in both his burlesques and serious criticism, he demonstrates a confidence in women in his heroines, which is the foundation of his belief in marriage. One argument deployed by the anti-marriage writers is that in an age of moral degeneration, women are corrupted and unreliable:

> Is this an Age, my Friend, to take a Wife?
> And wear domestick Fetters during Life?
> When e'en in Youth no Modesty is found,
> When Town and Country, both in Vice abound? (*Celibacy*, 3)

The author's main complaint is that a young newly wed woman is often too easily spoiled by the "Dangers" "at the Court, the Play, the Masquerade" (4) and when

brought from the country to town, as she is a "Scholar apt" at seduction (6). Contrary to this, the change of location from country to town in Fielding's novels, besides being an important plot device, tempers and proves the heroines' good qualities instead of corrupting them. While residing in London for "about a fortnight, for the first Time" (Bk. XV, Ch. ii, 786), Sophia is exposed to "Errands of Pleasure" such as going to the play (Bk. XIII, Ch. ix, 726) and remains untainted, and in answer to addresses of Lord Fellamar, she declares, "I promise you, Sir, your World and its Master, I should spurn from me with equal Contempt" (Bk. XV, Ch. v, 797). Equally new to London, Tom Jones, though in search of Sophia, becomes "one of the best dress'd Men about Town" and is "raised to a State of Affluence, beyond what he had ever known" after being involved with Lady Bellaston at the masquerade (Bk. XIII, Ch. ix, 724). The masquerade is detested by Fielding as "Known prudes there, libertines we find,/ Who masque the face, t'unmasque the mind" (*The Masquerade*, Lines 73-4, 7), and accused by Dr. Harrison of being "such Brothels of Vice and Debauchery as would impeach the Character of every virtuous Woman who was seen at them" (*Amelia*, Bk. X, Ch. iv, 423). This notorious diversion is used as a setting to test the Amelia, who is determined to stay away from it in order to escape the double pursuit of Colonel James and the noble lord (Bk. X, Ch. i-vi). Unlike his discreet wife, Booth strongly insists on participating in the occasion, only to be pestered by two women dominos and forced to renew his affair with Miss Mathews (Bk. X, Ch. ii). By representing women who refuse to fall in face of temptations against men who are apt to give in, Fielding distinguishes himself from the misogynistic vein in the extreme

anti-marriage authors of his time.

The temperance and discretion shown by Sophia and Amelia in their relocation from the country to London form a striking contrast with the naivety and indulgence of the famous Mrs. Margery Pinchwife in *The Country Wife* (1675). Although Wycherley directs his burlesque at Pinchwife the abusive and jealous husband, the naïve country wife who too easily succumbs to seduction is also subject to ridicule and is made a laughing stock. Margery's insistence on marrying Horner may lay bare the author's opinion of the so-called "innocent" woman:

> Horn. I cannot be your husband, dearest, since you are married to him.
> Mrs. P. O, would you make me believe that? Don't I see every day at London here women leave their first husbands and go and live with other men as their wives! Pish, pshaw, you'd make me angry but that I love you so mainly. (Act V, Scene IV, 149)

The coarse manner with which Margery is represented means to be more than comical and caricatures the country wife, which finds a response in the accusation of women as expressed in *Celibacy*. In his farce *Miss Lucy in Town* (1742), Fielding also writes a burlesque of a silly country heiress who freshly arrives in London:

> WIFE. Well, I'll try to be as much in fashion as I can: but pray when must I go to these beaus? for I really long to see them. For Miss Jenny says, she's sure I shall like them; and if I do, i'facks! I believe I shall tell them so, notwithstanding what our parson says. (41)

Here we find a parallel between Fielding and Wycherley in that both render a country wife the butt of laughter, as they follow the tradition of ridiculing that stereotype. Nevertheless, heroines in his later novels move beyond the stereotype of the Country Wife and Miss Lucy, by taking their relocation as an essential phase in establishing or

enhancing their conjugal relations with the heroes instead of one that subverts or ruins their marriage. Fielding's breakaway from his predecessors, and from his earlier rendition, in handling the same storyline, suggests his consolidated confidence in women and marriage.

Fielding attacks sexual relations outside marriage and is concerned with their harmful effects on women, and this conforms to his general sympathy with them. He insists that a man and woman should be properly married "with a few previous Ceremonies", without which there may arise the sad situation that "the Woman who hath satisfied your passion, together with her Children, may be turned out to starve whenever you are tired of her" (*Champion* of June 21, 1740). He targets his ridicule at those "Gentlemen" who are described as "*wishing Joy*" and unwilling to take conjugal responsibility and hints that they may well ruin their women. This reveals his interest in sexual inequality and his sympathy with the women unprotected by the legal guarantee of marriage who are likely to be victimized. In the same essay, Fielding continues to criticize "Guardianship", a practice among unmarried young gentlemen to "look after" young women without marrying them:

> [T]he young Ladies . . . are desirous to have their Affairs very carefully look'd after, sometimes provide themselves with five or six at the same time: But as some of these Guardians are commonly concerned for several Ladies, a secret is often communicated from one to the other, which ends in breeding ill Blood amongst them all. (382-83)

The promiscuity among the men and women, according to the author, will end in the spread of "a Secret". Here the word "secret" can be a pun for venereal disease (Note 1, 383) and shows in a physical sense the harm of extra-matrimonial relations. By

pointing out the ill consequences of cohabitation and guardianship, Fielding illustrates from the moral point of view the necessity of proper marriage between the two sexes. Moreover, by accusing women of keeping "five or six" guardians as well as men being "commonly concerned with several Ladies", the author exposes an equally corrupted status of sexual morality in both women and men, and implies that they are both responsible for the moral and physical deterioration in the society. This may reveal in a sense his awareness of women's corrupting power.

Moreover, though taking marriage as a major theme in his writings, Fielding differs from his contemporaries who, as termed by Smallwood, "chose frequently to ridicule [marriage] in public, but . . . in private they acknowledged [marriage] to be in a state of crisis" (1989, 54). Fielding's writings often show a sense of "crisis" about marriage and he does satirize conjugal problems such as abusive husband or wife, adultery and cuckoldom. For example, the controversy between love and interest is expressed with cynicism in Act II, Scene VI of *The Modern Husband*:

> MR. BELLAMANT. It is a stock-jobbing age, everything has its price; marriage is traffic throughout; as most of us bargain to be husbands, so some of us bargain to be cuckolds; and he would be as much laughed at, who preferred his love to his interest, at this end of the town, as he who preferred his honesty to his interest at the other. (35)

Marriage as a means to create interest is disclosed perceptively here and those who "bargain to be cuckolds" could go as far as selling their wives' sexual favours to other men. This has a precedent in John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, where the hero bases his sexual relations upon interest. A parallel case can be found in *Amelia* in Mrs. James' assistance of her husband in pursuing other women in order to secure his

sustenance for her. Nevertheless, Fielding still seems to be optimistic that happy marriage is attainable and advocates it in the main plot of his major novels; thus his heroes and heroines are all happily married for love after conquering obstacles. He exposes the "crisis", the corruption of the marriage institution, as the tenor of his social criticism with an aim of correcting but not just lamenting it. Meanwhile, he hails love and marriage as a way out of the disappointing situation.

Marriages in Fielding's fictions, though presented in a diversified manner, generally correspond to the fundamental ideologies communicated by Allworthy when he addresses the potential union of Bridget and Captain Blifil:

> I have always thought Love the only Foundation of Happiness in a married State; as it can only produce that high and tender Friendship, which should always be the Cement of this Union; and, in my Opinion, all those Marriages which are contracted from other Motives, are greatly criminal; they are a Profanation of a most holy Ceremony, and generally end in Disquiet and Misery: For surely we may call it a Profanation, to convert this most sacred Institution into a wicked Sacrifice to Lust, or Avarice: And what better can be said of those Matches to which Men are induced merely by the Consideration of a beautiful Person, or a great Fortune! (Book I, Chapter xii, 70-1)

In *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* we find the heroes and heroines striving to set up their marriages solely on the basis of affection for each other, and in his remaining novels, especially in *Amelia,* the belief that friendship should be the solution to solidify the conjugal relation is fully expounded. More importantly, Fielding devotes most of Allworthy's speech to criticizing contemporary motives for marriage, i.e., beauty or property, and such criticism is consistently found in his uncompromising attacks on what he terms as "Profanation" of marriage in his burlesque of the Richardsonian marriage moral revealed in *Pamela*, which may be taken as trading "a

beautiful Person" for "a great Fortune". Nevertheless, since he believes that one's outward appearance mirrors the inside as has been discussed in Section I, he thinks highly of personal beauty, and the same thought is expressed by Allworthy later in the same speech. "To deny that Beauty is an agreeable Object to the Eye, and even worthy some Admiration, would be false and foolish. Beautiful is an Epithet often used in Scripture, and always mentioned with Honour. It was my own Fortune to marry a Woman, whom the World thought handsome, and I can truly say, I liked her the better on that Account." (71) Meanwhile, Fielding does not downplay the importance of property, either: in his major marriage plots, all the men and women are in the end united with considerable wealth, which often comes in a surprising manner. In short, Fielding insists an on all-round view of marriage requisites and regards any single-sided view as violation of the moral base of it. The understanding that a woman has more to contribute to a marriage than merely "a beautiful Person" acknowledges her capabilities.

Marrying exclusively for amassing property is a social vice that Fielding repeatedly touches upon and criticizes. In *Love in Several Masques*, two men comment on the popular trend in marriages of the age as:

> *Mer*. And again, others be neglected who have every Charm but Wealth. In short, Beauty is now considered as a Qualification only for a Mistress and Fortune for a Wife.
> *Malv*. The Ladies are pretty even with us, for they have learnt to value good Qualities only in a Gallant, and to look for nothing but an Estate in a Husband. (Act I, Scene IV, 33)

The conversation demonstrates sarcastically the downright materialism which is

"even" in both sexes, and the parallel syntactical structures show this evenness, implying an equilibrium of men and women in their choices. The common topic in his works of a man keeping a mistress or a woman gallant outside marriage exposes one aspect of "crisis" in contemporary families. In *The Temple Beau*, the hero expresses his pursuit of property in a more bold-faced manner:

> To refuse a fine Lady, with twenty thousand Pounds, is neither in my Will, nor in my Power. It is against Law, Reason, Justice--In short, it is a most execrable Sin, and I'll die a Martyr to Matrimony e're I consent to it. (Act IV, Scene VII, 157)

Clearly Fielding is lashing such pursuit as unlawful, unreasonable and unjust, and hinting that marriage on the sole foundation of property may "martyr" the husband and wife. Captain Blifil marries Bridget with little regard for her personal qualities but much for "Mr. Allworthy's Lands and Tenements", so naturally there grows a "hatred" between the couple (105) and the man's premature death may indicate the author's understanding of the futility of contrivance for property in marriage.

Nevertheless, Fielding does not underestimate the importance of provision in a marriage and this attitude can be illustrated by his restoring wealth to the hero and heroine in all his major novels. The justification for this is expressed by Alllworthy: "As the World is constituted, the Demands of a married State, and the Care of Posterity, require some little Regard to what we call Circumstances" (71). Gary Gautier points out that the "gentrification" of the heroes and heroines indicates Fielding's "class and gender conservatism":

> Taken as a whole, Fielding's representations of marriage finally reinforce class as well as gender conservatism. Joseph and Fanny, Tom and Sophia, Amelia and

> Booth, are all gentrified in preparation for marriage--a move which at once privileges the gentry and secures the endogamy injunction. (1995, 119)

Admittedly the restoration of property in the novels may reveal the author's reluctance to give up the marriage ideal of the landed gentry. However, the mystery of birth concerning Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews and Fanny and thus the reduction of their identity to the low class kind, besides being a plot device, functions to generate a context detached from material interest in which the men and women fall in love. It is this context that furnishes the first requisite in marriage according to Allworthy, the mutual affection of a couple for each other, disregarding their social and economic status. Sophia's attachment to Tom Jones in spite of his unknown parentage and determination to marry "down" are actually very progressive in an age when women took marriage a good opportunity for social elevation. The fact that Fanny is gentrified as well as Joseph also sheds some light on gender equality for they equally contribute to the material foundation of their marriage, and what is more, Amelia is the heiress who finally improves the family's economic condition. To revert to *Tom Jones*, in the last chapter, we find "Western hath resigned his Family Seat, and the greater Part of his Estate to his Son-in-Law" (Bk. XVIII, Ch. xiii, 981) while Tom becomes an heir in his own right. In *Jonathan Wild*, it is Mrs. Heartfree who restores the jewelry to her husband and delivers him from imprisonment. The recurrent theme of women bringing property to marriage conforms to the superior woman trope discussed in Section I in the material sense and to some extent argues against Gautier's understanding of Fielding's "gender conservatism".

Another critic who believes that Fielding is to some extent conservative in his

attitudes towards gender is April London. While acknowledging the provision of wealth by the heroines, she thinks that "virtuous women are given power in order that they may renounce it by the willing ceding of their property, metaphorically and literally considered, to the control of their male partners once the latter have revealed themselves as prudential" and this "allows Fielding to mark out the limits of female power within his moral universe" (1987, 331). I would argue that the facilitation of a happy marriage by the woman's property does not necessarily equal to the "willing ceding" of it "to the control" of the man in the first place, and even if it does, the acquisition of the man's "prudence" may not be a once-and-for-all life-time business, so a virtuous wife will continue to exert her reforming influence, in the same way as she does in the pre-marriage tests and trials. *Amelia*, which records "The various Accidents which befell a very worthy Couple, after their uniting in the State of Matrimony" (Bk. I, Ch. i, 15), represents the wife's role in guiding the husband in their domestic life and indicates the continuation to reform the latter. London's illustration of the "ceding" of woman's power by quoting Fielding's portrayal of Sophia toward the end of *Tom Jones* may not be sufficient:

> At the party on the evening preceding their marriage, we are told that Sophia "sat at the Table like a Queen receiving Homage, or rather like a superior Being receiving Adoration from all around her" (pp. 977-78). The shift from "Queen" to "superior Being" attests to the erasure of her personality since it emphasizes not only her passivity but also her relinquishment of any independent title. (331)

Both "Queen" and "superior Being" emphasize the heroine's centrality in the setting and they echo eloquently the superior woman trope in Fielding's writing. The circumstance described shows that the heroine deserves to be the center of attention

because she is the one who brings the marriage into reality. Comparing Sophia to a queen and a goddess foreshadows her power in the domestic sphere which she is prepared to enter, for family life requires more "Adoration' than "Homage" to the wife and mother. Both terms empower the heroine and the latter does not necessarily deprive her of personal vitality. Therefore, a woman will maintain her proportion of power after being married instead of losing it.

Fielding insists that men and women should choose their own marriage partner and criticizes forced marriage, especially that of a daughter by a tyrannical father for the purpose of gaining property. As Martin C. Battestin has pointed out, "In their greatest works, HF [Henry Fielding] in the comedy of *Tom Jones*, and Samuel Richardson in the tragedy of *Clarissa* (1747-48) depict daughters at the mercy of parents who regard them as chattel to be bartered for the aggrandizement of their families, a common attitude of the time that made the state of matrimony into what HF calls 'legal Prostitution for Hire' (*Tom Jones*, XVI, viii)" (2000, 240). The strength of Fielding's statement reveals his antagonism to the custom. In Book Eighteen, Chapter Three, Allworthy, speaking for the author as moralist, mounts a harsh attack on forcing a woman to marry against her own will, an attack occasioned by Sophia's experience:

> Now to force a Woman into a Marriage contrary to her Consent or Approbation, is an Act of such Injustice and Oppression, that I wish the Laws of our Country could restrain it; . . . for is it not cruel, nay impious, to force a Woman into that State against her Will; for her Behaviour in which she is to be accountable to the highest and most dreadful Court of Judicature, and to answer at the Peril of her Soul. (883)

Here strong words such as "Injustice", "Oppression", "cruel" and "impious" are laden with condemnation, and considering that it is a defense of woman from a fatherly figure, the passage is particularly significant. An earlier version of the protest in the female voice can be heard in Fielding's adaptation of *The Miser* by Moliere, in the conversation between Lovegold and his daughter Harriet:

> LOVEGOLD. This, Daughter, is what I have resolved for myself; as for your brother, I have a certain widow in my eye for him; and you, my dear, shall marry our good neighbour, Mr. Spindle.
> . . .
> HARRIET. Did ever father attempt to marry his daughter after such a manner? In short, Sir, I have ever been obedient to you; but as this affair concerns my happiness only, and not yours, I hope you will give me leave to consult my own inclination.
> LOVEGOLD. I wou'd not have you provoke me; I am resolved upon the match. (Act I, Scene VIII, 195)

Although it is more of a translated version, the language employed is full of force. Echoing Allworthy's judgment, Harriet protests against forced marriage from the perspective of the victimized, and openly proposes that a woman should seek her "Happiness" according to her own "Inclination". The two cases may bring forth a common understanding of freedom in choosing a marriage partner, from the point of view of women as well as men.

While women's freedom of choice in marriage is usually restrained by parental interference, men in Fielding's novels are prevented from marrying their true love by women, who often exert some negative power in this sense. The main form is the sexual imposition of upper class ladies upon young men, which cannot result in matrimony owing to the difference in social hierarchy but rather hinders their being

properly married. Class difference stands out in Lady Booby's address to Joseph Andrews:

> Suppose a Lady should happen to like you, suppose she should prefer you to all your Sex, and admit you to the same Familiarities as you might have hoped for, if you had been born her equal, are you certain that no Vanity could temper you to discover her? (Bk. I, Ch. v, 29)

Despite letting her carnal appetite get the upper hand, Lady Booby remains very conscious of the social gap between the young man and her. Confronted with temptations, the men can only decide whether to remain "chaste" as in the case of Joseph Andrews or to embark on an escapade as Tom Jones does. Similarly, the heroines are also exposed to seductions of upper class men, who seek extra-matrimonial gratification of their desires rather than make marriage offers. In all, intrusions of the socially privileged are employed to test the freedom of marriage choice of the heroes and heroines—Lady Booby's effort to sabotage the marriage of Joseph and Fanny, Lady Bellaston's scheme to separate Tom from Sophia, as well as Lord Fellamar's address to Sophia and the Noble Lord's attempt to ravish Amelia, are all good examples to illustrate the point

Just as he believes in the possibility of happy marriage, Fielding seems to believe that freedom to choose a marriage partner can be beneficial, which is demonstrated by the happy union of Fanny and Joseph Andrews, and Sophia and Tom Jones. Sophia's success in escaping the fate of being "bartered as chattel" (Battestin), viewed side by side with her mother's "marriage for convenience" arranged "against her Will, by a fond Father, the Match having been rather advantageous on her

Side . . ." (Bk. VII, Ch. iv, 339), is an especially hopeful breakthrough. Against Squire Western's threat to "disinherit her . . . turn her out of Doors, stark naked, without a Farthing" (Bk. VI, Ch. ii, 275) provoked by her love for a foundling, Sophia challenges the control that her father assumes over her fate. She takes actions to prevent her father's scheme to secure her marriage with Blifil in order to join the "two Estates" together and make the largest estate "in this Country" (277), and thus avoids repeating the tragic story of her mother's generation. Sophia's rebellion, in contrast with her mother's submission to Squire Western as "a faithful upper Servant" (338), indicates an advancement in love and marriage ideologies between two generations. This is particularly significant, for it posits the issues in a developmental transition and suggests a kind of progress in matrimonial values from the old to the new. Despite the difference in the modes of comedy and tragedy, compared with the experiences that Clarissa suffers during her escape, the fact that Sophia is kept safe and remains in control of the incidents on her journey is significant. The different rendering of a similar plot and the happy ending the heroine is entitled to mark Fielding's confidence in the triumph of a more enlightened marriage ideal.

What constitutes marital felicity is another thematic concern in Fielding's novels, and he seems to rate mutuality as the key. In portraying the domestic bliss of Tom Jones and Sophia, he writes that "They preserve the purest and tenderest Affection for each other, an Affection daily encreased and confirmed by mutual Endearments, and mutual Esteem" (Bk. XVIII, Ch. xiii, 981). From the repetition of the word "mutual" we can see that it is mutuality rather than dominance of one party

and compliance of the other that guarantees conjugal happiness. Earlier on in the same novel, Fielding ironizes the opposite marital modes in terms of the Aristotelian gender concept [3] that takes women as morally inferior to men by nature (Bk. II, Ch. vii, 105) and holds that the husband is by nature meant to govern his wife and family (Bk. II, Ch. iii, 81). He caricatures "*a domestic Government founded upon Rules directly contrary to those of Aristotle*" (original italics) in presenting the bullying of Partridge by his wife (Bk II, Ch. iii), and mocks Captain Blifil's "Opinion of the female Sex" by stating that "he exceeded the Moroseness of Aristotle himself. He looked on a Woman as on an Animal of domestic Use, of somewhat higher Consideration than a Cat, since her Offices were of rather more Importance" (105). Fielding seems to suspect both a bullying wife and an abusive husband, together with the Aristotelian ideologies of gender and marriage, since the two extreme kinds of conjugal relations, either against or for Aristotle, are formed upon the ill-considered basis of gender roles. In *Tom Jones*, Fielding's attack on improper married life culminates in Book Seven, Chapter Four, where he presents "*A Picture of a Country Gentlewoman taken from the Life*" (original italics) regarding Squire Western's nameless wife. The Westerns' domestic life is described as follows:

> The Squire, to whom that poor Woman had been a faithful upper Servant all the Time of their Marriage, had returned that Behavior, by making what the World calls a good Husband. He very seldom swore at her (perhaps not above once a Week) and never beat her: she had not the least Occasion for Jealousy, and was perfect Mistress of her Time: for she was never interrupted by her Husband, who was engaged all the Morning in his Field Exercises, and all the Evening with Bottle Companions. (338)

Earla A. Wilputte reads from this passage Fielding's sympathy for the character as "a

woman whose absence is imposed by an overbearing husband, not by God" (2000, 328). In fact, Fielding's critique of the Westerns' marriage mode does not stop at what Wilputte terms as the "reductive treatment" of Mrs. Western and therefore "her absence from the text". Through the ironies surrounding a so-called "good match" the readers can realize the author's implication of what a happy marriage is not or should not be. By stating that Western was what "the World" called "a good Husband" and his wife a "perfect Mistress of her Time", Fielding poses challenge to the matrimonial values of "the World" and indicates that there should be a more enlightened standard for a happy marriage than the master-servant type. The solution, as shown by the relation between Tom Jones and Sophia, lies in mutuality.

Friendship generated out of mutual affection between husband and wife, on the other hand, is regarded by Fielding as the foundation of conjugal relations. There is great friendship besides sexual passion between the hero and heroine in each of his major novels, and the former may even overtake the latter. For example, though this is rendered in a slightly comic manner, when Joseph Andrews and Fanny are threatened with the possibility of an incestuous relation, they decide that if it is true, they would vow "a perpetual Celibacy, and to live together all their Days, and indulge a *Platonick* Friendship for each other" (Bk. IV, Ch. xv, 335). The potential transformation from love into a purely spiritual tie suggests the value and strength of friendship between the opposite sexes, yet this does not mean to advocate celibacy, since the two of them are in the end happily united. In *Amelia*, Amelia proclaims the firmness of her friendship for Booth:

> And let it be a Comfort for my dear *Billy*, that however other Friends may prove false and fickle to him, he hath one Friend, whom no Inconsistency of her own, nor any Change of his Fortune, nor Time, nor Age, nor Sickness, nor any Accident can ever alter; but who will esteem, will love and dote on him for ever. (Bk. IV, Ch. v, 175)

The juxtaposition of friendship with expressions resembling wedding vows in the passage well illustrates the ideal of integrating friendship in a marriage. Amelia also implies that conjugal friendship can be more loyal than that contracted elsewhere. Booth, from his own narrative of his marriage with Amelia, expresses comparable admiration for his wife, which is also full of esteem and "doting" feelings. Amelia's truthfulness to her words, in contrast with Booth's betrayal, indicates that a woman can be the stauncher defender of conjugal friendship. Moreover, in *Joseph Andrews*, Wilson, as is pointed out by Gautier, "explicitly places this conjugal love above male bonding" by expounding on his domestic bliss: "And sure as this Friendship is sweetened with more Delicacy and Tenderness, so is it confirmed by dearer Pledges than can attend the closest male Alliance" (*Joseph Andrews*, 226). Indeed, elevation of friendship between husband and wife is a very common topic in Fielding's writings. Smallwood finds that his perception of conjugal friendship differs from that envisaged by Steele in *The Tatler*, which expands the husbands' role into a combination of "the fondness of a lover, the tenderness of a parent and the intimacy of a friend" (1989, 56). However, Fielding may have departed from Steele to the extent that he expects the wives, rather than being patronized by the husbands, to fulfill complimentarily a similar role. Actually, all his heroines are embodiments of "lover, parent and friend" in one person, who attend to their husbands' spiritual as well as physical needs.

Sophia and Amelia, for example, extend motherly care to as well as exert motherly influence on Tom Jones and Booth. In the verse epistle "To a Friend on the Choice of a Wife" (1743), Fielding shows the expected value of a wife from a man's perspective. He regards a wife as "a Companion, and a softer Friend;/A tender Heart, which while thy Soul it shares, /Augments thy Joys, and lessens all thy Cares./One, who by thee while tenderly carest,/Shall steal that God-like Transport to thy Breast" (Lines 48-52, *Miscellanies Volume I,* 43). While stressing tenderness of feminine love, the author also seeks complementarity with the husband's care in the wife's.

Fielding also stresses the perceptiveness of men and women as an important prerequisite to conjugal happiness, and echoing his favorable opinion of the character of women as discussed in Section I, he is especially interested in expounding the a wife's role to promote a man's understanding. His representation of the couples in his novels goes beyond the "common sort of ridicule by which '[a] kind husband hath been looked upon as a clown, and a good wife as a domestic animal, unfit for the company or conversation of the *beau monde*'", which is criticized by Steele in *The Tatler* in 1710 (Smallwood, 1989, 54). In the same poem quoted at the end of last paragraph, he views an ideal wife as one possessing "superior judgment":

> Superior Judgment may she own thy Lot;
> Humbly advise, but contradict thee not.
> Thine to all other Company prefer;
> May all thy Troubles find relief from her. (Lines 262-65, 50)

The point raised here corresponds to Allestree's advice to a wife in *The Whole Duty of Man* mentioned above. Although the speaker here insists, from the man's point of

view, that a wife should acknowledge a man's better sense and not openly contradict her husband, a wife's is still assigned the role of an advisor. Moreover, in *Joseph Andrews* a higher opinion of women's sense is shown by Wilson, who rates highly his wife's "just observations on life" and "agreeable" manner of presenting her opinions:

> [T]o say the Truth, I do not perceive that Inferiority of Understanding which the Levity of Rakes, the Dulness of Men of Business, or the Austerity of the Learned would persuade us of in Women. As for my Woman, I declare I have found none of my own Sex capable of making juster Observations on Life, or of delivering them more agreeably; nor do I believe any one possessed of a faifuller or braver Friend. (Bk. III, Ch. iv, 226)

The Wilsons' marriage, the ideal one among the three that Fielding represents in the inn-episodes of *Joseph Andrews*, embodies mutual respect. It is preferred over those of the Tow-wouses and Trullibers, the former of which, according to Gautier, can be tagged "dominant female/submissive male," and the latter vice versa. It can be inferred from this that Fielding views a woman's judiciousness as a necessary ingredient in a happy marriage. Wilson's eulogy of his wife's superior understanding, Gautier continues to argue, does not necessarily furnish "gender equality", because he "quickly qualifies" afterwards the domain of his wife's duties to be "the Care of her family" and turns to praise her understanding in "Cookery or Confectionary" (*Joseph Andrews*, 227). It is true such a role is prescribed in conduct books like *The Whole Duty of Women*, and it is also true that the vantage point for Fielding to represent women is usually inside the home and family; however, this does not erase his awareness of gender equality. In Wilson's case it is the wife who saves the husband, and family care is as important as the man's business. Fielding's insistence on

representing women against the background of home is out of the consideration of keeping the traditionally constructed social order rather than gender discrimination. Familial circumstances provide a domain to observe women closely but not necessarily to constrain them there. Besides their place at home, which is regarded as the nucleus of the society, women have their roles to play in a larger scene, and this shall be discussed in the next section.

Section III Women's Place in Society

Fielding imagines women in the larger social context at the same time as giving them close representation in marriage and family and he is concerned with women as social beings as well as women in domestic relations. In this section I will discuss his view of women's position in society from three perspectives. First, it is necessary to study Fielding's theory of education, which is one of the most important topics in his works. In his harsh criticism of contemporary methods of education, he juxtaposes education for both sexes and attacks the deficiency in that for women more severely. He sets himself in the middle ground between conservative and radical writers regarding this issue, admitting women's capability of learning and advocating the education of women in different strata. However, he seems to be skeptical about their ability to master certain areas of knowledge, for example, the classics. He also doubts if learning has a corrective function for human nature, in women and men alike. Secondly, the travel plot in Fielding's major novels allows the women characters exposure to different social phenomena and thus the establishment of their

relations with different sorts of people. Therefore, the heroines' significant social roles, in particular, are constructed and improved in their journeys. Thirdly, in terms of women and politics, which Fielding touches upon far less frequently, he admits gender inequality in this area but appears quite antagonistic to women's engagement in this traditionally male-dominated domain.

The juxtaposition of criticism of contemporary education for both men and women in Fielding's journalism indicates subtly a stance of treating them on equal basis. In the *Champion* of September 4, 1740, immediately following the attack on the deterioration of moral standards in young men's education, the narrator proceeds the central problem in the education of women:

> As for the Education of the *Females*, it is altogether as particular as that of the *Males*: These being half taught to read and write, many of our Crew imagin'd the Men used a different Language from the Women. (447)

This earlier observation that women are only "half taught" women suggests some serious reflections on the broken style of writing in the letters by women later in *Shamela* and *The Female Husband*. The fact that there are more women writing poorly than men in his works reveals the imbalance of their education. In a similar way, in the *Convent-Garden Journal* of July 25, 1752, Fielding consistently assumes the role of an oppositionist and deals with the matter of "Good Breeding" again by placing the education of young men and women side by side. The narrator's transition to women's education sounds even more pessimistic than his discussion of men's:

> I come now to the beautiful Part of the Creation, who, in the Sense I here use the Word, I am assured can hardly (for the most Part) be said to have any Education. (304)

The author is calling attention to the absence of women's education, and his adherence to the same understanding of the issue over a good twelve years from 1740 to 1752, implies stylistically his preference of the structural device of discussion, and ideologically, the stagnancy of the topic and thus the urgency to reform it. Besides, the latter half of both journal articles is filled with various illustrations of the defects of female education, which renders the issue with more serious problems than the men's education. The absence of women's education identified by Fielding reflects his deep concern with the issue.

Fielding not only critiques the absence of women's education but also continuously challenges the established female conduct of different social strata and attributes their defects to improper education provided by mothers and dancing masters. Education of a daughter is a recurrent theme in his novels, which corresponds to his opinions in the two journal articles discussed in the previous paragraph. Among the unwelcome female behaviors described by Fielding, artificiality (*Champion,* Sept. 4, 1740), prudishness (*Champion,* Sept. 4, 1740), utilitarianism in marriage (*Champion*, Sept. 4, 1740, *Tom Jones*, Bk. XIV, Ch. i), bashfulness (*Convent-Garden Journal*, July 25, 1752, *Joseph Andrews*, Bk. IV, Ch. vii) and lack of modesty (*Convent-Garden Journal,* July 25, 1752) stand out conspicuously. He rates these behaviors as resulting more from bad education than women's nature, since "a Creature of even an angelic Nature" could be "poison'd by such an Education" (*Champion*, 448). The negative influence of the "Mother" is generally to blame; for instance, they either lead their daughters to ignorance—"[A]t

the Age of seven or something earlier, Miss is instructed by her Mother, that Master is a very monstrous kind of Animal" (*Joseph Andrews*, Bk. IV, Ch. vii, 299) or teach them to conceal their natural feelings—"Every young Woman is, moreover, instructed by her Mother in her tenderest Years, to conceal all her Inclinations, to deny her Affection with Confidence" (*Champion*, 448). What is worse, mothers' education may exert a more serious social influence—"Our present Women have been taught by their Mothers to fix their Thoughts only on Ambition and Vanity" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. XIV, Ch. I, 743), and "she is taught the extreme Folly of Love, and the Prudence of marrying a Man for his Riches" (*Champion*, 448). Although Fielding focuses on the defective or insufficient teaching from mothers, these cases reflect that women's conduct education is to a large extent female delivered and dependent on female instruction. His treatment of the issue as an enclosed unit exclusively by and for women shows his understanding of women's prominence in the area.

Fielding's criticism of mothers' negative influence on their daughters and in turn its corrupting social consequences finds an ultimate expression in his representation of the bawd characters. As Bertrand A. Goldgar observes, Fielding has a rather "ambivalent" attitude toward the issue of prostitution. "On the one hand, his attitude toward the young women brought into his court was one of great sympathy; on the other hand, when required to look at such problems from a societal rather than personal viewpoint, as in his *Charge to the Grand Jury*, he called for every effort to check the progress of prostitution and suppress its practice" (1985, 265). Fielding's satire of the bawds' corrupt teaching to the young women reflects his sympathy for

them. In *The Covent Garden Tragedy* (1732), for instance, Mrs. Punchbowl, the bawd mother, compares her relation to the prostitute to that between ordinary mother and daughter:

> When you shall be a bawd, and sure that day
> Is written in the almanack of fate,
> You'll own the mighty truth of what I say.
> So the gay girl whose head romances fill,
> By mother married well against her will;
> Once past the age that pants for love's delight,
> Herself a mother, owns her mother in the right. (Act II, Scene III, 124)

The repetitive mentioning of "mother" echoes the author's emphasis on mother's role, often in a derogative manner, in a woman's education. To make matters graver, the mother's interference with the daughter's freedom of choice in marriage is also brought into the picture. Another instance of corrupt education is Mrs. Midnight, the bawd in *Miss Lucy in Town* (1742), who tries to sell the heroine's sexual favours to her clients. She also appears to be a keen "educator" for the naïve young woman fresh from the country, but in an ironic way:

> Fine ladies do every thing because it's the fashion. They spoil their shapes, to appear big with child because it's the fashion. They lose their money at whist, without understanding the game; they go to auctions, without intending to buy; they go to operas, without any ear; and slight their husbands without disliking them; and all—because it's the fashion. (41)

Though burlesque of the "fashion" is quite patent in the lines, Miss Lucy's willingness in accepting their face value shown in reply that "I'll try to be as much in fashion as I can" reflects the deceptive nature and thus effectiveness of such teachings. In both bawd mothers we may detect Fielding's antagonism for inappropriate education for young women. Shamela's mother, whose address "Lodgings at the Fan, and Pepper-

Box in Drury-Lane" also signifies prostitution (Letter I, 14), always instigates her daughter to seduce and take advantage of men: "And seeing you have a rich Fool to deal with, your not making a good market will be the more inexcusable" (Letter V, 16). The idea of treating a daughter as a marketable commodity is not uncommon in Fielding's writings, yet in *Shamela* it is a mother engaged who sells of women's flesh. In short, the extremely negative image of a mother providing corrupt education can be, in a sense, associated with the bawds. This evidences the vital role that women play in their own education on one hand, and how much young women suffer improper education on the other.

