HENRY FIELDING'S USE OF SATIRE

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Abstract

Henry Fielding's Use of Satire

Poet, playwright, journalist, and novelist, Henry Fielding produced a striking variety of works in his literary career. A large portion of these works are filled with satire. The numerous farces, burlesques and comedies Fielding produced as a dramatist relied heavily for their appeal on the social, literary and political satire they contained. The irony and derision in these works was directed at specific elements in his society which Fielding felt merited exposure. His pose was that of the Augustan satirist ridiculing the folly he witnessed around him.

Fielding's first attempts at prose were also satirical, with many of the targets the same as those he had attacked in his plays. However, the nature of his satire began to change, to take on moral overtones as
he began to concentrate on larger, more fundamental problems concerning man and his relation to society. *Jonathan Wild*, Fielding's most sustained satire in the Augustan manner, is the first of his works to fully reveal the author's preoccupation with moral issues of his day. In this satire Fielding's concern is with the principles that govern human behaviour and the whole question of good and evil in man's nature. This type of moral satire is carried further in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* where Fielding sets out not only to ridicule society's follies, but also to portray a way of life as a norm of behaviour for the common man. He is no longer the satirist concentrating on the evil in society, for as novelist he must portray society with all its intricate blendings of good and evil. Even in his comic novels, however, Fielding never completely abandoned the role of satirist, and it is the changing nature of the satire in his works as he switched from dramatist to novelist that I discuss in this thesis.
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The table above outlines the contents of the document, with each chapter and its corresponding page number listed. The chapters include an introduction, a detailed examination of 'Dramatick Satire', the author's farce and tragicomedy, miscellaneous essays, and discussions on the evolution from satirist to novelist. The final chapter concludes the document.
Introduction

Henry Fielding is best known as author of the two comic masterpieces, *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. His reputation as a novelist is well established, but his standing as a satirist remains hazily defined. A large portion of his writings is now neglected by the general reading public who prefer his novels to his dramatic works or his essays in which his role as satirist is most evident. However, Fielding's experience as a dramatist and a writer of prose satire provided valuable training for his eventual role as a novelist. In all his major works, including his comic novels, satire plays a prominent part.

From a technical viewpoint, evidence of Fielding's dramatic background can be seen throughout his novels. Their masterful plots, their characterizations, and the sense one has of the narrator's complete control, reveal the author's early training. But the similarities go deeper, to the spirit of the works, for there is the same desire to instruct found in all the author's writings. This instructive nature usually
manifests itself in the satire the works contain. Fielding experimented continually with form, but his basic subject matter, and what may be called his moral position, remained unaltered. He was a civic-minded writer, a man preoccupied with the society around him. He was a product of his age, a perfect example of the Augustan ideal of the public man. As such all his works were essentially concerned with contrasting the possibilities that existed for man as a rational being with the folly that he actually committed. He attacked vice in all its forms, focussing particularly on the misuse of reason -- false tastes in learning, the abuse of knowledge -- any departure from what was generally accepted as the norm of decent, responsible humanity. In his early writings satire was an end in itself, the exposure and ridicule of satiric targets was the ultimate intention of the artist. And in the novels, as in *Tom Jones* for example, satire remains an integral part of the work even though it is frequently used for the sake of the comic effect and lacks the fiercer qualities of formal satire.

Passing from the damning indictment of *Jonathan Wild* to the delightful warmth and humour of *Tom Jones* would seem to offer a study in opposites. One is formal satire, the other a "comic romance," or a "comic epic poem in prose." However, the spirit of satire pervades even Fielding's comic novels. The change that Fielding underwent from dramatist and satirist to novelist was neither a particularly sudden nor a radical one. He grew into the novelist's role with lengthy works like *A Journey From This World to the Next* and *Jonathan Wild*, and in so doing gently shrugged off the stricter confines of formal satire without ever
completely abandoning the role of satirist. With the greater freedom the novel allowed him, Fielding could indulge himself in the things he did best -- weave his intricate plots, provide lengthy, detailed description of character, and lead his reader into surprise after surprise -- and still satisfy his desire to write instructively, to expound a moral doctrine.

Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia represent a more comprehensive statement of Fielding's already well established views on life and human nature. They are all essentially moral works, but it is in the two comic novels that Fielding most often employs satire as an instrument in his 'moralizing.' Amelia, his last novel, is the severest, angriest social comment Fielding makes, but it is, paradoxically, his least satirical. The bitterness of Amelia is far removed from the satiric indictment of Jonathan Wild. In the latter, the highwayman-hero emerges as a threatening satanic figure, one who is so completely evil that he must be hated, yet one so cunning and deceptive that he must be feared and even admired. Jonathan Wild is brilliant satire, Amelia suggests a somewhat more frustrated Fielding lamenting society's evils in sentimental fashion. It would seem that, with each novel he wrote, Fielding drew further away from the pure satire that marked his earlier works and closer to a form of moral didacticism.

The transformation from satirist to novelist involves a shift in the artist's perspective. A change of focus occurs. The author no longer emphasizes solely the evil in his society. The satirist exposes the folly he witnesses around him, the novelist adds new dimensions
until the exposure of vice becomes only part of a much larger plan that involves a portrayal of good as well as evil. However, because the instructive satire is central to the novelist's purpose, I think one can view Fielding's novels as having a satiric core.

In his novels, Fielding is no less intent upon pointing out man's shortcomings and exposing hypocrisy in all its forms than he was in his political farces or his satirical essays. His approach, however, is radically different. The satirist singles out his targets and sets out to destroy them with any means at his disposal, the novelist, on the other hand, is not confined to describing the evil in his society, he can be as liberal with his praise as with his criticism. One modern view of the satirist is that he presents the reader with the evil, blowing it up in all its ugliness in an attempt to convey the terrifying threat he feels it represents to society. By concentrating on the evil the satirist implies what the alternative, the norm of behaviour, should be. For Fielding, and for writers of the eighteenth century on the whole, this norm was remarkably consistent. It had its roots in Christian tradition and was based on laws dictated by nature and by reason. It proposed a refined, cultured, dignified way of life as an end to be desired by any man with the power and the will to reason.

In formal satire this norm is implied or stated more than illustrated. In Jonathan Wild this is the case. The reader's attention is rivetted on the evil personified in Wild himself. The Heartfrees enter the lists in white armour, so to speak, but they are representative figures of good, used only to emphasize the thorough evil of the high-
wayman. The norm is implied rather than portrayed -- somewhere between the poles that Heartfree and Wild represent lies the desired norm of behaviour for the common man. The satirist's way is to focus on the evil which he is trying to warn his readers of. He presents a vivid, frightening image of the lurking danger. Fielding departs from this method in his novels. For here the author gives us as his central figures characters like Parson Adams or Tom Jones who are themselves mixtures of good and evil, and therefore more than symbolic figures. In their adventures, Adams and Tom constantly come in contact with forces of good as well as evil, allowing the narrator to portray the blessings of the former as well as reveal the ugliness of the latter. What is presented is not the satirist's world of black and white, but the multi-coloured world of the novelist. In Fielding's novels it is not an implied norm, but an illustrated one, it is not stated, it is portrayed through example.

As a dramatist, however, Fielding's concern was with the evil itself, not with portraying an alternative to the evil as he was later to do in his novels. In his dramatic career and in his first attempts at prose Fielding utilized all the tools of the satirist's trade. His early farces and burlesques enjoyed immense success. In The Author's Farce and The Tragedy of Tragedies, Fielding ridiculed the tastes of a fashionable society which was lavishing both its time and praise on frivolous entertainments. Pantomine, tumbling exhibitions, and Italian opera were among the diversions most loudly applauded by the beau monde. The young dramatist was aligning himself with writers like Dryden and
Pope and Gay in waging a war against dullness as displayed in declining literary standards and false tastes. His concern, as had been that of the famous Scriblerus Club (1713), was with the general misuse of reason. His plays depended largely on the contemporaneity of the satire they contained for their success. They were witty and sharply satirical, for they were written in a critical age, one in which social habits were perpetually satirized and literature constantly criticized. Much of the satire of the early plays was directed at the literary scene, particularly at the hack writers of Grub Street.

In *Pasquin* Fielding found a new forte — political satire. He had introduced political satire in the earlier *Don Quixote in England* with favourable results, but still the reception of *Pasquin* exceeded all expectation. As in his other political farces Fielding set out to expose the corruption that existed in the Walpole administration, but like all good satire Fielding's ironic denouncement becomes universal in its application until the target is no longer one villain but all villains, it is not just the corruption and graft of one government, but of all governments.

When Fielding turned to prose he continued writing in a satiric vein. Many of his targets remained the same, but he began to experiment with new forms. the *persona*, epistles, dream visions, mock scholarship, burlesque criticism, mock encomia and numerous others. Several of his works in this period were cast in the mold of Lucian, and many were not unlike the essays of Swift both in the polish of their prose and in general tone. In this period also Fielding began writing moral essays
on subjects that were to become major themes in his novels, and the moralist in him began to emerge alongside the satirist.

Jonathan Wild represents a curious landmark in Fielding's career. It is a culmination of the type of formal satire he had been writing in his plays and essays, and at the same time it contains many elements that look forward to his career as novelist. Certainly Jonathan Wild represents Fielding's most sustained formal satire. Wild, the anti-hero, emerges as a threat to any society. He is the 'great man', the politician, the cutthroat businessman -- in fact, he is any person who has risen to power by trampling on the rights and feelings of others. He is the manipulator, the man who plays with human lives as if they were designed specifically for his own use. The feelings of others mean nothing to him for he is concerned with Wild and Wild alone. His very immorality is the source of his strength, and it is society's inability to cope with just such an inhuman product that is so frightening. Jonathan Wild is relentless, bitter satire. There is a singleness of purpose in the work that is reminiscent of Swift's most powerful satires.

Yet in spite of this, there are elements in Jonathan Wild which point forward to Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones. Most obvious among these similarities is Fielding's use of the mock-heroic. He had of course made use of this device in Tom Thumb, but it is in the story of Wild that one sees Fielding using the epic simile and inflated language with some of the same effect that he was later to use them in his comic novels.
With Joseph Andrews Fielding adopted a new mode of writing. What began as a reaction to Richardson's Pamela evolved into a unique form of moral satire which Fielding couched in what he termed a 'mock epic poem in prose'. His role is no longer strictly that of satirist, for as novelist he must be a far more genial entertainer. In his comic novels the satire functions for the sake of the comedy rather than for the satiric effect alone. This is particularly true in the case of character portraits, but even when the issues are larger, when Fielding is attacking a greater evil, when society itself is being called to task for sins committed, much of the sting of the satire is removed simply because echoes of laughter are still ringing in the reader's ears. It is good-natured satire with the exposure and the ridicule carried out in the most congenial fashion. However, even though the bite of the satire is often reduced to a playful nip, the spirit of satire still pervades these novels. The arch-villain remains the hypocrite, the pretender. Pride and vanity in all their foolish forms are continually singled out and unmasked. It is delightful to trace the exposure, to see just how deep Fielding's understanding of human nature penetrated. His satiric targets remained remarkably constant throughout his career, in keeping with his firm moral views.

It is my intention to discuss a number of Fielding's works, concentrating on the satire they contain. As a dramatist and a writer of essays Fielding deserves to be ranked as a skilled satirist, and to this reader at least, Jonathan Wild remains one of the fiercest, most successfully sustained satires of the period. In tracing Fielding's
career from satirist to novelist it is interesting to note the unique position the tale of Wild occupies. It is the best of his formal satires and at the same time it contains many foreshadowings of his latent power as a novelist. When Fielding turned to the novel he remained a satirist at heart. Although he was no longer writing formal satire, and the ultimate effect of his two epics of the road was comic rather than satiric, still these novels were filled with instructive satire calculated towards describing or establishing a mode of moral conduct.
A Writer of 'Dramatick Satire'

Henry Fielding began his literary career as a dramatist. His comedies, farces, burlesques, and ballad operas would be sufficient to secure him a position in English letters even if fate had not steered him towards the novels on which most of his popular fame is based. In the nine-year span from 1728 until the Licensing Act cut short his dramatic career in 1737, Fielding produced twenty-odd plays, many of which, like Don Quixote in England, Tom Thumb or Pasquin, enjoyed immense popularity. He is the single most important figure in the theater of the 1730's. The contemporaneity of his plays makes them invaluable social documents. With his vigorous style he records London life, especially that of the beau monde, in language that is brisk and captivating. Fielding displayed the age's characteristic concern with politics and fashion, and with the general state of society in regard to culture -- particularly the much feared degeneration of the standards of literature. All his comedies of fashionable life and his political
and theatrical burlesques reflect his concern with society and its many frailties and vices.