After dealing with Fielding's criticism of education for women in terms of moral conduct, it is necessary to move to his understanding of formal learning in them. This requires a look into his perception of such basic issues as women's intelligence and what they should be taught against contemporary views. Unlike the author of *Man Superior to Woman* (1739), who holds that women's "intellectual faculties" are "evidently inferior" to men's (Ch. III, 17), he seems to agree that women can possess the highest intelligence (*Amelia*, Bk. X, Ch. i, 407). Like Archbishop of Cambrai who held that women should be taught "history, religion, and practical affairs such as housewifery, dress and adornment, care of health, etc."(1707, Chapters III-XV), Fielding limits Amelia's reading to "*English* plays, and Poetry", "the Divinity of the greatest and learned Dr. *Barrow*" and "the Histories of the excellent Bishop *Burnet*" (Bk. VI, Ch. vii, 256). The scope for Amelia's education is also consistent with the advocate of Hannah More and Mary Wollstonecraft that education should make

women "useful rather than ornamental" ((Lasch 1997, 72). Although Dr. Harrison later encourages Amelia to "read a little in the Delphin *Aristotle*, or else in some Christian Divine, to learn a Doctrine which you will one Day to have a Use for" (Bk. XII, Ch. viii, 528), women's classical learning demonstrated by Mrs. Atkinson remains dubious. The main skepticism voiced by Dr. Harrison over the topic concerns "the Utility of Learning in a young Lady's Education" and the possible impairment to marital felicity that women's learning might bring (Bk. X, Ch. i, 407). Time and again Mrs. Atkinson's misquotations in Latin and Greek become the butt of Dr. Harrison's satire. Nancy A. Mace points out that "As Fielding's most detailed presentation of a learned woman, Mrs. Atkinson exemplifies another group in eighteenth-century society with incomplete knowledge of the classical tradition but pretensions to great learning" (1996, 99). Indeed, contentious, pedantic and selfish, the woman is portrayed as the opposite of the virtuous Amelia, who is far less learned. Mrs. Atkinson to some extent implies the author's suspicion of formal classical education in women.

Nevertheless, Fielding does not completely deny the value of learning in women. During her clashes with Dr. Harrison, Mrs. Atkinson is represented as a radical defender of women's education against conservative views with a considerable degree of seriousness on Fielding's side. She denounces the "Opinion that the Difference of Sexes causes any Difference in the Mind" as "nonsensical" (Bk. X, Ch. iv, 428), to which her opponent consents. She refutes Dr. Harrison's supposition that a woman who has learning might "despise" her husband (Bk. X, Ch. i, 408) by arguing

"where is the Harm in a Woman's having Learning as well as a Man?" (Bk. X, Ch. iv., 427). Her defenses for women's education conform to Fielding's opinions on the issue in his journalistic writings. Nina Prytula thinks that "Mrs. Atkinson represents a particularly dangerous breed of Amazon whose social nonconformity not only deforms her own character but—to borrow a phrase from *Tom Jones*—so 'degrades and contaminates' the men among whom she lives that they become no better than monsters themselves (*TJ,*, 186)"(2002, 187). It is not true that Mrs. Atkinson's learning turns herself into a monster and the men related to her as well, if we take into consideration that she is victimized by the noble peer in the first place, and her second husband Atkinson remains a pure-hearted man to the end of the novel. The Atkinsons may embody another interesting case of complementarity between men and women, in terms of both sides' willingness that the wife supplements the husband's lack of knowledge. Mrs. Atkinson's remark that "Women who have Learning themselves can be contented without that Qualification in a Man" is also responded to by Dr. Harrison with "there may be other Qualifications which may have their Weight in the Balance" (Bk. X, Ch. i, 408). The argument allows a reversal of conventional gender roles in marriage and hints that this may not affect domestic felicity. The happy ending of the Atkinsons in the concluding chapter of *Amelia* may prove the point:

> Mr. *Atkinson* upon the whole hath had a very happy Life with his Wife, though he hath been sometimes obliged to pay proper Homage to her superior Understanding and Knowledge. This, however, he chearfully submits to, and she makes him proper Returns of Fondness. (Bk. XII, Ch. ix, 532)

The husband's submission to the wife's "superior Understanding and Knowledge", in

spite of the slightly ironic tone here, sustains a happy marriage, though it is not the mode of most marriages. From Fielding's rendition of the Atkinsons' case it can be concluded that women's learning is not necessarily unfavorable in family life as long as man and wife balance their "Qualification" and avoid pedantic dispute.

While advocating education for women, Fielding seems to insist that knowledge and education cannot erase moral defects and this may subsequently lead to the question whether education can change human nature. In spite of Mrs. Atkinson's learning, she is portrayed as a rather overbearing figure who pursues her self-interest at the expense of others. In the masquerade where she is dressed as Amelia, she flirts with the noble lord in Amelia's guise and takes advantage of the lord's love for Amelia to gain a commission for Sergeant Atkinson. Facing Amelia's reprobation afterwards, Mrs. Atkinson does not show any sense of guilt. Instead, she quarrels bitterly with Amelia, calls her a "Prude", and accuses her of "using me cruelly ill" (Bk. X, Ch. viii, 442-448). Fielding's elaborate depiction of the quarrel scene first between the two women and later with Atkinson and Booth underlines his scorn for selfish pursuit of personal interest. What he seems to indicate is that a woman's intelligence combined with education, if used to serve improper ends, is not desirable. This idea also applies to men's education and learning in the novels. For instance, Square in *Tom Jones* is a learned philosopher, but he is snobbish and hypocritical. In the case of Parson Adams, learnedness does not remove his naivety and precipitance. Another type of unwelcome woman of learning can be found in Sophia's aunt, Mrs. Western. Well-read especially in history and politics and one who

"had seen the World", she is said to be "moreover excellently well skilled in the Doctrine of Amour"; however, "as to the plain simple Workings of honest Nature, as she had never seen any such, she could know but little of them" (Bk. VI, Ch. ii, 273-274). Thus for all her worldly wisdom, she takes Sophia's symptoms of love as being caused by Blifil instead of Tom Jones and flaunts her discovery to her brother. The caricaturing of Mrs. Western discloses some peculiar character traits that education has not reformed but has enhanced, for example, insularity and smugness. On the other hand, the fact that Tom Jones and Sophia do not possess the undesirable qualities of their tutors, particularly hypocrisy and prudishness, may prove the inability of education to change human nature for the worse.

A different vantage point from which to observe women's place in society in Fielding's works is through the journeys that they make. Women's journey is a motif and that contributes significantly to the imaginative construction of women's social roles in the novels. First and foremost, the number of women traveling on their own is relatively large given a social context in which the female sex is generally confined in the house or depends on male company if they travel at all. Fanny, Sophia, Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Heartfree all embark on their journeys, voluntarily or passively, without being accompanied by men. Among them the willingness and determination of Fanny and Sophia to travel by themselves are remarkable. After learning what happened to Joseph Andrews, Fanny promptly sets off:

> Indeed the Fact was, that this poor Girl having heard of *Joseph's* Misfortune . . . that instant abandoned the Cow she was milking, and taking with her a little Bundle of Clothes under her Arm, and all the Money she was worth in her own Purse, without consulting anyone, immediately set forward, in pursuit of One,

> whom, notwithstanding her Shyness to the Parson, she loved with inexpressible Violence, though with the purest and most delicate Passion. (Bk. II, Ch. x, 144)

The quick actions demonstrated by the consecutive use of verb and nonverb phrases reveal the heroine's decisiveness and therefore her determination to travel. She appears more praiseworthy if we consider the many difficulties that she meets on the way. Pursuing freedom of choice in marriage is what usually motivates Fielding's heroines to travel, and they are entitled to run after the men they love, or to escape from those they despise. As he clearly remarks in *Tom Jones*, though with a bit of irony, "when a Lady hath once taken a Resolution to run to a Lover, or to run from him, all Obstacles are considered as Trifles" (Bk. VII, Ch. viii, 352). Indeed the resolute heroines show a disregard for obstacles on the way. If Fanny acts on instantaneous decision, Sophia is a more self-consciously determined traveler. In answer to Honour's dissuasion from her escape from home with "Robbers", "Villains" and coldness of the nights in the country, she says, "A good brisk Pace . . . will preserve us from the Cold; and if you cannot defend me from a Villain, Honour, I will defend you; for I will take a Pistol with me" (Bk. VII, Ch. viii, 351). From Somerset to Upton, though with a guide, Sophia remains in control of the route they take and proceeds by night fearlessly. When she is later joined by Harriet Fitzpatrick, there is a more impressive scenario of young women traveling by themselves in the country. Indeed, among Fielding's women travelers, Sophia is the most voluntary and sophisticated.

In Fielding's plots traveling women inevitably become the prey of men's sexual attacks, but those women who are confronted with ravishment are usually

endowed with strong power of self-protection. What Honour uses to dissuade Sophia, the predatory men, seem to abound on the women's journeys and attempted rape frequently marks some climactic conflicts between the two sexes. In spite of the fact that in reality women do get raped, and even in novels, for instance, in *Clarissa*, the heroine does fall victim to a rapist, and in spite that Fielding's novels are comic while Richardson's tragic, Fielding shows an obvious intention to have his women fight and win in their combat with the vicious men. Fanny manages to find rescue after falling into a hopeless situation: "The Man of War having convey'd his charming Prize out of the Inn a little before the Day, made the utmost Expedition in his power towards the Squire's House, where the delicate Creature was to be offered up a Sacrifice to the Lust of a Ravisher" (Bk. III. Ch. xii, 268). Her escape undermines the overwhelmingly lopsided gender relations and is a significant stroke in empowering the generally held "weaker sex". Similarly, when Mrs. Heartfree "in the utmost Agonies of Despair" faces Jonathan Wild the resolute and violent ravisher, she gives off "so vehement Shrieks" to summon the Captain for her deliverance (Bk. II, Ch. x, 79). Here again we find that in the struggle between men of primitive masculinity and endangered women, the latter get the upper hand, and this can be further shown by Mrs. Heartfree's escape from the ravishment of many more men in her overseas adventures. Besides, most of the attempted rapes in Fielding's fiction occur between men of higher social status and women of lower standing, for example, the Squire's abduction of Fanny, and Lord Fellamar's addresses to Sophia. This conforms to statistics obtained from a study of some 1770's prosecuted rape cases in London, in

which "the defendants tended to be a little more prosperous than complainants" (George Durston, 2005, 173). So in Fielding, women's fight against rapists also underlines their resistance to the social-political power imposed upon them. By having women escape from rapes, Fielding undercuts the conventional gender and social power relations.

Fielding's insistence on releasing women from attempted rapes indicates his optimism about women. William Park observes that attempted rape is a "stock plot" in, besides Fielding, mid-eighteenth century novelists such as Samuel Richardson and Tobias Smollett. He interprets a "rapist" as "a violator of domesticity, marriage and innocence" and "the only figure who personifies all vice" in the "limited world" represented by the novelists (1966, 383). In Fielding's handling of such a "stock plot" in his comic world, the "zero record" in success of attempted rapes may seem to be natural. However, what is significant is the physical strength with which women fight against the rapists and the willpower embodied in it. Rogers takes Fielding's over-emphasis on women's chastity as equating physical violation to complete ruin of them, behind which there is the chauvinistic convention of treating a woman as a piece of property (1976, 260). If we view how the author values male as well as female chastity—he also attaches high importance in male chastity, which can be shown by the award for Joseph Andrews and punishment for Tom Jones—there could be less gender discrimination in the rape plots. By placing the heroines in the test and trial of rape cases and showing how they survive, the author imagines with intensity the power of women.

Politics, a domain from which women are often isolated, is touched upon, but far less frequently than other areas in Fielding's representation of women. Perhaps the most politically enthusiastic woman character is Sophia's aunt, Mrs. Western, who is described as to have "attained a very competent Skill in Politics, and [who] could discourse very learnedly on the Affairs of *Europe*" (Bk. VI, Ch. ii, 273). With the negative image that Fielding gives her, her politics also becomes the butt of ridicule. In the lengthy account of the dialogue between Mrs. Western and Squire Western over Sophia's marriage, the brother and sister attack vehemently on each other's politics. Squire Western's opinion about women and the domain sounds representative of men's opinion in general: "You know I don't love to hear you talk about Politics, they belong to us, and Petticoats should not meddle" (275). What Squire Western articulates here does not reflect Fielding's attitude. Since his zealous support of the Jacobites also invites the author's antagonism, his criticism of women engaging in politics has little credibility. Fielding treats both the brother and the sister in satirical terms and renders them as ignorant of true human feelings, as they both fail to figure out whom Sophia loves. In Mrs. Western's concluding remark of their argument, the political situation is dramatically trivialized:

> Brother, you are absolutely a perfect *Croat*; but as those have their Use in the Army of the Empress Queen, so you likewise have some good in you. I will therefore once more sign a Treaty of Peace with you, and see that you do not infringe it on your side; at last, as you are so excellent a Politician, I may expect you will keep your Leagues like the *French*, till your Interest calls upon you to break them. (Bk. VI, Ch. ii, 278)

The language used here is basically freed from female rhetoric, but the subject matter

is a domestic argument. The tension created by such an irony reveals the author's disapproval of passionate quarrel over politics in either sex. Smallwood concludes from Fielding's representation of the argument of the Western brother and sister that "Despite his support for a feminist cause such as the full moral education of woman, and in spite of the neat alignment of feminist challenges to patriarchy with his own opposition to absolute monarchy, feminism itself is unacceptable to Fielding" (1989, 71). It is true that Fielding consistently supports women's education in the chapter and challenges the absolute male authority, yet Mrs. Western can be an epitome of, to borrow Offen's term "individual feminism", which conflicts Fielding's "relational" understanding of gender roles. What can also be inferred from the chapter is his critique of the over-enthusiasm of both men and women in politics.

The mixed tone of burlesque and sincerity in addressing the issue of "Parliament of Women" in two numbers of *The Champion* renders Fielding's attitude rather ambiguous. In protesting against the unfair treatment of women, Belinda says, "A Cobbler is represented in the Legislature, but a Duchess is not" (Jan.1, 1739-40, 103). This sounds like a plain truth calling people's attention to women's absence from legislature. The "Remedy", Belinda continues, lies in a "Parliament of Women, which may enact such Laws as may be necessary for the better Governance of our Affairs, and have a watchful Eye over all Encroachments made on any of our Rights and Privileges, by the He Part of the Creation" (103). While the first purpose sounds reasonable, the second one demotes the matter into triviality. In the May 15, 1740 number about "Resolutions" passed by the "Assembly of Ladies" a similar

incoherence of tone occurs. For instance, "That it appears to this Assembly, that the Women of Great Britain have an equal Right with the Men to be represented in the Parliament" may sound serious, but then it immediately moves to a nonsensical manner by saying that "there is no Difference between the very old People of both Sexes, old men being commonly called old Women . . . " (320). That sense and nonsense are placed next to one another may indicate the author's perception of the instability and incoherence of political policies. Besides, incoherence is regarded as a female attribute by his contemporary writers; for example, in *Female Inconstancy Displayed* (1732) the author attacks women in "Three diverting Histories Describing the Levity of the Fair Sex" (1). Fielding's duplicative demonstration of such a characteristic in discussing women in politics may reflect his suspicion of their engagement in the domain.

Fielding's disapproval of women's engagement in politics culminates in *The Jacobite's Journal*, where he ridicules the effeminacy of the "Mystery of Jacobitism" (Number 2, Saturday, December 12, 1747). The involvement of women in Jacobitism is caricatured in the engraved frontispiece showing a man and his wife, who are obviously preaching the doctrine, riding on ass-back. The wife "in her Plaid" holding a sword upward appears particularly zealous. Echoing this illustration, the author in an assumed Jacobite's voice declares:

> As the Ladies therefore form so considerable (perhaps the most formidable) Branch of our Party, so will a very considerable Part of this Paper be allotted to their Use. Over this Branch my Wife will preside; and indeed she is excellently qualified for the Office, being as ready to draw her Pen as her Sword in the Service. For both these Nature hath endowed her with adequate Talents; for she hath a most masculine Spirit, and is a great Mistress of all the Wit and Humour

> which hath so notably distinguished and supported our Party. (100)

It is not difficult to realize from the passage the author's satire on women who are ready to "draw the Pen and Sword", since their "masculine Spirit" seems to be out of keeping with the expected nature of the gender. Like the examples discussed earlier in the cases of Mrs. Western and Molly Seagrim, masculinity in women is never a desirable quality for Fielding. Furthermore, the author ascribes the assertion that "Women are, in every Consideration, equal to Men" to the Jacobite ladies and sounds skeptical of it. Indeed the author appears antagonistic to women's equality with men in politics when he attacks their political enthusiasm: "The very Scandal at their Tea-Tables is political, and both the Esoteric and Exoteric Doctrines are constantly in their Mouths" (99). Nevertheless, the criticism of women's active involvement in politics is meant to satirize men's effeminacy and flaccidity in the area:

> On this Account she admits the Excuse which several Women, otherwise well inclined, have alledged against wearing the *Scotch* Plaid-Petticoat, which is indeed a most unbecoming Dress for a fine Lady; tho' the little laced Waistcoat of that Kind sits very prettily on those Gentlemen, whose chief ambition it is to distinguish their Abilities in Hunting and Horse-Racing, since it serves a double Purpose, and denotes at once the *Jacobite and the Jockey*. (101)

Once again men wearing "the little laced waistcoat" invite more ridicule, because they show an intention to usurp the female features and the lessening of their masculinity may suggest a willingness to give up political responsibility. One possible implication here is that women fill in men's absence in politics since what men care for is entertainment. As the author states earlier, "In fact, I found the only possible Means of maintaining any Superiority was by a manful Conquest of myself, and a generous

Submission to my Wife . . ." (100-01). The irony of men's abnegation of their duty in politics in submission to women's power throws Fielding's antagonism into ambivalence.

In this chapter I have discussed Fielding's thematic concerns with the woman question in terms of his representation of the character of women, their place at home and their place in society. In representing the character of women, he admits the superiority of women's character and his conceptions of women are more enlightened than those of his predecessors and contemporaries, for example, Richardson and Wycherley. He portrays sexual complementarity in his heroes and heroines and commends a certain degree of femininity in men while discouraging masculinity in women. He sees gender more as a social construct than an inborn category, as gender boundaries are often transgressed in his fictional imagination. In demonstrating women's place at home, Fielding insists on the necessity of proper marriage between men and women and attacks extra-matrimonial relations. He supports young people's, especially young women's, freedom of choice of their marriage partners and has them fight against patriarchal pressure to marry them for property. He views the foundation of marital felicity to be friendship and mutuality between the spouses in stead of one party's dominance and the other's submission. In perceiving women's place in society, Fielding emphasizes proper education for young women and women's role as educators for the next generation. He entitles women to the freedom to travel and thus exposure to the society at large, and lets the women solve their own problems, for instance, escape the rapists or pursuers. He does not seem to favour women engaging

in politics, yet he reveals an awareness of political inequality between men and women and suggests that men's lack of interest or dedication in the area may transfer political power to women. To sum up, all his thematic concerns indicate a general sympathy for women.

Chapter Three Women in Plot and Structure

Fielding deploys women characters in decisive roles in advancing plot and establishing structure. Interpersonal conflicts in the form of men versus women act as the basic motivator of plot development in Fielding's novels. Continuing my discussions of his thematic concern with women in Chapter Two, a large number of women characters in his novels are designated to initiate incidents and consequently move the story along. My main argument in this Chapter is that Fielding's sympathy for women is more crucially reflected in the deep structures of the novels—the development of plot—than in his conscious thematic concerns. D.H. Lawrence once made the dictum that readers should "[n]ever trust the artist" but "trust the tale" (1951, 13). The meaning of a literary text is embedded in its narrative movement, and Fielding's deployment of women to play fundamental parts in controlling the plot and structure works towards an argument that his novels are basically pro-women texts. I will focus the discussion in this chapter in the following three topics: women freeing men from imprisonment and bringing them back home, women functioning as action initiators, obstacle setters and mystery resolvers in the plots, and the narrators being subject to feminine power in the narrative movements.

Section I Women Freeing Men from Imprisonment

While it is true that Fielding generally represents women in familial circumstances, he does allows them to travel at their own initiative and be exposed to different social spheres. That is to say, the women characters are often free from the

confinement of the family house; thus Fanny, Sophia, Mrs. Heartfree and Amelia are imagined to be traveling on the open road, in town and even overseas. Despite all the travel plots of Fielding's novels, some male characters, particularly the heroes, are confined in prison at a certain point, and to a certain extent, for instance, in the house. While the women are released from the restriction of home and wander around in the outside world, at least for a certain period of time, men retreat to prison, which can be figuratively taken as a sort of home forced upon them. This completely reverses the conventionally designated domains for men and women. The concepts of family house and prison house may be seen as fluidly interchangeable and so are the occupants. Women's activated state of being, against men's forced stagnation, suggests the reversibility of traditional gender roles. This may again reveal Fielding's intuitive awareness of gender role more as a social construct than an inborn factor. What is more significant, in the imprisonment of Tom Jones, William Booth, and Mr. Heartfree, it is women who strive to procure the men's freedom. Married women such as Amelia and Mrs. Heartfree especially, whose commitment as mother and wife has categorized them as "domestic Animals" (*Jonathan Wild*, Bk. II, Ch. i, 51), step out of the boundary of the house to save their husbands. This subverts the conventional mode of conjugal relations "man outside, woman inside" and enables women to play their roles outside home when in need. It may furnish a better understanding of Fielding's complex ideal of gender complementarity in association with my previous discussion of Booth taking care of Amelia's labour and Colonel Bath attending to his sister's sick bed. Besides, the family estate is always the final destination of the

heroines' journeys, together with the men they have retrieved out of imprisonment. This requires some reevaluation of the family as a sphere of the feminine, which I will consider later.

Although Fielding does not focus on men's imprisonment as a main part of the plot in his first novel, we still find the archetype in *Joseph Andrews*. In Chapter Nine, Book Three, there is the image of men being tied down—after being defeated by "the Captain, the Poet, the Player" and the servants, Joseph and Parson Adams are tied "back to back" to the bed-post in the inn (Bk. III, Ch. ix, 259). The posture could indicate not only the restriction of their movements but also the impairment of their perspectives. Thus the two men are depicted as completely losing their capability to act but remain for a whole chapter (Bk. III, Ch. xi, 264-67) engrossed in "*the Exhortation of Parson Adams to his Friend in Affliction*". Here men's inability to do anything but talk could imply their abdication of power. On the other hand, Fanny, though taken prisoner, manages to seek the rescue of Peter Pounce by her "Vociferation". Just as "*Adams* and *Joseph* were discoursing back to back", Fanny "in an instant . . . leaping from" the chariot, "ran up to her *Joseph*" (Chapter IX, Book xiii, 269-30) and liberated him from confinement. The representation of a dynamic woman rescuing a static man goes against conventionally expected gender performance. For instance, the heroine in *Pamela* can only manage to escape from the advances of Mr. B in his house and her dynamism never goes beyond that. Looking forward, in *Jane Eyre*, it is the heroine who sets out to travel on her own and finally returns to Rochester's estate to rescue in the spiritual sense the blinded and crippled hero by

marrying him. Fielding's shared plot device with the more self-conscious nineteenth-century feminist writer suggests his perhaps similar gender ideology. The comic portrayal of Adams, "which *Fanny* had delivered from his Captivity", may further complicate the author's rendition of gender features:

> [H]e had risen in such a violent Hurry, that he had on neither Breeches nor Stockings; nor had he taken from his Head a red spotted Handkerchief, which by Night bound his Wig, turned inside out, around his Head. (Bk. III, Ch. xii, 270)

Here the man stripped of male apparel and appropriate female way of dressing may again suggest the merging of genders, because the "Handkerchief" being "turned inside out", a physical form of reversal, could be indicative of a transgression of gender performance. The attribution of female features to Adams the generally masculine figure may just be prompted by the author's unconscious intention, yet shows more of his gender views.

Wilson's tale includes a brief plot of woman rescuing man from literal imprisonment, which marks a turning point in his life story and leads to Fielding's ideal among the marriages presented in *Joseph Andrews*. Told in the first-person, the tale supplies a more advantageous viewpoint than the third-person to observe a man being deprived of power and subject to the deliverance of a woman. Wilson, when recalling his depressed state of being in his earlier days, describes himself as "I had now neither Health . . ., Liberty, Money or Friends; and had abandoned all Hopes, and even the Desire of Life" (Bk. III, Ch. iii, 219), and says that others see him as a man "who ran headlong to his own Destruction" (220). It is Harriet Hearty who acts as his "kind Deliverer" by offering him "a Bank-Note of £200" to save him from prison

(221). This is an earlier case than in Fielding's later novels of giving a woman superior financial status so that she can procure a man's liberty with money, and a similar situation can be found in Miss Mathews buying Booth out, which I shall discuss later. Wilson's narration of his behaviors to Harriet after being released—"I threw myself at her Feet with the most ardent Acknowledgements" (221) and "I then fell prostrate before her, and told her, 'if I had offended, my life was absolutely in her power . . ." (222) —develops a vision in which man submits to the mercy of woman. On the other hand, the woman appears to be aware of her ascendancy, especially in monetary terms: Harriet consoles Wilson by "if she [Fortune] hath put your Happiness in my power, I have told you, you shall ask nothing in Reason which I will refuse" (222-23). The patronizing tone in her words is not typical of a woman addressing a husband to be, and this indicates that the Wilsons' union is founded upon the wife's generosity. Besides, Wilson's tale sets a precedent of the domestication of man, for it ends with the man's retirement "from a world full of Bustle, Noise, Hatred, Envy, and Ingratitude, to Ease, Quiet and Love" and such a retirement is complete as, according to him, "We have here lived almost twenty Years, with little other Conversation than our own . . ." (224). The Wilsons' conjugal relationship is particularly significant if we associate the couple with Joseph's parentage, because their mode of domestic felicity serves to foreshadow that of their son.

Men's confinement in *Joseph Andrews*, in spite of its short duration in the context of the whole story, ushers in a prototype of plot in the later three novels. Tom Jones's imprisonment is a climactic plot movement covering almost the last two

books of the novel and two women, Mrs. Miller and Mrs. Waters, are relatively important in procuring his freedom. In fact, women initiate the actions in this incident: it is Harriet Fitzpatrick's contrivance for Tom to advance to Mrs. Western that triggers his duel with Mr. Fitzpatrick, and it is Lady Bellaston's scheme to press Tom to the navy that summons Lord Fellamar's men to commit Tom to the Gatehouse. This is consistent with Fielding's general means of handling plot and structure. When Tom is awaiting the trial for killing Mr. Fitzpatrick in affliction, Mrs. Miller performs the role of his mentor by encouraging him with warm words such as "cheer yourself up", "Matters go better, I promise you, than you think", and "Don't despair" (Bk. XVII, Ch.v, 893). She defends Tom before Mr. Allworthy with her "generous and grateful Behavior":

> "By all that's sacred 'tis false," cries Mrs. Miller, "Mr. Jones is no Villain. He is one of the worthiest Creatures breathing; and if any other Person had called Villain, I would have thrown all this boiling Water in his Face." (Bk. XVII, Ch. ii, 877)

The vigour of the language conveys her perception of the indisputability of Tom's good nature and renders her his staunch defender and savior. She not only defends Tom in words but also in actions, by shuttling between Tom in prison, Sophia and Mr. Allworthy and improves the situation in Tom's favour. It is also worth noting that during Tom's imprisonment, Sophia "was at full Liberty to receive what Visitants she pleased" (Bk. XVII, Ch. vi, 895). The hero's loss of liberty and the heroine's opposite status may be indicative of the author's suppression of man's power and elevation of woman's. Mrs. Waters, though by no means a positive woman character, also

functions to deliver Tom from his plight by reporting that Fitzpatrick is not dead, which turns the hero's countenance from "more miserable than any Dungeon in the Universe" to "great Satisfaction" (Bk. XVII, Ch. ix, 910-11). What is more, she is also the one who frees Tom from the accusation of incest and removes the last obstacle between him and Sophia. In sum, the imprisonment and deliverance of Tom Jones are both brought about by women with whom he is involved.

In *Jonathan Wild*, prison is the main setting for the hero and his "foil", Mr. Heartfree, and their wives' visits to the prison are elaborately represented. Laetitia, endowed with negative vitality, deals Wild a further blow upon their every meeting. Mrs. Heartfree, on the other hand, restores her husband in her utmost capacity until finally delivering him from being executed. Controversially enough, the woman is portrayed, as mentioned earlier, as "a mean-spirited, poor, domestic, low-bred Animal, who confined herself mostly to the Care of her Family" (Bk. II, Ch. i, 51). It sounds as if that she is destined to be confined to the domestic circle with no intention to break away from it. However, the imprisonment of her husband upsets her usual role and she "applied herself to all possible Means to procure her Husband's Liberty." She "hastened to beg her Neighbours to secure Bail for him", and "repaired to her Husband to comfort him, at least with her Presence" (Bk. II, Ch. vii, 70). In this process we may sense the shift of power from the man to the woman. Mrs. Heartfree's safe return from her extensive overseas travels subverts her image as a woman limited to the family house. The contrast between her stereotype and her performance reveals the fluidity of any so-called inborn identity. Mrs. Heartfree, as in the case of Fanny, at

a certain point of the plot, surpasses her usual designation and duties related to it. Once again it implies the reversibility of gender roles, and in this respect Mrs. Heartfree is a more telling example for she is categorized as a very meek woman, yet she is represented as performing feats on her voyage, and she is the one to deliver her husband from death. The ambivalence between portrayal of the woman's characteristics and her performance continues throughout the novel. Upon her return from the voyage, she "ran to him [Heartfree] with a Look all wild, staring, and frantic, and, having reached his Arms, fainted away in them without uttering a single Syllable" (Bk. IV, Ch. v, 151). Her resumption of the fragility belonging to "a domestic Animal" after the great adventures indicates Fielding's complicated ideal of womanhood. On one hand, he imagines that women can be extremely strong, and on the other, he wants them to retain delicacy. The same phenomenon occurring in *Amelia* will be discussed later.

The prototype of man's confinement and women's deliverance of him in *Amelia* develops into a more conspicuous plot device. This last novel differs from its predecessors in structure in that it starts with Booth in prison. It seems that the hero's confinement is inevitable: he is forced to leave his home in the country to escape debt, and "to avoid immediate Confinement in Prison" (Bk. III, Ch. xii, 149-150), but only ends up in imprisonment in London under a different accusation. Furthermore, he is locked up with Miss Mathews and lives in "criminal Conversation" with her for "a Whole Week" (Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 154). The double layers of prison house to shut Booth up reveal an intensified inclination of the author's to confine the man. This is proved

by the fact that after his release from prison, he "resolved to remain a close Prisoner in his own Lodgings" to avoid Murphy (Bk. IV, Ch. ix, 191), and later he is confined in the bailiff's house in Gray's Inn Lane. Also from his account of his military experience, we learn he is wounded in Gibraltar and it is Amelia who travels from England to attend to him. It seems that imprisonment is Booth's fate, for virtually throughout the novel he is locked up. In spite of the fact that Miss Mathews is Booth's fellow prisoner and seducer in his first confinement, she is the possessor of much more sexual and economic power than he. "Her Eyes, the most eloquent Orators on such Occasions, exert their utmost Force; and at the Conclusion of his Speech, *she cast a Look as languishingly sweet*, as ever *Cleopatra* gave to *Anthony*" (Bk. IV, Ch. i, 151). "The most eloquent Orators" and her analogy to "*Cleopatra*" demonstrate the forcefulness of her advances to the man. A woman's procurement of a man from imprisonment is most directly illustrated by Miss Mathews' negotiation with the governor, who charges her "five Guineas", "the Sum which he computed to remain in the Lady's Pocket; as to the Gentleman's [Booth's], he had long been acquainted with the Emptiness of it" (Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 158). The woman's pocket full of money and the man's empty are symbolic of their lopsided economic power relation. That Miss Mathews finally buys Booth out of prison with a bank-bill of a hundred pounds increases her monetary superiority.

Amelia, on the other hand, is the party traveling about to procure her husband's liberty by exerting the power of her virtues. Parallel to the Heartfree episode, Amelia, who is also a "domestic" type, manages to leave the country for

Gibraltar to take care of Booth. Upon Booth's first confinement in London, she searches for him and takes him out of prison in her coach after Miss Mathews pays for his discharge. The description of her meeting Booth in prison then echoes that of Mrs. Heartfree's fragility:

> "[W]here is he?"—and presently a female Spectre, all pale and breathless, rushed into the Room, and fell into Booth's Arms, where she immediately fainted away. (Bk. IV, Ch. i, 159)

The empowerment of women to move about and yet the emphasis on their physical weakness reveals the author's paradoxical attitude toward the issue. Zomchick argues that in *Amelia* there are "the public world" entered "through the prison portals" and "the private world" of "domestic and conjugal pleasures" (1993, 140). He terms Amelia's "strength to travel from her home in England to the side of her wounded husband" as "domestic heroism". Regarding Amelia's fainting upon meeting Booth, Zomchick suggests:

> When Amelia enters the prison, however, strength and heroism have faded before the challenge to the sufficiency of domestic and conjugal pleasures . . . When the spectral Amelia faints, the action repeats the disembodiment implied in the description. The bearer of private virtues loses her vitality in the public sphere. (140)

Although the prison and the family can be considered as different spheres, in Fielding they are not markedly meant to be public and private. The affair between Miss Mathews and Booth carried out in the prison house cannot be seen as public, and the constant involvement of women in releasing the men from imprisonment obviously intermingles the two spheres. In other words, there is no such clear division as the public sphere presided over by men and the private by women. Therefore, the idea

that Amelia's fainting means the loss of "her vitality" in the public sphere may not be a sound explanation. I would argue that in both Mrs. Heartfree's and Amelia's cases, Fielding's allowing them to faint after their feats hints that femininity and heroism co-exist in women's nature.

A further look at Amelia's influence in freeing Booth from his later two confinements can provide a better understanding of the heroine's role in the plot development. Though on both occasions it is Dr. Harrison who acts as the direct agent, he releases Booth out of his friendship with Amelia and sympathy for her children:

> To this, indeed, he was induced by the Love he always had for that Lady, by the good Opinion he entertained of her, as well as by Pity for her present Condition than which nothing appeared more miserable; for he found her in the highest Agonies of Grief and Despair, with her two little Children crying over their wretched Mother. (Bk. IX., Ch. i, 359)

However, Amelia not only convinces Dr. Harrison with her "Grief and Despair"—she defends Booth by giving the doctor "some Satisfaction as to what he had heard of her Husband's Behavior in the Country" (Bk. IX, Ch. i, 359). Among the different parties who try to aid Booth, she plays the most decisive part by convincing the doctor of her husband's innocence. Her procurement of Booth's freedom is represented with more density in his last confinement in the bailiff's house, when "the Desire of regaining her Husband's Liberty . . . engrossed her whole Mind" (Bk. XII, Ch. ii, 499). She is seen to shuttle between the bailiff's house, the doctor and people involved, more than just talking. When finally seeing Booth released,

> [S]o violent a Turn was given to her Spirits that she was just able, with the Assistance of a Glass of Water, to support herself. She soon however recovered her Calmness, and in a little Time began to eat what might indeed be almost

> called her Breakfast. (Bk. XII, Ch. vii, 524)

The different reactions to her husband's release from his first and last imprisonment imply Amelia's progress from an innocent and fragile woman to a more mature and sturdy one. It suggests that women's strength finally prevails over their delicacy in the author's mind.