In the burlesques of *The Author's Farce*, *Tom Thumb*, *Pasquin*, and *The Historical Register*, Fielding created a genre for himself, the genre which he called 'Dramatick Satire.' *The Author's Farce* was first performed on March 30, 1730. It was his third dramatic attempt and gave many hints of the author's latent power as a satirist. By his choice of the pseudonymn "Scriblerus Secundus," Fielding indicated his satirical design, for he was playfully associating his name with Pope and Swift, the founders of the famous Scriblerus Club whose members took it upon themselves to ridicule social and literary abuses.

The play is divided into two parts, the first portrays the lot of a young playwright, Luckless, who is dependent upon theatrical managers and booksellers for his livelihood, and the second part, "The Pleasures of the Town," depicts the rehearsal of a dramatic entertainment ridiculing the amusements of the fashionable world. It was the taste of his society, more than anything else, that Fielding was holding up to public censure, for the fashionable entertainment of the day consisted of Italian opera, farces, pantomines, tumbling exhibitions and bombastic tragedies. The drama -- at least in the hands of writers like Gay and Fielding -- shared with non-dramatic literature the early eighteenth-

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1 Following *Love in Several Masques* (1728) and *The Temple Beau* (1730).
century disposition towards satire, and there was no better place to show up the absurdities and frivolous entertainments being associated with the stage than on the stage itself. Fielding feared that his age was one of cultural decline and that this degeneration was nowhere more obvious than in the literature and drama popular with the social elite. The fact that these spectacles, the puppet shows and pantomimes, for example, were so popular, was the cause for Fielding's outrage and the object of his attack in *The Author's Farce*. Because of their popularity, these displays were taken up by the theatrical managers strictly as good business ventures. No concern was shown for artistic merit. However, many artists registered a loud, clear protest against this decline of literary standards, and Fielding's protests were as articulate as any.

On opening, the play had as its immediate satirical targets Colley Cibber and Robert Wilks, both actor-managers of Drury Lane. In the revised version a change was made in the substitution of Theophilus Cibber for Wilks -- a change which must have added much in the way of comic enjoyment, for Fielding's audience seemed to like nothing more than seeing the Cibbers ridiculed. While such treatment was quite personal and at times even bitter, it still rose above mere abuse to serve the larger purpose of the satire. As one critic points out.

They (the Cibbers) are made to serve a symbolic function similar to that served later by Colley Cibber in the revised *Dunciad*, they are types of the theater manager, the dictator of dramatic art in that time of literary depravity, at once perceptive judges of the public taste and headstrong, vain tyrants who
pride themselves on capricious conduct.²

The fact that the Cibbers were well known to the audience heightened the satire's immediate appeal, but on the larger scale they were stock villains, just as young Luckless, the impoverished playwright, represented a typical victim of their villainy.

Witmore admonishes Luckless for attempting to be a writer in such an age:

S'death! in an age of learning and true politeness, when a man might succeed by his merit, there would be some encouragement. But now, when party and prejudice carry all before them, when learning is decried, wit not understood, when the theatres are puppet-shows, and the comedians ballad-singers, when fools lead the town, would a man think to thrive by his wit? If thou must write, write nonsense, write operas, write Hurlo-thrumbos, set up an oratory and preach nonsense, and you may meet with encouragement enough. Be profane, be scurrilous, be immodest...³

The angry Witmore continues in this vein, attacking in his outburst soldiers, physicians, lawyers, courtiers, and flattering poets. He damns the practice of patronage by telling Luckless it is the only way to succeed in letters in such an age: "If thou wilt, write against all these reasons, get a patron, be pimp to some worthless man of quality, 


write panegyrics on him, flatter him with as many virtues as he has vices" (VIII, 205).

Luckless's attempts to solicit a publisher provide dramatic justification for the introduction of scenes from literary Grub Street. Here, along with the devastating ridicule of the Cibbers, who appear as the Marplays, there is a description of a bookseller's shop with several hacks busy at tasks assigned by their master, the bookseller. Fielding protests the conception of literature as a commodity with a marketable value, suggesting that this conception, held in the play by both the bookseller and the theater managers, is a contributing factor to the prevailing literary degeneracy. With characters like Bookweight, Dash, Quibble and Blotpage, Fielding provides a comical rendering of the hack writer. To these characters literature is a commodity to be supplied in the quickest, but not necessarily most efficient, manner possible. Greek mottoes, Latin mottoes, even second-hand mottoes out of the Spectator, all are marketable goods to be bought and sold according to the law of supply and demand. Fielding attacks in a slightly more jocular fashion than Pope those people who buy books merely for show.

4 Compare Pope's Moral Essay IV:

His Study! with what Authors is it stor'd?
In Books, not Authors, curious is my Lord,
To all their dated Backs he turns you round,
These Aldus printed, those Du Sueil has bound,
Lo Some are Vellom, and the rest as good
For all his Lordship knows, but they are Wood. (133-138)

Bookweight, as a seller of books and one who knows the market's trends, is explicit about the kind of books that sell and those that do not:

Give me a good handsome large volume, with a full promising title-page at the head of it, printed on a good paper and letter, the whole well bound and gilt, and I'll warrant its selling -- You have the common error of authors, who think people buy books to read -- No, no, books are only bought to furnish libraries, as pictures and glasses, and beds and chairs, are for other rooms.

(VII, 221, Act II, v)

Fielding has genuine fun with the Cibbers while at the same time pointing out the threat such people represent to the standards of his art. Marplay junior tells us what their role in this whole business of stage and drama is:

My father and I, sir, are a couple of poetical tailors; when a play is brought us, we consider it as a tailor does his coat, we cut it, sir, we cut it, and let me tell you, we have the exact measure of the town, we know how to fit their taste.

(VII, 207, Act I, vi)

We are made to visualize this pompous young ass, Marplay junior, in all his vanity and silliness, boasting of his one "small sally into Parnassus," "a sort of flying leap over Helicon" (VIII, 207). Young Marplay's one attempt had been damned by the critics so he wisely turned to more rewarding pursuits. The scene between father and son is filled with a good-natured but extremely personal attack on the hapless pair. Marplay senior refuses to accept Luckless's play not because of any particular fault it may possess, but because there is nothing "coercive" to his "passions" in it. Moreover, he confesses to his son when questioned about the play.
It may be a very good one, for aught I know; but I am resolved since the town will not receive any of mine, they shall have none from any other. I'll keep them to their old diet.

(VIII, 215, Act II, ii)

With all the surface laughter and gaiety of the farce there is the danger of missing, or at least of shrugging off, the serious overtones that accompany it. Here the malicious reasoning behind this pair's actions, together with the selfishness revealed in their keeping back authors who show any merit, are the evils the satirist is pointing at. The satiric effect derives from the situation itself. The dramatic image is there, alive, on stage before the audience. The undercutting and deflation of the image, as well as the exposure of the foulness and hypocrisy that lie beneath the surface of things-as-they-seem-to-be, are accomplished through dialogue and action. The irony and the satire is usually blatantly obvious, but the lack of subtlety does not detract from the final effect. As the serious is reduced to the absurd, the whole situation takes on suggestions of the ridiculous and the satirist's role is fulfilled. The play is characterized by a lightness of tone, but even with its deceiving air of banter, the seriousness of the author's implications is never doubted.

The puppet show, "The Pleasures of the Town," is a dramatization of the major theme of the Dunciad. Luckless tells us "the chief business is the election of an arch-poet, or, as others call him, a poet laureate, to the Goddess of Nonsense" (VIII, 228). Those contending for the laureateship, Don Tragedio, Sir Farcical Comic, Dr. Orator, Signior Opera, and Monsieur Pantomine, are personifications of the ruling London
pleasures. Like Pope, although with less emphasis, Fielding alludes in dialogue to the increasing prominence of Nonsense (or Dulness) as the extension of the pleasures of the business community to the fashionable end of town: "My lord mayor has shortened the time of Bartholomew Fair in Smithfield," explains a poet to a bookseller, "and so they are resolved to keep it all the year round at the other End of the town" (VIII, 235).

The position of arch-poet or poet laureate is ultimately filled by the ghost of Signior Opera. Queen Nonsense -- like all other foolish women -- is enamoured with Opera and resolved that he shall have the crown. The implication is that absurd as some of the other entertainments may be, there is really no contest. Opera is most entitled to the position beside Queen Nonsense. Mrs. Novel sings his victory song.

Air XX
Away each meek pretender flies,
Opera thou hast gained the prize,
Nonsense grateful still must own,
That thou best support'st her throne. (VIII, 252)

The ending of the play burlesques all happy endings wrought through impossible chance and coincidence. After the rehearsal of the puppet-show we return to the story of Luckless and Harriet, but it is only a formality. The reader suddenly becomes aware that he has not left the realm of Nonsense at all but has only moved to another part of her kingdom. In a whirlwind of discovery it is revealed that Luckless is actually the long lost prince of Bantam, who had only been traced by the 'luckiest' chance. At this timely moment a message arrives announcing the death of his father, the king, so Luckless is now Henry I, King of Bantam.
But it does not end there. Punch, one of the actors of the puppet-show reveals that he is "no common fellow," that he is in reality Mrs. Moneywood's son and the prince of Brentford. Mrs. Moneywood, the Queen of this land of Brentford, had been forced to flee with her children when the king was overthrown. This makes Harriet princess of Brentford. Even Joan, who is discovered to be Punch's wife, finds herself a king's daughter. It is the happiest of all happy endings with everyone part of one big happy royal family. The play-within-the-play merges with the play itself and all is nonsense. The preposterous ending provides a fitting climax for the satire. What is implied is that the tastes of society are no less preposterous than the play's ending and the court of Nonsense is the ruling court of the day. It is the audience even more than the entertainments themselves that deserves the censure of the satirist. It is they whom he attacks in his prologue.

Like the tame animals designed for show,
You have your cues to clap, as they to bow,
Taught to commend, your judgements have no share,
By chance you guess aright, by chance you err.
(VIII, 193)

With The Author's Farce Fielding committed himself to a role he was never really to abandon, that of social satirist. The play was only mildly successful, but it indicated the direction Fielding's talents were to take.

The Tragedy of Tragedies or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great is Fielding's most successful burlesque of heroic tragedy. The play is filled with florid diction, impossible plots and situations that
are pregnant with violence, superhuman characters, and lofty sentiments, all of which are vulgarized and exaggerated to absurdity. Tom Thumb was at first performed along with The Author's Farce, but ultimately it became much more successful. As the brunt of the satire was directed at the type of heroic drama cultivated by Dryden, Banks and Lee and their followers, the play did not rely quite so heavily on local historical fact as did his political satires. The parody was the main vehicle of the attack, but Fielding still was able to get in a few thrusts at his contemporaries that had nothing to do with their writing of heroic tragedy.

In his original preface to the tragedy Fielding again made Cibber one of his victims by praising himself (as author) and his actors, and then throwing "little Tom Thumb on the town" just as the poet laureate had thrown The Provoked Husband at the feet of her Majesty. In the altered edition of 1731, H. Scriblerus Secundus makes use instead of the learned style of Dr. Bentley and Professor Burmann of Leyden. The preface itself is a masterpiece of satire and humor. The persona first remarks on the divided opinion concerning the merit of the play:

Whilst some publicly affirmed that no author could produce so fine a piece but Mr. P---, others have with as much vehemence insisted that no one could write anything so bad but Mr. F--------.

(IX, 7)

5 Wilbur L. Cross, The History of Henry Fielding (New Haven, 1918), I, 90.
He mentions that the tragedy had been celebrated with great applause at Amsterdam where it was presented under the title of Mynheer Vander Thumb, and received with "that reverent and silent attention which becometh an audience at a deep tragedy"(IX, 7). In this work we begin to sense the sheer exuberance and humor that are so much a part of Fielding's most mature works -- and of his satire. There is a new playfulness and control in this ironic preface that was not found in The Author's Farce. H. Scriblerus Secundus tells us that there are two reasons for his writing the preface. The first is out of a sense of duty aroused by the first "surreptitious copy" that had been published, and the second, he tells us, is the result of knowing myself more capable of doing justice to our Author than any other man, as I have given myself more pains to arrive at a thorough understanding of this little piece, having for ten years together read nothing else, in which time, I think, I may modestly presume, with the help of my English dictionary, to comprehend all the meaning of every word in it.

(IX, 8)

He ignores the question as to whether or not the piece was originally written by Shakespeare, except to remark pointedly that if it had been the work of such an eminent hand, its merit would have been considerably greater with many of the age who buy and commend what they read from "an implicit faith in the author only"(IX, 9). The narrator proceeds to defend the tragedy against all attacks. He praises its historical accuracy, the essence of the tragedy itself, the characters, the sentiment and diction. But his defense serves only to undermine any chances for credibility the play might have possessed. Typical of this disastrous
process are his remarks about tragedy. "What can be so proper for tragedy as a set of big sounding words, so contrived together as to convey no meaning? which I shall one day or other prove to be the sublime of Longinus." (IX, 12)

Scriblerus damns himself and the play with every sentence. His attempts at praise have exactly the opposite effect. He tells us about the author:

He is very rarely within sight through the whole play, either rising higher than the eye of your understanding can soar, or sinking lower than it careth to stoop.