As mentioned earlier, Fielding sees the domestication of men as the final means of their salvation, because all his major novels have the happy ending of the heroes settling into an idyllic family life. Joseph Andrews, like his parents, retires to "a little estate" with Fanny's fortune, where "*Fanny* presides, with most excellent Management in his Dairy", and he "remains blest with his *Fanny*, whom he dotes on with the utmost Tenderness, which is all returned on her side" (*Joseph Andrews*, Bk. IV, Ch. xvi, 344). Tom Jones returns with Sophia to Squire Western's "Family Seat" in the country as a "worthy" and "fond" couple (*Tom Jones*, Bk. XVIII, Ch. xiii, 981) in ultimate domestic felicity. The life of Heartfree in the family estate is even more explicitly eulogized:

> Thus *Heartfree*, his Wife, his two Daughters, his Son-in-Law, and his Grandchildren, of which he hath several, live all together in one House; and that with such Amity and Affection towards each other, that they are in the Neighbourhood called *the Family of Love*. (*Jonathan Wild*, Bk. IV, Ch. xvi, 195)

Booth is more accurately described than Mr. Heartfree to withdraw from his previous movements and revert to the family circle: after paying off his debts in London, he "returned into the Country, and hath never since been thirty Miles from Home", surrounded by Amelia and their six children (*Amelia*, Bk. XII, Ch. ix, 532-33). All the

four heroes share home as the common destination and all of them become domesticated men in the end and enjoy being so. It is women who facilitate the domestication of men in all the four cases. Women's retrieving their men from a sort of vagabond existence to more peaceful and orderly life reveals their restorative power. What is more, the mutual affection shared by family members lessens the sense of the family house as the domain confining and limiting women, and indicates that it is the realm for the mutual well-being for women as well as men.

If the structural prototype of women liberating and domesticating men embodies Fielding's empowerment of the heroines, his allusions to mainstream classical writings in *Amelia* imply his emphasis on the title heroine in the deep structure. Allan Wendt observes that "The story of Amelia may perhaps be best understood by relating it to another story of punishment and reward—the book of *Job*" and identifies the heroine as "stage center" and "the principal figure" of the novel (1960, 132). Though the observation is mainly made in thematic terms, Amelia is indisputably the focus of the book. John E. Loftis analyzes the systematic parallels between *Amelia* and *The Aeneid* "in structure, in setting, in incident and in character" by paralleling Booth's adventures with those of Aeneas and Amelia with both Creusa and Lavinia (1977, 220). Loftis also comments that in discussing the influence of the *Aeneid* on *Amelia*, Lyall H. Powers, among other critics, "assumes that Booth is *the* hero and does not investigate how other characters, for example the title character herself, relate to the total design"(215). I agree that Booth should not be "*the* hero" since the novel is entitled *Amelia* but not, to quote from Wendt, "*Billy Booth* or *The*

Boothiad" (131). Amelia's adventures go side by side with Booth's and can be an even stronger storyline, because structurally, in most episodes Booth is shut up in prison and is deprived of power of action while Amelia is empowered to fight for his freedom. Both Wendt and Loftis have realized the importance of the heroine in the novel and I would add that Fielding's allusion to the Biblical hero Job and the classical hero Aeneas to an eighteenth-century housewife conveys his perception of women to readers. There can be a hero in the housewife: Amelia and Mrs. Heartfree are cases in point. The heroic qualities of the women are manifested in that they can not only endure sufferings like Job but also fight and win back what they should have like Aeneas. Loftis sees Amelia as "mainstay of the family" but emphasizes her role as a preserver:

> Amelia's role in the novel is primarily that of wife, mother and mainstay of the family: we see her constantly tending both her children and her husband. Her name itself means "industrious," deriving ultimately from the German for "pain" or "trouble," and suggests as well "ameliorates." The focus on Amelia in her role as wife and mother, the force which preserves the family time after time, further emphasizes the importance of family in the novel. (223-24)

Yet Amelia's fight for domestic happiness should not be underestimated, since the structure and plot of the novel reveal that she is not only a preserver with Job's patience but a fighter with Aeneas' power.

In this section I have discussed the plot of women freeing men from imprisonment in Fielding's major novels. By arguing that the prison is a kind of house imposed on the men, as the family house is imposed on the women, I have demonstrated how Fielding endows his women characters with liberty and power,

economic, social or moral, to retrieve the men and domesticate them. While women perform unconventional actions to rescue men, they retain their feminine traits, for instance, the frailty demonstrated by Mrs. Heartfree and Amelia. In spite of this, as in the case of *Amelia*, women have their share in Fielding's reference to the classics showing heroic qualities. To conclude, the plot discussed in this section reveals that the female characters can surpass their expected performances and this subverts the conventional gender roles.

Section II Plots of Women's Power

The plot movements in a novel furnish an interesting perspective on the author's imaginative pattern. In Fielding's fictional world, we can see that women characters are often accorded the function of launching incidents, promoting the development of the storyline and acting to finally lay the truth bare. Women are the locale of power and they can be classified as action initiators who start to make things happen to people around, obstacle setters who complicate the events, and mystery resolvers who bring about the usually happy ending. Some of them function in a global sense by exerting an influence on the overall structure of the novel, while others act at a more local level to move the plot in a certain episode along. In this section I will examine some of Fielding's plays and his major novels to define the women-driven plot template and explore stages of its development.

Fielding's plays are a good source to start with because they were written in the earlier stage of his writing career, use a simpler plot and can offer a basic template

for his fictions. There is already a tendency in his plays to employ women characters as the three kinds of plot drivers as defined previously. In his first play *Love in Several Masques* (1728), "a regular five-act comedy of intrigue" (Martin C. Battestin, 2000, 182), Catchit the chambermaid to Vermilia initiates the trouble between Vermilia and Malvil by complicating their relationship:

> Catchit *alone*. Well, sure Nature has not a more ridiculous Creature than a jealous Lover. Never did a Lady in my Profession get more by forging Smiles and favourable Expressions from a Mistress, than I, by making Mr. *Malvil* believe mine values him less than she does. He has promised me a Diamond Ring to discover his Rival. Ay, but how shall I discover his Rival, when he has none? Hum! Suppose I make him one! (Act II, Scene III, 39)

The fact that Catchit relates directly to the audience what she is going to do makes her role in the plot explicit—she is the one who makes things happen to Vermilia and Malvil. Catchit creates the mischief for her own material benefit, while Lady Trap, who lusts after her niece Helena's lover, Merital, conspires to win the young man's sexual favour. Lady Trap's intention is also voiced by herself when she is "alone": "My niece goes to Lady *Matchless's* this evening; I'll make him [Merital] an Assignation, in her Name, to meet by dark in the Dining-room" (Act II, Scene VII, 44), and by doing so she ushers in one of the climactic scenes in the play. Both Catchit and Lady Trap can be seen as both action initiators and obstacle setters and probably due to the nature of dramatic representation, Fielding assigns them such roles very obviously by letting them vocalize what they are going to do. What is more significant, in *Love in Several Masques*, women characters are not only given power to move the plot along but also demonstrate a self-consciousness of their power. Take

the heroine, Lady Matchless, who functions as an action initiator who is also capable of solving problems arising from the actions, for an example. Her comments that "the Men are very silly Creatures" and that "Our Slaves they are . . . for our Service born" (Act III, Scene XII, 60) could be indicative of a woman's controlling power and her awareness of it. Among the three matches in the play, Lady Matchless's union with Wisemore is chiefly pushed forward and realized by herself; meanwhile she is the focus in her multi-lateral relations with Sir Apish Simple, Lord Formal and Harry Rattle, who all wish to marry her for her property, and is therefore the one making things happen to all the suitors. In sum, in Fielding's first play we can see the basic template of employing women characters to initiate actions, set obstacles and resolve mysteries in the plot.

Chambermaids like Catchit who manipulate the plot also appear in Fielding's later plays and they are given even the center stage. In *The Miser* (1733), which is based on Moliere's *L'Avare* (Martin C. Battestin, 2000, 182), there is the smart and eloquent chambermaid to Harriet, Lappet, who is an action initiator, obstacle setter and mystery resolver in one. *The Intriguing Chambermaid* (1734), an adaptation from a French farce by Jean-Francois Regnard, has another clever, dominant chambermaid Lettice to play similar parts to Lappet advancing the plot. It is noteworthy that both chambermaids were acted by Catherine "Kitty" Clive, whom Fielding declares to be in comedy "the greatest Actress the World ever saw" (Martin C. Battestin, 2000, 47). *The Intriguing Chambermaid* is dedicated to Clive and according to Martin C. Battestin, it is a play Fielding "expressly wrote with her in mind" (47). This may

supply information pertaining the author's emphasis on the maid's role, which may not have been the focus in the original play as much as in his adapted version. Lines to illustrate Lappet's eloquence and thus her effort in directing the storyline permeate *The Miser*. For instance, when Lovegold reveals to Lappet his love for Mariana, who is also courted by his son Frederick, the maid takes pains to dissuade her old master:

> LAPPET. Think of her extravagance.
> LOVEGOLD. A woman of the greatest modesty!
> LAPPET. And extravagance.
> LOVEGOLD. She has a very fine set of teeth.
> LAPPET. She will have all the teeth out of your head.
> LOVEGOLD. I never saw finer eyes.
> LAPPET. She will eat you out of house and home.
> LOVEGOLD. Charming hair!
> LAPPET. She will ruin you! (Act IV, Scene VIII, 243)

From the resolute way in which Lappet speaks we can see the strength and we may understand why she controls everybody's fate in the play. Lappet is also the character who delivers the longest speeches to reveal truth behind things and foretell what is going to happen; thus as a leading plot driver she operates throughout the whole plot. Lettice in *The Intriguing Chambermaid* acts in a very similar way as Lappet does by covering up her master's squandering of the family fortune and reconciling Goodall and his son. It is she who facilitates the marriage of her master and Charlotte and that of Rakeit and herself. As the title suggests, Lettice is the central character that plans happenings in the play. What is more interesting lies in one of her airs:

> For did our women, wise, indeed,
> Contrive no way to mend the breed,
> Our sparks such pretty masters grow,
> So spruce, so taper, and so low;
> From Britons tall,

> Our heroes shall
> Be Lilliputians all. (Act II, Scene III, 308)

The depreciation of men's size as well as mental status here echoes that in *Tom Thumb* or *Gulliver's Travels* and this, I would argue, together with women's control of the plot, serves to enhance women's physical and spiritual power. In the two plays with dominant maids we perceive the template of powerful women manipulating the plot.

This template can also be detected in his novels, though the genre involves a much larger number of characters and more complicated actions. Women's roles in deciding and motivating the plot and structure could be viewed from a broad perspective in terms of a novel's main plot, in other words, the framework of a story. For example, in the birth mystery of Tom Jones, without which the history of the "foundling" could not have been constructed, Bridget Allworthy is the key figure in laying down the foundation of the plot. She gives birth to the hero; thus she initiates the general action in the novel. She deserts him and hides the truth from the world, thus she creates mystery around the parentage of the hero and sets obstacles in his life. She confesses to Dowling her motherhood of Tom Jones upon her death and reveals the truth to Allworthy in a letter; thus she resolves the mystery of the hero's birth and restores rights to him. In spite of her scant participation in the events, she is the one who makes everything happen to Tom Jones, including actions derived from prejudices against him because of his unknown birth. For example, it is Bridget who induces the tutors Thwackum and Square to despise Tom and discrimination against him:

> [A]nd hence she acquiesced, after a little Reluctance, in all the Favours which

> Mr. *Allworthy* showered on the Foundling; whom the good Man called his own Boy, and in all Things put on an intire Equality with Master *Blifil*. This Acquiescence in Mrs. *Blifil* was considered by the Neighbours, and by the Family, as a mark of her Condescension to her Brother's humour, and she was imagined by all others, as well as *Thwackum* and *Square*, to hate the Foundling in her heart; nay, the more Civility she shewed him, the more they conceived she detested him, and the surer Schemes she was laying for his Ruin: For as they thought in her Interest to hate him, it was very difficult for her to perswade them she did not. (Bk. III, Ch. vi, 139)

Besides being ironic about the ingratiation and ignorance of the two tutors, this passage provides a unique perspective to view Bridget's role in the whole plot: she serves to aggravate Tom Jones' situation mainly because people around want to discard the face value of her attitude toward the foundling for something deeper and thus the case gets complicated. It can be inferred that the more kindness she shows to the foundling, the worse treatment he suffers from the tutors, so she works as an action initiator in a reactive way. In addition, Bridget is also the one who sows the perpetual rivalry between Tom and Blifil for Squire Allworthy's favour and inheritance, and Sophia's love.

Bridget's retreat to the background does not mean she exerts less influence on the development of the storyline. From Mrs. Waters's (Jenny Jones's) reminiscence of Bridget's "Plot" regarding Tom's birth when the whole history is drawing to the end, the readers may discover who the controlling figure behind the scenes is. Mrs. Waters reveals the circumstances in which Bridget discloses her pregnancy with Tom:

> At last she began to catechise me on the Subject of Secrecy, to which I gave her such satisfactory Answers, that at last having locked the Door of her Room, she took me into her Closet, and then locking that Door likewise, she said, she should convince me of the vast Reliance she had on my Integrity, by communicating a Secret in which her Honour and consequently her Life was concerned. (Bk. XVIII, Ch. vii, 941)

The double locking can be symbolic of Bridget's hidden role in the plot. Hidden as she is, she is an action initiator since from this scene on she conjures up the hero's parentage of Partridge the village schoolmaster and Jenny Jones. Consequently, Tom's partnership with Partridge, in his adventures some twenty years later, and his accused incest with Mrs. Waters both derive from the scene. In this sense she is an obstacle setter and a self-conscious one, as Mrs. Waters observes in her recounting to Allworthy, "And all Suspicions were afterwards laid asleep by the artful Conduct of your Sister, in pretending Ill-will to the Boy, and that any Regard she shew'd him was out of mere Complaisance to you" (Bk. XVIII, Ch. vii, 942). The fact that she locks Jenny up with her prepares a possible disclosure of the secret in the future, so in the end of the novel the mystery of Tom's birth is resolved both by Bridget herself via Dowling and by Mrs. Waters (Jenny). Allowing another woman in the role of mystery resolver, Bridget is the more powerful one herself

Another example of a woman character serving to invite things to happen to people is Betty Harris, Amelia's wicked sister, who conspires with lawyer Murphy to deprive Amelia of her inheritance. Similar to Bridget's case, her conspiracy causes what Amelia, Booth and their children have to suffer. Betty is represented in Booth's narration to Miss Mathews in the prison as an unpredictable woman, whose attitude toward the Booth-Amelia union keeps altering. She "seconded" Dr. Harrison "with the warmest Entreaties" in persuading Mrs. Harris to marry Amelia to Booth (Bk. II, Ch. vii, 89). However, after the two get married, "there was a very visible Alteration in Miss *Betty's* Behavior" —she "was fretful and captious on the slightest Occasion"

and "never failed to make some malicious Remark" on the couple's relations (Bk. II, Ch. viii, 92). She opposes Mrs. Harris' buying Booth the exchange in the army, and incites Booth, by assuming a friendship with him and commending him "to the Skies" (Bk. II, Ch. viii, 92-94), to go to Gibraltar to fight for his "honour" instead of staying home to take care of the pregnant Amelia. Betty the inconsistent woman, evidenced by Miss Mathews' comment that "I always conceived her to be the deepest of Hypocrites" (89), foreshadows that she is going to act unfavorably. Nevertheless, Betty remains an implicit action initiator and obstacle setter in most books. Her absence during the Booths' episodes of misery almost leaves her a forgotten figure, until at the end of the whole novel Robinson reveals that she is the contriver with Murphy and others upon Mrs. Harris' sudden death "to make a new Will, in which *Mrs. Booth* had a Legacy of ten Pounds, and all the Rest was given to the Other". In the conspiracy, she is the leading party because the three men are hired by her—she buys Robinson and Carter with "200*l*. each" and Murphy an unknown amount (Bk. XII, Ch. vi, 517). She is still the mystery resolver, though not intentionally, for she writes letters to "manifestly prove the Forgery and clear up the whole Affair" (Bk. XII, Ch. viii, 529). Both Bridget and Betty perform similar roles in the plot development and their lack of participation in the events does not equate to a lack of dominance in the structure of the novels. To sum up, Fielding's deployment of a woman character at the background to manipulate happenings in such popular motifs as birth mystery and loss and retrieval of property, I would argue, indicates that in his imaginative world, women exercise power at a deep level.

Many other women characters are designed and disposed methodically as plot drivers in the symmetrical structure of Fielding's novels. In the intricate mechanism of his classic texts, women act as controlling devices. In *Tom Jones*, one of "the three most perfect plots ever planned" according to Coleridge (Ian Watt, 1957, 269), the disposal of women characters in plot planning is the most conspicuous. Among the three parts of six books each located in the three different settings—Somerset, the road and London, each major turn in the hero's personal history is initiated by a woman character. Specifically, it is Tom Jones' escapades with three women, namely, Molly Seagrim, Mrs. Waters and Lady Bellaston, that respectively lead to his banishment from Squire Allworthy's house in Somerset, his loss of Sophia in Upton Inn and his near ruin in London. In the locale of Somerset, Molly's role fulfills the three functions, as discussed previously, of a plot driver: she initiates an affair with Tom, complicates the situation with her pregnancy, and therefore creates a barrier between Tom and Sophia. She also triggers two melodramatic episodes, namely, the battle in the churchyard, and the "great Incident" in her room, where her affair with Square is laid bare and Tom is released from her. Mrs. Waters performs the same roles though her contribution to the plot seems to be more extensive than that of Molly: she first appears in the Somerset setting as Jenny Jones to give Tom his name, about twenty years later this stands out in the dividing point of the whole structure to develop an affair with Tom at Upton and poses a further barrier between Tom and Sophia, and in London she partially removes the obstacle by freeing Tom from the accusation of incest. As for Lady Bellaston, she is responsible for the major plot

development in London, an action initiator and obstacle setter, for she is the one who creates the entanglement among Tom, Sophia, Lord Fellamar and herself. She imposes her addresses on Tom and sets a further barrier between Tom and Sophia by persuading Lord Fellamar to separate the two. To revenge Tom's refusal to continue the affair with her, she contrives to press him into the navy. Molly Seagrim the country girl, Mrs. Waters the common-law wife of an army captain, and Lady Bellaston the woman of the politest society, in spite of their different age, appearance and social background, are all represented as dominating figures who are sexually aggressive. Each of the three women characters is deployed to accelerate conflicts in the plot and intensify them. It is upon the basic structure of sexual temptation and resistance that the love plot in *Tom Jones* progresses to a happy ending. In other words, the final union of the hero and heroine is a result of the struggles between obstacle setting and dissolving involving the three women.

The same thing happens in *Joseph Andrews*, where the fundamental plot is made possible by a woman's desire for the hero and contrivance against him when it is disappointed. Lady Booby and Mrs. Slipslop are responsible both for compelling Joseph Andrews to embark on his journey and for all his dramatic adventures together with Parson Adams. At the other end of the storyline, the two contrivers also function to complicate matters by obstructing the final union of Joseph and Fanny. Although the seeming shift of Fielding's focus to Parson Adams as the plot develops is often criticized as a deviation from his original plan, there are textual markers in Book One to foreshadow what is going to happen in Book Four. One such marker is found in the

description of Lady Booby's mentality:

> But what hurt her most was that in reality she had not so entirely conquered her Passion: the little God lay lurking in her Heart, tho' Anger and Distain so hoodwinked her that she could not see him. She was a thousand times on the very Brink of revoking the Sentence she had passed against the poor Youth. (Bk. I, Ch. ix, 45)

The passage throws light on the woman's inner conflicts and indicates that Joseph's expulsion from the Booby house does not end her emotional entanglement with him. It is echoed by Fielding's statement that "all was not ended by the Dismission of *Joseph*", when he writes about "the second Appearance of Lady Booby on the Stage" two books later (Bk. IV, Ch. i, 278). After Joseph returns to the parish, Lady Booby launches her bid to marry him, and she conspires further with Slipslop to remove Fanny from between them. In a move that resembles Lady Bellaston's behavior towards Sophia, she pushes Beau Didapper to ravish Fanny. It is this design that triggers the melodrama of night adventures in Booby Hall, including the climactic bedchamber accidents. If the structure of *Joseph Andrews* could be imagined in the shape of a dumbbell, Lady Booby would weigh heavily on the two ends for her tremendous contribution in initiating all actions and setting obstacles. All events in Book One are started in her house upon her initiative, and after the travel plot in two books in the middle, the events develop further in Book Four before the closing, again set in her house, and driven by her plans. In this regard, Fielding constantly employs women characters to promote his plot from his early efforts in novel writing. Also worth mentioning is the part Slipslop plays in the story. Though merely a waiting woman of Lady Booby's, she is not a shadow of her mistress but rather a parallel plot

driver, because she intends to "lay her violent amorous Hands on the poor *Joseph*" even before her mistress (Bk. I, Ch. vi, 33-34) and drives Fanny out of the house "on account of her extraordinary Beauty" (Bk. I, Ch. xi, 48). In a sense Slipslop could be the externalization of Lady Booby's inner desire obscured by social conventions. While Lady Booby is engaged in ambiguous advances to Joseph and abundant internal conflicts, Slipslop is full of dynamic actions: she makes more open addresses to Joseph, she participates in part of the hero's travel, where she reveals Lady Booby's condition to Parson Adams, and she fights in the inn. What is more, she actively involves herself in the bedchamber episode, her bed being the first mistaken destination of the Beau.

My previous discussion of women's role in plot and structure in Fielding's novels concentrates on the villainous women as action initiators, obstacle setters and mystery resolvers in the novels. It is obvious that in *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* seductions of the heroes by profligate women embody the main conflicts that drive the plot along. Nevertheless, juxtaposed in the novels are virtuous women figures who manipulate the plot and structure in a constructive way. This point is in agreement with my assumption of the preserving capacity of women. London observes, "In *Tom Jones* . . . it is the female characters who embody the choices offered to the protagonist and who thus determine not only the course of the novel's action but also the form of its ending" (1987, 328). I would divide such "female characters" into the constructive and the destructive kind and argue that *Tom Jones* is a realm where the two forces compete in achieving the hero's moral integrity. The former force

embodied in Sophia operates against the latter as found in Molly Seagrim, Mrs. Waters and Lady Bellaston. In the plot and structure, parallel to the development advanced by the corrupt women, Sophia is engaged with another storyline which integrates with Tom Jones' experiences. Unlike her rivals, who motivate the plot in individual phases of development—for instance, Molly never appears beyond the Somerset episodes—Sophia's image permeates the whole novel and acts to control the whole text. Her involvement with Tom is the central action and around it incidents are generated. The power Fielding confers to Sophia in plot building can be exemplified in the Upton Inn incident, in which Sophia learns about Tom's affair with Mrs. Waters and in indignation determines to give him up. By doing so she sets a major obstacle on the hero's way to achieving true love. Leaving her "Muff" with her name attached to it, she departs from the Inn with her maid, and upon seeing the muff, Tom is thrown into a frantic state. It is at this point that Sophia and Tom reverse their parts—from then on Tom begins his pursuit of Sophia on the road. The muff is used as a prop in diverging the plot, and its owner, Sophia, is assigned to perform the task. More barriers are created by Sophia in her refusals of Tom after he is released out of prison and her consent to marry him finally resolves the enigma of her attitude.

Amelia, like Sophia, permeates the whole plot, yet she is a woman to whom all things happen rather than one who makes things happen. Unlike Fielding's other novels, *Amelia* is the life history of a woman. Although it is set mostly in the household situation and involves few road experiences, actions still abound to propel the plot along. The plot scheme in *Amelia* can be perceived as the heroine's constant

confrontations with interpersonal relations, especially extramarital affairs between men and women. Over the basic structure of the theft and restoration of Amelia's inheritance, the former contrived by her sister Betty, a number of women, for example, Miss Mathews, Mrs. Ellison and Mrs Atkinson, are also deployed to bring forth conflicts that seem autonomous but are all relevant to Amelia's *buildungsroman*. The unique opening set in Newgate, where Booth and Miss Mathews are both committed, facilitates the latter's narration of her love story with Hebbers and the revenge she took on him. The Mathews episode, postponing the appearance of eponymous heroine, increases suspense regarding her. It then ushers in the portrayal of Amelia as a paragon of beauty, virtue and faith, in Booth's reminiscence of her, in the two books devoted to their courtship and early postnuptial life. In this light Miss Mathews is the woman who establishes the framework of the special narrative pattern at the beginning of the novel. She plays a dual role here: on one hand, she tells her own tale so as to reveal one kind of womanhood to contrast with the heroine's; on the other, she facilitates Booth's introduction of Amelia. She soon extends her role as an obstacle setter by initiating an affair with Booth in the prison and urging him to continue after they are released. Never brought face to face with Amelia, Miss Mathews confronts her via Booth. As her inquiries lead to the telling of Amelia's story, her affair with Booth serves to bring forth Amelia's response. Embedded in the Mathews-Booth relation is the conflict of Mathews versus Amelia, and in this sense Amelia is the receiving end of all incidents concerning Miss Mathews. From the above discussion we may infer that in *Amelia*, women characters invite things to

happen to the heroine. Another typical case can be Mrs. Ellison, the landlady who appears to care for Amelia and her children, but actually plans to facilitate an affair between the noble lord and Amelia. From Mrs. Ellison the storyline develops to the noble lord and his temptation of Amelia, and more importantly, to the process in which Amelia discerns the truth and retains her virtue. Mrs. Atkinson, who emerges from the episodes opened up by Mrs. Ellison, functions in more dimensions than the latter in acting on Amelia. A victim of the lord's seduction, she narrates her own tragic story, in which her credulity and vanity can be taken as a foil to Amelia's caution and chastity; by disclosing her fate to Amelia, she prevents Amelia from falling into Mrs. Ellison's trap; yet by assuming Amelia's voice before the lord in the masquerade to gain her own profit, she poses a further obstacle to the heroine. At the same time, actions brought about by such men as Booth, the noble lord and Colonel James are all aimed at Amelia's reactions to them. For example, the battle episode in Gibraltar interpolated in Booth's narration can be read as intended to draw Amelia from the domestic scene in order to demonstrate her courage and dedication in a broader setting. In conclusion, Amelia's significance in terms of plot and structure exists in that she is a ready aim for all actions.

In sum, from Fielding's earlier writing of drama to his major novels, there is a consistent template of employing women as plot drivers in the deep structure. This indicates that in his fictional world, women are ascribed tremendous power, whether they exercise it upon the overall texts, or in individual episodes. It seems that as the author progresses in his writing career, there is a growing tendency to rely upon

women characters in his design of plot and structure, which is coherent with his thematic concern in favour of women.

Section III The Narrators and the Plot

Fielding's novels feature different kinds of narrators, among which the "omniscient (or self-omniscient)" narrator, in Henry K. Miller's term, is the most obvious. Apparently a male persona, the narrator is a manipulating figure assuming a masterful voice, who unremittingly relates to the readers what happens and makes comments, so one might expect his imaginative world to be male-dominant. But the male narrator does not direct his narration against the women-driven plot as I have observed in Section II. Instead, he unconsciously collaborates with the women characters to foreground their importance in the novels. Meanwhile there are also women narrators in Fielding. Women narrators, particularly those in the first person, generally speak with a split voice in their narration, acknowledging man's power on one hand while subverting it on the other. Therefore, in Fielding's major novels, both the "omniscient" male narrator in the general plot and the female narrators in the interpolated tales claim a fictional world presided over by men, but the relationship between the narrators and the plot usually uncovers women's dominance in the male world.

The most intrusive among the four major novels, something that is reflected by the introductory chapter heading each book, the narrator in *Tom Jones* appears to establish a male-dominant world from the beginning. *Tom Jones* opens with the

narrator ushering the readers into a realm where man is empowered and woman is deprived of power. In Book I, Chapter II, "*A short Description of Squire* Allworthy, *and a fuller Account of Miss* Bridget Allworthy *his Sister*", the narrator starts to introduce the man with an elevating tone and the woman with a depreciative kind. He presents Allworthy as "the Favourite of both Nature and Fortune", who has "an agreeable Person, a sound Constitution, a solid Understanding and a benevolent Heart" and is in possession of "one of the largest Estates in the Country" (Ch. II, Bk. i, 34). By equipping Allworthy with more positive personal attributes and economic strength, the narrator sets up a male authoritative figure. On the other hand, the so-called "fuller Account of Miss Bridget Allworthy" portrays a rather prudish woman, an "Old Maid" "whom you commend rather for good Qualities than Beauty" (35), who is actually neither beautiful nor virtuous. The ironic tone the narrator uses to describe Bridget contrasts with his seriousness in talking about Allworthy. Besides, Allworthy is said to have "a very tender Affection" for his sister (35) and this may indicate his patronizing of his sister, who relies upon his estate for a living. Financially, morally and emotionally, the power relation between man and woman seems to be indisputably lopsided at the beginning. Allworthy as a magistrate and patriarch remains alive throughout the whole novel: he presides over matters particularly in Somerset and London, the two ends of the structure, and pronounces decisions regarding other people's fate. The opening speech in his trial of Jenny Jones well illustrates his awareness of his own role:

> "You know, Child, it is in my Power, as a Magistrate, to punish you very rigorously for what you have done; and you will perhaps be the more apt to fear

> I should execute that Power, because you have, in a manner, laid the Sins at my Door." (Bk. I, Ch. vii, 51)

The speech occurs without allowing the prosecuted any chance to defend herself, and his addressing her as "Child" and the repetitive use of the word "Power" reveal his self-conscious authoritarianism. Similar cases can be found in Allworthy's comments on Bridget and Captain Blifil's marriage, when he compels of Tom Jones out of his house, and when he persuades Sophia to marry Tom, where the man remains a domineering judge. The narrator maintains a realm of patriarchy at least in the surface structure by having Allworthy exert his "Authority" (Bk. XVIII, Ch. iii, 920) from the beginning to the end. It is he, for instance, who acquaints Tom with "the whole Matter" (Bk. XVIII, Ch. xi, 965) of his birth mystery.

A further look into the workings of the matters judged by Allworthy may throw his authority into question. Most of his judgments are based upon false information contrived by others, especially by women. His lengthy "Admonition" for Jenny by mistaking her as the foundling's mother, for example, results from an intricate design by Bridget and Jenny, which is accelerated by the superficial intelligence of Deborah Wilkins and an old matron in the parish. Entrapped by four women, the magistrate can only exercise his reasoning as far as women want him to go. As an action initiator, Bridget is the one manipulating the other women, who in turn manipulate Allworthy, either consciously or unconsciously. We may infer from the narrator's presentation of the patriarchal figure being trapped by women that within the patriarchal realm of *Tom Jones*, women exert their dominant influence in motivating the plot. This in a large sense challenges Allworthy's authority and

subverts the gender power relation appearing at the beginning of the novel. In fact, the narrator weakens Allworthy's role by constantly exposing his judiciousness to skepticism. In agreeing to marry Bridget to Captain Blifil, he falls into the contrivance of the Blifil brothers. He misjudges the hypocritical suitor to be "a Man of Sense and Honour", his sensual sister as a woman looking for "Perfections" in a man and their interest-motivated union as one based on "Love" and 'Friendship" (Bk. I, Ch. xii, 70). Upon the completion of Allworthy's moralism of love and marriage on the occasion, the narrator says:

> Here Allworthy concluded his Sermon, to which Blifil had listened with the profoundest Attention, tho' it cost him some Pains to prevent now and then a small Discomposure of his Muscles. He now praised every Period of what he had heard, with the Warmth of a young Divine who hath the Honour to dine with a Bishop the same Day in which his Lordship hath mounted the Pulpit. (Bk. I, Ch. xiii, 72)

By comparing Allworthy to a Bishop and his speech to "Sermon", the narrator in a sense elevates him to a kind of unworldly status, yet his ready acceptance of flattery given by a deceptive listener hints that he is subject to human frailty after all. This contradiction suggests the limitedness of his power. Similar situations occur in the subsequent episodes. For instance, when sending Tom into exile, the narrator says that Allworthy "harangues" "in a long speech", proclaiming to Tom that "There is no Part of your Conduct which I resent more than your ill Treatment of that good young Man (meaning *Blifil*) who hath behaved with so much Tenderness and Honour towards you" (Bk. VI, Ch. vii, 310-11). Once again he misjudges the hero on Blifil's false charge and Thwackum's false witness, which violates the Christian commandments he

is supposed to follow. In Book Eighteen, after Blifil's villainy is laid bare, Allworthy tries to match Sophia with Tom, but he fails to understand Sophia's true feeling for Tom by taking at face value her claim that "I shall never receive Mr. Jones as one who is to be my Husband" (Bk. XVIII, Ch. ix, 955). The continuous misjudgments made by the patriarchal figure decentralize him in the fictional realm and reduce him to a passive recipient of actions. Therefore, in the presumably male-dominant world of *Tom Jones*, patriarchy is deprived of power, and is subjugated to women's control in most of the plot movement.

The narrator in *Tom Jones* also confers power on women. A typical example of such conferment can be discovered in Book One, Chapter Five, when, after describing Allworthy's religious meditation, he continues,

> Reader, take care, I have unadvisedly led thee to the Top of as high a Hill as Mr. *Allworthy's*, and how to get thee down without breaking thy Neck, I do not well know. However, let us e'en venture to slide down together, for Miss *Bridget* rings her Bell, and Mr. *Allworthy* is summoned to Breakfast, where I must attend, and, if you please, shall be glad of your Company. (Bk. I, Ch. v, 43-44)

On one hand, the comparison of Allworthy's mind to a hill top acknowledges his respectability, but on the other, to break the reader's "Neck" sounds rather playful and implies that the respectability is not free from violation. Although "to slide down together" may indicate the contact with an inferior order of existence, the outstanding "Mr. Allworthy" is "summoned to Breakfast" by his sister. The verb "summon", which appears again two lines later, is used by Allworthy for his maid servant Deborah Wilkins and seems to maintain its reference of hierarchy. The paragraph suggests the narrator's intention to submerge the boundary between the high and the

low and thus that between Allworthy and Bridget. From here Bridget enters the realm that her brother should be in charge of and starts to make matters more complicated by setting obstacles. After her brother gives her the foundling as a "Present", she behaves on the contrary to what a prudish spinster like her normally does: "she rather took the good-natur'd side of the question, intimated some Compassion for the helpless little Creature, and commended her Brother's Charity in what he had done" (Bk. I, Ch. v, 44). By this means she places Allworthy at her disposal and directs his actions, the most immediate one being to find out the mother of the foundling, which brings about the Jenny Jones episode mentioned earlier. The narrator's conspicuous transfer of man's authority to a woman, I argue, undermines his male voice proclaiming a male world. J. F. Smith holds that the relation between the narrator and the women characters is a sort of alliance: "As Bridget Allworthy and her maid, Jenny Jones, conspire to deceive Mr. Allworthy about the facts surrounding the foundling's birth, so the narrator must conspire to deceive his readers since Tom's secret heritage functions as the keystone of his complicated design" (1993, 99). I agree with Smith in terms of the collaboration between the narrator and the women, but would continue that neither the narrator nor Allworthy could fulfill the design of the birth mystery of Tom Jones, so the narrator has to resort to women's power. Metaphorically, the narrator works as a puppet master manipulating both the man and the women, yet the man is reactive and thus less mobile while the women are made to perform a lot of actions, to such an extent that they dominate the plot development.