(IX, 12)

The preface sets the tone for the whole satire. Using a device popular with satirists of all ages, Fielding makes his persona a prime target for the satiric attack. In this way he introduces the audience to the atmosphere of the ridiculous before even entering the play proper. H. Scriblerus Secundus is the typical hack writer, a man who displays the false learning, pretension and pomposity that the satirist detests. The persona's bland lack of sensitivity is characteristic of the product of Grub Street that Fielding, along with Swift and Pope, felt was lowering the standards of the literature of the day.

Turning to the play itself, we find from beginning to end a rich succession of burlesque declamations, heroic outbursts of tragic or tender passion, and mock heroic similes. For almost every line of this Fielding refers us, through the mock pedantic notes, to a passage in some heroic tragedy well known to the playgoers of his time. The opening
lines spoken by Doodle and Noodle are indicative of what is to follow. From the first ridiculous images of the sun "like a beau in a new birth-day suit" and nature wearing her "universal grin," until the final vision of King, Queen, Huncamunca, Noodle, Doodle and Cleora all lying "scatter'd and o'erthrown" like a pack of cards, the heroic does not stand a chance. The single use of the word "grin" is enough to add a note of madness to the whole performance. The suggestion that things are far from normal becomes fact when Noodle replies: "This day, O Mr. Doodle, is a day / Indeed! -- A day, we never saw before." (IX, 18) It is literary slapstick with the immediate effect being incredulous laughter. In this case, however, the laughter stems partially from the fact that we realize that a frighteningly thin line is drawn here between the realm of the absurd and that of reality.

Fielding makes fun of all the conventions of heroic tragedy. His hero, Tom Thumb, is more than mortal; he is possessed of a "mountainous soul." He is a ferocious warrior whose name is used by the giant nurses to frighten children -- but of course it is impossible to reconcile any of these heroic attributes with the pigmy-sized Thumb. It is in the language itself that the burlesque is most skilfully handled. The dramatist vulgarizes every noble sentiment he can possibly lay his hands on with hilarious results. Similarly his characters are possessed of all the wrong virtues. Queen Dollallola is far removed from any conception one might have of a tragic heroine. When she weeps, tears gush down her "blubber'd cheeks, / Like a swol'n gutter" (IX, 21), when she speaks, vulgar sentiments issue forth. She emerges as a crude, over-sexed,
middle-aged female who wanders about the court in a state of semi-in
toxication. Her predominant characteristic is her lust. She con-
tinually swoons over Tom Thumb, and she has only envy for Glumdalca,
the captive Queen of Giants, who had to leave twenty husbands behind.
Dollallola's sentiments on this last occasion are far from those ex-
pected of a Queen -- even one who tipples:

Oh! happy state of giantism -- where husbands
Like mushrooms grow, whilst hapless we are forced
To be content, nay, happy thought, with one.
(IX, 26, Act II, iii)

When Dollallola weighs her virtue against Tom Thumb she finds her
virtue the lighter of the two. Knowing it to be as impossible for her
to live without her virtue as without Tom, she can only hope to be
left a widow. Fielding places her regal wishes in a harsher setting
when he compares her dilemma and proposed solution to that of a whore
set loose to walk the streets again after a sentence in Bridewell!
When the King feels a sudden pain within his breast in the presence of
Glumdalca he does not know if it arises from love "or only the wind-
cholick." Huncamunca, the princess loved by both Tom Thumb and Grizzle,
is a suitable offspring for such parents. After marrying her "Thummy"
she is eager to point out to Grizzle that "a maid, like me, Heaven
form'd at least for two"(IX, 53), and the emphasis we gather is on the
"at least."

Fielding achieves his satiric effect in a multitude of ways. Fre-
quently he surrounds a noble sentiment with utter nonsense and by con-
trast achieves the desired effect of the ridiculous. Another device
he uses is to build to a state of sublimity and then add a final word or phrase that is enough to topple the whole construction. Possibly the most successful device Fielding employs is that of juxtaposing the sublime with the vulgar. He begins in elevated beautiful language, slowly inflating his image, and then descends with startling abruptness to the common. An example will best illustrate this point:

Thumb: Whisper ye winds that Huncamunca's mine, Echoes repeat, that Huncamunca's mine! The dreadful business of the war is o'er, And beauty, heavenly beauty! crowns my toils! I've thrown the bloody garment now aside And hymeneal sweets invite my bride. So when some chimney-sweeper all the day Hath through dark paths pursued the sooty way, At night, to wash his hands and face he flies, And in his t'other shirt with his Brickdusta lies. (IX, 29, Act I, iii)

The effect of the sudden shift from the loftiness of the first part of the passage to the commonness of its latter part is to shock the reader into an awareness of the absurdity of the situation. The imagery is as incongruous as the noble sentiments themselves.

After the unfortunate demise of Thumb the tragedy draws to a quick and bloody close. In his grief over the loss of his mighty warrior the king decrees that they "Let lawyers, parsons, and physicians loose, / To rob, impose on, and to kill the world" (IX, 70). This is the worst imaginable end, it is implied, to the worst imaginable disaster. There follows a triumphantly absurd climax in which everyone is killed, providing the audience with a blood-bath superior to that found in the goriest of heroic tragedies.
In the burlesque there would appear to be two basic levels to the satire. The most obvious level is the burlesque of heroic tragedy itself. Fielding ridicules in a delightfully humorous manner all the conventions that were being abused by the tragedians of his era. The object of his satire is primarily heroic tragedy as it was being performed in London at that time, and the play burlesques directly more than forty heroic and pseudo-classic tragedies. His satiric effect is achieved by giving mock heroic treatment to the most unheroic course of events imaginable. He distorts heroic sentiment, juxtaposes high flowing language with the vulgar and obscene, and incongruously links images drawn from opposite poles, all with wonderful dexterity. The more serious implications beneath his bantering tone provide a second level to the satire. The "tragedy" represents a grave comment on Fielding's society and on the frailties of its members. Pride, foolish idolization, false virtue, all emerge as targets in what is essentially an attack on the tastes of the age.

In 1736 Fielding had formed "The Great Mogul's Company of Comedians" and had taken the Little Theater in the Haymarket. In Pasquin, A Dramatic Satire On the Times, his first play produced there, he returned to the political satire he had written in Don Quixote in England (1733). The election scenes in the earlier play had met with such applause that Fielding no doubt felt a whole new field for the

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exercise of his powers of satire had opened up -- and it had. He pro-
ceeded to make use of the Little Theater as a platform for the prose-
cution of a vigorous political campaign against the ministry.

Both *Pasquin* and *The Historical Register* (1737) contain nearly as
much social, literary and theatrical satire as they do political satire.
Again the *beau monde*, the London society with all its follies and vices,
is hit by the author. The sheer frivolity and inanity of the life of
a London *beau*, as well as French fashions and the whole art of polite
conversation, are handled with contempt. Such common practices as
keeping and gaming -- or rather the commonness of such practices -- are
similarly held up to ridicule. The fervor for Italian opera and
particularly the town's idolization of Farinelli, a celebrated Italian
male soprano, receives special attention from Fielding.

Fielding is at his full strength as a dramatist in *Pasquin*. His
range is greater than ever before and with the additional attraction
of political satire the play takes on a sparkle and vivacity that ranks
it high among his dramatic productions. The author again uses the
device of the play-within-the-play, this time revolving the action
around the rehearsal of two plays: the first a comedy called "The
Election," and the second a tragedy called "The Life and Death of Common
Sense." As their titles would indicate they are essentially political
and literary satires at their core, with a generous helping of social
satire spread over the whole as a kind of frosting.

"The Election" consists of a series of humorous scenes in which
the flagrant and open bribery at elections and the shameless immoralit
of fashionable life are satirized. Bribery is the major theme of the
comedy. The scenes exposing the corruption that riddled elections were
so completely successful the Opposition suggested that the play should
be acted in every borough before the elections to warn the people against
the bribery that took place. These scenes are comical and lively.
The satire is never very subtle, but the comedy would not succeed if
it were. However, even in these scenes in which Fielding was ridi-
culing the ministry, he does not pass up an opportunity to jibe at
Colley Cibber. In the scene with Lord Place, Colonel Promise and
several voters, Lord Place promises to provide for them all, either
in customs, excise or the court:

2 voter. My Lord, I should like a place at court too, I don't
much care what it is, provided I wear fine clothes
and have something to do in the kitchen or the cellar,
I own I should like the cellar, for I am a devilish
lover of sack.

Place. Sack, say you? Odso, you shall be poet-laureate.

2 voter. Poet! no, my Lord, I am no poet, I can't make verses.

Place. No matter for that, you'll be able to make odes.

2 voter. Odes, my lord! what are those?

Place. Faith, sir, I can't tell what they are, but I
know you may be qualified for the place without being
a poet.  

(XI, 184, Act II, i)

Bribery and corruption are the order of the day. Fielding was having

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7 Ibid., p. 51.
fun with his subject matter, but the laughter does not erase the sobering implications of many of the scenes.

The immorality of fashionable society and the tastes of the theater-going world are prime targets for the satirist. Mrs. Mayoress's desire to have her husband again in office is based solely on her wish to get out of the country and back to the pleasures of London. She is seconded in this by her daughter who manifests all the popular tastes of the day. Miss Mayoress expresses her reasons for wanting to return to the city: "then we shall see Faribelly, the strange man-woman that they say is with child, and the fine pictures of Merlin's cave at the play-houses, and the rope-dancing and the tumbling" (XI, 179, Act II, i). There is a great deal of rancor displayed in Fielding's attack on Farinelli and what he represented. Nearly ten years later in the True Patriot we find Mr. Adams remarking:

This opera, I am informed, is a diversion in which a prodigious sum of money, more than is to be collected out of twenty parishes, is lavished away on foreign eunuchs and papists, very scandalous to be suffered at any time, especially at a season when both war and famine hang over our heads.9

There would seem to be two forces operating behind Fielding's dislike.

8 In his novels Fielding continues to associate good with country life and evil with the cities, especially London. His heroes, Joseph and Fanny and Tom and Sophia, for example, are rewarded by a life of ease and contentment in the country.

9 No. 13, Tuesday, Jan. 28, 1746.
first are the reasons evident in Mr. Adam's comments, which are linked with the whole question of art and culture, but secondly, there is a natural, healthy masculine distaste for this type of fawning, effeminate person, a distaste that makes itself obvious in all his writings.

The author ridicules the social follies of his society in good-natured fashion. Lord Place comments on Miss Mayoress's remarkable breeding -- reflected in her good taste -- and tells her she will no doubt be much admired in the beau monde and soon taken into keeping by some man of quality. For, he says,

"every one now keeps, and is kept, there are no such thing as marriages now-a-days, unless merely Smithfield contracts, and that for the support of families, but then the husband and wife both take into keeping within a fortnight.

(XI, 180, Act II, i)

We discover that there are several "reputable" trades which people of fashion may practise, "such as gaming, intriguing, voting and running in debt," and all without fear of punishment. Mrs. Mayoress carefully explains to her questioning daughter that "people are punished for doing naughty things, but people of quality are never punished, therefore they never do any naughty things" (Act II, i).

The second part of the play, Fustian's tragedy, "The Life and Death of Common Sense," has as its main theme a conspiracy against Common Sense. The villains in this insurrection are the representatives of religion and the learned professions of law and medicine. These conspirators prefer Queen Ignorance to Queen Common Sense as their sovereign. Fielding uses this allegory to satirize the inordinate
claims set up by the church, to expose the inequalities and hardships
that the existing laws countenanced, and to ridicule the quackery
practised in the name of medical science. This tragedy is more starkly
allegorical than the puppet-show in *The Author's Farce*, it is less
particularized and more bitter. The invasion of the realm of Common
Sense by Ignorance is again basically the same theme as is found in
the *Dunciad*. It also reveals in explicit terms the problem with which
Fielding as a professional man of the theater was always confronted;
the conflicting demands of sound critical sense and popular taste.
Fielding chose to satirize the tastes of his society rather than con-
form to them. Writing at a time "when nonsense, dulness, lewdness,
and all manner of profaneness and immorality" were "daily practised
on the stage" (XI, 201, Act III, i), the author attempted to hold up
to ridicule the fashionable entertainments of his day by satirizing
them.

In the tragedy Common Sense is ousted by Ignorance. She interprets
her fall in terms that anticipate the fourth book of Pope's *Dunciad*:

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Henceforth all things shall topsy-turvy turn,
Physick shall kill, and Law enslave the world;
Cits shall turn beaus, and taste Italian songs
While courtiers are stock-jobbing in the city.
Places, requiring learning and great parts,
Henceforth shall all be hustled in a hat,
And drawn by men deficient in them both.
   (XI, 224, Act V, i)
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The tone is lighter, the language rougher, but the implications are
the same as those of the *Dunciad*, though admittedly, Pope creates more
of a feeling of horror at the prospect of the reign of Dulness than
does Fielding.

Much of the satire of *Pasquin* is directed at the theater. The ridiculous plots, the silly mistakes that occur in the rehearsals -- such as Queen Common Sense appearing as her ghost before killing herself -- the constant haggling of Trapwit, Fustian and Sneerwell, these are all part of the author's humorous attack on the practices of the stage. The mock heroics of the tragedy accompanied by the comments of Fustian, the author, burlesque the absurdities of heroic plays in the same manner and for the same reasons as *Tom Thumb*. The attack on pantomine, Italian opera, doctors, lawyers, Grub Street, and even the Royal Society, reveal the author's never-failing interest in the society around him. His political satire, which blossomed really for the first time in this play, was more than just a means for drawing a full house. Fielding showed a distaste for false pride and affectation in all their forms and he considered it even more damnable when such hypocrisy manifested itself in so-called "great men."

*Pasquin* was the beginning of the end for Fielding as a dramatist. The Walpole administration regarded him as the chief satirist for the Opposition and was understandably disturbed by his attacks. Previous attempts to license the acting of plays had failed, however, leaving the playwrights with a false sense of security.¹⁰ Fielding was at the

¹⁰ In 1733 more than one unsuccessful attempt had been made to test the legality of performing plays without a license. In the same year a bill to regulate playhouses was introduced in the House of Commons and defeated. In 1735, Sir John Barnard introduced a similar bill which, while supported by Walpole, was ignored.
time the leading figure of the London stage, a man at the peak of his
dramatic career. His dedication to the public in The Historical Register
For the Year 1736 contained proposals for enlarging the Little Theater,
redecorating it and bringing in a new, better company of actors. The
same dedication contained also an ironic foreshadowing of the fate that
was soon to befall him:

If nature hath given me any talents at ridiculing vice and
imposture, I shall not be indolent, nor afraid of exerting
them, while the liberty of the press and stage subsists,
that is to say, while we have any liberty left among us.
(XI, 237)

This liberty was taken away. On May 20, 1737, Walpole introduced
a bill to regulate playhouses, using a play called The Golden Rump
(author unknown), which had come into his hands through one Giffard,
proprietor of the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, as an example of the
potential threat of unlicensed plays to the administration. The bill
went through all its stages in less than three weeks and became law
on June 21st. As a result all theaters except those at Covent Garden
and Drury Lane were closed and Fielding's dramatic career was over.
The Mi seel  an i es

Fielding's first significant venture in prose was The Champion. This newspaper provided him with more freedom for his satiric attacks than had the stricter confines of the drama. Fielding adopted the persona of Captain Hercules Vinegar -- in fact he created a whole family of Vinegars just as Steele had created the Bickerstaffs in The Tatler -- and in this way he was able to continue his attack on Walpole, the Cibbers, Italian Opera, current tastes and trends of fashionable society, and all the quacks and mountebanks he had ridiculed in his plays. The Champion provided the author with a perfect means for dealing with society's follies and with both the virtues and vices inherent in human nature. It started Fielding writing on themes that were to form a basic part of his fiction for the rest of his career. Issues only touched in his farces and burlesques became topics for the essayist. Charity, poverty, goodness as opposed to greatness, became subjects for moral essays that began to appear with his political allegories and his con-
tinued sport with the Cibbers of his society. Just as his dramatic career had provided him with invaluable training for the writing of the novel, so too these first ventures in prose provided the germs of what were to develop into basic themes of his fiction.

The Miscellanies, published in three volumes in 1743, can be regarded as a major landmark in Fielding's career. Although they came out one year after the publication of Joseph Andrews, a significant portion of their contents is assumed to have been composed at an earlier date. They can be seen as the product of his transitional period between the careers of dramatist and novelist.

In the Miscellanies there is ample evidence of Fielding the satirist. It is in this wonderful assortment of poems, essays and longer narratives that we see a side of Fielding not always recognizable in his comic works. This Fielding is cast in the mold of Lucian and Swift and he often writes satire purely for satire's sake. He demands our admiration for the skill with which he handles the devices of the satirist's trade. Frequently he adopts a persona who is as glib and convincing as Swift's modest projector, sustaining his poise in virtually any literary situation in which he cares to place himself. In poetry Fielding experimented with epigrams and mock epitaphs, with parody and burlesque, with the satiric epistle and the satiric allegory,

1 "A Modest Proposal," The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, ed. Temple Scott (London, 1905), vol. VII. In this proposal the projector lays out a plan for solving Ireland's problems that is rational, convincing, and unbelievably horrible. Citations from Swift in my text are to the Temple Scott edition.
and he even attempted to write verse essays, mixing satire and direct statement in the manner of Pope. In his prose he used epistles, burlesque criticism, diatribes, dream visions, mock encomia, essays, mock scholarship, burlesque history, and dialogue to achieve his satiric effect.

To illustrate the skill with which Fielding is capable of handling satire I propose first to discuss two shorter pieces from his Miscellanies: "An Essay on Nothing" and "Some PAPERS Proper to be Read Before the R----l Society." Here the author ridicules his satiric targets in essays that are decidedly Swiftian.

Fielding's "Essay on Nothing" is a delightfully executed piece of satiric writing. Cast in the form of an encomium, the essay eulogizes "nothing." The subject had been treated before, perhaps most notably by John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, in a poem entitled Upon Nothing, but Fielding gives it a new twist. Adopting the persona of a pretentious logician, Fielding sets out to prove in a logical, well-ordered argument that "nothing" not only exists, but that it can be seen, tasted, smelled, felt, and loved, hated, or feared. This particular form of satire was not new with Fielding, it was in fact one with an ancient tradition behind it. The encomium was originally an oration in the epideictic mode which eulogized a person, place or thing according to a fairly consistent form while employing a conventional

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set of relevant arguments.\(^3\) It was meant to be impressive and ostenta-tious in its formal treatment of the subject. The beauty of Fielding's essay rests in the manner in which it adheres to all the demands of form while at the same time ridiculing the arrogant nonsense that many contemporary authors were passing off as learned treatises.

The author's parody of the serious encomium functions on three distinct levels.\(^4\) On the surface there is the panegyric itself on the subject of "nothing." This is neatly presented in a formal, erudite tone. The next level is the satire proper, the implied meaning that is in every statement about "nothing" and which is directly applicable to contemporary values. This second level fuses with the first in the matter of form, for the framework (the rhetorical devices proper to the serious encomium) contributes to the satiric effect by virtue of the faithfulness with which the satirist follows the rules. It is in recognition of the form and the subsequent awareness of what is being done with it that much of the pleasure to be derived from the satire is found. The third level can be seen when the author drops his ironic pose and speaks directly to the audience. This is something that Swift seldom, if ever, does, for in Swift the narrator wears the mask of the adversary practically throughout. But if one can agree with the suggestion that one of the great contributions Fielding made to the novel

\[^3\] Ibid., p. 302.

\[^4\] This discussion is based on divisions suggested by Miller.
was the coupling of the technique of the persona with that of the straight-forward narrator and expositor, teaching writers of English fiction to assume and remove the mask at will,\(^5\) then I think it is reasonable to apply the same argument to these shorter works. I see no reason for feeling that the author's intrusion detracts from the satiric effect, rather, I would suggest, it strengthens the point the satirist is making. I will try to illustrate this by a closer examination of the essay itself.

In his introduction to the paper the author states his surprise that so few writers have endeavoured to elaborate on this particular subject of "nothing." He writes:

> But whatever the reason, certain it is, that except a hardy wit in the reign of Charles II none ever hath dared to write on this subject; I mean openly and avowedly, for it must be confessed, that most of our modern authors, however foreign the matter which they endeavour to treat may seem at their first setting out, they generally bring the work to this in the end.

\[(XIV, 309)\]

In this passage can be found the three levels referred to above. There is the polite, formal introduction demanded of the form. The type of person writing the treatise is also revealed. He is a man puffed with his own importance and almost condescending with his "none hath ever dared to write on this subject." I think we have to see the persona

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as being in many respects similar to the hack writer of *A Tale of a Tub*. The latter is a product of Grub Street, a man willing to turn his pen to absolutely anything -- even nothing. To the satirist this man represents a definite threat to a society that is striving to maintain certain standards in its literature. In Fielding, as in Swift and Pope, we find moral decline equated with cultural decline with the hack writers riding the crest of the wave of degeneracy.

Swift's hack writer is a notable example of someone who has written on "nothing," for he ends up writing on this subject at the conclusion of the *Tale*. He is also quite explicit about his reasons for doing so:

> I am now trying an experiment very frequent among modern authors, which is to write upon nothing, when the subject is utterly exhausted, to let the pen still move on, by some called the ghost of wit, delighting to walk after the death of its body.

(Swift, I, 142)

The narrator of *The Tale of a Tub* is a unifying factor in that he represents a target of much of the satire. The whole insane Tubbian world manifests itself in this product of Grub Street. It is a mad world of distorted values, filled with mountebanks and fools all acting their parts on their itinerant stages.

Fielding's *persona* represents an equally villainous threat to society. Like the author of the *Tale* he too is the object of the attack and a unifying feature of the satire. He is the ostentatious, arrogant pedant pretending to great wisdom and knowledge. At times the author drops his ironic pose and speaks directly to the audience.
At such points it is not the hack speaking any longer, but Fielding himself directing a satiric barb at his contemporaries. These lapses into direct comment never strike the reader as being out of place in the satire. It is difficult to discern the shift in tone on many occasions and it is this very ambiguity that gives zest to the whole game of trying to decide when Fielding is in earnest or when he is mocking, when it is the persona speaking and when the author himself.

He has such a delightful sense of the ludicrous that the reader is hesitant to accept at face value anything he writes in the satiric vein. Fielding frequently switches targets -- from his persona to others among his contemporaries -- so whenever it suits his purpose he drops the mask and picks up another satiric device, that of ironic commentary. This is a feature of Fielding's satire that is not emphasized enough. He wrote with a thorough grounding in the works of the great writers. He knew the rules, the forms and the conventions and utilized them for his own purposes.

The author of the Essay proceeds to lay out his treatise in a manner befitting a serious encomium. In his first section, as proper in such a logical presentation, he discusses the 'Antiquity of Nothing':

This is very plainly to be discovered in the first pages, and sometimes books, of all general historians, and indeed, the study of this important subject fills up the whole life of an antiquary, it being always at the bottom of his inquiry, and is commonly at last discovered by him with infinite labour and pains.

(XIV, 310-311)

Within the framework of his mock eulogy Fielding comments neatly,
politely, and destructively on a number of intellectual abuses. Fielding shared with many writers of the age a distaste for the misuse of learning, particularly when it manifested itself in pretension. Many of his contemporaries, antiquaries and historians among them, must have struck him as being employed at turning out sheer nonsense, wasting valuable effort in the pursuit of vain recognition.

The second section, "Of the Nature of Nothing," further illustrates the learned, orderly aspects of the treatise. The narrator outlines in convincing tones his plan of attack:

I shall...proceed to show, first, what nothing is, secondly, I shall disclose the various kinds of nothing, and, lastly shall prove its great dignity, and that it is the end of everything.

(XIV, 311)

There could be no clearer statement of purpose for an admittedly tenuous subject. The narrator is confident. He provides the reader with elaborate comparisons that emphasize the points he is making:

For instance, when a bladder is full of wind, it is full of something, but when that is let out, we aptly say, there is nothing in it. The same may be as justly asserted of a man as of a bladder. However well he may be bedaubed with lace, or with title, yet if he have not something in him, we may predict the same of him as of an empty bladder.

(XIV, 312)

Here again Fielding glides smoothly from one satiric target to another. There is first the satire aimed at the persona. This is inherent in the form and the language which is mechanical, pretentious rhetoric. Expressions like "we aptly say" give the paper the formal air of a
learned document while at the same time things are explained in the simplest, commonest terms. Fielding mixes lofty purpose with completely incongruous imagery in order to emphasize the ridiculous. We have a direct comment from Fielding himself as well -- if a man has nothing in him, regardless of his finery and his titles, he is the same as an empty bladder.

The third and final section, "Of the Dignity of Nothing, and an Endeavour to Prove that it is the End as well as the Beginning of all Things," represents the brunt of Fielding's satiric attack. It is here we find expressed most clearly his distaste for a subservience to mere empty titles. He despised the idea of paying respect to a man not for what he is but for who he is -- for qualities associated with his title, not for any that he may in fact possess. Fielding uses the following syllogism to prove the existence of the dignity of nothing:

The respect paid to men on account of their titles is paid at least to the supposal of their superior virtues and abilities, or it is paid to nothing. But when a man is a notorious knave or fool, it is impossible there should be any such supposal. The conclusion is apparent.