The narrator in *Amelia*, though less intrusive than the one in *Tom Jones*, is a

male voice still propagating a patriarchal world embodied in Dr. Harrison, yet this fatherly figure only functions in limited locales. Facilitating the marriage between Amelia and Booth and the restoration of Amelia's inheritance, Dr. Harrison, like Allworthy, appears the most important at the two ends of the structure. In most of the plot, in spite of the fact that he is the patron and mentor for the heroine and her family, he retires to the background, leaving his wards to be confronted with various misfortunes. As I said in Section II, it is the women characters, namely, Betty Harris, Miss Mathews, Mrs. Ellison and Mrs Atkinson who cause things to happen to Amelia. Compared with these women, Dr. Harrison does nothing to contribute to the plot development but remains at the receiving end of the incidents. A close family friend of the Harrises, the doctor is not acquainted with Betty's conspiracy with Murphy and other men to defraud Amelia of her inheritance until the last book. What is more, he fails to recognize the true character of Murphy and employs him to arrest Booth for debt. His false belief that a learned woman must despise her unlearned husband, which is later shattered by the Atkinsons' domestic happiness, also undercuts his authoritative vision. In short, Dr. Harrison, like Allworthy, symbolizes a patriarchy with reduced power. The narrator allows him to be outdone by Betty Harris, who is the root cause of what Amelia and her family suffer, since she conspires with Murphy, Robinson and Carter to disinherit Amelia. The monetary power attributed to Betty by the narrator enables her to maneuver the men at her service and the three men in this case are subject to female control. Meanwhile the narrator also confers on Betty social power, as is shown by Dr. Harrison's employing Murphy "partly, perhaps, out of

Good-will to him and partly from the Recommendation of Miss *Harris*; for as he had married a Servant of the Family, and a particular Favourite of hers"(Bk. XII, Ch. v, 515) Here again as in Allworthy's case, the prominent male character is deprived of knowledge—he is ignorant of the Betty-Murphy alliance—and is left at the mercy of an apparently far less significant woman who is aware of the matter. Thus, in *Amelia*, as well as in *Tom Jones*, the narrator subverts the established male world by employing women to motivate the plot.

Joseph Andrews professes no less masculine power despite the fact that the central figure Parson Adams is represented as more comical and less perfect than Allworthy and Dr. Harrison. The narrator fabricates a story full of male physical energy, demonstrated in the fighting and blood shedding, and predominantly male discourses on religion and learning. He can be perceived as a powerful persona himself since he deploys the characters in a decisive manner, killing off Sir Thomas Booby in merely a couple of lines by saying that he "departing this Life, left his disconsolate Lady confined to her House as closely as if she herself had been attacked by some violent Disease" (Bk. I, Ch. v, 28-29) to pave the way for Lady Booby to seduce Joseph, and summoning people from London to Booby Hall in the country, for instances. Nevertheless, a closer look at the plot development reveals that women characters such as Lady Booby and Slipslop are the ones functioning to advance the storyline. Lady Booby, I would think, juxtaposes the male and female spheres and the interaction of the two spheres could illustrate the workings of the deep structure of the novel. A noble woman succumbing to her own sexual desires, she is presumably a

weak character, yet the narrator's rendition of her dealings with men suggests that she is a powerful figure. After her passion for Joseph is frustrated, she takes an immediate action to expel him from the house:

> She therefore sent for her Steward, Mr. *Peter Pounce*, and ordered him to pay *Joseph* his Wages, to strip him off his Livery and turn him out of the House that Evening. (Bk. I, Ch. ix, 44)

The narrator's tone in this short paragraph implies that Lady Bobby' is extremely at ease in ordering one man to penalize another, in a sense beyond social hierarchy. Similar situations occur after Lady Booby returns to the country, where she bosses around men of different social positions to do what she wants. She is described as bidding Parson Adams to abandon Joseph and Fanny, threatening that "I will suffer no Parsons who run about the Country with Beauties to be entertained here", and to this the latter responds with "many Bows" (Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 283-84) —the tendency of an essentially lopsided gender relation is always revealed by Parson Adams' submission in his contacts with Lady Booby. She is then said to request Lawyer Scout to commit the young couple to prison, and when this is not done she "began to meditate a Design" of exposing Fanny to the addresses of Beau Didapper. Lady Booby's manipulation of the men, in short, works against the prominent male ethos in the novel and reveals the narrator's empowerment of women.

The female voices telling stories from women's point of view in Fielding's novels, similar to the male "omniscient" narrator, acknowledge the existence of a male-dominant realm but undermine it along within their narratives. The episodes told by female narrators offer a unique perspective to observe the workings of Fielding's

fictional world and his understanding of women. In my opinion, the female narrative has undergone a developmental process in the author's novel writing career. One of the early attempts is "The History of Leonora, or the Unfortunate Jilt" told by a "perfectly well bred" lady, an interpolated tale having no obvious connection with the main plot of *Joseph Andrews*. However, the female narrative voice is not very distinguishable from a male one in terms of stylistic features. For example, the narrator introduces Leonora:

> She was an extreme Lover of Gaiety, and very rarely missed a Ball or any other publick Assembly; where she had frequent Opportunities of satisfying a greedy Appetite of Vanity with the Preference which was given her by the Men to almost every other Woman present. (*Joseph Andrews*, Bk. II, Ch. iv, 103)

The phrases loaded with double modifiers such as "extreme Lover of Gaiety" and "greedy Appetite of Vanity" and the syntactic structure of one relative clause embedded in another present an elaborate style. A corresponding case can be found in a first-person male narrative—Wilson's reflection on his youthful indulgence:

> Knowledge of the Town seemed another Ingredient: this I thought I should arrive at by frequenting publick Places. Accordingly I paid constant Attendance to them all: by which means I was soon Master of the fashionable Phrases, learned to cry up the fashionable Diversions, and knew the Names and Faces of the most fashionable Men and Women. (Bk. III, Ch. iii, 203)

In relating the similar theme, the male narrator also talks with an elaborate style using a long relative clause with the three consecutive repetitions of the word "fashionable". The stylistic similarity of the two quoted passages may indicate that, when writing *Joseph Andrews*, though the author realized the necessity to employ a female narrator to recount a woman's experience, he did not differentiate much between the female

and male narratives. Anthony J. Hassall argues that "Fielding became increasingly aware that women characterized by a superior male narrating voice might so lack authenticity that—at least in the case of those with personal experience of the "other" world—it was worth sacrificing the masterful wit and vigour of that voice to have them tell their own stories" (1988, 452). This may not be the case in the tale of Leonora, because the female narrative voice carries at least the same "wit" and "vigour" as a man's.

Besides, the tale of Leonora is not a successful attempt at female narrative for there is a discrepancy between how the woman in discussion represents herself and what the narrator says about her. The unsympathetic third-person narrator tends to mediate what happens and what people hear from her perspective, thus she becomes the manipulating persona. The heroine of the tale, on the other hand, is silenced most of the time and thus deprived of her power. The discrepancy between the faith demonstrated by Leonora's letter to Horatia and her behavior when involved with Bellarmine may arouse some doubt of the truth of the tale. The letter, which may have been written by Sarah Fielding according to J. F. Burrows' statistical study, has a paragraph in the middle like this:

> Oh Horatia! What a Life must that be, where the meanest domestick Cares are sweetened by the pleasing Consideration that the Man on Earth who best deserves, and to whom you are most inclined to give your Affections is to reap either Profit or Pleasure from all you do! In such a Case, Toils must be turned into Diversions, and nothing but the unavoidable Inconveniences of Life can make us remember that we are mortal. (Bk. II, Ch. iv, 107)

Here Leonora is supposed to be expressing her anticipated domestic felicity in her

own voice. The paragraph conveys the sincerity of an affectionate woman ready to dedicate herself, and so it goes beyond what could have been said by a "Jilt" who only cares about a man's "Coach and six" and luxuriant clothes. The description of her upon capturing the attention of Bellarmine fails to match with the high-pitched tone in the letter:

> As this vast Profusion of Ecstasy had confounded her Understanding, so there was nothing so foolish as her Behavior: she played a thousand childish Tricks, distorted her Person into several Shapes, and her Face several Laughs, without any Reason. (Bk. II, Ch. iv, 109)

The same caricaturing tone remains in the rest of the tale and makes the whole representation of Leonora fall short of consistency and thus reliability. A point which can be drawn from the conflict between the different voices in representing Leonora is that in his early career as a novelist Fielding realizes the necessity of employing a female voice to relate women's experiences, yet he appears less than totally meticulous and convincing in writing from a woman's perspective.

Nevertheless, Fielding demonstrates a persistent effort in constructing female narrative voices in his later works and I find that the female narrators conform much better to the relevant movements in the plot. In his "Preface" to Sarah Fielding's *Familiar Letters between the Principal Characters in David Simple, and Some Others* (1747), Fielding professes his belief in the necessity of using female narrator to tell women's experiences:

> In the conduct of women, in that great and important business of their lives, the affair of love, there are mysteries, with which men are perfectly unacquainted. (J. F. Burrows and Anthony J. Hassall, 1988, 449)

In *Amelia*, he makes the same point via Miss Mathews more explicitly:

> Men are often blind to the Passions of Women; but every Woman is quick-sighted as a Hawk on these Occasions; nor is there one Article in the whole Science which is not understood by our Sex. (Bk. II, Ch. ii, 70)

These two quotations may serve to indicate Fielding's developmental adherence to female narrators in the middle and late phases of novel writing. Hassall observes that in the "History of Betty the Chambermaid", the tale of Leonora and Mrs. Fitzpatrick's history, "there is a clear progression from a male narrator to a female narrator to a first-person female narrator; and from an implied male audience to a mixed audience to a private female audience, one that is increasingly sympathetic towards the protagonist of the history" (449). I agree with Hassall regarding the progression of narrator, and I think it is true that the first-person female narrative is more to the benefit of the female protagonist. However, I would argue that the first-person female narrator is compatible with the underlying women-driven plot, whether the audience is male or female. The personal accounts of Mrs. Heartfree, Harriet Fitzpatrick, Miss Mathews, and Mrs. Bennet, which are all told in the first-person, mark themselves as independent entities though meanwhile they are inseparable episodes in the general plot of the novel. In the following paragraphs I will explore the compatibility of the women narrators with the plot by examining how they exert their power.

The first-person women narrators are actually constructed against a domain of male-dominance, but they manage to outdo the patriarchal force. Mrs. Heartfree, who tells the most involved travel tale among them, is confronted with one lusty man after another during her voyage, amounting to five after Jonathan Wild. In her narrative she

sounds not only aware of the threats of men but also admits her frailty in the face of them. For instance, when talking about the French Captain, she says, "He did not even once insinuate to me, that I was totally in his Power, which I myself saw, and whence I drew the most dreadful Apprehensions" (Bk. IV, Ch. vii, 155). When delivered from the ravishment of the Count by the Hermit, she recounts that "I, therefore, committed my self to his Guidance, though with Tears in my Eyes, and begged him to have Compassion on my Innocence, which was absolutely in his Power" (Bk. IV, Ch. x, 167). Her repeated referring to man's "Power" and her readiness to submit to it indicate her perception of the narrated world as being presided over by men. In spite of this, Mrs. Heartfree's descriptions of her escape from each ravisher contradict her claimed weakness and subjugation to men. Her escapes are not just by providence—she fights with both intelligence and physical strength: she elaborates on the fact that she gets the English Captain drunk with "a constrained Air of Gayety" and "an affected Laugh" and finds rescue from the Count by screaming "with . . . Force". There is an air of triumph in the narrative voice when relating the savage English Captain's defeat:

> But Heaven was now graciously pleased to relieve me; for in his Attempt to pursue me, he reeled backwards, and falling down the Cabin Stairs, he dislocated his Shoulder, and so bruised himself, that I was not only preserved that Night from any Danger of my intended Ravisher; but the Accident threw him into a Fever, which endangered his Life, and whether he ever recovered or no, I am not certain; for during his delirious Fits, the eldest Lieutenant commanded the ship. (Bk. IV, Ch. xiii, 158)

The narrator, though still attributing her deliverance to "Heaven", manifests her victory over the man by dispossessing him of his physical power, and consequently,

his command of the ship, which is generally referred to in feminine terms. Similarly, when she describes the reaction of the less imposing Hermit, who courts her with gentle but persistent means and is turned down by her as she does to the other pursers, she sounds sympathetically delighted: "We found the poor Man prostrate on the Ground, expressing all the Symptoms of Misery and Lamentation" (Bk. IV, Ch. xii, 173). Earla A. Wilputte points out that Mrs. Heatrfree "shows far too much interest in the way men keep trying to seduce or rape her" and "readers . . . find that her chastity is suspect, to judge from the way she tells the tale" (2000, 333). However, the disparity between Mrs. Heartfree's expected behavior and "the way she tells the tale" implies a shift in her role. The role reversal of the expected victimizer and victim as revealed by the narrator implies a reversal of power relation between the men and the woman. The first-person female narrator contributes to the women-driven plot by shattering the male world established by her own voice.

Another interesting phenomenon within Mrs. Heartfree's narration is that the narrator often has to insert the demand from a male realm outside her tale. The existence of such a realm is continuously emphasized by the male narrator of the whole novel, who keeps interposing his remarks about Mr. Heartfree's reaction to his wife's adventures. The situation in which the narrative action occurs—the heroine addressing two male listeners, her husband and the justice, in the prison house—furnishes the woman's central position. J. F. Smith observes that "As Mrs. Heartfree tells her tale of repetitive danger and sudden escape, she begins to feel the very real power she exercises over her audience in her new character of narrator" (1993, 86).

Admittedly the female narrator feels her power over her male audience, but from time to time she has to show that she comes to terms with the male realm chiefly indicated by her husband's anxiety over whether she has been ravished. What she says directly maneuvers her husband's emotions. When her recounting of the clash between the ship she takes and the English Man of War "occasioned *Heartfree* to change Colour", she quickly turns to "Circumstances of a more smiling Complexion" (Bk. IV, Ch. vii, 156) to pacify him. Before relating the "fatal Night" of the English Captain's "Molestation", she again relieves him from anxiety: "Here perceiving *Heartfree* grew pale, she comforted him by an Assurance, that God had preserved her Chastity, and again restored her unsullied to his Arms" (Bk. IV, Ch. vii, 157). Moreover, the male narrator resorts to Mrs. Heartfree's own voice, instead of the third-person narrative, to soothe her husband when telling about the Count's attempt to ravish her:

> Mrs. *Heartfree* again perceiving Symptoms of the utmost Disquietude in her Husband's Countenance, cry'd out: "My Dear, Don't you apprehend any Harm.—But, to deliver you as soon as possible from your Anxiety— . . . "(Bk. IV, Ch. x, 166)

Here the female narrator, fully aware of the male listener's frailty, breaks out that she will "deliver" him, in a rather impatient and patronizing tone. Mr. Heartfree's manifested anxiety about the loss of his wife's chastity, which suggests that he regards his wife's body as his private property, is out of place with the facts that he has just been rescued from the gallows by his wife's timely return and that he will only procure his freedom with his wife as witness. On the other hand, Mrs. Heartfree's narrative voice undermines the male narrator's claim of her submission to men when

relating her encounter with the captain and the hermit.

Harriet Fitzpatrick's tale, though restricted to a woman's suffering from a villainous husband, reveals a similar challenge to man's power in the first-person female narrative. In the surface structure, there is the story of a villain marrying a naïve woman for her property and then abandoning her for a new mistress. The narrator ascribes physical attraction to Mr. Fitzpatrick: "He was handsome, degagé, extremely gallant, and in his Dress exceeded most others" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. XI, Ch. iv, 582). She says he tortures her with "Barbarity" in their married life by contradicting her in every sense. He is presented by her as a tyrannical patriarch, who even confines his wife to force her to give up her property. Although the empowered man appears to have the upper hand over the woman, the first-person narrative lays bare the woman's domineeringness, which is not secondary to the man's. She confesses her motive for marrying Fitzpatrick: "I was pleased with my Man. I was pleased with my Conquest. To rival my Aunt delighted me; to rival so many Women charmed me" (Bk. XI, Ch. iv, 584). Her complacency with her "Conquest" reveals her vain character. Harriet's reaction to the letter revealing that Fitzpatrick married her "on account of her Ready Money" further illustrates her intended violence: "If every one of these Words had been a Dagger, I could with Pleasure have stabbed them into his Heart" (Bk. XI, Ch. v, 587-88). The clash between the strong man and strong woman is dramatized in this paragraph of her narration:

> 'When I had remained a Week under this Imprisonment, he made me a Visit, and, with the Voice of a Schoolmaster, or, what is often much the same, of a Tyrant, asked me, "If I would yet comply?" I answered very stoutly. "That I would die first." "Then so you shall, and be d—n'd," cries he; "for you shall never go alive

out of this Room." (Bk. XI, Ch. vii, 601)

The woman imprisoned and threatened by the "Tyrant", though protesting strongly, is the weaker party in the confrontation, yet in the next paragraph she quickly makes her escape out of her almost hopeless situation. What is more, her covering up of her means of escape by telling Sophia "But it would take up an Hour to tell you all Particulars" actually hides her relationship with the Nobleman from her audience and thus suggests her narrative power. After Harriet's escape, she triumphs over her husband, who pursues her all the way in vain and ends up being fatally wounded in London.

The first-person female narrative culminates in *Amelia* in spite of the fact that the most of the heroine's life experiences are told by a first-person male voice. The tale of Miss Mathews and that of Mrs. Bennet respectively serve to usher in Booth's recounting of his marriage with Amelia and resolve the mystery of Mrs. Ellison's generosity to the Booths' family. Meanwhile, they form two individual realms in which we can gain a closer view of gendered power relations. Miss Mathews' tale once again features a patriarchal world, embodied in her indulgent father and deceitful lover Hebbers. Her father, who enjoys inviting dragoon officers to his house, consents to marry her to Hebbers with a large fortune after discovering their relations. Hebbers, on the other hand, is the man who ruins her by keeping her only as a mistress. It appears that Miss Mathews is left at the control of her faithless lover: she follows his persuasion to play the harpsichord, maintains sexual relation with him and cohabits with him in London. Her remarks that "yet the Generality, I am afraid, are too much

in the Power of a Man to whom they have owned an Affection" (Bk. I, Ch. viii, 53) convey an intention to yield to man's power. However, Miss Mathews represents a different self in disclosing her revenge on Hebbers, after learning that he has married widow Carey:

> In the highest Agony of Rage I went in a Chair to the detested House, where I easily got Access to the Wretch I had devoted to Destruction, whom I no sooner found within my Reach than I plunged a drawn Penknife, which I had prepared in my Pocket for the Purpose, into his accursed Heart. (Bk. I, Ch. ix, 59)

Her repetitive use of the personal pronoun "I" demonstrates a very strong ego and the way in which she confesses her murder of Hebbers shows that she neither fears nor regrets. These traits revealed in her own words foreshadow her later advances to Booth in and outside the prison, and her treatment of Colonel James "in the most tyrannical Manner" (Bk. XII, Ch. ix, 531). A female narrator such as Miss Mathews speaks with a deceptive narrative voice, yet her actions betray her words.

The tale of Mrs. Bennet demonstrates in a condensed way the power of a first-person female narrator and of women characters, since the tale contains more conflicts between men and women which are resolved in the men's death. It shares the template of the narrator's stance discussed above, the female narrator's reaction to an established male world. Mrs. Bennet's father, a clergyman who devotes all his love to her after the death of his wife and elder daughter, also acts as her mentor in her classical education. A new action initiator, a young widow, who "was very fully possessed of the Power of making herself agreeable" and who "had the Spirit of a Tigress" (Bk. VII, Ch. ii, 272, 273), diverts the father's attention from the daughter

and marries him. Then the old man "no longer acted from his own excellent Disposition, but was in everything governed and directed by my Mother-in-Law" (Bk. VII, Ch. iii, 275). In presenting the relationship between her father and step-mother, the narrator already deprives the man not only of power but also of life, for the old man dies soon after his young wife, who is believed "to have broken the heart of her first husband"(273), delivers him a son. Parallel to the father's marriage is Mrs. Bennet's own marriage facilitated by her jealous aunt, another powerful woman figure, with Mr. Bennet the young curate. Though happily married, the Bennets have to resort to the noble peer's favour to escape poverty, not realizing the latter's design to seduce the wife. After hearing of his wife's seduction by the noble peer, Mr. Bennet "entered the Room with a Face as white as a Sheet, his Lips trembling, and his Eyes red as Coals of Fire, and starting as it were from his Head" (Bk. VII, Ch. viii, 299). He threw "a large Book" at his wife and knocked her down, "kicked" her and "stamped upon" her. He abused her: "false Monster, you have betrayed me, destroyed me, you have ruined your Husband!" (Bk. VII, Ch. viii, 299) The man's violent actions and words perceived by the narrator indicate the imbalance of male and female physical and social power. Despite this, the female narrator soon terminates such imbalance by saying that her husband dies of "a Polypus in his Heart" (Bk. VII, Ch. ix, 302), which coincides with the widow's "breaking the heart" of her father. Therefore, not altogether coincidentally, both marriages end up with the man's death owing to the woman, though the narrator describes both her father and her husband as divine and powerful. What is more, the narrator's denigration of the noble peer by repeatedly

ascribing effeminate traits to him may reveal her understanding of manhood: "He acted as the Part of a Nurse to my little Infant; he danced it, he lulled it, he kissed it; declared it was the very Picture of a Nephew of his—his favourite Sister's Child" (Bk. VII, Ch. vi, 290). The slighting tone toward the noble man's appropriation of feminine behaviors subverts the narrator's proclaimed admiration of his "goodness". To connect such perception of man's frailty with the two marriages, it might be easier to understand why they both end in the man's death. Wilputte observes that in Mrs. Bennet's tale about her mother's death "Woman carries dangerous potential and, . . . is eager to find personal fulfillment and abandon her domestic duties", and therefore she is silenced—"best to thrust her down to the darkness to prevent the 'Other' side from emerging" (2000, 329). It is true that Fielding realizes women's power, but I disagree with Wilputte's point that women are simply silenced by men, because compared with the death of the male characters, Mrs. Bennet's mother's death is not caused by any men.

To conclude, my investigation of the relationship between the narrators and the plot illustrates once again that in Fielding's fictional world women have real power. The overall storyline of each novel and each individual tale told by a female narrator contain a template upon which women's power prevails in the deep structure. Specifically speaking, the male narrator in *Tom Jones*, *Amelia* and *Joseph Andrews* subverts the established patriarchal figures by submitting them to the designs and commands of women. Tales relating women's experiences, though with an unsuccessful trial in Leonora's story, generally serve their ends better by having a

female first-person narrator in the later novels. Mrs. Heartfree, Harriet Fitzpatrick, Miss Mathews and Mrs. Bennet all acknowledge patriarchal power in their narrative worlds but meanwhile undermine it with their own voices.

Chapter Four Vitality of the Women Characters

In line with Fielding's thematic concern with women and his reliance on women characters in plot and structure, he portrays his women characters with more imaginative engagement than he does the men. Women in his novels are represented as quite lively and exuberant figures, whether virtuous or villainous. Since the way in which women are represented is an important perspective to investigate the author's attitude toward them, in this chapter I will investigate the engagement with which Fielding imagines his women characters. Undercutting Ian Watt's still influential criticism that "Fielding's primary objectives in the portrayal of character are clear but limited: to assign them to their proper category by giving as few diagnostic features as are necessary for the task" (1957, 271), Fielding's approach to characterization does not render his women characters with less life than Richardson's. They are not just stereotypes bearing "few diagnostic features"; on the contrary, simple as some of them may be, they are given considerable physical and spiritual vitality. Nina Ptytula contends that "Fielding's generalizing attitude toward women as a sex can be deduced from the way in which the physical oppositions he creates between his own categories of anti-heroine constantly collapse, revealing a more fundamental psychological likeness in their stead" (2002, 175), but I would argue that Fielding's imagination of the women characters furnishes them with individualized energy. The discussion of the vitality of Fielding's women characters will be carried out in three aspects: the exuberance they manifest in their portraits, words and actions, the physical strength they demonstrate in the mock-heroic battles and their energy as reflected in metaphors

used to describe them.

Section I The Exuberance of Women

The exuberance of Fielding's women characters can be illustrated in their elaborate portraits, their idiosyncratic speeches and their resolute actions. Although not every heroine is presented with the same amount of effort and detail, some heroines, for example, Sophia Western and Laetitia Snap, own very vivid portraits. Fielding insists that in a truly beautiful woman her outward luster reflects her inner virtue, since he praises Sophia by saying that "Her Mind was every way equal to her Person; nay, the latter borrowed some Charms from the former" (*Tom Jones*, Bk, IV, Ch. ii, 157). On the other hand, a vicious woman also shows her inward vice in her appearance, as in Laetitia's example. Although the effect of women's inner quality on the outward appearance is a common male emphasis, Fielding sees it differently, uses it as a means to enliven the women characters' otherwise single-dimensional portraits, and facilitates multi-faceted representation of them. Besides, women in Fielding's novels are often imagined to perform unconventional actions beyond the family circles, as I have observed in the previous chapters. For instance, Sophia escapes from home in pursuit of her true love and Amelia rushes about to procure the freedom of her husband. In the process of representing such actions, the women often talk idiosyncratically. Many women also surpass the conventionally expected behavior patterns for the female gender and involve themselves in masculine activities such as fighting, and in imagining the fighting scenes Fielding portrays women as acting with resolution. This

section will be dedicated to the study of the exuberance of women in their portraits, speeches and actions, with a focus on Sophia and Laetitia.

Sophia is a telling case because she is widely acknowledged as the author's favourite heroine embodying his ideals of beauty, modesty, chastity, wisdom and other virtues, and her exuberance in physical appearance is achieved in Fielding's depiction. In appearance she is a "paragon" encompassing features of many beautiful women in art as well as in life, and this manifests her vitality in a complex aesthetic sense. It takes one whole chapter for Fielding to present her portrait as an example of "what we can do in the Sublime". The endeavour to associate sublimity with the presentation of a woman itself indicates the author's elevation of her, as the narrator declares, "Our Intention, in short, is to introduce our Heroine with the utmost solemnity in our Power, with an Elevation of Stile, and all other Circumstances proper to raise the Veneration of our Reader" (Bk. IV, Ch. i, 154). The elevated style in introducing Sophia remains both celebrated and controversial. For instance, while Samuel Johnson contends that Sophia "never wholly recovers" from the introduction, Robert Alter considers that the style "is honestly meant to give her a certain real grandness" and thinks that "it clearly succeeds" ("The Use of Style", Harold Bloom, 1987, 87). Admittedly Fielding's efforts are successful, but it would be useful to go beyond Sophia's "grandness" and examine her liveliness, since she is not meant to be a goddess but a country squire's daughter. Anthony J. Hassall, when talking about the same episode, is right in deciding that Sophia is "no 'heroine' but a flesh-and-blood woman", but he is a bit dubious in thinking that "the excesses of literary romanticizing of heroines are quoted throughout

her description in mocking fashion to ensure that the reader does not mistake her for a romantic fantasy" (1980, 171). In fact, Fielding does not just quote "literary romanticizing" in excess but incorporates artistic as well as biographical elements in Sophia. After the theatrical practice ushered in by "Hushed be every ruder breath . . .", he begins to associate Sophia with beautiful women in art works as well as real life, ranging from the "Statue of the Venus de Medicis" to the "one whose Image never can depart from my Breast", referring to his first wife Charlotte Cradock, who died in 1744 (Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 154-56). The technique of employing some women figures who are either ever alive or known for their verisimilitude in artistic representation to create the image of Sophia greatly vivifies her, for the readers can associate the life of the women with the heroine.

The description of Sophia's healthiness is a convincing indication of her vitality. The presentation of her as a "Paragon" does not end in a static portrait of her—"Her Complexion has rather more of the Lilly than of the Rose; but when Exercise, or Modesty, encreased her natural Colour, no Vermilion could equal it" (Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 157). The subtlety of life is indicated in changes of her complexion and may extend beyond it. Fielding's quotation from John Donne is particularly interesting:

> ——Her pure and eloquent Blood
> Spoke in her Cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one might almost say her Body thought. (Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 157)

The paradoxical conceits "eloquent Blood spoke" and "her Body thought", ascribe beauty of a more intelligent kind to the heroine, and the active verbs "spoke" and "thought" incompatible with their subjects indicate unconventional activity. Samuel

Johnson, in spite of his acknowledgment of Donne's "very extensive and various knowledge", criticizes Donne for "the ruggedness of his lines" (1968, 13). The fact that Fielding borrows from Donne, who was an unpopular poet known for his rough fantastic awkwardness in the eighteenth century, may also suggest that Sophia is intended by her author to be an idiosyncratic heroine. Moreover, Richard Steele quoted the same lines from Donne to praise the charm of "the agreeable *Statira*", whose liveliness is also the focal point—"Her Features are enlivened with the Chearfulness of her Mind, and good Humour gives an Alacrity to her Eye" (1891,158). Departing from Steele's portrayal of Statira "as a Pattern for improving their [women's] Charms", Fielding quoted Donne to show Sophia's charm as an individual woman.

Since Fielding mingles his imagination of Sophia with reminiscences of his first wife, the heroine embodies both factual and fictional elements, and the biographical nature with reference to Charlotte Cradock provides her with life. In the introductory chapter to Book Thirteen of *Tom Jones*, entitled "*An Invocation*", Fielding actually posits Sophia among her historical prototype, the readers and the author himself:

> Come, bright Love of Fame, inspire my glowing Breast . . . Fortel me that some tender Maid, whose Grandmother is yet unborn, hereafter, when, under the fictitious Name of *Sophia*, she reads the real Worth which once existed in my *Charlotte*, shall, from her sympathetic Breast, send forth the heaving Sigh. Do thou teach me not only to foresee, but to enjoy, nay, even to feed on future Praise. Comfort me by a solemn Assurance, that when the little Parlour in which I sit at this Instant, shall be reduced to a worse furnished Box, I shall be read, with Honour, by those who never knew nor saw me, and whom I shall neither know nor see. (Bk. XIII, Ch. i, 683)

Jill Campbell analyses the second sentence quoted in the above as "rocking also

between fiction and life—from the historical Charlotte to the fictional Sophia to the real but as yet nonexistent future reader" to express Fielding's wishes "for the literary afterlife he has found" (2005, 424). I find that in this passage stating one of his purposes in writing, which is fame, Fielding recapitulates the idea that art can make life eternal. In Sophia he juxtaposes a threefold role: to spread the "real Worth" of the author's deceased wife, to inspire the readers, particularly women, and to carry on the author's literary fame. A fictional character loaded with such expectations from real life figures, consequently, gets their life in her and is an exuberant one. Besides, Fielding's preference of Sophia among other characters to be the vehicle to maintain his literary reputation adds weight to her. His prediction of "some tender Maid" discovering "the real Worth" of Charlotte embodied in Sophia suggests his awareness of a female readership, which is consistent with his thematic and technical concerns with women in the novels. This may suggest that as an author he needs to cater to the female audience and make sure not to disappoint them. Campbell's perception of Fielding's "privileges as the recipient of an elite education and participant in male literary circles" (2005, 411) through this paragraph fails to do justice to his gender ideology. Leopold Damrosch, Jr. observes from the above-quoted passage that "The name Sophia means 'wisdom', but Sophia Western is not wisdom personified as Spenser's Una is truth personified. She is a flesh-and-blood young woman". "The emblem is only an emblem," continues Damrosch, "an arbitrary sign whose meaning derives from the richer reality of the living Sophia Western, and she in turn derives from the reality of women like Fielding's dead wife, whom the fiction brings back to

life" (1985, 278). Indeed Sophia is not simply an "emblem" of wisdom as perceived by Johnson and Watt; she is a living character infused with the life of Charlotte. Damrosch's thinking of Sophia as a realistic life rather than an emblem provides a good support for the vitality of Fielding's women characters.

Sophia's vitality is also facilitated by the vivid depiction of her mental energy often reflected by the discrepancies between what the narrator says she thinks and what he describes she does. The tension between the heroine's thoughts perceived by the narrator and outward actions, I think, generates room for such energy. For example, from the presentation of Sophia's attendance on her father, it is not difficult to detect her strong mind underneath her outward tractability. The descriptions of her experience in love with Tom Jones manifest her mental activities:

> The lovely *Sophia* shone forth that Day with more Gaiety and Sprightliness than usual. Her Battery was certainly leveled at our Heroe; though, I believe, she herself scarce yet knew her own Intention; but if she had any Design of charming him, she now succeeded. (Bk. IV, Ch. x, 187)

The terms employed in the description such as "Gaiety" and "Sprightliness" embody dynamic instead of static notions, while "Battery" and "Design", though conventional metaphors, indicate activity rather than passivity, as they are collocated with "level" and "charm", actions that are initiated by her. Hence Sophia's energy is reflected. Then her change of mood, triggered by Tom Jones' escapades with Molly Seagrim, is presented:

> Thus it happened to poor *Sophia*; upon whom, the very next Time she saw young *Jones*, all the former Symptoms returned, and from that Time cold and hot Fits alternatively seized her Heart . . .That Passion, which had formerly been so exquisitely delicious, became now a Scorpion in her Bosom. (Bk. IV, Ch. xii,

199)

The images of "cold and hot Fits" and "Scorpion" convey with vivacity Sophia's disappointment with her lover; however, the extreme "cold and hot" and "delicious and poisonous" feelings may serve to expand her experience. In sum, by disclosing what is going on in Sophia's "Intention", "Heart" and "Bosom", Fielding endows her with vibrantly rich inner life. Martin C. Battestin's abstraction of Sophia as "the emblematic redaction" of "Virtue" (1974, 181) overlooks her inner as well as physical vitality.