(XIV, 316)

This is the same type of chop logic that Swift's modest projector uses. Here, as the writer proceeds to prove the dignity of "nothing," not only the persona but every hypocrite, all those who pretend to something they are not, come under devastating attack. The persona continues:

Now that no man is ashamed of either paying or receiving this respect I wonder not, since the great importance of nothing seems, I think, to be pretty apparent; but that they should
deny the Deity worshipped, and endeavour to represent nothing as something, is more worthy reprehension.

(XIV, 316)

The mask of the persona is dangling around the author's neck at this point. This is Fielding giving vent to his feelings concerning the corruption, deceit, "vulgar worship and adulation" that goes on in the courts and cities. He almost abandons his treatise in these passages. He reveals his concern with the "great man" of society:

The most astonishing instance of this respect, so frequently paid to nothing, is when it is paid (if I may so express myself) to something less than nothing, when the person who receives it is not only void of the quality for which he is respected, but is in reality notoriously guilty of the vices directly opposite to the virtues whose applause he receives. This is, indeed, the highest degree of nothing, or (if I may be allowed the word), the nothingest of all nothings.

(XIV, 316)

Fielding is protesting a society in which "gravity, canting, blustering, ostentation, pomp, and such like," are continually mistaken for true virtues such as "wisdom, piety, magnanimity, charity, and true greatness." It is a world in which the former, the pretenders, are given all the honour and reverence due the latter.

The ending of this mock encomium provides the harshest note of all. In such a society there is no reward, even for the virtuous. Good will continue to lose out, evil to prosper.

The virtuous, wise, and learned, may then be unconcerned at all the charges of ministeries and of government, since they may be well satisfied, that while ministers of state are rogues themselves, and have inferior knavish tools to bribe and reward, true virtue, wisdom, learning, wit, and integrity, will most certainly bring their possessors -- nothing.

(XIV, 319)
The final ironic twist effectively negates what immediately precedes. It Fielding builds towards a climax, introduces a ray of hope in the murky world he has portrayed, then obliterates with that unexpected "nothing" which is the reward of good as well as evil in this society of false values. It is a society in which goodness is seldom rewarded but the greatness of a Jonathan Wild (or a Walpole) is revered. It is an age in which the corrupt prosper, deceit and fawning are the order of the day, and in which a learned treatise can be presented on "nothing."

The straight-faced sincerity and uncritical naivete of Fielding's parody of the Philosophical Transactions is reminiscent of Swift's "Modest Proposal." The paper is reasoned, academic, and extremely logical, the persona of the virtuoso is maintained throughout.

To turn to Swift for a moment, we see his economic projector as a man who views everything in terms of money, one whose values all come equipped with price tags. Yet the basic element of the satire is the compelling conclusion -- how can you disagree with a person whose sole desire is to benefit mankind by his proposal? The projector sets forth his argument in sincere, persuasive tones.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts for many years upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of other projectors I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is true a child, just dropped from its dam, may be supported by her milk for a solar year with little other nourishment, at most not above two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging, and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them, in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the
rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding and partly to the clothing of many thousands. (Swift, VII, 208)

It is a compelling, logical argument developed step by step in cold, inhuman terms. Shock, horror, disbelief mix with credibility to yield a grotesque effect. It is the type of reason displayed by his economic projector that Swift is satirizing, the type of reason that can argue such an inhuman, horrible act through to its conclusions.

Fielding uses much the same technique in his parody of the scientific report. His persona is the virtuoso, the man of science, one who presents a paper on the English guinea, or CHRYSPUS, with all the sincerity expected of the true scientist. As in the "Modest Proposal" the argument is convincingly developed. Fielding is careful to follow the order of topics proper to a biological report: he first gives a diagram, then follows the size and species of the CHRYSPUS and its general habitat, he attempts to classify it and gives an account of its motion and methods of reproduction, he conducts experiments with it and then arrives at conclusions concerning its life cycle and local habitat. The satire derives its form from the work parodied, a scientific report by Abraham Trembley, a distinguished Swiss naturalist and Fellow of the Royal Society. Trembley's paper had been contributed in November, 1742, to the Philosophical Transaction of the Royal Society. It dealt with experiments in the regeneration of fresh water polyps and created a sensation in the scientific world. Just how much Fielding knew or cared about science is unknown, but from his remarks in his writings we assume he shared Swift's view of the virtuoso's activities -- a
waste of the intellect on trivial things. Trembley's paper provided
Fielding with a perfect means of attacking in a jesting fashion the
Royal Society while at the same time making a serious comment on
misers and avarice and the corruption that seems to associate itself
with excess wealth.

Here as in the "Essay on Nothing" where the panegyric on "nothing"
was enjoyed for its own sake, the first response is the pleasure de­
rived from the incongruities of the sincere, scientific account of
the CHRYSPUS. The second level is the implied satire, for the parody
provides the means by which to deride much larger follies.

The humor so essential to this type of satire emerges in the
tone of the virtuoso's report. It is with a credulity born out of
fascination with the mysteries of science that the narrator reports
many of his findings, never doubting for a moment that his readers
will share his amazement at the marvels unveiled. He is careful to
analyze similar characteristics of the Polypus and CHRYSPUS and in
so doing he uncovers some remarkable differences:

it (the CHRYSPUS) differs from the Polypus in the consequence,
for instead of making the INSECT its prey, it becomes itself
a prey to it, and instead of conveying an insect twice as
large as its own mouth into it, in imitation of the Polypus,
the poor CHRYSPUS is itself conveyed into the LOCULUS or
pouch of an INSECT a thousand times as large as itself.
(XV, 67)

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The scientist displays complete indifference to the "insect" that deposits the "poor CHRYSIPUS" in its pouch. Much of the satiric effect derives from this combination of man-as-insect image and the very disinterestedness of the speaker. It is all right for the narrator to speak of man as a bug, but not for him to fail to show suitable revulsion or fear. It is the indifference that hurts.

Much of the attack is directed at Fielding's old enemy, Peter Walter, who is disguised as Petrus Gualterus. This famous usurer becomes the miserly Peter Pounce in *Joseph Andrews*. Making him the virtuoso enabled the author to kill two birds with one stone; he could have his fun with the Royal Society and at the same time conduct a sharply satiric attack on avarice and misers. Gualterus is perfect in his role of naive recorder, he tells us:

A CHRYSIPUS by the simple contact of my own finger, has so clearly attached itself to my hand, that by the joint and indefatigable labour of several of my friends, it could by no means be severed, or made to quit its hold.

(XV, 68)

We again receive a double image. One is that of Gualterus the learned scientist, amazed at the remarkable qualities of this object he is studying, the other is Peter Walter, a despicable miser, a man from whom it is impossible, even for friends, to extract a single guinea. It

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is the latter image that arouses our contempt.

It is inevitable in such a thorough experiment that the question of reproduction should arise. The ingenuousness of the man's report on this aspect, the air of innocence with which it is delivered, helps cloak a deeper, darker intent in the humorous. The learned Petrus tells us that he "never observed any thing like the common animal copulation" among the CHRYSIPI. His first attempts at breeding them failed because he used only two subjects and these would not produce a complete CHRYSIPIUS. But, undaunted, he continued to experiment:

Upon this, I tried a hundred of them together, by whose marvelous union (whether it be, that they mix total, like those heavenly spirits mentioned by Milton, or by any other process not yet revealed to human wit) they were found in the year's end to produce three, four, and sometimes five complete CHRYSIPI.

(XV, 68)

It is a child-like fascination that the scientist displays as he hints at the many wonderful mysteries of nature.

The question of incest preoccupied the learned man for awhile, but fortunately, he tells us, not one of his experiments yielded any traces of copulation, incestuous or otherwise. The sincerity of tone and the strict confinement to proper form aid in compounding the utter absurdity of the whole report. Coupling a logical, straight-forward presentation with preposterous subject matter results in the ridiculous. This is what the satirist strives for.

Fielding never loses sight of the report he is parodying, often
quoting from the journal itself in order to maintain a scientific atmosphere. The language of Gualterus's paper is as learned as that of the original. In discussing the "division and subdivision of our CHRYSIPUS" he points out that "we are forced to proceed in quite a different manner, namely by the metabolic or mutative, not by the shystic or divisive." The biological terminology serves two purposes. It keeps the report on a scientific plane and it again emphasizes the fact that the CHRYSIPUS is possessed of animal characteristics, not vegetable. The CHRYSIPI do not multiply by anything so simple as cell-division -- they are living organisms and must be studied as such. The implication is that, through our deification of material wealth, money has become more than a simple convenience designed for man's use, it has taken on qualities of a living organism and plays a major role in the affairs of men, a role that is mystical and powerful and uncontrollable.

The satire becomes more intense as the essay draws to a close and the virtuoso lists some of the virtues of the CHRYSIPUS. Here, the author points out, his subject exceeds "not only the Polypus, of which not one single virtue is recorded, but all other animals and vegetable whatever." He first mentions the amazing power the CHRYSIPUS possess. When a single one is stuck on to the finger it will "make a man talk for a full hour, nay, will make him say whatever the person who sticks it on desires. and again, if you desire silence, it will as effectually stop the most loquacious tongue." It does upon occasion happen that one, or two or three or even twenty guineas are not sufficient, but if
you apply the proper number they "seldom or never fail of success."
Every man has his price. Fielding constantly attacked corruption and
bribery, especially when it went on in high places, and beneath the
surface of this satire you feel the acute concern of the author. The
scientist goes on to point out that this fantastic CHRYSPUS has the
"miraculous quality of turning black into white, or white into black,"
and even of producing love in the finest and loveliest women for the
"most worthless and ugly, old and decrepit of our sex." A marriage
made for wealth and position is always a prime target for Fielding.
This particular subject receives its most extensive treatment in his
last novel, Amelia, but it is a major theme in all his fiction.

Thus with his straight-faced scientific account Fielding turns
his immediate material to a much broader purpose, satirizing the Royal
Society, the pretentious virtuoso, and in a much more serious vein,
misers, avarice and the corruption that wealth brings.

Both the "Essay on Nothing" and "Some PAPERS Proper to be Read
before the R---l Society" represent part of Fielding's general attack
on social and intellectual abuses. They are light and clever in their
polished presentation and show why Fielding is aptly called an accom­
plished satirist. In them he reveals a skill and control in handling
his form and subject matter that does full justice to the reputation
he established as a satirist while writing drama.
In 1743, one year after the publication of Joseph Andrews, the first edition of Henry Fielding's The Life of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild The Great appeared in volume III of his Miscellanies. From the very beginning it was a problem child, for while it had much in common with Joseph Andrews, its tone was darker, the irony more sustained and the bitterness much more apparent.

Fielding's endeavours as a dramatist had resulted in numerous farces and burlesques which, while hastily turned out, enjoyed immense popularity. They were filled with attacks on contemporary conditions, on politics, and on pretension in all its masks. Similarly his writings for The Champion, particularly his "Voyages of Mr. Job Vinegar," which were explicitly imitative of Gulliver's Travels bitterly condemned conditions in his society. However, it is Jonathan Wild that represents Fielding's most successful attempt at a sustained piece of satiric
writing. In it he records the actions of a Great Man, Jonathan Wild, in such a manner as to expose the evil that threatens any society when "goodness" and "greatness" become completely divorced virtues, with all the power and material benefits falling into the greedy, clutching hands of those that possess the quality of "greatness." Fielding pays tribute to the conventional virtues that have always been admired by man -- virtues such as honour and generosity and compassion -- by presenting them as deplorable weaknesses while praising all their despicable opposites which are embodied in his hero, Jonathan Wild.

It has been questioned by many critics whether Jonathan Wild functions as a successful satire or whether it is not rather a tedious tirade that is neither a novel nor a formal satire but something in between the two. It is my intention to offer valid reasons for claiming that the work does constitute a successful satire and something which is unique among Fielding's works. Unlike Joseph Andrews or Tom Jones, where the action rises above any satirical intent, to exist ultimately as something to be enjoyed in its own right, in Jonathan Wild the culminating effect of the work is satirical.