Another perspective to observe Sophia's vitality is through her idiosyncratic speech and resolute actions. Though she is never the narrator of long passages, as her cousin Harriet Fitzpatrick is in relating her unfortunate marriage, Sophia talks eloquently and perceptively. For instance, in judging Blifil and Tom Jones, she states, "I hate the Nature of Master Blifil, as I do whatever is base and treacherous; and I wonder Mr. Allworthy would suffer that old barbarous Schoolmaster to punish a boy so cruelly for what was only the Effect of his Good-nature"(Bk. IV, Ch. v, 166). By infusing his own mind into hers, Fielding enlivens the heroine with strong and distinct likes and dislikes. In showing detestation for Blifil, Sophia declares, "rather than submit to be the Wife of that contemptible Wretch, I would plunge a Dagger into my Heart" (Bk. VII, Ch. vii, 349). Observable is Sophia's deviation from conventional feminine discourse in terms of her resolute style, which can be attributed to Fielding's purpose of molding her as an unconventional heroine. In her determination to flee and subsequent travel, Sophia is depicted as a daring and adventurous woman. She persuades her maid to walk with "a good brisk Pace" in the country by night, and

promises to defend her with "a Pistol" (Bk. VII, Ch. vii, 351). Filled with "all the Spirit which she ought to have", she "mounted resolutely behind the Fellow" who conveys her to Honour (Bk. X, Ch. ix, 559-60). Her "heroic Temper" and "Generosity" are illustrated in her calm reactions to such events as the loss of her bank bill in the journey:

> Misfortunes of this Kind, whatever Inconveniences they may be attended with, are incapable of subduing a Mind in which there is any Strength, without the Assistance of Avarice. *Sophia* therefore, tho' nothing could be worse timed than this Accident, at such a Season, immediately got the better of her Concern, and with her wonted Serenity and Cheerfulness of Countenance, returned to her Company. (Bk. XI, Ch. ix, 610)

Instead of showing panic at the loss of her money that is badly needed for her journey and complaining about it, as a natural reaction of people on such occasions, Sophia behaves as if nothing happened. Her "Strength" of mind and "Serenity" in critical situations mark her as an exceptional woman. The use of the verb "subdue" and the verbal phrase "got the better of", which have an association with battles, suggests that there is a kind of combatant in Sophia, hence her vitality.

The vitality of Sophia augments as she relocates herself from the country to London and thus progresses from innocence to sophistication. Dealing with Sophia's controlling role in the plot development, April London also catches her inner activity as reflected in her relocation: "Her ultimate decision to place herself under the protection of her aunt nicely balances calculated rebellion with obedience" (1987, 327). Fielding actually hints that there is space for her growth toward the close of the chapter of her introduction: "By her Conversation and Instructions, *Sophia* was perfectly well-

bred, though perhaps she wanted a little of that Ease in her Behavior, which is to be acquired only by Habit, and living within what is called the polite Circle" (Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 158). Such "want of Ease" can be illustrated, for example, by her reaction to Blifil's courtship in the country: "to shorten a Scene which she could no longer support, *Sophia* rose up and left the Room . . ." (Bk. VI, Ch. vii, 294). Although she does not flee the man she detests out of conventional "Bashfulness", she is seen to act without much initiative. Sophia's later escape from home, her travel on the road and life "in the polite Circle" in London equip her with more ease to confront her circumstances. Therefore, when facing the addresses of Lord Fellamar in Lady Bellaston's, she no longer just gives "downcast Looks, half Bows and civil Monosyllables" as in her response to Blifil (Bk. VI, Ch. vii, 294). She is described as a commanding woman speaking with dignity and resolution:

> *Sophia* then forcibly pulling away her Hand from his, answered, with much Spirit, 'I promise you, Sir, your World and its Master, I should spurn from me with equal Contempt.' (Bk. XV, Ch. v, 797)

This scene forms a striking contrast with the courtship in the country in the portrayal of her manner and language she uses. Similar to the decisive term "spurn from me with equal Contempt", she later refuses Lord Fellamar by saying that "I intreat you to desist from a vain Pursuit" (797). The words employed in her refusal of the man reveal a stronger consciousness in Sophia to control circumstances rather than submitting to them.

The scenario before the final reconciliation of Tom and Sophia demonstrates Fielding's perception of the growth of the heroine, and reading without perception of it

may render the end of the novel incompatible with the rest. Sophia's refusal to Tom's earnest courtship does appear contradictory of her true feelings for the man, yet if we give up thinking of her naïve self and take the awakening of feminist consciousness in her into consideration, the scene could lead to a different interpretation. Upon Tom's pledges of devotion to her, "*Sophia* blushed, and half smiled; but forc[ed] again her Brow into a Frown" (Bk. XVIII, Ch. xii, 973). The three consecutive actions, though not elaborately expressed by Fielding, very vividly represent Sophia's inner activities: on one hand she is ready to re-accept Tom, on the other she wants to take the initiative in his final reform. Ian Watt, citing Coleridge's criticism that the end of *Tom Jones* is "forced and unnatural", and "the language is without vivacity or spirit, the whole matter is incongruous and totally devoid of psychological truth", takes the representation as "a stock comic scene":

> In fact, Fielding merely gave us a stock comic scene: elevated sentiments of penitent ardour on the hero's part were countered by wronged womanhood's equally elevated scorn of her faithless suitor. Soon after, Sophia accepts Tom, and we are surprised by her very sudden and unexplained reversal: the dénouement has been given a certain comic life, but at the expense of the reality of emotions involved. (1957, 273)

Such judgment only rests upon a view of Sophia's stagnancy. If seeing her as merely an emblem of wisdom without much inner life, we may easily agree with Coleridge's critical comments. But if we perceive her to be a dynamic figure growing as the storyline progresses to the end, we may take her language "without vivacity or spirit" as a manifestation of her interior conflicts, the "incongruous" matter as her deliberate setting of obstacles, as long as we acknowledge a kind of modified "psychological

truth" of hers. In terming Sophia's reaction as "wronged womanhood's equally elevated scorn of her faithless suitor", Watt might have ignored her "blush" and "half smile" before her "Frown", which could help to explain "her very sudden and unexplained reversal". The quick succession of actions toward the end is actually facilitated by the heroine's gradually enhanced vitality over the whole novel.

At the other end of the spectrum of women's portraits is the vitality Fielding assigns to vicious women, which culminates in the case of Laetitia Snap in *Jonathan Wild*. Ushered into the novel as "a Woman of Merit, and great Generosity", Laetitia makes her first appearance one morning, receiving Wild "in the most beautiful Deshabille" (Bk. I, Ch. ix, 32). Her "wantonly hung" hair, the remains of make up in her face overnight, and her "loosely attired" body in rather dirty and untidy clothing, particularly her half exposed breast, all serve to present to the readers the physical features and personality traits of "that lovely young Creature" (32-33). Prytula points out that Fielding's "mock-heroic description" of Laetitia "intentionally deflates" her affected "fineladyism" and "the various features of her body crudely pantomime her habitual appropriation of her husband's masculine prerogatives" (2002, 178). Satirical as Fielding is in the portrayal of Laetitia, the details show that she is an exuberant figure. If Laetitia's "appropriation of her husband's masculine prerogatives" is true, it adds to her physical power. Professedly Fielding does not direct derogatory terms at her, but his repetitive use of such hackneyed compliments as "lovely" "beautiful" and "fine" foregrounds the discrepancy between what he says about the woman and what he means. Rhetorical devices like oxymoron and hyperbole endow the character with

vitality in a complicated sense. For example, in the description that "a neat double Clout, which seemed to have been worn a few Times only, was pinned under her Chin" (32), the paradox between "neat" and "Clout" and "worn a few Times" vividly reveals Laetitia's pretentious way of dressing. The description that "a thin Covering of a rumpled Muslin Handkerchief almost hid them [her breasts] from the Eyes, save in a few Parts, where a good-natured Hole gave Opportunity to the naked Breast to appear" (33) discloses animatedly her wanton nature. Fielding's portrayal of Laetitia's breasts as having "uncontrolled Liberty to display their beauteous Orbs" (32) confers a kind of negative feminine power upon her. Prytula argues that the breasts "break free from the artificial constraints of everyday costume" and "The nature of this image enables him [Fielding] to suggest that, like their breasts, the Amazonianism of these women is itself a potent force just barely contained by the appearance of respectability in which they attempt to clothe themselves" (178). In spite of Fielding's possible suspicion of the deceptiveness of the "Amazonian" women, it is useful to consider his acknowledgement of their "uncontrolled Liberty" and "potent force". In contrast with the affectionate portrayal of Sophia in the "sublime" style, the ironic representation of Laetitia forms her into a vital woman figure on the inverse of feminine virtue.

In the moral respect Laetitia is imagined as a vitally corrupted figure, the female counterpart of Jonathan Wild "the great man". If Wild is the conglomerate of human vices, Laetitia rivals him in many senses. She is promiscuous, seeking gratification of her different desires from different men. "This young lady", Fielding observes, "among other good Ingredients, had three very predominant Passions; to wit,

Vanity, Wantonness, and Avarice" (Bk. II, Ch. iii, 59). She employs "three Sorts of lovers" to satisfy her "Passions", with Wild "solely engrossing the third" (60). Her promiscuity goes farther than the same propensity in the male characters, for instance, the noble lord in *Amelia*, in that she is driven by utilitarian purposes. Besides, she defends herself by denying being "a poor-spirited Creature" or "a raw senseless Girl" and claiming that she knows "what other married Women do" (Bk. III, Ch. viii, 113). She is scheming, for she has "very different ways of entertaining" her various lovers, and she is deft at telling lies. After she is informed by her sister Theodosia of Wild's marriage proposal and "what he had produced", she lies to Bagshot, with whom she is flirting, that "a young Lady was below to visit her", and then she pretends to Wild that she just enters the house (Bk. II, Ch. iii, 59). She is hypocritical—when she learns that her sister has an illegitimate child with Count La Ruse, her response well exemplifies her hypocrisy:

> She fell into the utmost Fury at the Relation, reviled her Sister in the bitterest Terms, and vowed she would never see her nor speak to her more; then burst into Tears, and lamented over her Father that such Dishonour should ever happen to him and herself. At length she fell severely on her Husband for the light Treatment which he gave this fatal Accident. She told him he was unworthy of the Honour he enjoyed of marrying into a chaste Family. That she looked on it as an Affront to her Virtue. (Bk. III, Ch. xiii, 129)

Stylistically speaking, the action verbs such as "reviled", "vowed" and "burst" are employed to enhance her vehemence and thus expose her dishonesty. The commendatory terms "Honour", "Chastity" and "Virtue" which she gives herself only serve to mark her from those qualities and render her the opposite. The radical reactions performed by Laetitia here are particularly affected, given the readers'

awareness of her lechery. Therefore, the more she attempts to flaunt herself, the truer the nature she discloses, and in the process she gains her animation. In fact, Fielding portrays Laetitia in a similar manner to what he does to Wild: by making them perform wicked deeds and meanwhile vocally defend their wickedness, he indulges them in constant self-expression and self-justification. As a result, the villainy of both the man and the woman is self-evident.

As in Sophia's case, Fielding also endows Laetitia with life-force through her idiosyncratic speech and resolute actions, but works towards the image of a woman abuser. In the chapter in Book Three devoted to "*A Dialogue matrimonial*", Fielding assumes a "*verbatim*" record of the dialogue between Wild and Laetitia "*on the Morning of the Day Fortnight on which his Nuptials were celebrated*". The chapter offers a unique viewpoint on both persons' characteristics as well as the domestic relation in a "marriage for Convenience". After Laetitia's accusing Wild of taking her as "a poor spirited Creature" who only desires the husband's "Fondness", the dialogue proceeds,

> *Laetitia*. …I have no Wishes which misbecome a virtuous Woman. —No, nor should not, if I had married for Love. —And especially now, when no body, I am sure, can suspect me of any such thing. —
> *Jonathan*. If you did not marry for Love, why did you marry?
> *Laetitia*. BECAUSE it was convenient, and my Parents forced me.
> *Jonathan*. I hope, Madam, at least, you will not tell me to my Face that you have made your Convenience of me.
> *Laetitia*. I have made nothing of you; nor do I desire the Honour of making anything of you.
> *Jonathan*. Yes, you have made a Husband of me.
> *Laetitia*. No, you made yourself so; for I repeat once more it was not my Desire but your own .(Bk. III, Ch. viii, 114)

Claiming to be a "virtuous" woman as she always does, Laetitia lays the blame of her lewdness on her unhappy marriage with Wild. Her tit-for-tat argument with Wild sounds superficially like a complaint out of wronged womanhood, yet she can hardly gain sympathy because she completely ignores the fact that she makes use of him to gratify her avarice. In this sense, her words only reveal her artificial nature. Moreover, the curses she delivers to Wild at Newgate deal him a death blow: "I faith, my dear, it makes me Amends for being *nubbed* myself to have the Pleasure of seeing thee *nubbed* too—" (Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 142). The hanging of her husband does not reduce her contempt for him, on the contrary, it incurs more abuse from her. Malice prevails over human compassion in Laetitia and makes her a woman of demonic vitality.

The physical vitality of Laetitia is illustrated in her combats with Wild, in which she does not suffer much disadvantage. Barely at the end of the first courting scene in the novel, in response to Wild's "Oaths" promising marriage and "urgent Addresses", she scratches him in the face and forces him to "retreat from the Conflict". Fielding describes her bellicosity as follows: "though she had not learned the vulgar Art of clenching her Fist, Nature had not, however, left her defenseless; for at the Ends of her Fingers she wore Arms, which she used with such admirable Dexterity, that the hot Blood of Mr. Wild soon began to appear in several little Spots on his Face" (Bk. I, Ch. ix, 34). The "Dexterity" that she fights with indicates her truculence, and the violence occurring in their first contact foreshadows their turbulent married life later on. Fighting seems a common practice between the couple — both of their two meetings before Wild's execution end up in physical combat, provoked by Laetitia's

bitter verbal attack on her husband. The fight is represented in a rather animated way: “he seized her by the Waste [Waist], and with strong Arm flung her out of the Room; but not before she had with her Nails left a bloody Memorial on his Cheek” (Bk. IV, Ch. ii, 142). Laetitia attacking Wild with her nails gives a vivid picture of the brutish woman. A physically and immorally vital figure, Laetitia has a destructive kind of vitality and thus she greatly contributes to Wild’s ruin. Her capacity to destroy finds concrete expression in her ruthless abuse of Wild in his final days and culminates in her flirtation with Fireblood in Newgate, which is spotted by her husband. Wild’s “horrible Uproar in the Gate”, incurred by Laetitia’s unfaithfulness and thus “the Injury done to his Honour” (Bk. VI, Ch. xi, 170-171) is probably the last noise he makes in the world. Such a noise is symbolic in that it marks the finish of the “great Man”, with the fatal blow given by the “great Woman”.

From the examination of two extreme cases of Fielding’s imaginative engagement with his women characters, it can be concluded that both his virtuous and villainous women characters are full of life, with the former full of constructive vitality while the latter destructive. In the next section I will study the vitality of women characters represented in Fielding’s highly dramatized situations, namely, the mock-heroic battles.

Section II The Martial Vitality of Women

Women fighting in the battle scenes demonstrate a peculiar kind of feminine martial vitality in Fielding’s novels, particularly in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*.

While imagining the heroes to be vitally fierce fighters, the author also ascribes similar traits to some women characters, which deviate from the normal perspectives of representing women. Three aspects are interesting here: Firstly, in war scenes involving both men and women, women's actions are usually narrated with elaboration while the descriptions of men are relatively reserved, and such a tendency exists even in *Joseph Andrews*, in which the battles are primarily concerned with men. Secondly, women's manner of fighting, apart from its unique features, for example, resorting to their fingernails and hitting their rival's nose, is comparable with men's to some extent. Thirdly, there is an increase in attention to female fighters from *Joseph Andrews* to *Tom Jones* in terms of the number and scale of battles participated in by women.

In the "comic-Epic-Poem in Prose" women are described as fighting more instinctively and resolutely than men, unlike Roger D. Lund's exposition of "the ultimate impossibility of seamlessly accommodating those heroic features necessary for the creation of a 'comic-Epic-Poem in Prose' (2006, 88), which completely ignores Fielding's representation of female fighting. Women's actions are usually described hyperbolically, whereas men's actions are described in understatements implying a sort of rationality and meticulousness. Although in *Joseph Andrews* most battles involve men fighting, overstatement of women fighting already takes shape. For instance, when Adams rescues Joseph from the attack of the host in the inn, the commentary is:

> *Adams* dealt him so sound a Compliment over his Face with his Fist, that the Blood immediately gushed out of his Nose in a Stream. The Host, being unwilling to be outdone in Courtesy, especially by a Person of *Adam's* figure, returned the Favour with so much Gratitude that the Parson's Nostrils likewise began to look a little redder than usual. Upon which he again assailed his Antagonist, and with another stroke laid him sprawling on the Floor. (Bk. II, Ch.

v, 119)

In presenting the two men's tussle, the understated and ironic words such as "Compliment", "Courtesy", "Favour" and "Gratitude" furnish a reserved tone, and the expression that "the Parson's Nostrils likewise began to look a little redder than usual" plays down the narration that the parson's nose is bleeding. The three bouts are told in quite evenly distributed sentence patterns, and this may implicitly suggest that the two men fighters are hitting each other with much restraint. On the other hand, the female fights immediately ushered in by the above passage are more sensationally represented. The combat between the hostess and Adams, in contrast with the reciprocity between the host and Adams, is a unilateral charge of the woman on the man:

> The Hostess, who was a better Wife than so surly a Husband deserved, seeing her Husband all bloody and stretched along, hastened presently to his assistance, or rather to revenge the Blow which to all appearance was the last he would ever receive, when, lo! a Pan full of Hog's-Blood, which unluckily stood on the Dresser, presented itself first to her Hands. She seized it in her Fury, and without any Reflection discharged it into the Parson's Face, and with so good an Aim that much the greater part first saluted his Countenance, and trickled thence in so large a current down his Beard, and over his Garments, that a more horrible Spectacle was hardly to be seen or even imagined. (Bk. II, Ch. v, 119-20)

The two long sentences both written from the point of view of the hostess foreground the woman in the scene, and her actions such as "hasten[ing] presently to his assistance", "seiz[ing] it in her Fury" and "without Reflection discharg[ing] it" reveal that she is a resolute fighter. When the description comes to the male party, Adams, the ironic and understated expression "saluted his Countenance", which is quite similar to the first quoted passage, is again used, but it is of a different tone here. Although the hostess may not necessarily be a better fighter than her husband and Adams, she is

more instinctive than both men. This is especially shown by her resort to whatever is available as a weapon, even if it is "a pan full of Hog's-Blood". The result of the fight, which leaves the man covered in blood, suggests the potential of killing by the woman.

Similar emphasis on women's fighting can be detected in the presentation of *A Battle sung by the Muse in the* Homerican *Stile* in *Tom Jones*, where Molly Seagrim fights against the village mob. While Molly's struggle with a dozen women and another dozen men is described in vivid details occupying eleven paragraphs, Tom's rescue of Molly from the villagers just takes a few lines in one paragraph. J. P. Vander Motten observes that "In the description of the havoc that Molly, with a thigh-bone, Samson-like, wreaks on the mob, Fielding may have taken his cue from Pope's 'Essay on Homer's Battles'" (1988, 250). An interesting paradox between the scenario and its source lies in the gender reversal of the fighters, as Pope's comments focus on the "Heroes" in Homer, while Fielding gives his prior attention to the female fighters. Although in both Molly's and Tom's cases it is one fighter confronting a mass of fighters, the former is seen to combat many individuals with various weapons available, but the latter only "dealt his Blows so profusely on all Sides" with his "Horsewhip" after giving Goody Brown "a Lash or two" (Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 183). The hyperbolic appeal to the "Muses" to usher in the battle fought by Molly shows that the narrator is giving priority to women's fight:

> Ye Muses then, whoever ye are, who love to sing Battles, and principally thou, who whileom didst recount the Slaughter in those Fields where *Hudibras* and *Trula* fought, if thou wert not starved with thy Friend *Butler*, assist me on this great Occasion. All things are not in the Power of all. (Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 178)

The allusion to the fight of Trula, the strong woman in Butler's *Hudibras*, indicates that the battle is going to be a woman-dominated one led by Molly the equally fierce fighter. Consistent with such an introduction, the mock Homerican references in the coming scenes very elaborately tell us how Molly fights against the men and women. On the other hand, when recounting Tom's whipping of the villagers, the narrator makes an apparent understatement by saying "unless I would again invoke the Muse, (which the good-natured Reader may think a little too hard upon her, as she hath so lately been violently sweated) it would be impossible for me to recount the Horsewhipping of that Day" (Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 183). Such deliberate avoidance of elaboration deemphasizes the man's fight, and sets off the woman's as more prominent.

In the "Battle of Upton", once again a fuller description is dedicated to women fighting than to men, and men even appear to be subjugated by women's verbal and physical power during the fight. The landlady is first of all said to attack Tom "with a certain Weapon, which, tho' it be neither long, nor sharp, nor hard, nor indeed threatens from its Appearance with either Death or Wound, hath been however held in great Dread and Abhorrence by many wise Men; nay, by many brave ones". Faced with her violent abuse, Tom "could not be provoked to make any Resistance; but in a most cowardly Manner applied, with many Entreaties, to his Antagonist to desist from pursuing her Blows; in plain *English*, he only begged her with the utmost Earnestness to hear him . . ." (Bk. IX, Ch. iii, 501). Here it is the woman who possesses the destructive power of the tongue and the man appears "so submissive to her" and only responds like a coward to her provocation. If this can be taken as Tom's respect to the

opposite sex, his combat with the landlord is also given without much energy in a subordinate clause: "when a swinging Blow from the Cudgel that Tom carried in his Hand assaulted him [the landlord] over the Shoulders" (Bk. IX, Ch. iii, 502). The focus of the battle remains on the scuffle among the landlady, Partridge, Mrs. Waters and Susan the chambermaid, where women obviously take the centre stage. The "most desperate Fight" between Susan and Partridge in their "single Combat" marks the climax of the battle:

> [T]hat Amazonian Fair having overthrown and bestrid her Enemy, was now cuffing him lustily with both her Hands, without any Regard to his Request of a Cessation of Arms, or to those loud Exclamations of Murder which he roared forth. (Bk. IX, Ch. iii, 504)

Although Fielding may be ironizing such behaviors in a woman, the lop-sided combat, with the woman bestriding the man and cuffing him with both hands, is rarely found in other battle scenes and worth some attention. What is more, the man being beaten up does nothing but beg for mercy. The fact that the overwhelming party is a woman is not coincidental, if we take into consideration how the author imagines the inn hostess and Slipslop assaulting the men and Molly crushing the village mob. In representing the mock-heroic battles joined by both sexes in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, there is an orientation of overstating women's martial power and men's suffering from it.

Women's martial vitality is achieved by a reversal of the perceived natural feminine characteristics and appropriation of some masculine features in terms of their physical appearances and mannerisms in fighting. An earlier example can be Slipslop, who is said to have "a rough Beard" on the chin, causing Parson Adams to mistake her

for a ravisher in the night adventures in Booby Hall. Prytula rates Slipslop as a "more monstrous than human" and "vaguely androgynous" figure who "balances between unmistakable femininity . . . and a kind of compromised masculinity . . ." (2002, 180). Slipslop's masculinity during her fighting prevails over her natural female features. In spite of Fielding's antagonism to Amazonian women as perceived by Prytula, gender appears to be reversible in the scene. A parallel case in point is that the real attempted ravisher of Fanny, Beau Didapper, is taken as a woman because of his "extremely soft" skin and "low Voice begging" (Bk. IV, Ch. xiv, 332). The confused gender identity of Slipslop and the Beau actually triggers the battle, and the sustaining of the battle is owing largely to Slipslop's masculine style of fighting, which is started by "a Cuff on his [Adam's] Chops". Lack of femininity is generally an important attribute in the combative women: Goody Brown, for instance, is said to be "famous . . . in the Fields of *Venus*, nor indeed less in those of *Mars*" (Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 181). She is portrayed as having "no Breast, her Bosom (if it may be so called) as well in Colour as in many other Properties, exactly resembling an ancient Piece of Parchment" (182) and "no feminine Appearance, but a Petticoat" (183). Susan the Chambermaid is "as two-handed a Wench (according to the Phrase) as any in the Country" and "her Form was robust and manlike" (Bk. IX, Ch. iii, 503). All these cases of possible gender reversal evidence against Prytula's opinion that female physical trait counts more in the "Amazonian Heroine". She holds that Molly's possession of "full-breastness" is "more typical of Fielding's representation of such brazen women in general" than Goody Brown (2002, 177). In fact, if Molly is a more typical "Amazonian", it is because of

her energy and skills in fighting, not her "full-breastness". It is women in possession of masculine traits who usually fight with more power.

Although Fielding seems to agree that bellicosity is an unfeminine quality, he admits that "the Order of Nature" can be inverted and women can be manlike and fight as violently as men. In the representation of the churchyard battle in *Tom Jones*, the mention of an inversion of gender performance is worth noting:

> Then *Kate* of the Mill tumbled unfortunately over a Tombstone, which catching hold of her ungartered Stocking, inverted the Order of Nature, and gave her Heels the Superiority to her Head. *Betty Pippin*, with young *Roger* her Lover, fell both to the ground. Where, O perverse Fate, she salutes the Earth, and he the Sky. (Bk. IV, Ch. vii, 180-81)

Earlier readers have noted that the action of Kate of the Hill alludes to Mydon in *Iliad* and that of Betty and Roger alludes to Nisus and Euryalus in *Aeneid*. However, the two cases consecutively listed and the commentaries of "inverted the Order of Nature" and "perverse Fate", in addition to the shift of the fighter's gender from man in the epics to woman, suggest the author's deliberate reversal of gender roles. In the mock-heroic battle, women actually take men's place. Vander Motten has made similar observations about the battle but offers some different points of view:

> By the time Fortune has turned the tide of battle, Molly has been very nearly elevated to the stature of a Homerican hero(ine). Yet we are never allowed to lose sight of the fact that the world in which, for some fleeting moments, she has demonstrated her prowess is one where the 'Order of Nature' (p.180) is inverted—where heels have superiority to head; where lovers find themselves on the ground, not face to face but back to back; where the artifact becomes the artist's own undoing. (1988, 253)

Admitting Fielding's acknowledgement of Molly's "prowess", Vander Motten sees it as the subversion of "one of the novel's major themes, the existence of Order in the

universe". However, the reversibility of the natural order, specifically, in gender roles, is not negative in Fielding as Vander Motten perceives.

With regard to styles of fighting, Fielding imagines there are similarities as well as differences between women and men. The most distinctively female means of attacking is probably scratching, as is revealed in the description of Laetitia that "at the Ends of her Fingers she wore Arms" (*Jonathan Wild*, Bk. I, Ch. x, 34). Slipslop, in spite of her masculine way of fighting, also resorts to her fingernails: she "cuffed and scratched as well as she could" in her combat with Adams in the Booby Hall (*Joseph Andrews*, Bk. IV, Ch. xiv, 332). In Mrs. Partridge's tussle with her husband, the readers are told that "from his Face descend five streams of Blood, denoting the number of Claws with which Nature had unhappily armed the Enemy" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. II, Ch. iv, 89). Goody Brown is also a scratcher, for she has "Talents (or rather Talons)" that leave her husband with a "well-scratched Face" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 181). Scratching particularly applies to domestic conflicts, in which the husbands are often badly injured by the wives' "natural Arms". Another different feature of women's "Fistycuff-War" defined by Fielding himself is "to assail the Bosoms of each other", which could be fatal (*Tom Jones*, Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 182), whereas men are more likely to direct the fist to the part "where the Heart is lodged", which is also meant to kill, as in Adam's fight with the ravisher of Fanny (*Joseph Andrews*, Bk. II, Ch. ix, 138). Fielding also sees that women are "of a more bloody Inclination than Males", because they often "apply to the Nose, as to the Part whence Blood may most easily be drawn" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 182). Although men hit each other's nose as well, as I

have cited earlier in the fight between Adams and the inn host, women seem to be more bloodthirsty. The inn hostess' showering Adams with hog's blood and Susan the chambermaid's setting of a "bloody Torrent" from Partridge's nostrils can prove the point. Again in the Churchyard battle in *Tom Jones*, Goody Brown is seen to get blood to "trickle" from Molly's nose; meanwhile Molly "caused another bloody Stream to issue forth from the Nostrils of the Enemy"(182). To sum up, in women's distinctive ways of fighting, whether it is scratching, attacking the bosoms or hitting the nose, they appear to desire a more immediate effect, especially with blood shedding.

Fielding also equips women with similar means of fighting to those of men, and this merges the differences between fighters of both sexes. In Joseph's scuffle with men sent by the gentleman to take Fanny away, the weapon he resorts to resembles the pan with "Hog's-Blood" used by the inn hostess. He is said to lift up "a certain huge Stone Pot of the Chamber with one Hand, which six Beaux could not have lifted with both, and discharged it, together with the Contents, full in the Captain's Face" (Bk. III, Ch. ix, 257-58). In this case both men and women can be throwers, though with difference in the weight of the weapons they throw. In the same battle scene, Joseph "with his left Hand so chucked him [the host of the inn] under the Chin that he reeled" and "was pursuing his Blow with his right Hand"(Bk. III, Ch. ix, 258). Similar motions can be found in Adams' combat with Fanny's ravisher in Book Two. The ravisher is described thus: "he threw himself upon him, and laying hold on the Ground with his left Hand, he with his right belaboured the Body of *Adams'* till he was weary . . ." (Bk. II, Ch. ix, 138). The technique of men fighting with their left hand holding on to the

target and their right to strike also applies to women. A typical instance is Slipslop slapping the hostess in the inn after she bathes Adams in hog's blood: "Mrs *Slipslop*, holding down the Landlady's Face with her Left Hand, made so dextrous a use of her Right, that the poor Woman began to roar in a Key, which alarmed all the Company in the Inn" (Bk. II, Ch. v, 120). In the fight between Molly and Goody Brown, the latter also clutches Molly's hair "with her Left Hand" and "attacked her so furiously in the Face with the Right", while Molly counterattacks in a similar manner (Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 182). The resemblance in the way in which men and women fight, I would argue, suggests a kind of acknowledgement of women's comparable martial vitality with men's, although from the moral point of view, Fielding seems sarcastic of the bellicosity of women.

Women's comparable martial vitality may be shown in a clearer light if we compare a female fighter with a male one. A case in point can be Joseph's fight with the dogs to rescue Adams in comparison with Molly's actions against the village mob in the churchyard battle. Structurally, both battles share a similar pattern—starting with the narrator's appeal to the muses for assistance and references to poets, in the former case to Swift, Mallet, Middleton and Cibber, and in the latter to Butler. In terms of narrative style, both are presented with a mock-heroic tone, emphasizing the power of the central fighter as opposed to the masses—Joseph beats nearly ten dogs with names, whereas Molly about two dozen men and women. Both Joseph and Molly meet their enemies head-on:

> No sooner had *Joseph* grasped this Cudgel in his Hands than Lightening darted from his Eyes, and the heroick Youth, swift of Foot, ran with the utmost speed to

> his Friend's assistance. (*Joseph Andrews*, Bk. III, Ch. vi, 241)

Though eulogizing terms are not applied to Molly similar to those describing Joseph, she is also said to confront the villagers' attack boldly: "Molly, having endeavoured in vain to make a handsome Retreat, faced about" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 179). More importantly, they defeat their enemies with similar force and efficiency. Joseph "levelled his Cudgel at his [Rockwood's] head, and laid him sprawling" (238), while Molly "laying hold of ragged Bess, who advanced in the Front of the Enemy, she at one blow felled her to the Ground" (179). Molly makes use of whatever weapon available—she takes up a skull and hits "a Taylor on the Head" and stuns him, and then she picks up a more suitable weapon:

> Molly then taking up a Thigh Bone in her Hand, fell in among the flying Ranks, and dealing her Blows with great Liberality on either Side, overthrew the Carcass of many a mighty Hero and Heroine. (180)

The lines are reminiscent of Samson's slaying a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass (Note 1, 180), through which we can imagine with how much ease and deftness Molly fights the mob. The parallel between Molly the village girl and Samson the giant fighter, however ironic, provides an interesting perspective on Fielding's view of women. The superimposition of Molly over Samson confers masculine power on her image. If we associate Samson's relations with three women (Judges 14-16) with Molly's with three men, namely, Tom, Square and Partridge, it is then not only in martial but also in sexual vitality that women and men are compatible. The thigh bone Molly fights with has its counterpart in the cudgel of Joseph, which the narrator also elaborates on with an association with Achilles and Samson. The analogy of both

Joseph and Molly to the ancient heroes suggests women's comparable vitality with men's.

It is observable that from *Joseph Andrews* to *Tom Jones,* there is an increase in attention to women's fighting and accordingly a decrease in men's. Although women fighters in *Joseph Andrews* are represented with elaboration, the hero still is the most attentively imagined fighter, especially in spontaneity and swiftness in action, as demonstrated in his rush to combat the dogs quoted above. Besides, in rescuing Fanny from the ravishment of Beau Didapper, he is said to run "like a Cannon-Ball, or like Lightning, or anything swifter, if anything be", and he beats the beau skillfully—he "threw his Head so dextrously into the Stomach of the Ravisher that he fell a lifeless Lump on the Field" (Bk. IV, Ch. vii, 304). Nevertheless, in *Tom Jones*, the hero, though often involved in frays, never appears centre stage. His conflict with the Ensign in defence of Sophia's reputation, which might have been presented in a full battle, judging by the author's interest in writing about battles in the earlier novel, is just mentioned briefly: "the Ensign, together with a Volley of Curses, discharged a Bottle full at the Head of Jones, which hitting him a little above the right Temple, brought him instantly to the Ground" (Bk. VII, Ch. xii, 377). Another occasion which is worth a fighting scene is Tom's wounding of Fitzpatrick, yet it is presented in a short paragraph with no more than one bout between the two fencers (Bk. XVI, Ch. x, 872) The focus of fighting in *Tom Jones*, which marks an important feature of the "comic-epic-poem in prose", shifts from the hero to the women characters. All the elaborately described battles, for example, the domestic battle of the Partridges, the churchyard

battle, the Upton Inn battle, and the battle "of the amorous Kind" between Tom and Mrs. Waters, are dominated by women. Women such as Mrs. Partridge, Molly, Susan the chambermaid and Mrs. Waters are shaped as vanquishing fighters, whereas men, especially Tom and Partridge, are usually defeated. The temporal development of Fielding's focus from male physical heroism to female physical heroism may suggest a gradual change in his perception of women's physical power.

Section III The Metaphoric Energy of Women

Extended metaphors are often used to usher in the major actions of women characters in Fielding's novels, and thus provide an important perspective on his representation of women. In this section I will study feminine energy as revealed in the metaphors, which critics have not discussed much. Firstly, I will argue that Fielding employs lively metaphors to describe his favourite women, for example, Sophia, and equally vivid, albeit negative, images for women who are the targets of his ridicule. Secondly, though in the animal metaphors describing men and women the animal vehicles are generally distinguished by gender, there are transgressions of gender boundaries, and animals to which women are compared are often fierce. Thirdly, love affairs represented in military terms embody a strong sense of female conquest, which can also in turn reflect the author's perception of women's power.

The images which Fielding employs to portray Sophia bring about a kind of positive energy of his virtuous women. Similar to the "Flourish of Drums and Trumpets" used to introduce "the Heroe" mentioned before the very first appearance of

Sophia in *Tom Jones* (Bk. IV, Ch. I, 152), there are a few extended metaphors to herald her actions in other parts of the novel. In these metaphors, the analogies between Sophia and some especially exuberant plant and lively animals evidently indicate the amount of life the author confers on her. For instance, when presenting Sophia thinking of Tom in Upton Inn, three consecutive images are used:

> As in the month of *June*, the Damask Rose, which Chance hath planted among the Lilies with their candid Hue mixed his Vermilion: Or, as some playsome Heifer in the pleasant Month of *May* diffuses her odoriferous Breath over the flowery Meadow: Or as, in the blooming Month of *April*, the gentle, constant Dove, perched on some fair Bough, sits meditating on her Mate; so looking a hundred Charms, and breathing as many sweets, her Thoughts being fixed on her *Tommy*, with a Heart as good and innocent, as her Face was beautiful: *Sophia* (for it was she herself) lay reclining her lovely Head on her Hand . . . (Bk. X, Ch. v, 542)

Anthony J. Hassall points out that "The passage combines romanticizing and anti-romanticizing in a delicate balance of wit and affection. Sophia looks like a rose, is true as a dove, and sighs like a cow. In short she is human" (1981, 171). It is useful to proceed from the view of emotion contained in the passage to the metaphorical devices. In all the three analogies Sophia is imagined as a figure full of life, whether she is compared to "the Damask Rose", "some playsome Heifer" or "the gentle, constant Dove", the three vehicles which all assume prominence in the scenes. Besides the vivid images in the foreground, the background is also not stagnant: "the Lilies with their candid Hue", "the flowery Meadow" and "some fair Bough" serve to enhance the life of the rose and animals. Among these seemingly clichéd images we can recognize the author's imaginative focus on the heroine. In fact, Fielding consistently resorts to similar metaphors for the heroine throughout the novel. He compares Sophia and Tom

to "two Doves, or two Wood-pigeons" in their "Conversation of Love" (Bk. VI, Ch. ix, 300) and again Sophia to "a plump Doe" that "escaped from the Forest, and to repose herself in some Field or Grove" (Bk. XVII, Ch. iv, 887). Though in both cases he means to introduce the impending threat to Sophia, namely, Squire Western's revenge on the two lovers and the pursuit of "a very fine young Woman of Fortune and Fashion" in the way hunters pursue a doe, the animals he employs are themselves young and female ones full of life.

The metaphors depicting women who lack virtue, particularly with regard to the noises they make, may still function to reveal their inner force. Lady Bellaston appears for the first time in Mrs. Fitzpatrick's lodging after her footman "thundered at the Door" with "a most violent Noise" that "shook the whole House" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. XIII, Ch. iv, 697). The hyperbole to describe the noise projects the woman's energy to the footman and then the door. In *Amelia* the most violent knockings on the door are also produced by women: Mrs. James is said to give "a violent Knocking" that "would have persuaded any one not accustomed to the Sound, that the Madman was returned in the highest Spring-Tide of his Fury" (Bk. VI, Ch. v, 245), and Mrs. Atkinson also gives "a thundering Knock" at the door of Amelia's house (Bk. XI, Ch. vi, 479). Such behavior of women finds its special meaning in that with the opening of the door, new things happen, therefore the women who knock violently do serve to usher in new actions. In a sense this can also reflect their vitality. A more condensed presentation of noises made by a woman can be found in Honour's quarrel with the landlord of the inn, who mistakes Sophia for Jenny Cameron. Honour is described as making

> . . . a Noise not unlike, in Loudness, to that of a Pack of Hounds just let out from their Kennel; nor, in Shrillness, to Cats when caterwauling; or, to Screech-Owls . . .(Bk. XI, Ch. viii, 602-03)

The animals which the author associates with Honour's loud quarrel are all vital ones at exciting moments of their life. Many other lines in the same paragraph parallel Honour to "Oyster-Wenches" and thus deal more attack on women's loudness. Later on he attributes Honour's bad temper to punch:

> Now Mrs. *Honour* had unluckily poured so much of this liquid Fire down her Throat, that the Smoke of it began to ascend into her Pericranium, and blinded the Eyes of Reason which is there supposed to keep her Residence, while the Fire itself from the stomach easily reached the Heart, and then inflamed the noble Passion of Pride . . . (Bk. XI, Ch. viii, 605-06)

The references to "Fire" and "Smoke", which are often found in collaboration with wars, suggest bellicosity as well as force of life in the waiting woman.

Fielding generally assigns male vehicles in the metaphors for men and female ones for women, but occasionally he allows transgression of gender boundaries by using feminine reference for men. In his earlier novels we can find some cases of metaphor which are distinguished by gender. For instance, in *Joseph Andrews*, when Parson Adams tries to save Fanny from the ravisher, the description is:

> 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 the Crabstick, immediately leap from the Woman, and hasten to assail the Man. (Bk. II, Ch. ix, 138)

Among the three parties involved in the scene, the ravisher and Adams are compared to cocks and Fanny to a hen, and the roles they play in the fight correspond to those in the animal world. A similar case is Jonathan Wild's reaction to his wife's affair with

another man:

> As the generous Bull, who having long depastured among a Number of Cows, and thence contracted an opinion, that these Cows are all his own Property, if he beholds another Bull bestride a Cow within his Walk, he roars aloud, and threatens instant Vengeance with his Horns, till the whole Parish are alarmed with his bellowing. Not with less Noise, nor less dreadful Menaces did the Fury of Wild burst forth, and terrify the whole Gate. (Bk. IV, Ch. xi, 170)

The two male animals fighting over one female metaphor in both passages are gendered. However, in his later novels there are metaphors that transgress gender boundaries. Squire Western is compared to "the fair *Grimalkin*, whom *Venus*, at the Desire of a passionate Lover, converted from a Cat into a fine Woman" —just as a female cat cannot change her nature of mouse-chasing , he gives up the pursuit of his daughter for that of some hounds (*Tom Jones*, Bk. XII, Ch. ii, 623). Booth "blushed, and was as silent as a Virgin" upon hearing Mrs. Ellison's praises of him (*Amelia*, Bk. IV, Ch. ix, 193)—though "Virgin" could also be used to indicate male chastity, Booth's reaction and indeed the metaphor are clearly feminine here. The feminine reference in the metaphors for men, I would suggest, also reflects the author's perception of women's vitality because Fielding transfers women's features into male physiques.

Some metaphors used for women, though bearing images of the female gender, create a scene in which the female images are overwhelmingly dominant in contrast with their victims. A typical example is Slipslop's intended harassment of Joseph:

> As a hungry Tygress, who long had traversed the Woods in fruitless search, sees within the Reach of her Claws a Lamb, she prepares to leap on her Prey, or as a voracious Pike, of immense Size, surveys through the liquid Element a Roach or Gudgeon which cannot escape her Jaws, opens them wide to swallow the little Fish, so did Mrs. *Slipslop* prepare to lay her violent amorous Hands on the poor *Joseph*, when luckily her Mistress's bell rung, and delivered the intended Martyr

> from her Clutches. (*Joseph Andrews*, Bk. I, Ch. vi, 34)

The woman being likened to "a hungry Tygress" and "a voracious Pike" here assumes power in relation to the man, who is to be martyred as "a Lamb" and "a Roach or Gudgeon". Besides, the long sentence encompassing the two metaphors functions to enhance the woman's physical forcefulness. The same "Pike and Gudgeon" analogy again appears in *Amelia*:

> The great Man received the Money, not as a Gudgeon doth a Bait, but as a Pike receives a poor Gudgeon into his Maw. To say the Truth, such Fellows as these may well be likened to that voracious Fish, who fattens himself by devouring all the little Inhabitants of the River. (Bk. XI, Ch. v, 476)

In this case the power relation shifts from sexual to social corruption, where Fielding attacks the upper stratum's abuse of the less privileged. Yet the common vehicles employed in presenting the sexual advantage Slipslop takes of Joseph and the social advantage the great man does of Booth are interesting. The comparability between a woman's physical strength and a great man's social power throws light on our understanding of woman's vitality in Fielding's use of metaphors.

Still some other metaphors employed for women's actions foreground women and in such scenes there is a detectable appropriation of male terms. In Mrs. Partridge's fight with her husband, she is likened to a "fair *Grimalkin*", who "though inferior in Strength, is equal in Fierceness to the noble Tyger himself" (*Tom Jones*, Bk. II, Ch. iv, 89). The image of a female cat as fierce as a male tiger attributes more physical power to the woman. Thus she is seen to fly "like Lightening on her Prey, and, with envenomed Wrath, bites, scratches, mumbles, and tears the little Animal" (89). Mr.

Partridge, on the other hand, as in the case of Joseph facing the advances of Slipslop, is merely placed on the suffering end as a "Prey". The same reference to *Grimalkin* to illustrate Squire Western's hunting hobby shows, once again, that metaphors are not always divided by gender in Fielding's novels. The metaphor to introduce Mrs. Deborah Wilkins' arrival at the parish to investigate Tom's parentage places the woman high above the earth in a threatening and male image:

> Not otherwise than when a Kite, tremendous Bird, is beheld by the feathered Generation soaring afloat, and hovering over their Heads, the amorous Dove, and every innocent little Bird spread wide the Alarm, and fly trembling to their Hiding-places: He proudly beats the Air, conscious of his Dignity, and meditates intended Mischief. (*Tom Jones*, Bk. I, Ch. vi, 47)

The "tremendous Bird" the woman is compared to is obviously a male one because it appears self-consciously aloof and superior. In spite of the ironic use of the overwhelming male bird image for the waiting woman, a sense of masculinized female power is achieved.

The comparison of love to war is a fairly common trope in the literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and it is often found in Fielding's novels, but he does not only employ it as a conventional cliché. Unlike his predecessors and contemporaries, he gives women dominance in the trope by analogizing them to the conquering parties rather than the conquered. Some women are described as having a strong military sense. Mrs. Western, for instance, claims that she knows everything in Sophia's mind "as well . . . as the French [know] our Motions, long before we put them in Execution" (Bk. VI, Ch. v, 287), and she pushes Sophia to marry Blifil by saying that "It would be bad Politics indeed, . . . to protract a Siege when the Enemy's Army

is at Hand, and in Danger of relieving it" (290). In Mrs. Western we see a woman who commands daily life and other people's love in military terms. In *The Temple Beau*, women in love are compared to "Heroes" in war by Wilding: "Women act in Love, as Heroes do in War: Their Passions are not presently rais'd for the Combat; but when once up, there's no getting off without fighting . . ." (Act IV, Scene I, 151) In fact, women are not only imagined to be resolute fighters in love but also triumphant ones, in many of Fielding's works. When Tom falls in love with Sophia, the author says it is the virtues of Sophia that "had been able so absolutely to conquer and enslave the Heart of poor *Jones*". The following passage exemplifies the triumph of Sophia's love:

> The Citadel of Jones was now taken by Surprize. All those Considerations of Honour and Prudence, which our Hero had lately with so much military Wisdom placed as Guards over the Avenues of his Heart, ran away from their Posts, and the God of Love marched in in Triumph. (*Tom Jones*, Bk. V, Ch. v, 226)

The passage clearly indicates that Tom is on the defensive side rather than the offensive, which assigns the man a passive role. It is also noteworthy that before this passage Tom's future fall is compared to the capture of the city by the Trojan horse in Dryden's translation of *Aeneid*. The connection of the heroine with the famous strategy reveals Fielding's empowerment of her.

Compared with his contemporary writers, Fielding ascribes more energy and power to women in his trope of love as war. An instance in Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess*, for example, elaborates on this trope. However, opposing Fielding's perception, she views man as the conquering party, who possess "superior Power". In the letter from Alovisa to Count D'elmont, the woman manifests submission to the

man:

> Resistless as you are in War, you are much more so in Love: Here, you conquer without making an Attack, and we Surrender before you Summons; the Law of Arms obliges you to show Mercy to an yielding Enemy, and sure the Court cannot inspire less generous Sentiments than the Field. The little God lays down his Arrows at your Feet, confesses your superior Power, and begs a friendly Treatment . . . (*Love in Excess*, 4)

A similar view appears in Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's poem "Wednesday", in which Dancinda complains about Strephon's inconsistency in love:

> I see too well what wishes you pursue;
> You wou'd not only conquer, but undo:
> You, cruel victor, weary of your flame,
> Would seek a cure in my eternal shame; (90)

The two passages create an image of a man conquering and a woman surrendering and suing for his favour, which runs against Fielding's mode of presenting man-woman relationship in his wars of love. The "Battle of the amorous Kind" occurring in Upton Inn between Mrs. Waters and Tom, where the former wins Tom over with her "Artillery", forms an interesting contrast with the passage from Haywood:

> The Smile our Heroe received full in his Eyes, and was immediately staggered with its Force. He then began to see the Designs of the Enemy, and indeed to feel their Success. A Parley now was set on Foot between the Parties; during which the artful Fair so slily and imperceptibly carried on her Attack, that she had almost subdued the Heart of our Heroe, before she again repaired to Acts of Hostility. To confess the truth, I am afraid Mr. *Jones* maintained a Kind of *Dutch* Defence, and treacherously delivered up the Garrison without duly weighing his Allegiance to the fair *Sophia*. (Bk. IX, Ch. iv, 513)

Although the three quotations are all delivered from the perspective of a woman courting a man, in Fielding we feel the woman's initiative, but in Haywood and Montagu passivity and submission. Courted by women, Count D'elmont and Strephon

are deemed as the winners whereas Tom is the loser. What is more, in both Sophia and Mrs. Waters' capture of Tom's "Citadel" or "Garrison", the women are described as if they perform the role of a whole army and exert collective energy, while Count D'elmont and Strephon only appear to be a single person subduing his women admirers. Fielding's presentation of women's conquering power as opposed to even his contemporary female writers, I would suggest, reflects his perception of women's vitality.

Chapter Five Fielding's Mock Genres and Femininity

Mock modes deal with subjects radically different from those of the original, and create a meeting point of high and low, heroic and unheroic, and masculinity and femininity. The last binary furnishes gender indeterminacy and tension. In this chapter I will explore Fielding's representation of women in his writing of mock genres in comparison with other eighteenth-century writers. Fielding's burlesque of heroics characteristically gives femininity the centre stage and prominence while deflating a set male ethos. Unlike other mock-heroic writers who tend to denigrate the female body and reproductive function, he accepts the diminution of men and magnification of women. As a comparative study of Fielding and other eighteenth-century mock-heroic writers is helpful in detecting the gender issue in Fielding's mock genres, I will conduct my discussion in the following three sections: First, I will place Fielding in relation to Dryden, Garth and Pope, and demonstrate how his gender perspective reacts to theirs in his mock-tragedy *Tom Thumb* (1730) and its extended version *The Tragedy of Tragedies* (1731) by elevating women. Secondly, I will examine how Fielding undermines male heroism by burlesquing the hero in *Jonathan Wild* in terms of his genealogy, his adventures and his relationship with women. Thirdly, I will study the mock tropes employed in what Fielding defines as "comic epic poems in prose" as a setting for gender performance, in comparison with two other eighteenth-century mock-heroic works, *Pompey the Little* and *The Rape of the Lock*, to investigate their differences of gender ideology.

Section I The Elevation of Women

Part of the English mock-heroic tradition involves a dominant female figure, often a fecund goddess or mother, who belittles and fools men. *Mac Flecknoe*, *The Dispensary* and *The Dunciad*, for instance, all contain such a figure and the representation of her implies an antagonism towards both female dominance and the diminution of men. Fielding, in contrast, seems to accept man's diminution in his mock-tragedies *Tom Thumb* and *The Tragedy of Tragedies*. At the same time, he inflates women in physical size and power. In this section I will illustrate Fielding's gender ideology by comparing his elevation of women with Dryden, Garth and Pope's misogynistic rendition of them.

In the limited feminine references in *Mac Flecknoe*, Dryden views women as creators of inferior art, and the mock-heroic satire on bad poets is tinged with a misogynistic tone. For example, in Line 64 the feminine term "fair Augusta" is used for London to create a negative image of the city. In the lines following the description of a feminized London, Dryden continues:

> From its old Ruins Brothel-houses rise,
> Scenes of lewd loves, and of polluted joys;
> Where their vast Courts the Mother-Strumpets keep,
> And, undisturbed by Watch, in silence sleep.
> Near these a Nursery erects its head,
> Where Queens are formed, and future Heroes bred;
> Where unfledged Actors learn to laugh and cry;
> Where infant Punks their tender Voices try,
> And little *Maximins* the Gods defy.(Lines 70-78, 239-40)

Dryden attributes the deterioration of arts to female images. His reference to a theatre being built near the "brothel-houses" and his connection of inferior arts with

prostitutes suggest his gender perspective. The "future heroes" who are born in the indecent environment, though referring to the authors, may still make us reflect upon the genealogy of the heroic heroes and throw their origin into question. Here the mock-heroic subversion is related to the gender issue. In these lines there is the prototype of a malign goddess, which is developed by Pope in *The Dunciad*. The "Mother-Strumpets" lulling the "vast Courts" sound similar to Goddess Dulness hypnotizing the world. Another interesting element in the poem is "Empress Fame" at "Shadwell's Coronation", where the female image is again associated with ruin—"But scattered Limbs of mangled Poets lay" (Line 99, 240), and with squalor—"From dusty shops neglected Authors come, / Martyrs of Pies, and Relics of the Bum" (Lines 100-01, 240). Dryden's anti-woman mentality is again reflected in his attribution of the bleak situation in literature to a dominant woman.

Although *The Dispensary*'s antagonism to womanhood does not seem to be consistent, Samuel Garth's portrayal of a very important female figure, "Envy", the presiding goddess in the college of physicians, is deeply misogynistic. In Canto Two he implies a handsome compliment to Queen Anne by being positively hopeful for a female ruler: "A Heroine shall *Albion*'s Scepter bear. / With Arms shall vanquish Earth, and Heav'n with Pray'r./ She on the World her Clemency shall show'r, / And only to preserve exert her Pow'r." (Lines 73-76, 12) In these lines he presents a powerful yet benevolent "Heroine", an ideal ruler who meets people's expectation, but all her credits are indicated in the future sense by the repeated use of "shall". Nevertheless, earlier in the same canto, Garth's portrayal of Envy as a ruler is very negative:

> In a dark Grott the baleful Haggard lay,
> Breathing black Vengeance, and infecting Day.
> But how deform'd, and worn with spightful Woes.
> When *Aocius* has Applause *Dorsennus* shows.
> The cheerful Blood her meager Cheeks forsook,
> And Basilisks sate Brooding in her Look.
> A bald and bloated Toad-stool rais'd her Head;
> The Plumes of boding Ravens were her Bed.
> From her chapp'd Nostrils scalding Torrents fall,
> And her sunk Eyes boil o'er in Floods of Gall.
> *Volcano's* labour thus with inward Pains,
> Whilst Seas of melted Oar lay waste the Plains. (Canto II, Lines 17-28, 10)

The description of the female body using many ominous images such as "Basilisks", "Toad-stool" and "Ravens" shows that Envy is a she-monster inviting abhorrence. In particular, the liquid images, "scalding Torrents" falling from her nose and "Floods of Gall" from her eyes, suggest a strong disgust with women's physicality. The portrait of Envy is comparable with that of the Goddess of Spleen in Canto Four of *The Rape of the Lock*, where Pope presents her in a similar posture: "Here in a Grotto, shelter'd close from Air, /And screen'd in Shades from Day's detested Glare, /She sighs for ever on her pensive Bed, /*Pain* at her Side, and *Megrim* at her Head" (Lines 21-24, 182). The enclosure of the cave from the outside world explains Spleen's isolation and thus ignorance, hence her endless sighs and depression. Her "two handmaids", "Ill-nature" and "Affectation" are women and they help to characterize Spleen. Both Garth and Pope address the detestability of a female figure, the former focusing on the physical while the latter on the spiritual. Envy and Spleen exemplify "the female monster" in Susan Gubar's term, who "epitomize[s] folly, vanity, hypocrisy, vacancy, and sensuality" (1977, 386).

The tradition of writing about female monsters culminates in Pope's crusade

against the corruption of learning in *The Dunciad*, where he confers on the Goddess Dulness supreme yet negative power. The whole world falls into chaos because it is ruled by a goddess, and this lays bare Pope's distrust of women. Perhaps more familiar is his more explicitly misogynistic view in "Epistle II To a Lady: *Of the* Characters of Women", which begins, "Nothing so true as what you once let fall, / "Most Women have no Characters at all "(Lines 1-2, 46). Pope remarks in a different poem female wit and learning: "In vain you boast Poetic Names of yore, /And cite those *Sapho*'s we admire no more: /Fate doom'd the Fall of ev'ry Female Wit, / But doom'd it then when first *Ardelia* writ." (*Impromptu, To Lady Winchelsea.* Lines 1-4, 288) His antagonism to women is prevailing and consistent in *The Dunciad*, in which Dulness is introduced:

> Dulness o'er all possess'd her ancient right,
> Daughter of Chaos and eternal Night:
> Fate in their dotage this fair Ideot gave,
> Gross as her sire, and as her mother grave,
> Laborious, heavy, busy, bold, and blind,
> She rul'd, in native Anarchy, the mind. (Book I, Lines 11-16, 270)

Marilyn Francus notes the full significance of this image: "Dulness, the daughter of Chaos and Night, not only lives in darkness, but is a purveyor of darkness, as she parodies divine creation by reversing it" (1994, 832). The dismal picture of Dulness's reign, with images such as "Chaos", "eternal Night", "Ideot' and "Anarchy", discloses Pope's dread of a world of darkness and disorder ruled by a woman. The gloomy effect achieved by metrical devices, for example, the assonance in Line 13 and alliteration in Line 15, enhances such a feeling. Furthermore, the feminizing of a male figure by the goddess arouses scorn in the poet:

> All as a partridge plump, full-fed, and fair,
> She form'd this image of well-body'd air;
> With pert flat eyes she window'd well its head;
> A brain of feathers, and a heart of lead; (Book II, Lines 41-44, 298)

The male figure formed with the goddess's manipulative hands, as we can see, turns out to be a hideous being that is deprived of both intelligence and emotion. The perception that men are unable to think and feel under a woman's dominance possibly reveals male anxiety.

Pope's averseness to women in *The Dunciad* is also found in his attack on the way that the goddess rules. The scenario of Dulness mounting her throne concretizes his imagination of the female tyrant, who is governed by the body instead of the head. Line 17 of Book Four presents Dulness with her head concealed and thus apparently absent: "She mounts the Throne: her head a Cloud conceal'd" (341). As a result, there is only the overwhelming presence of her body: "In broad Effulgence all below reveal'd, / ('Tis thus aspiring Dulness ever shines)" (Lines 18-19, 341). The ever-lasting blockage of her head may be an innuendo that the world will be consistently ruled by female senselessness. Dulness appears similarly in these lines: "Her ample presence fills up all the place; / A veil of fogs dilates her awful face" (Book I, Lines 261-62, 289), where again her body is inflated and face concealed. From the dominance of the female body there derives the ambiguous, perhaps incestuous, mother-son relationship, "Soft on her lap her Laureat son reclines" (Book IV, Line 20, 341), suggesting literature being enticed and enslaved by sexual desires. She cultivates her writers with poison— "Here stood her Opium, here she nurs'd her Owls" (Book I, Line 271, 290) —and toys with their works —" Prose swell'd to verse, verse loit'ring

into prose" (Book I, Line 274, 290). Nevertheless, the corruption of the female reign does not stop at feminization only—it involves fierce persecution of branches of human learning:

> Beneath her foot-stool, *Science* groans in Chains,
> And *Wit* dreads Exile, Penalties and Pains.
> There foam'd rebellious *Logic*, gagg'd and bound,
> There, stript, fair *Rhet'ric* languish'd on the ground; (Book IV, Lines 17-24, 342)

"*Science*", "*Wit*", "*Logic*" and "*Rhet'ric*", the fields traditionally championed by men, are cast into a deplorable situation, yet the means to torture them are the same as those used by a male ruler. I think here Pope is establishing a matriarchy in possession of the combined power of masculinity and femininity, which is doubly destructive. In other words, a female tyrant ruling with her body is more threatening than a male one, since she resorts to physicality to coax the men and to penalize them.

The infantilization of the world by Goddess Dulness is another target that Pope attacks in *The Dunciad*. An omnipresent motherly figure is formed by the poet's repeated references to the "Great Mother", "good Queen" and "good Goddess". Carol V. Pohli argues that the references still retain positive association in spite of their ironies, for the reason that "stereotypes, like genres, never can be entirely transcended". Therefore she holds that "Dulness's objectionable role is offset, even if only subliminally for the reader, by positive associations clinging to the images Pope selects" (1985, 212). I disagree with Pohli because Pope's representation of Dulness undermines the stereotype of motherhood and only leads to negative response to the domineering mother. The following lines from Book One disclose Dulness'

complacence in imagining herself in control of the world:

> "O! when shall rise a Monarch all our own,
> And I, a Nursing-mother, rock the throne,
> 'Twixt Prince and People close the Curtain draw,
> Shade him from Light, and cover him from Law;
> Fatten the Courtier, starve the learned band,
> And suckle Armies, and dry-nurse the land:
> Till Senates nod to Lullabies divine,
> And all be sleep, as at an Ode of thine." (Lines 311-18, 292-93)

Here the "Nursing-mother" is void of benevolence and care of her children; her only concern is the diminution of the masculine objects and her own subjugation of them. The diction conventionally associated with nursing such as "rock", "suckle", "dry-nurse" and "Lullabies" are now collocated with "throne", "Armies", "the land" and "Senates". The oxymorons, or rather the mismatches of verbs and objects, display chaos. Besides, familiar actions of Dulness such as "shad[ing]" and "cover[ing]", like the concealing of her head discussed in the last paragraph, deprive the world of light and knowledge. The unconventionally motherly behavior of infantilizing instead of fostering her progeny, I argue, subverts motherhood.

In contrast with the misogynistic or skeptical norm of women, which can be extracted from the mock-heroic poems by Dryden, Garth and Pope, Fielding presents a different and unconventional gender perception. Two of his early mock-tragedies, *Tom Thumb* and *The Tragedy of Tragedies*, dramatize the romances of a thumb-sized hero and are concerned with the issue of gender relations. The diminution of the hero and the caricatured reversal of the usual proportion of statures of men and women in the two plays furnish a physical magnification of women. In *Tom Thumb*, the diminutive

hero, who is said to be "a perfect Butterfly, a Thing without Substance, and almost without Shadow too" (Act II, Scene III, 398), is loved by both the princess Huncamunca and the queen Dollalolla. After his conquest of "Millions of Giants", which is shown by the metaphor that "some Cock-Sparrow in a Farmer's Yard, / Hops at the Head of a huge flock of Turkeys" (Act I, Scene I, 387), he is yet to be conquered by women in the romantic battles. In the chain of conquests, it is women who are rated as the most powerful. The overwhelming influence of femininity may suggest a realm of matriarchy, which reminds us of Pope's, yet Fielding's is not a malign one—the women in the realm appear to bear no malice to the men, and the author presents the love affairs in a jovial manner. *The Tragedy of Tragedies* progresses further than *Tom Thumb* in women's prominence because it also reduces the size of Arthur the human king by introducing a new character, Glumdalca, the captive giantess queen. Glumdalca may remind us of the giant women in Brobdingnag in *Gulliver's Travels*, but she differs from them in that she is presented as a healthy figure pursuing love. King Arthur's love for Glumdalca parallels Tom's for Huncamunca, and Glumdalca's falling for Tom Thumb deflates him even more because of the increased difference in their physical sizes. Whether it is the human king in love with a giantess, or three huge women loving a thumb-sized man, the conception of elevating the female gender is common in all the cases. What's more, the swallowing of Tom Thumb by a cow in both plays is consistent with the dominance of a female body:

> When on the sudden through the Streets there came
> A Cow, of larger than the usual Size,
> And in a Moment, guess, oh! Guess the rest,
> And in a Moment swallow'd up *Tom Thumb*. (*Tom Thumb*, Act II, Scene The

Last, 403-04)

The mentioning of "A Cow, of larger than the usual Size", which is in fact not necessary, shows once again the magnification of women. The metaphor immediately following, "the Boys / Of Fishmongers do swallow Gudgeons down" reiterates the power relation of the cow and Tom Thumb and reveals the author's consciousness of the role that size plays in the actions.

Fielding's rendition of the magnified and healthy female body does not seem to be revolting as renditions of the female body in Garth and Pope, nor does he detest fecundity as Pope and Swift do. Susan Gubar observes that out of "male fear of women" related to "womb envy", "Swift and Pope reserve their most impassioned attacks on female creativity for monstrous mothers who come to represent the sterility of indiscriminate fecundity, encroaching entropy, and the failure of form" (1977, 390). Her criticism of Swift and Pope has some foundation, yet her categorizing of Fielding with them in this regard is not well-grounded. "A satirist like Fielding", she suggests, in the two mock-tragedies and *Jonathan Wild*, "portrays Amazon queens whose lascivious desires can never be sated by the pathetically puny heroes" (383). This is not really the case in *Tom Thumb*, where King Arthur proclaims the marriage of the hero with the princess by declaring "And if I guess aright, *Tom Thumb* this Night / Shall give a Being to a new *Tom Thumb*" (Act II, Scene VIII, 402) and wishing "Long may ye live, and love, and propagate, / 'Till the whole Land be peopled with *Tom Thumbs* " (402). Farcical as it is, it retains the same acceptance of the diminution of man and sees the union as a normal marriage. Besides, neither queen Dollalalla nor the giantess

queen Glumdalca seems to think that the hero's size will affect his sexuality. Although Huncamunca's analogy of Tom Thumb to a needle lost in hay may contain an ambiguous sexual joke, it does not bear any inference that she is sexually dissatisfied with him. Prytula's opinion that Tom Thumb's fate is "merely a farcical realization of the sexual engulfment that his marriage to Huncamunca has all along threatened to accomplish" (2002, 181) may take the words literally. The needle joke and Tom Thumb's ending up in the body of a cow, put side by side, may suggest an interesting reversal of "womb envy", which can be termed as "womb longing". Unlike Francus' analysis of the womb in Pope and his predecessors' works as a signifier of "darkness and void", which "also generates anxieties attendant upon the inability to fill or illuminate such a space" (1994, 832), in the two plays by Fielding the female body, or specifically the womb, appears to be a receptacle offering protection rather than creating anxiety.

A comparative study of the gender-related speeches in *Tom Thumb* and *The Tragedy of Tragedies* can also show Fielding's gender perception. A typical case is the revision of King Arthur's argument with Queen Dollalolla over marrying Huncamunca to Tom Thumb. In the former play, after the queen expresses her disapproval, the king says:

> Say you so, Madam? We will have a Trial.
> When I consent, what Pow'r has your Denyal?
> For, when the Wife her Husband over-reaches,
> Give him the Peticoat, and her the Breeches. (*Tom Thumb*, Act I, Scene III, 390)

In *The Tragedy of Tragedies*, the same situation becomes more dramatic. When the

queen threatens her revenge on those who agree to marry the princess to the hero, the king's speech is altered to:

> Be she, or be she not—I'll to the Girl
> And pave thy Way, oh Thumb—Now, by our self,
> We were indeed a pretty King of Clouts,
> To truckle to her Will—For when by Force
> Or Art the Wife her Husband over-reaches,
> Give him the Peticoat, and her the Breeches. (Act I, Scene IV, 558)

The differences in wording carry some subtle changes in gender relations. If in *Tom Thumb* the transference of apparel between men and women in the household indicates the fluidity of gender identities, the man still assumes an authoritarian role for he does not acknowledge the woman's power to deny his decision. However, in the latter play, the same reference no longer establishes the man as the authority as he sees that he himself would be "a pretty King of Clouts" and realizes his wife's "Force or Art" that he may have to "truckle" to. The shift of gender power relations can be explained by the introduction to King Arthur as a dramatic persona "who stands a little in Fear" of his wife, and Queen Dollallola as "a little given to Drink; a little too much a Virago towards her Husband" (Drammatis Personae, 547). The portrayal of the king as a henpecked husband and the queen as hot-tempered woman fond of drinking turns upside down the conventional gender expectation in the heroic mode, where men drink and fight and women remain submissive.

The reversed gender reference in the metaphorical images in *The Tragedy of Tragedies* also furnishes a subversion of the heroic. When Tom Thumb is being pressed by the love of both Huncamunca and Glumdalca, he compares himself to a

"Whore" who is engaged with "two 'Prentices" and chooses the one with "a little Piece of Gold" while discarding the other with "the larger and the baser Coin" (Act II, Scene VII, 572). Later on in Act Three, Scene Four, King Arthur, addressing his drunken wife, says "I find / There is no Power in Drams, to quiet Wives; / Each Morn, as the returning Sun, they wake, / and shine upon their Husbands" (582). The comparison of the sun, which is usually a masculine image to a woman, I think, works in the same way as the previous metaphor. Moreover, articulations of inner passions more often found in male heroes in the heroic do find their way in women in Fielding:

> *Glumdalca* Left, scorn'd, and loath'd for such a Chit like this;
> I feel the Storm that's rising in my Mind,
> Tempests, and Whirlwinds rise, and rowl and roar.
> I'm all within a Hurricane, as if
> The World's four Winds were pent within my Carcass.
> Confusion, Horror, Murder, Guts and Death. (Act II, Scene VII, 572).

Such tropes are reminiscent of male heroes such as appeared in the *Iliad*, yet they are uttered by a woman in the mock-tragedy. Moreover, in the conclusion of both plays all the personae are slain by one another, the men and women breaking even in the blood shedding, similar to the heroes fighting and killing. This reveals Fielding's conscious inflation of womanhood, and by raising women to some heroic status Fielding undermines the convention of heroism.

Section II The Deflation of Manhood

Parallel to the elevation of women in his mock tragedies, Fielding deflates the hero in *Jonathan Wild* by representing him with a high-flown heroic style and

meanwhile subverting him. I want to argue that the deflation of the hero undermines the heroic mode and thus belittles manhood, which the heroic celebrates. In terms of gender relations, Fielding's mock-heroic heightens female power, against the dominant male ethos in the heroic. The juxtaposition of both eulogy and depreciation for greatness, and the mimicry of serious biographies, demonstrate Fielding's stance, to borrow William J. Farrell's terms, as a "pseudobiographer and pseudopanegyrist" (1966, 226), to denigrate greatness and great men alike. Wild's "Sea-Adventures" in Book Two reduce a typically heroic scene to a rogue's escape after the failure of his evil design, and therefore induce some reflections upon the heroic experience. The gender issue is more critically illustrated through Wild's failures in conquering women—Laetitia Snap, Molly Straddle, and Mrs. Heartfree—which constantly diminish him to a clownish figure.