In his study The Making of Jonathan Wild, W. R. Irwin gives extensive treatment to the historical background of Fielding's work, he presents a brief account of the history of the real Wild, and of the biographical material that would have been available to Fielding. Our author patterned his hero, or anti-hero, on the life and actions of one Jonathan Wild who was first a thief, then a receiver of stolen goods, and finally the leader of a gang of criminals which operated
successfully in London for several years. Wild was apprehended and hanged in 1725, and immediately numerous biographies were published celebrating his notorious career. Remarkable as his criminal achievements may have been, surely the most amazing feature about the man's life was the public sensation his hanging aroused. He was already a legend -- he became a symbol. Defoe's *Life and Actions of Jonathan Wild* was the first good account of Wild's life, and the one most used by Fielding for the historical background of his satire. Making Wild an allegorical figure was by no means new with Fielding. Subsequent to Defoe's biography, uses of Wild's name and reputation were for chiefly political purposes with the result that by 1743 Wild had become a symbol of evil and cruelty. It was this symbol that writers for the Opposition exploited in their countless attacks on the Prime Minister, Robert Walpole. These attacks were by no means limited to political pamphleteers and Grub Street hacks. The satirical possibilities of the man's villainous reputation were soon recognized, and references to Wild can be found in the works of such prominent writers of the age as Swift, Pope and Gay.

John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, first performed in 1728, employed a Newgate analogy to satirize the Walpole administration in a play that has remarkable similarities of plot and characterization to Fielding's work. While many viewed the opera as a lighthearted attack on the

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mores of the period, others, like Dean Swift, saw it as "...a very severe satire on the most pernicious villainies of mankind."\(^2\) It is difficult on the basis of the *Beggar's Opera* itself to see Gay as a determined satirist. There is simply too much music and laughter. However, behind the surface gaiety of the comic opera, behind all the boisterous laughter and music, there lurks a serious comment on society.

In his article "Satire and St. George," Philip Pinkus makes some remarks about the nature of satire that help to remove the difficulty of viewing something essentially light, witty, and even humorous, as being damningly satiric:

> It is not difficult to see the image of evil in what is called Juvenalian satire. But the point is that Horatian satire, which is light, urbane, even good-humoured, has a similar imagery. The difference is largely a matter of tone. The one stresses the horror of the evil, and the consequent fear. The other stresses the ridicule, and evokes laughter, in a sense showing a greater contempt for the target, an outward confidence in being able to escape the dangers of its evil.\(^3\)

Thus it is a type of Horatian satire we find in Gay, with the attack cloaked in the garments of the comic opera. He presents us with satire on at least four main fronts: social, political, literary and musical. Jonathan Wild's presence is immediately recognizable in the character of Peachum, who is also a thief-taker and scoundrel par excellence. Peachum (like Fielding's Wild) represents the forces of

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\(^3\) *Queen's Quarterly*, LXX (1963), p. 35.
evil in the dramatic conflict. The political satire is focussed on Walpole and his administration, who are elaborately identified with Peachum and his associates in their swindling and robbing of the public. The parallels between Gay's Newgate opera and Fielding's Newgate tale extend even to the names of some of the characters involved.\(^4\) There is a Bob Bagshot in Fielding's tale and a Robin Bagshot plays a minor role in *The Beggar's Opera*. Wild has illicit relations with Molly Straddle who has her counterpart in Sukey Straddle in Gay's opera. Social and political satire pervades *The Beggar's Opera* much as it does *Jonathan Wild*. There is, however, a basic difference to be noted -- in the former all the qualities of the comic opera, the sentimentality, melodrama and the music are present in such strength as to tone down the satire, in *Jonathan Wild* there is much laughter and even some melodrama, but their function is to enhance the satiric effect.

In the Preface to the *Miscellanies* (1743), Fielding was careful to warn his readers of the dangers of making hasty assumptions about his work, particularly in taking it as an assault on contemporary conditions.

As it is not a very faithful portrait of Jonathan Wild himself, so neither is it intended to represent the features of any other person. Roguery -- and not a rogue -- is my subject, and, as I have been so far from endeavouring to particularize

\(^4\) The parallels are fully discussed in J. E. Wells, "Fielding's Political Purpose in *Jonathan Wild*," *PMLA*, XXVIII (1913), p. 29. My treatment of *Jonathan Wild* extends Wells' conclusions which I find amply established by the text.
any individual, that I have with my utmost art avoided it, so will any such application be unfair in my reader, especially if he know much of the great world, since he must then be acquainted, I believe, with more than one on whom he can fix the resemblance.5

Now the claim "roguery, and not a rogue, is my subject," echoes the protective cry of all satirists and can be taken much as a polite formality, particularly when the very next remark undermines the sincerity of the utterance. It would have been immediately understood by Fielding's contemporaries that the hero Wild was certainly not of the "Great World," and that the author was actually prompting his readers to make the logical associations. It is typical of Fielding that he lodges protests that he is not attacking anything in particular and then invites or rather commands special application. The following passage further illustrates this point:

But without considering Newgate as no other than human nature with its mask off, which some very shameless writers have done -- a thought which no price should purchase me to entertain -- I think we may be excused for suspecting, that the splendid palaces of the great are often no other than Newgate with the mask on. Nor do I know anything which can raise an honest man's indignation higher than that the same morals should be in one place attended with all imaginable misery and infamy, and in the other, with the highest luxury and honour....6

Fielding can be very blunt, but I think his complete sincerity and the touching earnestness of his concern with conditions-as-they-were come


home to the reader because of this directness. Many of the points made in the Preface are stressed again in the Advertisement from the Publisher to the Reader that came out in the corrected 1754 edition:

The truth is, as a very corrupt state of morals is here represented, the scene seems very properly to have been laid in Newgate, nor do I see any reason for introducing any allegory at all, unless we will agree that there are, without those walls, some other bodies of men of worse morals than those within, and who have, consequently, a right to change places with its present inhabitants.

(vol. II, Henley edn.)

The accusing tone, the ironic scorn of these lines is certainly indicative of a well-defined purpose on the part of the author. He is virtually challenging anyone to disagree with the statement that outside of Newgate there are "some other bodies of men of worse morals than those within." It is often difficult to determine when Fielding's declarations are to be taken literally. In his Preface to his narrative, for example, the author's words occasionally ring with a sincerity that may seem to remove suspicion of any double meaning, yet Fielding's very insistence that there are no hidden implications immediately arouses the reader's curiosity and starts him looking for various shades of meaning. It is continually emphasized in the Preface, in the Advertisement, and in the work itself that this is a book of purpose. Fielding is out to expose evil, and Walpole and his government represent one of the prime targets.

Three chapters of Jonathan Wild were apparently inserted for their political implications. These chapters are interesting both for the political satire they contain and for their Swiftian qualities.
The first of these, Book II, chapter VI, bears the subheading "of Hats."

Wild's gang is described as being divided on the basis of Tory and Whig principles.

As these persons wore different PRINCIPLES, i.e. HATS, frequent dissensions grew among them. There were particularly two parties, viz.: those who wore hats FIERCELY cocked, and those who preferred the NAB or trencher hat, with the brim flapping over their eyes. The former were called CAVALIERS and TORY RORY RANTER BOYS, etc, the latter went by the several names of WAGS, roundheads, shakebags, oldnolls, and several others. Between these continual jars arose, insomuch that they grew in time to think there was something essential in their differences, and that their interests were incompatible with each other, whereas, in truth, the difference lay only in the fashion of their hats.

(II, 73-74)

How very clear, concise and utterly destructive. The reader is reminded of Swift's *Tale of a Tub* where the three brothers Peter, Martin and Jack so alter the coats their father left them as to make them unrecognizable as being at one time exactly the same. Swift's allegory goes further and is far more involved, but the principle is the same. Fielding is attacking men whose principles are so shallow that they are worn like hats, for ornament or for identification. Such principles are not founded in reason, they are not rooted in moral responsibility, they are instead beliefs and convictions acquired as easily as a new hat. Such principles are changed as fashion dictates and those who hold different principles are hated and feared simply because they are different.

Wild's gang, however, is united in a common cause, a cause Wild makes all too explicit in his speech to his men: "If the public should
be weak enough to interest themselves in your quarrels, and to prefer one pack to the other, while both are aiming at their purses, it is your business to laugh at, not imitate their folly" (II, 75). Fielding, like Swift, found ridiculous much of the fawning and ceremony that went on in court circles. It is interesting to note what Fielding has to say about "ribbands" -- a comment that is not unlike that of Swift in Gulliver's "Voyage to Lilliput" when he describes the court ceremonies of the Lilliputians. History will help clarify this point as it relates to Fielding's satire. In 1725 Walpole persuaded the king to revive the Order of the Bath "an artful bank of thirty-six ribbands to supply a fund of favours." Walpole himself was on May 27 of that year invested with the order which he relinquished on June 26, 1726, so that he could be advanced to the order of Garter. This promotion of a commoner, for the first time since 1660, caused much jealousy among the nobility and suggested the nickname of "Sir Bluestring" by which he was commonly assailed in lampoons of the time. Fielding alludes to this affair in the scene between Wild and Blueskin when the latter fails to deliver a stolen watch to his chief. As a last resort, after explaining why every gang needs a leader, and what the "absolute rights" of that leader should be, Wild remarks; "and surely there is none in the whole gang who hath less reason to complain than you, you have tasted of my favours; witness that piece of ribbon you wear in your hat, with which I dubbed you captain" (II, 140). However, Blue-

7 Wells, p. 30.
skin is unimpressed by this favour and replies to the effect that the
ribbon means nothing, a reply that extracts the following comment from
Wild:

Might not a man as reasonably tell a minister of state, Sir, you have given me the shadow only? The ribbon or the bauble
that you gave me implies that I have either signalized myself,
by some great action, for the benefit and glory of my country,
or at least that I am descended from those who have done so.
I know myself to be a scoundrel, and so have been those few
ancestors I can remember, or have ever heard of....

(II, 140-141)

This is utterly preposterous in the Great Man's eyes of course, but to
the reader the suggestion is clear. Fielding is again stressing his
regret that such pomp and ceremony and respect is paid by the uninformed
(and many of the informed as well) to the undeserving.

Chapter XI of Book III carries the sub-title "A Scheme so deeply
laid that it shames all the politics of this our age, with digression
and sub-digression." Here we have the unscrupulous Wild contemplating
ways of ruining his friend Heartfree, "whose very name sounded odious
in his ears." Having decided to charge Heartfree with trying to defraud
his creditors by sending his wife away with their remaining valuables --
Wild's own suggestion -- his way was clear:

What remained to consider was only the quomodo, and the person
or tool to be employed, for the stage of the world differs
from that in Drury-lane principally in this -- that whereas,
on the latter, the hero or chief figure is almost continually
before your eyes, whilst the under-actors are not seen above
once in an evening, now, on the former, the hero or great man
is always behind the curtain, and seldom or never appears or
doeth anything in his own person. He doth indeed, in this
grand drama, rather perform the part of the prompter, and doth
instruct the well-dressed figures, who are strutting in public on the stage, what to say and do.

(II, 131)

This is satire cloaked in its sheerest veils. The whole image is frightening when one thinks of the power of this single person controlling the "well-dressed figures" who are merely pawns to his wishes. And these puppets are vain creatures who in spite of being told what to do, even what to say, still "strut" before the public and pretend to deserve their importance. The scene is a variation of the "court of Wax" image in Pope's "Fourth Satire of Dr. John Donne;"

Such painted Puppets! such a varnish'd Race
Of hollow Gewgaws, only Dress and Face,
Such waxen Noses, stately, staring things,
No wonder some Folks bow, and think them KINGS. 8

In Fielding the brunt of the attack falls on the puppet master as the source of the evil, but all the implications of a diseased society are present. This puppet imagery, as well as being a stock image for the satirist to draw on, was extremely appropriate for Fielding's purpose, for Walpole was often presented as puppet master by the Opposition's political writers. 9 This entire chapter is a direct attack on the administration. It contributes little if anything to the story of Wild and Heartfree, but it does score some direct hits on the satirist's

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9 Wells, op. cit., p. 39.
target. The irony of the following passage is obvious, so too, I think is the frustrated anger and concern that prompted it:

A GREAT MAN ought to do his business by others, to employ hands as we have before said, to his purposes, and keep himself as much behind the curtain as possible, and though it must be acknowledged that two very great men, whose names will be both recorded in history, did in these latter times come forth themselves on the stage, and did hack and hew and lay each other most cruelly open to the diversion of the spectators, yet this must be mentioned rather as an example of avoidance than imitation....

(II, 132)

Fielding does not name any names, but he does not have to to make the satire take on a very personal note.

In chapter III of Book IV we witness the conflict between Wild and Johnson as to who is going to rule the inmates of Newgate. It is generally agreed that Johnson here represents Walpole and that the election in Newgate symbolizes the parliamentary elections of 1741, in which Walpole's majority, reduced to sixteen, was so uncertain that he resigned. 10 Who Wild represents has been the subject of much speculation, with Charles Townshend, William Pulteney, and John Carteret being put forth as possibilities. 11 The author inserts a very sober speech at this point in the form of the utterances of the "very grave man" which take place after Wild has succeeded in ousting Johnson from his position of power. This gentleman sets forth the disadvantages of their present

10 Irwin, p. 40.

11 Suggested by W. L. Cross (The History of Henry Fielding), Wells, and Irwin, respectively.
system and even suggests a reasonable alternative. Yet while his speech "was received with much applause, ...Wild continued as before to levy contributions among the prisoners, to apply the garnish to his own use, and to strut openly in the ornaments he had stripped from Johnson" (11, 156). It is significant that Wild is always great, he rises above every situation that confronts him, even to the very end when he is raised on the gallows to swing high above his fellow men. "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 pinnacle of GREATNESS" (11, 205). Roguery and greatness are synonymous in Fielding's society and the great men are all too plentiful.

To continue this discussion further, it is necessary that the political satire be considered as an aspect of the conflict between greatness and goodness that is the allegorical basis of the work. This "fundamental ethical problem" (Irwin's phrase) is really inseparable from the consideration of the essential "badness" or "goodness" of man, a problem which found frequent expression in the writings of eighteenth-century moralists. One must consider Fielding himself as a moral satirist in the sense that he was so intensely concerned with this whole question. He took upon himself the task of exposing and ridiculing the great men of his society. The author is explicit about his own views on the subject of goodness and greatness in his Preface to the Miscellanies:

In Reality, no Qualities can be more distinct; for as it cannot be doubted but that Benevolence, Honour, Honesty, and Charity make a good man, so must it be confessed that the
Ingredients which compose the former of these characters, bear no Analogy to, nor Dependence on those which constitute the latter. A Man may therefore be Great without being Good, or Good without being Great.

Similarly, in the opening chapter of *Jonathan Wild* the author defines his terms: "no two things can possibly be more distinct from each other, for greatness consists in bringing all manner of mischief on mankind, and goodness in removing it from them" (II, 3).

The "great man" as seen by the eighteenth-century viewer had several notable characteristics. First he had to possess a ruthless, insatiable personal ambition. We look at Wild: "As his most powerful and predominant passion was ambition, so nature had, with consummate propriety, adapted all his faculties to the attaining those glorious ends to which his passion directed him" (II, 201). He had to be inventive, artful and resolute in everything that contributed to the attainment of his own goals. He had to be bold, cunning and avaricious — in fact, he had to be just like Jonathan Wild the Great. All these requirements were readily attributed to politicians who had become great not by virtue of their integrity or personal ability to perform the functions of their office, but through lying or scheming or bribing or simply fawning over someone already in a position of power. It was a common view to see the "great man" as conqueror — and history provided numerous examples in the form of Alexander, Louis XIV, Charles XII, all men who lived

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12 I am here making use of Irwin's discussion of this subject as a basis for my presentation.
solely for the gratification of their own driving ambitions and lusts.

The "good man" likewise had his role in the literature of the day. He was rather an involved figure in his combination of public and private roles, yet he was always recognizable. He was inherently a good Christian, a patriot, a man of moderate habits (in his mature years if not in his youth), he was kind and generous, even to the point of being tender upon occasion, and above all he possessed that most kingly of virtues, benevolence. Fielding's works are filled with good men: Adams, Allworthy, and Tom Jones, for example -- but for the most part they inhabit his later works, just as his early writings were perhaps more notable for the references to the great man as politician, conqueror or rogue. Pasquin, The Historical Register, Don Quixote in England, Tom Thumb, all reveal his preoccupation with the moral questions of his time.

The type of good man mentioned above is more than we find in Heartfree. While there is certainly nothing evil about Heartfree, he is virtuous to the extent of being too good to be true. His is a passive role in the allegory, he symbolizes good in order to provide a suitable foil for the evil that is Jonathan Wild. Wild the anti-hero is the living, driving force in this drama. It is Wild we watch, fascinated by his sheer villainy. Heartfree is little more than a prop to place side by side with the monster in order to enhance the latter's sheer lack of goodness. Jonathan Wild is satire, its characters are not meant to be believable as ordinary human beings, but rather they are to be seen as embodiments of either good or of evil. There is no blending of the two as there is in Fielding's later novels.
Jonathan Wild is more than a moral narrative, it is satire, with all the delightful variations of tone and meaning, the sustained irony, and the ultimate goal of ridicule that is found in such works as A Tale of a Tub and Gulliver's Travels. In fact, Fielding's work bears remarkable resemblances to Swift's Tale. There is, for example, the same basic image to be found in both of them. In the Tale the dominant image is that of the mountebank living in a world completely given over to fraud, ambition and greed. All the activity of this Tubbian society fits beautifully into the image of Bedlam with the mountebanks on their itinerant stages the maddest, most dangerous of all. In Jonathan Wild the focal point of the satiric attack is the highwayman, the great man in society; It is the highwayman in politics, the man who is trading on the good will and ignorance of the public that Wild represents. The villain's stage itinerant ultimately becomes the gallows, from there he swings out triumphantly above the heads of the people he has duped. It is on the gallows that he reaches the pinnacle of his greatness.

Many of the scenes of Fielding's Newgate tale also suggest the comic author of Tom Jones nearly as much as they do Fielding the satirist. Here too is found the same delightful device of the mock-epic simile which is used with such effect in Fielding's novels. There is a slight difference however, because here the mock-epic devices are used more for the purpose of satire than for their comic effects. For example, when Jonathan catches Fireblood in the arms of Laetitia, the scene is described in the following manner:

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 walks, 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. Long time did rage render his voice inarticulate to the hearer; as when, at a visiting day, fifteen or sixteen or perhaps twice as many females, of delicate but shrill pipes, ejaculate all at once on different subjects, all is sound only, the harmony entirely melodious indeed, but conveys no idea to our ears; but at length, when reason began to get the better of his passion, which latter, being deserted by his breath, began a little to retreat, the following accents leapt over the hedge of his teeth, or rather the ditch of his gums, whence those hedgestakes had long since by a patten been displaced in battle with an amazon of Drury.

(II, 181-182)

This mock-epic simile is the perfect vehicle to make the scene appear ludicrous. Fielding uses animal imagery to sink the emotion and passions described to the depths of bestiality. It is humorous, but the satirist's laugh is one of disgust and contempt. Such expressions as "long time did rage render his voice inarticulate" are so sonorous and so stately but so out of place coming from this screaming, toothless scoundrel completely mad with rage. It is humorous, but also completely devastating. The imagery and techniques are those of a skilful satirist. Wild's rage is given epic overtones as he is the mock-epic hero, but they only intensify the squalor and pettiness of the whole scene.

W. R. Irwin sees Jonathan Wild as an imperfect version of the famous "comic epic poem in prose" which Fielding developed in his later works. Many of the similarities Irwin points out are interesting -- as are the differences. The manner in which Fielding fitted the components of the serious epic into his comic scheme is simply stated in the Preface
to Joseph Andrews:

Now, a comic romance is a comic epic poem in prose, differing from comedy, as the serious epic from tragedy: its action being more extended and comprehensive, containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters. It differs from the serious romance, in its fable and action, in this, that as in the one these are grave and solemn, so in the other they are light and ridiculous; it differs in its characters by introducing persons of inferior manners, whereas the grave romance sets the highest before us; lastly, in its sentiments and diction, by preserving the ludicrous instead of the sublime. (1, 18)

Jonathan Wild fails to fill these requirements in some of its major aspects. For one thing, it is impossible to regard the greatness-goodness theme as being "light and ridiculous," just as it is difficult to see Wild's persecution of Heartfree as anything but grave. Most important of course is the fact that the comedy is for the sake of the satiric effect and not the other way around. However, the characters do fit nicely into the role of the comic epic in some respects. Wild is the very opposite of the traditional epic hero, a perfect mockery of the epic qualities we are accustomed to thinking such a hero should possess. Yet because we realize that the qualities which make Wild a great villain are identical to those which enable men in other walks of life to attain heroic stature in the eyes of the public, the sham involved in such claims to greatness is underscored. The manners of Wild and his crew are consistently vulgar, ignoble and even vicious, those of the Heartfrees are also decidedly unheroic. The sentiments continually present us with the ludicrous instead of the sublime, in fact, Wild can scarcely open his mouth without uttering something the author has ironically inverted.
The question of diction has been partially illustrated already, Fielding has filled the work with ludicrous language in the form of his mock-epic similes and heroic epithets. It is of course the incongruity between the thing he is describing and the terms in which he describes it that provides the surprising absurdity characteristic of his comic epics. Epic conventions such as the digression, the travel tale, the discovery, are employed by Fielding in a manner that hints at the later success he will have with these same devices in his comic masterpieces.

Jonathan Wild possesses, as has been shown, many characteristics of what Fielding termed the comic prose epic, but as Irwin points out:

Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones are fundamentally good-humoured works, in which serious vices are rather the accidental consequences of some human frailty or foible, than causes habitually existing in the mind. In Jonathan Wild the situation is reversed. The sustained irony reveals an evil which is fundamental, it is the humorous unmasking of affectation which occasionally seems incidental.¹³

This can be reconciled only in part with the view of Fielding as a moralist, for while he certainly revealed a strong moral purpose in all his writings, very few of them are ultimately satirical. In Jonathan Wild the satire directed towards fashionable society, towards greatness in all its vain, grasping forms, and towards affectation and hypocrisy in general, is so intensified as to become the dominant strain

¹³ Irwin, p. 106.
in the work. Wild himself comes to stand for more than any single corrupt statesman of Fielding's day, he comes to symbolize evil in its general sense.

The figure of the great man as highwayman dominates the satire. Wild becomes a symbol of indestructible evil, a man who has the cunning and the physical ability and the desire to capitalize on his fellow human beings' weaknesses in order to achieve his own gains. By virtue of its fierceness and the consistency of its irony as well as the calculated polish of its style, the work invites comparison with such satires as Gulliver's Travels or A Tale of a Tub. But nowhere in these works is there a single dominant symbol of evil to match the overpowering wickedness of Jonathan Wild the Great. He is a satanic figure, but one with many of the attractions of Milton's Devil. It is this that makes him the more to be feared. Because he is attractive, because he can gain the respect of his followers and thus a foothold in society, he can remain unhindered and unpunished as he goes his evil way.

It is a strange, completely inverted world that we find in Jonathan Wild, a twisted, corrupt society which puts all the emphasis on the wrong traits of human character. The satire is relentlessly sustained -- Jonathan Wild swings out of the world with a bottle screw that he had lifted from the parson's pocket clutched triumphantly in his hand. It is a fitting end, but the point that is consistently stressed is that the villain never reforms, good does not triumph, the Wilds never repent. Within the framework of the satire the evil is still with us, the great men still exist.
Fielding's right to be called an accomplished satirist on the basis of his early dramatic writings and his first efforts in prose, *The Miscellany*, has already been established. What I now hope to show is that he never abandoned completely the role of satirist in his novels, but rather, that he became more a critic of his society than ever. The creator of comedy, farce, burlesque and dramatic satire developed into a novelist who combined all these elements into a unique form of moral satire.

This mode of writing Fielding clearly defined in the Preface to *Joseph Andrews*. While this much-quoted Preface should not be applied extensively to anything more than *Joseph Andrews* itself, it does have implications for all his satire. Since all Fielding's novels are infused with the spirit of satire, it is essential to keep in mind his explanation of what constitutes the Ridiculous;
The only source of the true Ridiculous (as it appears to me) is affectation. But though it arises from one spring only, when we consider the infinite streams into which this one branches, we shall presently cease to admire at the copious field it affords to an observer. Now, affectation proceeds from one of these two causes, vanity or hypocrisy: for as vanity puts us on affecting false characters, in order to purchase applause, so hypocrisy sets us on an endeavour to avoid censure, by concealing our vices under an appearance of their opposite virtues.

(II, 21-22)

Fielding requests that we, as "good-natured readers," apply these observations to his writing. Surely then we are justified in carrying this concept of the ridiculous beyond *Joseph Andrews*, for the author's notions of what makes for the ridiculous have proven in his previous works to be quite unchanging. His targets are those of satirists of all ages.

But let us look at Fielding the satirist for a moment. His best known satires in the Augustan manner are his rehearsal plays, his farces, and *Jonathan Wild*. In these works he deliberately aligns himself with Pope and Swift in the war against dullness, avarice, hypocrisy -- all the evils of society that are the traditional targets of the satirist. As Ronald Paulson points out, however, there is another strain of Fielding's satire in which the central figure is a good-natured man who is thrown into violent contact with selfish, lustful, or malicious types. This form of satire is radically different from that which we

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find in something like Jonathan Wild. It has, for one thing, the added
dimensions inherent in the novel, the world can no longer be seen only
in terms of black and white or good and evil. In his satire on the
great man in society, Fielding made Wild, the personification of evil,
the central figure. Our eyes are riveted on Wild, it is he who is the
life-force of the narrative. Consequently, the good which acts as a
foil to this evil is simply that, a foil, it is a backdrop against
which the evil is thrown into vivid contrast. The Heartfrees are
little more than caricatures. They do not emerge as people for they
are not mean to do so. This is perhaps why Jonathan Wild is generally
regarded as Fielding's best formal satire, for it is here that he is
most directly concerned with the presentation of evil. But the pose
of Augustan satirist does not really become him, and few would rank
his early satires among his most interesting productions. Fielding is
not at his best when trying to make us solely aware of the evil, or
the horrible consequences of the evil, in his society. He functions
best as a hopeful satirist: he is aware of society's follies and vices
but he does not isolate them from the good in the same way as, for ex-
ample, did his predecessors Swift and Pope. The latter are despairing
satirists preoccupied with the exposure of the evil, they tend to show
black against a background of white, whereas in his novels, Fielding
works in all the colors of the spectrum. The world of the satirist is
far more violently symbolic than that of the novelist.