The antithetic designations that Fielding juxtaposes in the hero as "a GREAT Man" and "a GREAT Rogue" shatter the conception of greatness, and in turn manhood as its vehicle. The understatements following the panegyric immediately sabotage the heroic grandiloquence. In the opening chapter of the novel, for example, Jonathan Wild is said to be an "illustrious Person" "embellished with many of the greatest and noblest Endowments", but the narrator then turns quickly to "the Reverse" of his stated purpose and aim at talking about "the Weakness of modern". While claiming to show "a perfect or consummate Pattern of human Virtue", the narrator declares his intention of "faithfully recording the little Imperfections which somewhat darkened the Lustre of his great Qualities" (Bk. I, Ch. i, 8). The quoted comments on the hero begin in a

pompous manner and end in a reserved tone, yet we know quite well that his "Imperfections" far outdo his virtue. Therefore, among "the confounding Ideas" of the hero, deflation, though understated, prevails over inflation and becomes the dominant tone. The grandiloquence, which is normally associated with the praises of the heroic and manliness, has given way to "pseudopanegyrism". By this means the male ethos of heroism is subverted. Similarly, in disclosing more of Wild's character, the narrator uses the inflation-deflation pattern: "such were his great Abilities, and so vast the Compass of his Understanding, that he never made any Bargain without over-reaching (or, in the vulgar Phrase, cheating) the Person with whom he dealt" (Bk. II, Ch. ii, 54). The focus is obviously on "cheating" rather than his "great Abilities" for the purpose of debasing the hero. Another example is: "the truest Mark of GREATNESS is Insatiability" (Bk. II, Ch. ii, 56), where greatness is elevated with the superlative and all of a sudden demoted. David Nokes points out that "In *Jonathan Wild* we are shown the puppet-master's strings" and that this "is the fundamental part of the challenge of Fielding's satire" ("*Jonathan Wild*", Harold Bloom, 1987, 214). I suggest that by "showing the strings" to the readers, Fielding deliberately reveals the crudeness of the puppet show and the hero as well, and by extension, of all heroic ideas of manliness.

The subversion of the heroic and manhood is substantially indicated through the tension between inflation and deflation in the chapters introducing Jonathan Wild's genealogy, birth and education. A. R. Humphreys's observation is still apposite: "The details of Wild's ancestry and birth, the deeds of his forefathers and the portents which accompanied his nativity are elaborated with a sufficiently broad parody of pedantic

scholarship; stock epithets and heroic similes abound" (1942, 190). The ironic effects thus achieved not only deflate the hero's family, but also the "eminent" figures whom they are related to. The mistaking of "*Take out your Swords*" by "the Great *Wolfstan Wild*" for "*Take out their Purses*" (Bk. I, Ch.ii, 10) equates Hengist's cutthroat actions to those of a pickpocket, and thus diminishes the Saxon invader of Britain. Similarly, "Longfanger" Wild's "great Ease and Dexterity" in stealing hints at the same traits in Hubert de Burgh the chief justiciary (11). The parallels between the admonition of Jonathan Wild's birth and that of Cyrus and Paris suggest the resemblance of the rogue to the great princes (Bk. I, Ch. iii, 13). Jonathan Wild's detection of "the great Antiquity of *Priggism*" from the Eleventh *Iliad* and his confidence in outwitting Cacus of the Eighth *Aeneid*, also deflate the heroes and the heroic epics. The designation of Jonathan Wild as "a passionate Admirer of Heroes, particularly Alexander the Great, between whom and the late King of Sweden he would frequently draw parallels" (16) identifies the rogue with the "Heroes". What is more, the connection of the early and mid-eighteenth century critical commonplace paralleling Alexander the Great and Charles XII of Sweden with Jonathan Wild the ignorant student further undermines the evaluation of historical personae, which is usually formed by men. In short, what Humphreys summarizes as "parody of pedantic scholarship, stock epithets and heroic similes" serves to diminish the heroes and the works which elevate heroes via the deflation of the rogues to whom the heroes are compared.

Fielding denigrates men's pursuit of power through speeches, a medium often employed to voice male grandiloquence. A major topic in Jonathan Wild's soliloquies

is to parallel statesmen and thieves, which not only sabotages statesmen but also subverts the form of speech. When conversing with count La Ruse on human ambition, for instance, Wild says:

> In Civil Life, doubtless, the same Genius, the same Indowments have often composed the Statesman and the *Prig*, for so we call what the Vulgar name a *Thief*. The same Parts, the same Actions often promote Men to the Head of superior Societies, which raise them to the Head of lower; and where is the essential Difference if the one ends on *Tower-Hill*, and the other at *Tyburn*? Hath the Block any Preference to the Gallows, or the Ax to he Halter, but what is given them by the ill-guided Judgment of Men? (Bk. I, Ch. v, 21)

In addition to the political antagonism embodied in the Wild-Walpole equation, the speech poses a challenge to political and social power, the traditional domain for men. The identification of "the Statesman" with "the *Prig*" demystifies the making of "the Head of superior Societies" and demotes his superiority. Meanwhile, Wild the upcoming "Head of the Lower" is also deflating himself since he demonstrates a longing for the power that he seems to despise. Moreover, the different means of execution indicate that both statesmen and prigs will end in destruction, which can be taken as the utmost subversion of power. Challenges to the power of great men, as in "Man, whether he be a CONQUEROR, a TYRANT, a MINISTER, or a PRIG", are found in Wild's soliloquy after his scheme to rob Heartfree's jewelry is frustrated by Count La Ruse. At times, this implicit critique of the masculine pursuit of power is given more explicit expression. Lamenting the vanity of "human GREATNESS" and the unhappiness of "the State of PRIGGISM", Wild complains:

> If I cannot arraign my own Conduct, why should I, like a Woman or a Child, sit down and lament the Disappointment of Chance! But can I acquit myself of all

> Neglect? Did I not misbehave in putting it into the power of others to outwit me? But this is impossible to be avoided. In this a *Prig* is more unhappy than any other. (Bk. II, Ch. iv, 63)

The unwillingness to express his lamentation like "a Woman or a Child" establishes that Wild's world is a male one, from which he perceives woman and child as inferior beings. However, the acknowledgment of his lack of alternatives, which he immediately articulates, indicates the limitation of his power. In this way the male world that he clings to is thrown into question and the inferior beings despised by him assume a relatively higher status.

In addition to the deflation of greatness, the contrasting quality, goodness, as embodied in Heartfree, is also represented in a reserved way, so this further denigrates manhood. Greatness is defined by Fielding in the opening chapter as consisting of "bringing all Manner of Mischief on Mankind, and Goodness in removing it from them" (Bk. I, Ch. i, 9) However, the goodness of Heartfree only consists in his passive suffering from the mischief that Wild imposes upon him, without acting to remove it from himself, not to mention from mankind. His moralizing soliloquy in the prison centres around the vanity of all human "Pomps and Pleasures", which he regards as "worthless Trifles as any exposed to Sale in a Toyshop". What he hopes for is not these but "Futurity" (Bk. III, Ch. ii, 96-97). Here again he is expositing the worthlessness of the pursuit of "men", but the pompous style with carefully versed alliterative words and cumbersome structure only serves to undermine his goodness. Allan Wendt holds that Heartfree has what Fielding terms "a good heart" but lacks "a good head", and his benevolence "is potentially as harmful to himself and to his society as Wild's self-

interest; although it represents an admirable disposition, it lacks the courage and energy necessary for success in our present imperfect world" (1957, 319). Although Wendt goes too far by saying that Heartfree's benevolence may be harmful, doubtlessly Heartfree is a flaccid figure lacking energy. More recently, C. J. Rawson has argued that "as a somewhat passively virtuous person and as a mere tradesman, Heartfree was someone Fielding found it easier to sentimentalize than to respect" (1972, 296). Sentimentalizing, which is often applied to feminine subjects, works on the man here. Both Wild's "greatness" and Heartfree's "goodness" are subject to Fielding's ridicule in the novel. The good man lacking energy in the male domain of *Jonathan Wild*, together with the great man who constantly undermines male power, diminish the male ethos of energy and power, and therefore manhood as well.

Wild's "Sea-Adventures" which cover the most sustained mock-heroic passage reflect upon the heroic in an interesting way. A parody of the *Odyssey*, Wild's journey runs counter to the heroic in many respects. Instead of searching for treasures or returning to his beloved woman, he embarks on his exile as a defeated robber and ravisher after "a short Battle" with the crew on the ship. When "floating in a little Boat on the open Seas, without Oar, without Sail, and at the Mercy of the first Wave to overwhelm him", he "began to ejaculate a Round of Blasphemies", and "then accused the whole Female Sex, and the Passion of Love (as he called it)" (Bk. II, Ch. xi, 81), which conflicts with his claimed faith and gallantry. Wild's exaggerated words and actions, for example, "Let a Pack of cowardly Rascals be afraid of Death, I dare look him in the Face. But shall I stay and be starved", (82) reduce him to a cowardly ruffian

whom he scorns. The description that "he looked extremely fierce, but recollecting that no one was present to see him, he abated the Terror of his Countenance" (81) discloses his hypocrisy and inward weakness. The deflation of the central character in the mock-heroic journey may influence people's perception of the heroes in the heroic; Farrell's comment is still valid for this point:

> When a literary genre associated with the heroes of all times presents the life of a common thief that form becomes an ironic commentary on the traditional notion of a hero. The bombast structure implies, indeed underlines the bombast greatness of not only Wild but others who, though conventionally presented in this form, are as unworthy of it as he is. (1966, 225)

Indeed, if we associate Wild's villainous behaviors in the "Sea Adventures" with "the heroes of all times", it is natural to project the negative image into the "traditional notion of a hero" and merge it with the notion of an antihero. Consequently, the traditional heroic values usually embodied in masculine figures, for instance, faith, gallantry, courage, and integrity, are marred and masculinity, the pivot of heroism, is left at stake.

The deflating influence may be similarly projected from the mock-heroic form to the heroic, and this again diminishes manhood. Jonathan Wild's execution of his "wonderful Resolution" to "leap into the Sea for Drink", immediately deflated by his climbing back to the boat "miraculously within two minutes", celebrates cowardliness instead of heroic courage to face death. For Wild's rescue, Fielding makes a jest of the heroic form:

> and this [Wild's being replaced in his boat] without the Assistance of a Dolphin or Sea-Horse, or any other Fish or Animal, who are always ready at Hand when a Poet or Historian pleases to call them to carry the Hero through a Sea; as any

> Chairman at a Coffee-House Door near St. *James's*, to convey a Beau over a Street, and preserve his white Stockings. (Bk. II, Ch. xiii, 87)

Here Fielding makes the heroic devices of providence the butt of his ridicule and attacks the heroic writers' stereotypes. His explicit avoidance of "a supernatural Agent" shows a tendency to mark himself as distinct from the tradition. Moreover, the trivialization of the heroic is implied in the parallel of a supernatural agent with a chairman, the sea with a street in London and a hero with a beau, and particularly in the comparison of saving a hero to the preservation of a beau's "white Stockings". It can be supported by the way in which Wild spends his time in the boat—"in Contemplation, that is to say, in blaspheming, cursing, and sometimes singing and whistling"(Bk. II, Ch. xiv, 89). Such a presentation of a modern rogue's journey, in a heroic form rejecting stereotype, undermines the stock that it is built from. Humphreys' view still carries some weight —he sees Wild's rescue as an example of one of Fielding's "most frequent ironic devices", namely, "the transformation of a spontaneous and impromptu action into one performed to accord with a formal pattern" (1942, 191). Such transformation, with its mock-heroic rendition, ironizes not only the hero but also the heroic form, which mainly revolves on man's actions. Manhood, then, becomes the underlying target of the author's irony.

Viewed extensively, Wild's life experiences from birth to death form an extended version of his "Sea Adventures", and in his life journey he behaves in the same self-subversive clownish manner. Take his end on "the Tree of Glory" for an example—he retains his priggish character at his last moment by stealing a bottle-screw from the parson's pocket, and with this he reaches "*the highest Consummation*

of human GREATNESS" (Bk. IV, Ch. xv, 186). Upon the conclusion of the history, Fielding expounds the connotation of "Greatness":

> Indeed while GREATNESS consists in Power, Pride, Insolence, and doing Mischief to Mankind; —to speak out, —while a GREAT Man and a GREAT Rogue are synonymous Terms, so long shall *Wild* stand unrivalled on the Pinacle of GREATNESS. (Bk. IV, Ch. xvi, 194)

The further demystification of the characteristics of "Greatness", the identification of "a GREAT Man" with "a GREAT Rogue" and the acknowledgment of Wild as an arch criminal in the passage serve to resolve the contradictions which abound previously in the novel regarding the true features of the quality. One instance of the contradictions can be the criticism of "weak Writers" for presenting "Benevolence and Generosity" "in the Histories of *Alexander* and *Caesar*". Fielding holds that such writers "dress a Peasant in Robes of State, or give the Nose, or any other Feature of a *Venus*, to a *Satyr*" (Bk. IV, Ch. xvi, 193), and claims that his hero has not "any of those Flaws in his Character". Nevertheless, his declaration at the beginning to confer Wild the title "THE GREAT" upon the understanding of the hero's "Meanness and Imperfection" ranks him among his targets of criticism. Similar to his treatment of the "weak Writers", Fielding dresses the rogue in the robes of great man, at whom his satire is directed. This could contribute towards the author's undermining of himself, which is also a challenge to authority embodied in man.

Manhood is further deflated in the presentation of gender relations in the novel. Wild's promiscuity and treachery with the opposite sex, which conforms to other traits of a "great" man, embody a sense of male superiority commonly found in men of his

kind in literature. He is said to have

> . . . that Weakness of suffering himself to be enslaved by Women, so naturally incident to Men of Heroic Disposition; to say the Truth, it might more properly be called a Slavery to his own Appetite; for could he have satisfied that, he had not cared three Farthings what had become of the little Tyrant for whom he profest so violent a Regard.(Bk. III, Ch. iv, 101-02)

Here the enslavement of men in their relationship with women, according to Goldgar, echoes Peachum's comment in the *Beggar's Opera*, "Your Case, Mr. Macheath, is not particular. The greatest Heroes have been ruin'd by Women" (Act II, Scene V, see Note 9, *Jonathan Wild*, 101) The comparability of the two cases lies in the male perspective claiming that the destruction of men is brought about by women, yet the underlying point, upon a closer examination of both cases, is the self-conceitedness of the "Heroes" in conquering women. Men such as Wild and Macheath only give in to their enslavement by paying "a violent Regard" to women to satisfy their "own Appetite" and then desert them. In other words, they have the advantage of placing women at their disposal. However, the male superiority in sexual relations is overthrown by the fact that the imprisonment of both men is brought about by women. The women who are taken for granted as victims act against their victimizers, and exert their force in an unprofessed way. Here Gay and Fielding share a similar way of conferring women with hidden power to subvert male dominance established from a male perspective.

Although both Gay and Fielding allow the subversion of men's egocentricity in dealing with women, the rendition of the love affairs of Macheath and Wild reveals their different gender ideology. Except for Jenny's betrayal of Macheath with her female partners, all the other women in *The Beggar's Opera* plead their admiration for

and faithfulness to the hero. For example, when Polly visits Macheath in prison, she professes:

> O *Macheath*! was it for this we parted? Taken! Imprison'd! Try'd! Hang'd! —cruel Reflection! I'll stay with thee 'till Death—-no Force shall tear thy dear Wife from thee now. —What means my Love? —Not one kind Word! not one kind Look! think what thy *Polly* suffers to see thee in this Condition. (Act II, Scene XIII, 39)

In spite of the melodramatic tone, the speech shows quite seriously the woman's agony for her lover's possible execution, in contrast with his indifference for her. The woman's compliance to the man in Gay forms a sharp contrast with Laetitia's accusation of Wild, which is also set in the prison. Laetitia's main concern is that she "shall be scandalized" after her husband is hanged, and she bitterly attacks him: "I faith, my Dear, it almost makes me Amends for being *nubbed* myself, to have the Pleasure of seeing thee *nubbed* too" (Bk. IV, Ch.iii, 142). The men's attitudes towards their wives are also distinguished from each other. Wild takes it for granted that he has found "a good Wife" in Laetitia and "no Woman had ever less Reason to complain of her Husband's Want of Fondness" (Bk. III, Ch. viii, 113). Macheath, on the other hand, denies his marriage with Polly to Lucy, and only admits his relation with Polly as flirtation —"Tis true, I go to the House; I chat with the Girl, I kiss her, I say a thousand things to her (as all Gentlemen do) that mean nothing, to divert my self" (Act II, Scene IX, 34-35). Macheath and Polly, Wild and Laetitia assume unique gender roles in their marriage relations. There is interesting gender reversal between the two couples: Wild's manifested humility approximates Polly's, while Laetitia's promiscuity equates to Macheath's. In the male domains created in *The Beggar's Opera* and *Jonathan Wild*,

Gay's presentation of his hero's being pursued by women, surviving death and settling down with one of them reflects his reconciliation with primitive masculinity, which Fielding diminishes by frustrating Wild's love affairs and depriving him of life.

The constant disadvantage Jonathan Wild encounters in his relationship with women goes against his self-recognition as not one of "that low sniveling Breed of Mortals" who "*tie themselves to a Woman's Apron-Strings*" (Bk. II, Ch. iii, 58). His heroic ethos of seeking gratification in women consistently meets with frustration when he associates with Laetitia Snap, Molly Straddle and Mrs. Heartfree. To borrow Nokes' observation,

> Wild's constant comic failures with women make him appear not only as less than a hero, but also as less than a full adult; his schemes seem less like criminal master-strokes than the pranks of a malicious schoolboy. ("*Jonathan Wild*", Harold Bloom, 1987, 219)

However, it is not the infantilization of the man which is important so much as his degradation. The elaboration of his confoundedness after failing in his advances to Laetitia diminishes him to a clownish figure: "his full-blown Cheeks to resemble that Part which Modesty forbids a Boy to turn up any where but in publick School, after some Pedagogue, strong of Arm, hath exercised his Talents thereon" (Bk. I, Ch. x, 34). The comparison of the woman to a strong-armed "Pedagogue" and the man to a school boy discloses the ratio of power between the two. Such a pattern consistently exists between Wild and Laetitia, where he suffers her affairs with other men, and her verbal and physical abuses. Neither can Wild get the upper hand of the prostitute Molly Straddle—when he tries to take advantage of her without paying the account, she "had

in the Warmth of his amorous Caresses, unperceived, drawn from him" the purse containing nine hundred pounds. In the struggle to outwit each other, once more the woman wins. Again in Nokes' terms, "[t]he great manipulator is frequently out-manipulated, most notably by women" (219). If the defeat of Wild by two women discussed in the above is taken to be natural because they are "great women" related to the great men, who are skilled in fighting, stealing and cheating, the outwitting of Wild by Mrs. Heartfree the "poor-spirited domestic Animal" really reveals the diminution of male power. The great man's being thrown to the rough sea and being finally sent to the gallows by a domestic woman are cases in point to deflate manhood. Meanwhile, as one of the "low sniveling Breed of Mortals" scorned by Wild, Heartfree's happy ending with his wife and family deals another blow to the savage manhood.

Section III Gender Tension in Mock Tropes

The heroic tropes Fielding employs in his "comic epic poems in prose" burlesque the heroic style moderately in comparison with other eighteenth century mock-heroic works. By applying the tropes to what he terms "persons of inferior rank, and consequently of inferior manners", Fielding retains in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* the keynote of deflating the heroic and men. He makes use of the heroic devices to dramatize the actions of men as well as women, unlike Coventry and Pope, who trivialize the heroic principally at the cost of women in *Pompey the Little* and *The Rape of the Lock*. The dramatic situations foregrounded by the heroic tropes in Fielding furnish a setting for both genders to exert their power, instead of panegyrizing

femininity to such excess that diminution arises. As I have shown in the previous discussions, usually it is the feminine power that implicitly prevails over the masculine. In this section I will investigate the following: Firstly, the use of the genealogy trope in *Joseph Andrews*, which, compared with *Pompey the Little*, equally undermines the heroic, but at the same time feminizes the hero; secondly, the tropes to express the time of day in Fielding's novels and the actions that they usher in, which provide a gender equilibrium rather than the seemingly female universe that diminishes women in *The Rape of the Lock*; thirdly, the mock-pastoral passages and explicit allusions to the heroic in *Tom Jones*, which de-value the male characters whom the tropes normally elevate.

Fielding's introduction to the genealogy of Joseph Andrews works to deny the heroic trope, more than to satirize it as in *Pompey the Little*, and ignores the issue of bloodline, which is mainly a male concept. In the chapter presenting the "Birth, Parentage, Education" of the hero, *Pompey the Little* elaborates on the genealogy of a lapdog:

> *Pompey,* the Son of *Julio* and *Phyllis,* was born A. D. 1735 at *Bologna* in *Italy,* a Place famous for Lap-Dogs and Sausages. Both his Parents were of the most illustrious Families, descended from a long Train of Ancestors, who had figured in many Parts of Europe, and lived in Intimacy with the greatest Men of the Times. They had frequented the Chambers of the proudest Beauties, and had Access to the Closets of the greatest Princes; Cardinals, Kings, Popes, and Emperors were all happy in their Acquaintance; and I am told the elder Branch of the Family now lives with his present Holiness in the papal Palace at *Rome*. (Bk. I Ch. ii, 6)

Coventry's mock-heroic hyperbole in narrating Pompey's family history directs its satire at the style employed for a heroic persona. Despite the fact that it launches some

harsh attack on the heroic mode and the heroes, the domain established by the narrator is still a male one, which is most concerned with "the greatest men of the Times". Except for the women who are called "the proudest Beauties" in passing, all those with whom Pompey's ancestors are associated are men, culminating in the supreme male power of "his present Holiness". Along with the attachment to men, "The Genealogy of a Cat" in the same novel amplifies female follies by entitling some of the cat's ancestors as "*Gridelin the Great,* and *Dina the Sober,* and *Grimalkin the Pious*" (Bk. I, Ch. x, 52). Therefore, Coventry tackles the gender issue from a male perspective. In contrast, in the chapter under the same title, *Joseph Andrews* tends to deal with Joseph's parentage rather curtly, introducing him as "the only son of Gaffer and Gammer *Andrews*, and the brother to the illustrious *Pamela*, whose Virtue is at present so famous" (Bk. I, Ch. ii, 20). The emphasis on his famous sister instead of his nameless parents from the countryside, and the buffoonery later for his equally nameless great-grandfather "*Merry Andrew*" challenge what the narrator terms as "the exact Rules of Biography". Fielding's avoidance of assuming glorious forefathers for Joseph, I argue, distances *Joseph Andrews* from the establishment of a predominantly male domain.

The common reference to the fertility god Priapus in the genealogy of Jonathan Wild and apprenticeship of Joseph Andrews and their subsequent failure in playing Priapus' role place both men's sexual power on the agenda and then deflate it. The simultaneous appearance of Mercury and Priapus in the dream of Wild's mother during her pregnancy with him foretells that he will grow up to be both a thief and a thief

catcher, yet he fails to inherit the sexual attributes of the thief-watching god. Wild's constant frustrations with women are indicators of his lack of manliness, which subverts his own assumed superiority to women. Joseph's first office "to perform the Part the Ancients assigned to the God *Priapus*", i.e., to keep birds from the field, assigns him a manly role, but Joseph is unable to fulfill his role because his voice is "extremely musical that it rather allured the Birds than terrified them" (Bk. I, Ch. ii, 21). Jill Campbell infers from Joseph's failure that:

> Coming just before Joseph's refusal of Lady Booby's sexual advances, the allusion is telling: Joseph is found unfit for the "part of Priapus" by the sweetness of his voice; like the castrati, he combines an alluringly sweet voice with a disqualification from phallic office. (1988, 646)

Campbell is justified in her attribution of Joseph's sweet voice to his questionable manliness, but she overreads in her comparison of the hero to "the castrati". His refusal of Lady Booby is just part of the story that the author uses to parody Pamela's "virtue", and in his subsequent travels with Parson Adams, he demonstrates a fair amount of masculinity, particularly in the several fighting scenes. Joseph is not an explicitly feminized figure: rather the beautiful singer and the brave warrior in him throw his maleness into indeterminacy.

In the introduction to his "Education", Joseph embodies the struggle of masculinity and femininity, which take turns to prevail in him. Though "the Sweetness of his Voice" disqualifies him from "*keeping Birds*" and being a "*Whipper-in*", he proves to be an excellent horse rider with "Strength and Agility beyond his Years" (21-22). It is his manliness in riding with "Expertness and Success" and his integrity to

refuse "a considerable Bribe to play booty" that makes Lady Booby appoint him as her own footman (22). Such horse riding skills foreshadow his later manly performances, for example, the dexterity and force in using his cudgel. However, his masculine identity soon gives way to one of sexual ambiguity:

> Joey was now preferred from the Stable to attend on his Lady, to go on her Errands, stand behind her Chair, wait at her Tea-table, and carry her Prayer-Book to Church; at which Place, his Voice gave him an Opportunity of distinguishing himself by singing Psalms: he behaved likewise in every respect so well at divine Service, that it recommended him to the Notice of Mr *Abraham Adams* the Curate . . . (Bk. I, Ch. ii, 29)

It can be noticed that most tasks which Joseph performs are rather as Lady Booby's maid than her footman and that the transplantation from the stable to the drawing room feminizes his role. Yet the musicality of his voice now places him more on the masculine side, to win him recognition in the church and the attention of Parson Adams. The alternating of gender features also appears in Joseph's first encounter with the robbers on the road, where he is ordered to strip his clothes off. In spite of the fact that clothes may be of monetary value, the occurrence can be suggestive of rape of women. His reaction as a man—"Joseph, who was expert at Cudgel-playing, caught with his, and returned the Favour so successfully on his Adversary that he laid him sprawling at his Feet", is immediately overwritten by his being stripped "entirely naked" and thrown "into a Ditch" (Bk. I, Ch. xii, 51-52). Indeed in this episode of robbery Joseph's role shifts between genders. The chapter dealing with Joseph's genealogy, viewed from the above discussions, discards the template of the traditional biography, which usually creates a male domain, and facilitates a compromise of

masculinity and femininity as we can perceive from the different actions that the hero goes through.

The mock-heroic or mock-pastoral passages to announce the time of day, which Fielding crowns with "fine Writing" or "pretty Writing", together with the actions they usher in, furnish a space in which tension between the two genders comes into play. Such a space differs from the feminine realm created by Pope in *The Rape of the Lock* with similar devices. Unlike Fielding, Pope defines a diminutive cosmos from a woman's perspective:

> *Sol* thro' white Curtains shot a tim'rous Ray,
> And ope'd those Eyes that must eclipse the Day;
> Now Lapdogs give themselves the rowzing Shake,
> And sleepless Lovers, just at Twelve, awake:
> Thrice rung the Bell, the Slipper knock'd the Ground,
> And the press'd Watch return'd a silver Sound.
> *Belinda* still her downy Pillow prest,
> Her Guardian *Sylph* prolong'd the balmy Rest: (Canto I, Lines 13-20, 145-46)

The romanticizing of details of the heroine's bedchamber and the rituals performed after her waking up builds an overwhelming feminine atmosphere. Except for the mentioning of "sleepless Lovers", Belinda's world is a single sex one centering around herself. The close up portrayal of Belinda's belongings and actions produces an exquisitely delicate picture of woman, which, however, viewed at normal distance, carries an overtone of trivialization of the female sex. In *Joseph Andrews*, the evening when Lady Booby makes her advances to Joseph is described elaborately:

> Now the Rake *Hesperus* had called for his Breeches, and having well rubbed his drowsy Eyes, prepared to dress himself for all Night; by whose Example his Brother Rakes on Earth likewise leave those Beds, in which they had slept away the Day. Now *Thetis* the good Housewife began to put on the Pot in order to

> regale the good Man *Phoebus*, after his daily Labours were over. In vulgar Language, it was in the Evening when *Joseph* attended his Lady's Orders. (Bk. I, Ch. viii, 37-38)

The burlesque of the heroic here parallels the deities to ordinary men and women and implies a kind of gender tension. "Breeches", which usually marks male identity as opposed to "petticoat", make fun of the duty of the evening star Hesperus and hint that the incident about to take place is concerned with sex. When Hesperus' "Brother Rakes on Earth" are getting ready for their merry-making at night, Lady Booby will also engage Joseph in the satisfaction of her own desires. She wishes to "regale" Joseph as Thetis does Phoebus, but her footman holds fast on to his "virtue" by refusing her condescension. The passage creates a setting for the combat between Lady Booby and Joseph over the integrity of his "Breeches".

The engagement of a female deity to indicate a time period during the day also tells about Fielding's implicitly pro-woman gender ideology. Pope reveals a contrasting perception of women in *The Rape of the Lock*:

> Not with more Glories, in th'Etherial Plain,
> The Sun first rises o'er the purpled Main,
> Than issuing forth, the Rival of his Beams
> Lanch'd on the Bosom of the silver *Thames*. (Canto II, Lines 1-4,158)

Dealing with the morning, Pope starts from the sun, a male entity, yet that quickly loses its prominence to a female attribute, "the Bosom". Then Belinda is replacing the sun as the focus of attention:

> Fair Nymphs, and well-drest Youths around her shone,
> But ev'ry Eye was fix'd on her alone.
> On her white Breast a sparkling *Cross* she wore,
> Which *Jews* might kiss, and Infidels adore.

> Her lively Looks a sprightly Mind disclose,
> Quick as her Eyes, and as unfix'd as those: (Lines 5-10,158)

Belinda's "white Breast", the human counterpart of "the Bosom of the silver *Thames*", is dazzlingly charming. Her beauty, which is condensed in her "lively Looks", appeals to the "Eye", and she is worshipped as an idol. However, this seemingly woman-centred universe is precarious, for it is built upon exclusively physical features—Belinda is conceived as an object for all, and particularly for male eyes. What underlies the panegyric on woman's physical beauty is therefore a sexist gender perspective. Although Pope does not explicitly state whether Belinda shares common "female errors" described in the lines immediately following, the two hypotheses with "if", plus skepticism-arousing words such as "void", "hide" and "forget", undermine women's credibility. Although Belinda's locks are brought to the scene jokingly as — "This Nymph, to the Destruction of Mankind, /Nourish'd two Locks" (Lines 19-20, 159) — the convention of women corrupting men is still in the background. Fielding, on the other hand, demonstrates a different view of gender in his representation of the same time of day. After the road robbery, the naked Joseph is carried to the inn of Mr. Tow-wouse and at his arrival:

> Aurora now began to show her blooming Cheeks over the Hills, whilst ten Millions of feathered Songsters, in jocund Chorus repeated Odes a thousand times sweeter than those of our *Laureate*, and sung both *the Day and the Song*; . . . (Bk. I, Ch. xii, 55)

While ridiculing Colley Cibber's odes as examples of lifeless writing, the lines are packed with energy. The "blooming Cheeks" of Aurora conveys a kind of vitality in a female entity, the "jocund Chorus" activated by her implies her power, and the use of

"ten Millions" and "a thousand" magnifies her capacity. The lively morning scene makes a foil for the nearly dead status of the hero and brings him salvation. It also ushers in many activities such as the conversation with Mr. Barnabas, particularly Betty's fall for Joseph and the conflicts among the Tow-Wouses and Betty.

Fielding's mock style in his "pretty Writing" with mundane references instead of the celestial provides insights of social egalitarianism, which includes gender equality. This differs from Swift's attitude in his mock-heroic piece "A Description of the Morning" when describing people's daily activities:

> Now *Betty* from her Masters Bed had flown,
> And softly stole to discompose her own.
> The Slipshod Prentice from his Masters Door,
> Had par'd the Dirt, and Sprinkled round the Floor.
> Now *Moll* had whirl'd her Mop with dext'rous Airs,
> Prepar'd to Scrub the Entry and the Stairs. (Lines 3-8, 86)

The scene in which the lower people attend to their daily chores does not appear very critical of social injustice. However, Betty flying from her master's bed hints the submission of the lower class to the upper, and of women to sexual exploitation as well. Despite the fact that Swift foregrounds women in the poem to burlesque the situation in the heroics, the mentality revealed is misogynistic. Fielding, upon the resumption of Sophia's journey of from Upton Inn, dwells on seven o'clock in the morning with his criticism of social injustice:

> THOSE Members of the Society, who are born to furnish the Blessings of Life, now began to light their Candles, in order to pursue their daily Labours, for the use of those who are born to enjoy these Blessings. The sturdy Hind now attends the Levee of his Fellow Labourer the Ox; the cunning Artificer, the diligent Mechanic spring from their hard Mattress; and now the bonny House-maid begins to repair the disordered Drum-Room, while the riotous Authors of that Disorder,

> in broken interrupted Slumbers, tumble and toss, as if the Hardness of Down disquieted their Repose. (Bk.XI, Ch. ix, 609)

This initial paragraph of the chapter tackles the polarities of the exploited and the exploiters, and attacks the unevenness of wealth distribution in the society. Labourers are identified with oxen and the upper class people are "Authors" of the sufferings of the underdogs. The positive qualities ascribed to the poor such as "sturdy", "cunning", "diligent" and "bonny" lay bare the narrator's sympathy with them, whereas derogatory terms "Disorder", "broken", "interrupted", "tumble and toss" and "disquieted" indicate the lack of life quality of the rich. Noticeably this explicit challenge to the social authority paves the way for the women on their journey to London, where Sophia is said to demonstrate a "heroic Temper" over the loss of her bank bill. The seeming irrelevance of the opening paragraph and the content in the chapter has an impact, I argue, in implicitly inviting women to play equal social roles with men.

The mock-pastoral trope in *Tom Jones* works in what I would call an enthroning and dethroning pattern of manhood by elevating men to a height in both the physical and the spiritual sense and then bringing them down to face and interact with women. To some extent, this shatters the myth of the physical and mental superiority of men. The description of Allworthy, in Martin C. Battestin's words, "walking forth to survey his estate as dawn breaks, bathing the creation in light" (1974, 188), is a case in point:

> It was now the Middle of May, and the Morning was remarkably serene, when Mr. *Allworthy* walked forth on the Terrace, where the Dawn opened every Minute that lovely Prospect we have before described to his Eye. And now

> having sent forth Streams of Light, which ascended the blue Firmament before him, as Harbingers preceding his Pomp, in the full Blaze of his Majesty up rose the Sun; than which one Object alone in this lower Creation could be more glorious, and that Mr *Allworthy* himself presented; a human Being replete with Benevolence, meditating in what manner he might render himself most acceptable to his Creator, by doing most Good to his Creatures. (Bk. I, Ch. iv, 43)

Here Allworthy is elevated truly to a status above his fellow human beings and enjoys a sense of superiority conferred by the narrator. Battestin comments that "[t]he glory of this good man—who is, more than any other character except Sophia herself, the centre of the novel's moral universe—is rendered in terms of the sun, traditional symbol of the deity" (188). Battestin is talking about Fielding's rendition of Allworthy as a moral emblem, but he might have ignored the phenomenon that sun is, from an earthly perspective, not a stable image with its changes over the day while morality is expected to be coherently static. Allworthy's centrality in the moral universe in *Tom Jones*, as the sun, does go through its glory and gloom. C. J. Rawson comments on the instability of the "good" man as "[t]he ponderously fussy image of the sun makes Allworthy, by an absurd logic, 'the Rival of his Beams'—like Pope's Belinda!" (1972, 301) As is in Belinda's case, too much elevation of the character only ends in deflating him or her. As I've discussed previously, Allworthy's Olympian contemplation is soon interrupted by Bridget's "summoning" him to breakfast, over which a trap is laid for him with regard to the parentage of the foundling.

The placement of Tom Jones in a similar situation follows the same enthroning and dethroning pattern, not to subvert him as a moral authority but to sabotage his hard won sexual integrity. As usual, a woman exerts her power and this time it is Mrs. Waters:

> *AURORA* now first opened her Casement, *anglice*, the Day began to break, when *Jones* walked forth in Company with the Stranger, and mounted *Mazard-Hill*; of which they had no sooner gained the Summit, than one of the most noble Prospects in the World presented itself to their View, and which we would likewise present to the reader; but for two Reasons. *First*, We despair of making those who have seen this Prospect, admire our Description. *Secondly*, We very much doubt whether those, who have not seen it, would understand it. (Bk. IX, Ch. ii, 495)

The employment of the female deity "AURORA", with her powerful actions of opening her casement and breaking the day, is once again indicative of the feminine influence in the background. According to Battestin, the "Summit" symbolizes the achievement that Tom has made in realizing his past follies, and the "noble Prospects" stands for obstacles he has yet to overcome(1974, 189-90). In addition to symbolizing the theme of prudence, the significance of this passage in gender terms may be revealed in the self-depreciation of the narrator, who is obviously a male persona, regarding his own creative power. Meanwhile, it poses a challenge to the reader's comprehension, and implies that they may misread and fail to understand. A good example is embedded in the passage itself. Apparently a manly mood is established with the mock trope and that seems to distance woman from the picture; however, all of a sudden "the most violent Skreams of a Woman" come, which bring Tom down from the "Summit" to participate again in the fight of the two genders.

A more extended use of the mock-pastoral trope occurs in Book Five, Chapter Ten, which discloses Tom's self-contradiction in pleading devotion to Sophia on the one hand and embarking upon an escapade with Molly on the other. The trope creates a setting where Tom and the Molly demonstrate a kind of power wrestling, but interestingly enough, with each of them appropriating a gender feature of the other.

Tom is placed in the rather effeminate scene, loaded with "gentle" and "sweet" images, by himself:

> It was now a pleasant Evening in the later End of *June*, when our Heroe was walking in a most delicious Grove, where the gentle Breezes fanning the Leaves, together with the sweet Trilling of a murmuring Stream, and the melodious Notes of Nightingales formed all together the most enchanting Harmony. In this Scene, so sweetly accommodated to Love, he meditated on his dear *Sophia*. (Bk. V, Ch. x, 255-56)

Robert Alter refers to the paragraph as suggesting "a pleasant sense of pastoral harmony while making us quickly aware that it is a parody of bad pastoral poetry and worse prose". He points out that "the scene in which the tenderhearted lover casts himself on the ground is composed of a catalog of poetic clichés very much like the ones Pope makes brilliant fun of in the *Essay on Criticism*" ("The Use of Style", Harold Bloom, 1987, 89). I agree with Alter's judgment of Fielding's satirical use of the pastoral but would add that besides deflation of the style, there is also diminution of manhood here. Molly, as a woman who appears later in the scene, does not fit in the effeminate environment. She is said to be "without a Gown, in a Shift that was somewhat of the coarsest, and none of the cleanest, bedewed likewise with some odoriferous Effluvia, the Produce of the Day's Labour, with a Pitch-Fork in her Hand" (256). Her "coarsest" attire and "odoriferous" condition, together with the farm tool in her hand, are more often attributed to men than women. In Tom and Molly we see a reversal of gender roles.

Tom's resumed escapade with Molly is consistent with their reversed roles, where the masculinized woman once again gets the upper hand in the sexual battle.

Tom's high flown soliloquy to plead devotion to Sophia, including vows such as "How contemptible would be the brightest *Circassian* Beauty, drest in all the Jewels of the *Indies*, appear to my Eyes! By why do I mention another Woman? could I think my Eyes capable of looking at any other with Tenderness, these Hands should tear them from my Head" (256), overthrows itself right after it is spoken. Tom's immediate failure to keep his promise indicates the sexual falsity that women are often accused of, for example, in Pope's "Epistle II To a Lady" — "Chaste to her Husband, frank to all beside, / A teeming Mistress, but a barren Bride" (Lines 71-2, 56). It is noticeable that in presenting Tom and Molly both as unfaithful lovers, the narrator jokes that "*Jones* probably imagined one Woman better than none, and *Molly* as probably imagined two Men to be better than one" (257). Thus the woman is seen to possess more power to manipulate men. The analogy of Molly to "*Dido*", who, after "a Parley" of "a full Quarter of an Hour", retires with the hero "into the thickest Part of the Grove" can support the point. Tom's "Pen-knife", with which he carves Sophia's name on the bark, in comparison with Molly's "Pitch-fork" to handle "the Day's Labour", really suggests a lop-sided gender power relation. In short, the mock tropes in *Tom Jones* provide a setting for both genders to interact, and it is often the woman who wins. And to sum up, in Fielding's mock tropes the consistent mentality of deflating manhood is embedded.

Chapter Six Conclusion

The denial of a Richardson-Fielding polarity has been one foundation of this dissertation. Because of this, it is useful to revert to the issue at this point and consider Fielding's representation in juxtaposition with Richardson's after establishing Fielding's pro-women instinct in the deep structure of his writing. The stylistic and structural lines of inquiry employed to develop my thesis will help clarify Richardson's gender ideology and reflect upon Fielding's. Of course the two canonical writers imagine women and tell their stories very differently, with Richardson's tragic rendition "through tears" and Fielding's comical mode "through laughter". This chapter compares some episodes in *Pamela* and *Clarissa* with those in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, and investigates the parallel plot and structure in these novels as well. Different from Katherine Kittredge's point that Richardson's work "as a whole shows a conception of gender which is much closer to the work of modern feminist theorists than to the prescriptive conduct-writers of his day" (1994, 25), I argue that Pamela and Clarissa, intensely and exquisitely imagined as they are, demonstrate very different traits of women than do Fielding's heroines. The abduction of the heroines in *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, and particularly the roles they play in the plot, operate similarly to men's imprisonment plot in Fielding. The self-subversion of the female ethos permeating Richardson's novels parallels in an equally subtle way to Fielding's empowerment of women in a seemingly male world. This further evidences inaccuracy of the Richardson-Fielding polarity and the masculinist image of Fielding.

The heroines' reactions to men's sexual imposition in Richardson and Fielding

reveal their different understanding of gender power relations, notwithstanding the fact that one author works with the tragic mode and the other comic. Both being subject to men's advances and struggling to escape from them, Pamela is more perplexed and thus less resolute than Fanny. In Nancy Armstrong's defense of the novel as a female discourse, she views *Pamela* as demonstrating "strategies of self-production" and argues that Richardson's rendition of Pamela surpasses what a conduct book can do. Armstrong is right in that the female perspective does furnish a narrative space in which a woman gains full right of talking, but what she says about herself counts more than the fact that she is allowed to talk. In Pamela's own narration of her resistance of Mr. B., expressions such as "tremble", "at a loss for words" and "filled me with fear" (*Pamela*, Letter XI, 55) create the image a woman who is not able to sustain herself facing abuse from a man, although she faints only at well-chosen moments. Fanny, on the other hand, is endowed by Fielding with more power of action: she "resisted" her ravisher's "rude Kisses" and "rejected" his "Entreaties", "struggling" with the man with "the most violent Shrieks imaginable" (*Joseph Andrews*, Bk. II, Ch. ix, 137-39). In spite of disparity in social status between Pamela and Mr. B, her response to him encompasses submission to both a social and sexual superior. Gender power relations in *Pamela* may be embodied in the following passage:

> I struggled, and trembled, and was so benumbed with terror, that I sunk down, not in a fit, and yet not myself; and I found myself in his arms, quite void of strength; and he kissed me two or three times, with frightful eagerness. At last I burst from him, and was getting out of the summer-house; but he held me back, and shut the door. (Letter XI, 55)

The narration attempts to demonstrate the strong as well as the weak side of the

heroine, but the latter surpasses the former, which is particularly conveyed by such phrases as "benumbed with terror", "sunk down" and "void of strength". The last sentence here is indicative of the limit of Pamela's capacity throughout the novel: no matter how hard she tries to break away from the control over her by the man, she cannot achieve it. This may indicate the pressure imposed on her by the circumstances, yet her feminine characteristics, for example, concern with personal belongings and physical frailty, also stand in the way. When in the consultation with her parents about her escape, she is hindered by thoughts of whether she should "take away things he had given me or no" and worries of "two miles and a half, and a bye-way to the town" (Letter XII, 56). Fanny is a sharp contrast since she "without consulting anyone, immediately set forward" with "a little Bundle of Clothes under her Arm, and all the Money she was worth in her own Purse" to pursue Joseph (Bk. II, Ch. x, 144). Pamela's irresolution, in a way, shows her succumbing to the man's dominance and lack of confidence in travelling by herself.

The fact that Pamela's submission to Mr. B. is represented as a stance of her own choice and she remains submissive to him after what has gone between them may render Richardson's ideal of women's conduct ambivalent. After spending thirty six days in "Imprisonment", Pamela describes her reaction to Mr. B's insulting terms "perverse Pamela, ungrateful creature" as: "I could not speak; but throwing myself on the floor, hid my face and was ready to die with grief and apprehension" (221-2). The woman perceives herself giving up any means of protesting and resorting to suppliance instead. The loss of her capacity for anger to that for grief could be an important

indication of the cession of her power. It seems that the prostrating posture, that of "the fallen angel" for Mr. B., echoing the action of "sunk down" mentioned in the previous paragraph, is a specified code for Pamela. A similar posture is repeatedly spotted in the French hermit in *Jonathan Wild*, after being rejected by Mrs. Heartfree in his courtship of her. The recurrent presentation of Pamela's action and mind in face with Mr. B.'s vicious slander, for instance, "I sobbed, and wept, but could not speak", "I sighed, as if my heart would break", "I was ready to faint", "I was struck to the heart" and "I laid me down on the floor, and had no power to stir . . ."(222-3), all work towards the concept of woman as a weaker gender and femininity susceptible to masculine subjugation. He remains her "master" in her perception towards the end:

> But first let me observe, that the dear man forbade me to use the word *master*, either in speech or writing. But I insisted, that I could not dispense it for the present. In obedience to him, I said, it might wear off by degrees; but I must continue the style, at least, till he thought fit to declare the honour done me. (373)

Even if the man wishes to modify their power relation at least in name, the woman chooses not to give up her role as his secondary. Consistent with her willing cession of any initiative throughout the book, she sticks to her "obedience" and holds their marriage an "honour" for her. In spite of the fact that the battle of sexes is fought between a working class woman and her social superior, Richardson's gender ideology as revealed in the character of Pamela, appears quite conservative.

From Pamela's answer to Mr. B.'s proposal of a contract to make her "a vile kept mistress" (*Pamela*, 227), Armstrong sees that "Richardson empowers the subject of aristocratic power with speech" (1987, 112). She thinks that "Her power *not* to

consent redefines the nature of the contract between man and woman as it had been represented by a Puritan tradition, according to which a woman voluntarily entered into master-servant relationship when she consented to marriage"(114). However, in Pamela's article-by-article refutation of Mr. B's aggressive proposals in the contract, her power to fight verbally does not carry her very far:

> VI. Now, Pamela, will you see by this, what a value I set upon the free-will of a person *already* in my power; and who, if those proposals are not accepted, shall find, that I have not taken all these pains, and risqued my reputation, as I have done, without solving to gratify my passion for you, at all adventures. And it will behove you to consider, whether it is not better for you to comply upon terms so advantageous to you, and so beneficial to your father and mother, and other friends, than to be mine without condition and equivalent.

> VI. I know, sir, by woeful experience that I am in your power: I know all the resistance I can make will be poor and weak, and, perhaps, stand me in little stead: I dread your *will* to ruin me is as great as your *power*: yet, sir, will I dare to tell you, that I will make no free-will offering of my virtue. All that I *can* do, poor as it *may* be, I *will* do, to preserve my honour: and then, if I cannot escape the violence of man, I can safely appeal to the great God my only refuge, with this consolation, that my will bore no part in the violation. (229-30)

Both the male and female speakers here look at the dominant male power, with the former commanding and the latter inclining to comply despite her protest. Even Pamela's appeal to God addresses a male person, as is shown in her later proclamations "To Him do I commit my cause; and to Him will I give the glory" (231). Her "free-will" is only limited to the choice of what she cannot do but not she can do, and thus her refutation is rather passive, as in her own terms, "poor and weak". Pamela does not consent to the sexual contract leading to an extramarital partnership, but it cannot be ignored that later on she "voluntarily" enters into the marriage which is based upon an actual "master-servant relationship" and which she thinks "honours" her. A closer look at the man and wife relation in the marriage of Mr. B. and Pamela can show that it is in

conformity with man's role to "get money and provisions" and "be a giver" and woman's to "be a saver", as Armstrong has noted in an early seventeenth century Puritan marriage pamphlet (1987, 110). The property relation in marriage of Fielding's novels, on the contrary, shifts the woman to both the "giver" and the "saver". In *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones* and *Amelia*, it is Fanny, Sophia and Amelia who facilitate the economic foundation of their marriage. They are "givers" not only in terms of their dowry, but in the sense that they continue to provide for the family after being married.

Compared with Pamela, Clarissa is a more empowered heroine in exercising a woman's freedom of choice, especially at the beginning of the novel, which credits Richardson with pro-feminism. Clarissa's long letter to Anna Howe elaborating on her interview with Mr. Solmes explicitly demonstrates her rebellion against the arranged marriage. The first person narrative reveals her self-consciousness of the advantage that she has over Solmes: seeing his clumsiness in meeting her, she quickly gains "a little more presence of mind" for she knows that "Cowardice in a foe begets courage in one's self" (Letter 78, 303). The whole process of the interview is marked by the man's manifested sense of inferiority and Clarissa's capacity to dispose of him, a reversal of what is going on between Mr. B. and Pamela. Clarissa's argument against her uncle's persuasion voices her power of mind explicitly:

> My will, sir! Be pleased to allow me to ask, what was my will till now, but my father's will, and my uncle Harlowe's will?—Has it not been my pride to obey and oblige?—I never asked a favour, that I did not first sit down and consider if it were fit to be granted. And now, to show my obedience, have I not offered to live single? Have I not offered to divest myself of my grandfather's bounty, and to cast myself upon my papa's, to be withdrawn wherever I disoblige him? Why, dear good sir, am I to be made unhappy in a point so concerning to my happiness? (Letter 78, 304-5)

The force of Clarissa's speech lies in the series of rhetorical questions. They express with vitality her resentment of what the patriarchy—embodied in her father, uncle and grandfather—imposes upon her and her striving to realize her own "will". At this point Clarissa is a courageous heroine fighting to be her own mistress. Her disobedience surpasses that of Sophia in a similar episode in *Tom Jones*, where she protests against the arranged marriage with Blifil by pleading for her father's sympathy:

> Can you be unmoved while you see your *Sophy* in this dreadful Condition? Can the best of Fathers break my Heart? Will he kill me by the most painful, cruel, lingering Death? (Bk. VI, Ch. vii, 297)

Also set in rhetorical questions, Sophia's protest appeals more to the sensibility, acknowledging the paternal authority, which Clarissa ventures in part to overthrow. Therefore, in striving for freedom of choice in marriage, Clarissa, though more concerned with propriety, is portrayed at the beginning of the novel with more determination and power than Sophia.

Nevertheless, Clarissa's vitality dwindles as the story progresses while Sophia's increases, which contributes to different progression of the two authors' underlying gender ideologies. Both eloping from home to London and being subject to an older lady's custody, the two heroines grow more and more apart in their mental and physical strengths. Take their response to the respective sexual intrusion that they are confronted with for an example. Clarissa, knowing what her abduction will lead to, succumbs to Lovelace's power:

> She tore off her head-clothes; inquired where I was: and in she came, her shining tresses flowing about her neck; her ruffles torn, and hanging in tatters about her snowy hands; with her arms spread out; her eyes wildly turned as if starting from

> their orbits—Down sank she at my feet, as soon as she approached me; her charming bosom heaving to her uplifted face; and, clasping her arms about my knees, Dear Lovelace, said she, if ever—if ever—if ever—And, unable to speak another word, quitting her clasping hold, down prostrate on the floor sunk she, neither in a fit nor out of one.(Letter 256, 880)

Two presiding actions in this passage, tearing and sinking, indicate Clarissa's different mental and physical status from what she was. The tearing of her apparel and hair may lead to an understanding of the collapse of her integrity—she is no longer the young woman seeking to gratify her personal will. The sinking of her body can degrade her from the equality that she has won with the man, and together with this she is deprived of her power of speech, which she proudly possesses in the passage quoted earlier on to arraign arranged marriage. In place of her energy to shun the men, whether her suitor Solmes, her father or her uncle, there is just flaccidity and inclination to resort to man's support, as Lovelace observes, "I raised her: but down she sunk, as if quite disjointed: her limbs falling her—yet not in a fit neither" (881). A woman sinking and falling and leaving herself to the mercy of a man to "raise" her gives herself up to the male control. Such a scenario before the rape shows that Clarissa is already a woman of broken mind, and after the loss of her "*best self*" (974), she falls further into "absolute insensibility" in Lovelace's words (886), so much as she describes herself repeatedly to be "senseless"(1011). The rape devastates her mind as well as her body, and renders her for a while an utterly lifeless woman. This definitely represents how much Clarissa suffers from the man and arouses in readers antagonism towards the rapist, but still Clarissa's frailty does little credit to womanhood. Sophia illustrates an opposite ebb and flow of female energy to Clarissa's. Evolving from her timidity

reflected in her "downcast Looks, half Bows and civil Monosyllables" facing Blifil's courtship (Bk. IV, Ch. vii, 294) and her pathetic portrait "with the Tears trickling from her Eyes, the Blood running for her Lips" (Bk. IV, Ch. viii, 298) when Squire Western flares up at her refusal to marry Blifil, she now firmly resists Lord Fellamar's addresses by her eloquent articulation that "I intreat you to desist from a vain Pursuit; for, upon my Honour, I will never hear you on this Subject" (Bk. XV, Ch. v, 798).

The developmental disparity of vitality in Clarissa and Sophia more decisively widens as the stories go on, where both heroines experience confinement. William Park advocates a consideration of the "formal differences" between *Clarissa* and *Tom Jones* upon which the two works "inevitably became diametrically opposed to one another, even though employing similar assumptions and conventions" (1976, 461). Park's dichotomy offers valid perspectives because we see clearly *Clarissa* developing towards a tragic end and *Tom Jones* towards a comic one. Insisting on writing to the psychologically realistic moments, Richardson allows Clarissa's imprisonment in "a horrid hole of a house" for debt to further deprive her capacities. Belford witnesses her as one losing her power of speech and movement:

> No—No—go, go; MAN, with an emphasis—and would have said more; but as if struggling in vain for words, she seems to give up speech for lost, and dropped her head down once more, with a deep sigh, upon her left arm; her right, as if she had not the use of it (numbed, I suppose), self-moved, dropping down on her side. (Letter 334, 1066)

In comparison with how she is portrayed by Lovelace preceding the rape, Clarissa has undergone a major move from lack of life towards the loss of it. Verbs such as "lost", "dropped" and "numbed" and phrases "struggling in vain" and "give up" foreground

her irrecoverable drift into death. Her attempted rejection of "MAN", deriving from frustration by Lovelace's betrayal of her commission to him, proves only to be "in vain". Her actions as perceived in "And offering to rise, she sunk down through excess of weakness and grief, in a fainting fit" (1067) with the recurrent use of "sunk" and the realization of the "fit", suggest her failure ever to stand up on her own feet. Fielding, on the other hand, is without the necessity of showing trauma. He presents Sophia, in her confinement under the custody of her aunt, to be "remonstrating" against marriage forced upon her:

> "Why, Madam, must I of Necessity be forced to marry at all? Consider how cruel you would have thought it in your own Case, and how much kinder your Parents were in leaving you to your Liberty. What have I done to forfeit this Liberty? I will never marry contrary to my Father's Consent, nor without asking yours, —And when I ask the Consent of either improperly it will then time enough to force some other Marriage upon me." (Bk. XVII, Ch. viii, 906)

What Sophia says echoes Clarissa's protest quoted previously, her demand for "Liberty" reminiscent of Clarissa's complaint of her inability to fulfill her own "will". It is true that the storylines of the two novels run "diametrically opposed to one another", but the "assumptions and conventions" underlying the representations of Clarissa and Sophia, I argue, are not "similar", because the reduction and production of female energy stand for two different kinds of imaginative patterns for women.

Richardson and Fielding share a similar inclination to view gender as socially constructed rather than naturally determined, which can be revealed in the androgynous features of their characters, yet Richardson appears to be more intolerant of the female appropriation of masculinity than Fielding. Kittredge observes that "In

Clarissa, Richardson calls for persons of both sexes to adopt the positive characteristics usually attributed to the opposite sex" (1994, 20). She regards Anna Howe as a "proto-male-woman" and Hickman an effeminate "male virgin" who is "too meek for a man" (22). Such merging of gender boundaries abounds in Fielding's novels, ranging from the close resemblance of Joseph and Fanny's portraits to the amalgamation of "Hercules" and "Adonis" in Tom Jones. The Howe-Hickman union is also similar to that of the Atkinsons in terms of the woman's dominance in the marriage. However, compared with Fielding's tolerance for women possessing masculine features, Richardson shows more conformity to conduct books of their time. The masculine female housekeeper and bawd during the confinement of Pamela and Clarissa are reproductions of such Augustan female monsters as appearing in *The Dispensary* and *The Dunciad*. Mrs. Jewkes in Mr. B.'s Lincolnshire estate is described as a "naughty woman" with "an air of confidence" inclining to kiss the heroine. She demonstrates a strong homosexual tendency, for Pamela sees that "Every now and then she would be staring at my face" and "squeezing my hand, and saying, 'Why, you are very pretty, my silent dear!'"(144-5). As the heroine's "bed-fellow", she "has very punctual orders" to lock the two of them up and "tie the two keys . . . about her wrist". In the sexual pursuit of Pamela Mrs. Jewkes seems to be Mr. B.'s double. In *Clarissa*, Mrs. Sinclair is less sexually intrusive but more physically abominable:

> The old dragon straddled up to her, with her arms kemboed again—her eye-brows erect, like the bristles upon a hog's back and, scowling over her shortened nose, more than half hid her ferret eyes. Her mouth was distorted. She pouted out her blubber lips, as if to bellow up wind and sputter into her horse-nostrils; and her chin was curdled, and more than usually prominent with passion. (Letter 256, 883)

The association of the woman with animals such as "dragon", "hog", ox and "horse", which are generally strong and rough, allows her very little femininity and tough actions like "straddled" and "kemboed" render her more a man than a woman. It is true that in such association the female character also is also conferred physical power, but it is in a directly negative way. Richardson's antagonism to the female appropriation of male features, as is reflected from the two housekeepers, rather complies with than contradict the ethos of conduct books. Therefore, Kittredge's commendation that the androgynous characters furnish Richardson with "a gender conception which is much closer to the work of modern feminist theorists" (1994, 25) rather overstates the fact.

The second way in which I investigate Richardson's gender ideology is through the examination of the plot and structure of his novels. Evolving around the abduction of the heroines, *Pamela* and *Clarissa* yield parallel paradoxes in their plot and structure with those emerging from Richardson's imagination of women. The confinement of Pamela and Clarissa allows them much less freedom than what Armstrong perceives (1998, 373-398). As has been discussed in Section I, Chapter Three of this dissertation, in Fielding's novels the imprisonment plot mainly involves male prisoners, and women are usually endowed with the power to procure men's freedom. Contrary to this, in *Pamela* and *Clarissa* it is the heroines who are doomed to be prisoners in one form of confinement after another. They seem to be constantly confronted with an enclosure, whether it is a house, a chariot, or a coffin, and what they do is to be transported from one enclosure to the next. The image of a house is what the heroines are most often confronted with. Pamela seeks to leave Mr. B's house

for her father's, but only ends up in Mr. B.'s Lincolnshire estate, a "handsome, large, old, lonely mansion . . . with all its brown nodding horrors of lofty elms and pines about it, as if built for solitude and mischief" (146). The overwhelming image of this house is symbolic of what has been imposed upon the heroine, which she proclaims as her "bondage" and "imprisonment". Fighting more self-consciously than Pamela, Clarissa escapes from her father's house to find her own place, yet her dream is shattered because Lovelace turns out to be a worse warder for her. Strong as Clarissa's protest is—"I have no patience . . . to find myself a slave, a prisoner in a vile house—Tell me, sir, in so many words tell me, whether it be, or be not, your intention to permit me to quit it?—To permit me the freedom which is my birthright as an English subject?" (Letter 276, 934)—she emphasizes the man's "permission", though in a sarcastic way. Even though she attempts a break through by rushing "into the front parlour, and flew to the window, and attempted once more to throw up the sash", she is only to be frustrated, and in the end to be permanently confined in her coffin, to which she refers as her final "house". Her awkward situation is condensed in her exclamation that "Oh house (looking towards the windows and all round her, Oh house) contrived on purpose for my ruin!"(935) In the heroine's confinement plot shared by the two novels, Richardson allows the women to articulate their plight of being shut up and their accusation of the unfair treatment. This reflects his sympathy with women's lack of freedom in his days.

Although Richardson is sympathetic with the sufferings of the heroines in the confinement, he solves their dilemma in a rather conservative way. They are to either

marry the persecutor or die to compensate for the loss of virginity. In spite of all Mr. B.'s plot and "wicked gypsey-story" to trap her, Pamela is "over-come" by his one letter showing kindness, and changes her heart. She voluntarily returns to his estate after being released, ready to embrace the "good fortune" that she "had no reason to expect" (283). Just because of Mr. B.'s marriage promise, she gives up her rejection of the house and accepts it with zeal:

> What a different aspect everything in and about this house bears now, to my thinking, to what it once had! The garden, the pond, the alcove, the elm-walk. But my prison is become my palace; and no wonder every thing about it wears another face! (1998, 378)

Whether a "prison" or a "palace", the house remains a confining structure though Pamela perceives it differently. Armstrong thinks that "Merely by writing, Pamela miraculously turns an aristocratic manor house into a modern household that at first falls short of order and morality but eventually meets the new domestic standard" (378). Her opinion is a bit too optimistic, because it takes the conversion of a "prison" to "palace" literally. To be truly miraculous, "The new domestic standard" should contain a marital relation based on equality, but the relation between Pamela and Mr. B. does not promise much departure from the master-servant kind, with Pamela lingering on if her conduct "may be agreeable" to her husband and if he will accept her "determined duty" and "forgive" all her "imperfections" (379). Similar to Pamela but involuntarily, Clarissa is arrested and imprisoned again after she makes her escape in London, an experience which only occurs to men such as Tom Jones and Billy Booth in Fielding. Her prison room in the bailiff's is a "den" with "broken walls", "dark and

double-barred" windows and "old, tottering, worm-eaten" furniture (Letter 334, 1064-5). The room stands for the ultimately sinister environment that a woman of her status can be exposed to, and what she can do is only to succumb to it by "kneeling in a corner of the room" praying over her Bible. Fielding's imprisoned men also wait passively for their rescue. The reconciliation of Clarissa with her imprisonment culminates in her coffin, with "the plates, and emblems, and inscription" prepared "of her own ordering" (Letter 500, 1398). It seems that after being released from the bailiff's she is just getting ready for her death. In Clarissa's case, in the human world escape is temporary, while confinement is long lasting, and only by escaping this world can she find eternal salvation. In *Pamela* and *Clarissa*, both women protest against their confinement at the beginning, yet both come to terms with it in the end. Unlike Richardson, Fielding often imposes a house upon the men, but delivers and domesticates them via the women.

It is noteworthy that in the two novels the imprisonment and rescue of the heroines are executed by men, and women are generally placed at men's disposal. Mr. B.'s manipulative role in Pamela's abduction is laid bare by the editor: "he had ordered his Lincolnshire coachman to bring his traveling chariot from thence, in order to prosecute his base designs upon the innocent virgin" (*Pamela*, 123). More details of Mr. B.'s design show the intricacy of his trap:

> And having given instruction accordingly, and prohibited his other servants, on pretence of resenting Pamela's behavior, from accompanying her any part of the way to her father's, that coachman drove five miles on her way; and then turning off, crossed the country, and carried her onward towards Mr. B.'s Lincolnshire estate. (123)

It is Mr. B. who acts as the puppet master here to decide Pamela's destination, but she is completely kept in the dark in his chariot and blinded to choose which house to head for. Pamela's ignorance of what Mr. B. has done behind the scene is concretized in her narration that "I looked up when I got to the chariot, and I saw my master at the window, in his gown; and I curt'sied three times to him very low, and prayed for him with my hands lifted up . . ." (133) Physically posited as in other scenarios, the man is "up" and the woman is "low", and to apply this to the structure, the man plans the way and the woman follows him. Richardson seems to be critical enough of Lovelace's plot to abduct Clarissa by revealing his sadistic mentality in his own voice: owning that "*Credulity* is the God of Love's prime minister; and they never are asunder", he puts on his masks of "all gentleness, all obligingness, all serenity" before Clarissa to prepare for his "grand scheme" (Letter 117, 447), and he brags about himself as "a matchless plotter" (Letter 131, 473). Lois E. Bueler in her analysis of "the tested woman plot" in *Clarissa* denies that that the heroine's rejection of her father's authority means her relegating herself to Lovelace. Bueler insists that "The Harlowes have lost possession but Lovelace has not gained it—and cannot gain it except from Clarissa herself" (1994, 56). A holistic view of the plot can prove that Lovelace has not only failed to gain possession of Clarissa, but also lost her and his own life. However, Lovelace's failure results from Clarissa's failure to reform the libertine, which is definitely on her agenda when eloping with him. If we take the male prevalence in the structure into consideration, Clarissa's failure is only natural.

Clarissa's escape from home, which appears to be initiated by herself, is

actually controlled by Lovelace. In her letter to Anna Howe revealing her "agreeable" conversation with Lovelace about their destination, she is seen to be deceived by the man when she "choose[s] not to go to Lady Betty's" but "to take a turn cross the country to Windsor", although she claims her right to "approve or disapprove" him and declares her intention that "I should let everybody know my independence" (Letter 116, 442). Anthony J. Hassall observes that "When Sophia leaves home she does so confidently and capably. When Clarissa is tricked into leaving home, she does so under the domination of Lovelace, which she chooses, though not of course without conflict. Clarissa is unquestionably the more submissive of the two to male authority" (1981, 171). Though Hassall focuses on the character traits of the two heroines, he also catches the gender power relation embedded in the deep structure. Indeed Sophia's eloquence in convincing Honour to run away with her demonstrates more will power than Clarissa's planning, because the former reveals a woman's self-reliance while the latter does not. During their journey, Clarissa appears to give up her initiative gradually and hands it over to the man, as what she writes discloses: "I am quite at a loss, said I, what to do, or wither to go. Would you, Mr. Lovelace, advise me to think of going to London?" (Letter 125, 461) The idea of going to London fits exactly into Lovelace's wishes and after they get there, Clarissa is left at his mercy. April London also agrees that Sophia is a stronger character who is more conscious of her independence than Clarissa:

> The details of her plan of action before and after the elopement further emphasize her peculiar blend of integrity and deference and so again work to suggest that Clarissa's being "frightened beyond the power of controlling" is a function of an imperfect sense of self and an exaggerated passivity in the face of

> masculine power. (1987, 327)

One point that can be extended from London's argument is that unlike women's control of the plot in *Tom Jones*, the plot of *Clarissa* is subject to men's control.

The further plot development in the novel shows the consistent pattern. Although Clarissa succeeds in her escape for a while after the rape, she is captured again by Mrs. Sinclair, the masculine bawd, who is Lovelace's accomplice and a caricatured female version of his viciousness. Her deliverance from the bailiff's house is carried out by Lovelace's friend Belford, upon whose arm she leans while walking out. Even when she feels secure from the control of Lovelace, man's influence is still there:

> I am no prisoner now in a vile house. I am not now in the power of that man's devices. I am not now obliged to hide myself in corners for fear of him. One of his intimate companions is become my warm friend, and engages to keep him from me, and that by his own consent. I am among honest people. I have all my clothes and effects restored me. The wretch himself bears testimony to my honour. (Letter 343, 1088)

This declaration of restored independence reflects heavily on Clarissa's dependence on men both in the past and at present. Though she is out of the reach of Lovelace, she still has to rely on him to testify her "honour". Belford and Clarissa's later introduced cousin Morden continue to be her guardians till she is escorted back to her father's house after death. In short, all the incidents in Clarissa's life are facilitated by men, and this is indicative of Richardson's perception of gender relations. Armstrong views Richardson as not so conservative in gender by commending that he enables Clarissa to search for a gentleman outside her familial pressure. Nevertheless, it is observant for

her to point out that "By placing [Clarissa] herself under his [Lovelace's] protection, however, she only places herself at a further remove from her rightful place within the Harlowe family, and we consequently find her addressing Lovelace, much as she addressed her father . . ." (1998, 377). It is true that Clarissa abandons one male authority only to seek another, and that is why she suffers from confinement one after another. Therefore, from the feminist perspective, the plot of *Clarissa* imposes more constraint than providing liberty on women.

What has been discussed so far in terms of Richardson's imaginative pattern of women and the gender issue as revealed in the plot and structure of *Pamela* and *Clarissa* is meant to contribute some ideas to the eradication of the conventionally held Richardson-Fielding polarity. Nevertheless, my discussion does not intend to establish a reversed dichotomy of the feminism of the two canonical writers, i.e., with Fielding as "a radical feminist" and Richardson "a conventional sympathizer" for women. The meticulous representation of women's psyche and what they suffer in the male world does justify Richardson's feminist reputation, yet as has been discovered earlier on, the descending and reductive pattern of female energy and the male control of the structure subvert the female ethos of his novels. In contrast with Richardson, Fielding steadily confers his heroines with ascending and productive vitality and subjects his plot and structure to women's control. To conclude, in the deep structure, Fielding has a stronger feminist instinct and represents it more consistently than Richardson.

Notes

1. The second "given" summarized by Smallwood here echoes what Rivero observes in polarizing Richardson and Fielding in the Introduction in his 1998 collection.

2. *Wedlock a Paradice; or, a Defence of Woman's Liberty against Man's Tyranny. In opposition to a poem, entituled, The Pleasures of a Single Life* (1701) directly answers back *The Pleasures of a Single Life*, while *The Woman's Advocate, or the Baudy Batchelor out in his own Calculation, Being the Genuine Answer… to the Batchelor's Estimate.*(1729) responds to *The Batchelor's Estimate*. It is *Matrimony, or…Good Advice to the Ladies to keep Single. In which are painted … the Pictures of many Terrible Husbands, etc.* (1739) that initiates *Celibacy*.

3. The Aristotelian gender concept in the *Politics* has been specified in Note 1, Page 81 and Note 2, Page 105 of the Wesleyan edition of *Tom Jones*.

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