In his novels, Fielding's persona is no longer "Scriblerus
Secondus," the hack writer or the philosopher or the scientific pro-
jector who, like Swift's persona, is a prime target of the satire. Scriblerus is replaced by Fielding the narrator, often a self-conscious figure and one who frequently looms larger than the characters of the novels themselves. In *Tom Jones*, for example, we see the novelist as puppet-master, a man in control of our every emotion, in *Amelia*, he is a man preoccupied with social reforms and intent upon proposing a moral doctrine. In all his novels there is the undisguised attempt to produce instructive satire. As the narrator introduces his assortment of good and bad characters he is defining a positive and detailed code of proper conduct:

Much of the time (as in *Joseph Andrews*) Fielding keeps his reader's attention focused on the Trullibers and Tow-wouses, whose unamiable qualities are exposed by contact with the good man. But in two ways the emphasis tends to shift from the Evil to the Good, either Fielding becomes so sympathetic with his good-natured man's plight that he substitutes this character's suffering for the vigorous wrongdoing of his persecutors, or he gives us too detailed a picture of the Good. At his best, in *Tom Jones*, he maintains a balance between the evil and good forces which suggests to the reader that not the violently symbolic world of the Augustan satirists but the WHOLE world is being presented. At his worst, he allows the two forces to separate, in *Amelia*, into the pitiful, tear-stained goodness of the Booth family and the diabolic, almost motiveless evil of the noble Lord, Mrs. Ellison, and Amelia's sister Betty.²

I think this is an accurate analysis of the issue in so far as it relates to the changing form of Fielding's satire. It is not the limited world of the Augustan satirists such as he presented in *Jonathan Wild*.

² *Loc. cit.*
that Fielding gives us in his novels, but the whole world. It is his awareness of both evil and good and the impossibility of a world in which one exists without the other -- accompanied by his faith in man's ability to attain this good in spite of the abundance of evil -- that adds a new dimension to his satire. Rather than attempt to show merely what is wrong with society, he points out these wrongs as deviations from his own conception of a stable, healthy, moral society. It is satire that is more functionally corrective than that which he gave us in his earlier writings.

But as his novels do represent a new direction in Fielding's career, it might first be helpful to look at the actual take-off point, namely Shamela, his burlesque of Richardson's novel. Pamela was first published anonymously on November 6, 1740, and was an immediate success. Its plot was a disarmingly simple one. The device Richardson used was to narrate his story by means of lengthy letters from Pamela Andrews, a poor country girl in service with a wealthy family. After the death of the mistress of the household, Pamela is constantly attacked by the master, Squire B. Failing to seduce the elusive Pamela, he tries to rape her on several occasions, only to be foiled at the last moment. When all else fails Squire B. proposes marriage, his offer is joyfully accepted, and Pamela receives the reward of her virtue. The book was a best-seller by any standards, with five editions being published by September of 1741.³

³ Bernard Dreissman, Pamela-Shamela (University of Nebraska Press, 1960). A brief review of Shamela and Joseph Andrews which fills in the context of the reaction against Pamela.
The work was the sensation of the literary season, but a swarm of attacks, parodies, and spurious continuations soon appeared to sour Richardson's remarkable triumph. The first of the objections to Pamela appeared on April 4, 1741, in the form of a pamphlet published under the name of Mr. Conny Keyber. This delightful burlesque is generally accepted as being the work of Fielding. Shamela is an ingenious satire on a book that proposed as its end the cultivation of the principles of virtue and religion and claimed to have its foundation in Truth and Nature. The pamphlet represented a continuation of Fielding's prolonged attack on the literary tastes of the age as well as an attack on the religious and moral views Richardson expounded in Pamela. Attributing the burlesque to Conny Keyber was a thrust at his old enemy, Colley Cibber, and also at Dr. Conyers Middleton. The latter's Life of Cicero contained an "Epistle Dedicatory" to his patron, Lord Hervey (the Sporus of Pope's Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot). Fielding satirized this dedication with his dedicatory letter "To Miss Fanny," which was a close parody of Middleton's effusion. As well, the general tone of Shamela's confession is not unlike that of Cibber's Apology, which was a popular literary production of 1740. Fielding hit upon a perfect pseudonym and exploited its implications to the fullest degree.

But while Shamela is a delightful, refreshing piece in its own right, its major attraction lies in the fact that it points towards the

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writing of Joseph Andrews. Shamela is excellent burlesque, and as Watt points out, it goes beyond its original intention as parody and takes on a life of its own -- but nothing to compare with the later novel. Joseph Andrews, then, was also intended as a parody of Richardson's novel, but although the parody is obvious in the opening chapters it is not really sustained. The Pamela elements soon fade into the background and the story of Joseph and his friend Abraham Adams takes off on its own course. Rather than simply criticize Richardson's masterpiece, Fielding created one of his own that illustrated his reasons for discrediting Pamela. The surface connections between the two novels are obvious. Fielding inverts the central situation and we have Joseph, Pamela's brother, a footman in the Booby household, struggling heroically to protect his virtue against the advances of Lady Booby. But whereas Pamela used her virtue as a means to further her own ends, Joseph constantly refuses to take advantage of the opportunities placed before him. He remains chaste for his beloved Fanny and true to the teachings of his friend Parson Adams. But it is obvious from the start that Fielding intended something far different in Joseph Andrews than he had attempted in his parody. With only a few exceptions, such as Joseph's letters to his sister, there is no attempt to burlesque the actual manner and style of Richardson's book. The resemblances are subtly evident on every page, but they are not cast in the form of burlesque or mimicry. In his study of Joseph Andrews Battestin indicates the essential difference in the satiric ends of the burlesque and the later novel;
Behind the distinction between the burlesque of Shamela and the corrective satire of Joseph Andrews are divergent motives. In the first instance Fielding wished to expose the inherent foolishness of Richardson's book. This, he felt, could best be accomplished by the undermining process of parody, the destructive mimicry of the very substance and texture of Pamela. But the value of travesty is limited. It is a mode, as J. L. Davis has observed, essentially parasitic, negativistic, and superficial. In Joseph Andrews the allusive ridicule of Richardson is intended as a kind of foil, setting off to advantage Fielding's own ambitious attempt at reconstruction, at presenting, in "the Manner of Cervantes," a fresh conception of the art of the novel.5

Indeed we need only return to Fielding's Preface to the novel to see what he intended. He makes it clear that it is no longer burlesque, but comedy that he is writing. In such writing, he author points out, burlesque or parody may be admitted in the diction, but not in sentiment or in characters. Now in his "comic epic poem in prose," Fielding sets out to describe the Ridiculous, and he has reminded us that it is from the discovery of affectation that the ridiculous arises. Straight parody stops short of Fielding's intended goal. Parody or burlesque is in one sense a negative art, it shows up the inconsistencies and hypocrisies, all the false presentations of life and literature, but the reader must imagine for himself the desired happy medium. That is to say, the work parodied represents the one extreme, the parody itself another, and the reader's attention, after shifting back and forth between the two, comes to rest on an implied norm, an accepted standard. Joseph Andrews does not function in quite this way. This element is

present, but there is much more as well, there is the picture of society Fielding gives us. He illustrates his norm, the desired behaviour or moral code for the common man.

The heart of the satire, as well as the serious criticism of *Pamela*, is in the kind of world *Joseph Andrews* creates. It is in this fictional world of Joseph and Adams that affectation and vanity are pushed forward under the light of the ridiculous to stand forth naked and undisguised for all to see. The satire is more effective by virtue of the intimacy between narrator and reader -- the result is similar to having a friend tell you that you have acted like a fool instead of a perfect stranger making the accusation. The former has much more significance than the latter. Formal satire demands a certain aloofness on the part of the satirist and because of this it is often tempting to ignore his cries; he is the stranger with the wild look in his eyes standing on the edge of the crowd screaming "you are all mad!" Fielding's technique, on the other hand, is to show in a friendly manner just how foolish we all can be. This technique is so much more insidious than the naked satire of a work like *Jonathan Wild* that we are compelled to become involved to a greater extent in the story and are consequently more inclined to listen to what the satirist is saying.

Parson Adams is the most fascinating creation in the novel and the most effective vehicle of the satire. Fielding announced on the title page that his work was written in the manner of Cervantes, and
there is a definite spiritual kinship between the ridiculous and lovable Parson Adams and the equally ridiculous and lovable Don Quixote. Both are amusing figures and both have funds of idealism that no setback can diminish. Much of the comedy found in these works stems from the predicaments these two find themselves in as their ideal worlds conflict with the uglier realities of their society. But this same source of comedy is a source of satire, for it is often an uneasy laughter when we realize their idealism is never defeated. It is for this reason that Parson Adams is such an effective figure in the satire. He is ridiculous, but he is good. When he blunders and appears rather foolish, there is no sudden unmasking of evil in any sense, he is a man who is far from perfect, but one who is still impressively good. His mistakes, his little vanities and affectations, are forgivable where those of the true hypocrite are not.

Adams, like his biblical namesake, is the personification of true faith and charity. In this epic of the road his function is analogous to that of the person of formal satire. He operates both separately and simultaneously in the three characters that Maynard Mack attributes to the satirist: the "vir bonus" or moral man, the "naif," simple and unsophisticated, passing implicit judgement upon the immorality that bewilders him, and the "hero," indignant and courageous, defending virtue and the public good. The standard held up as a foil to set off

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the moral degeneracy of the age is embodied especially in the innocent quixotism of Abraham Adams. Even Joseph is more fully aware of the world around him than is the Parson, for he at least had the experience of three years' attendance upon Lady Booby.

Adams sets out on the highway to London in answer to an advertisement by a bookseller for manuscript sermons, and his adventures on the road serve to illuminate both the evil and the good to be found in his society. His experiences leave him undaunted, and while we often laugh at him, we can never feel contempt. As W. L. Cross points out, it is the man practised in the ways of the world, not the idealist, who is satirized. Even in the episode of the supposed drowning of Parson Adams' son, when we see all his Christian Stoicism peeled off and dropped useless to the ground like a rain slicker riddled with holes, it is not Adams who is the ultimate victim of the satire, it is the society that expects this type of reason to succeed. Parson Adams' sermonizing to Joseph about his reasons for marrying Fanny is strictly professional. He tells him:

Now, believe me, no Christian ought so to set his heart on any person or thing in this world, but that, whenever it shall be required or taken from him in any manner, by Divine Providence, he may be able, peaceably, quietly, and contentedly, to resign it.

(l, 351)

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8 Battestin, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
9 W. L. Cross, l, 331.
Such are the doctrines the good Parson preaches, but Fielding shows us how such rules conflict with human instincts. The passage continues.

At which words one came hastily in and acquainted Mr. Adams that his youngest son was drowned. He stood silent a moment, and soon began to stamp about the room and deplore his loss with the bitterest agony.

(1, 351)

However, we are not surprised at his inconsistency in the man's behaviour, for it is perfectly in keeping with the warm and human image of the parson the author has created. The satire is toned down to some degree for we can never associate the harshness of the word hypocrite with Adams, yet the effect is in no way diminished. Similarly we cannot condemn the man for his excessive pride in his learning and his prowess as a teacher, for such vanities are all too human and relatively harmless. I think much of the effectiveness of the satire comes from the realization that this likable old fellow with all his redeeming graces, still possesses these human weaknesses. Abraham Adams is the victim of a theoretical ideal of conduct that his own nature will not support. He is a man of the cloth and thus supposedly a man of peace, yet he is constantly getting into fights, always ready to defend his friends or his views with a fist the size of the knuckle of an ox or a huge crab-tree stick he carried. His theory preaches stoicism, yet he is the most emotional of men. But then Fielding's heroes we discover are always men of passion. Tom, Joseph, Booth, and Adams -- in each of them we find that while their emotions might be at times misguided, they are at least men capable of feeling. The point is relentlessly brought home to us that weaknesses are forgivable and human, it is outright
There are innumerable satiric elements that enrich this epic of the road. Many of these are devices and techniques that Fielding developed in his early years as a dramatist. The mock-heroic simile and the use of elevated epic language in general, added to the appeal of such works as Tom Thumb and Jonathan Wild, but they become a source of pure delight in Joseph Andrews. As Fielding's Preface shows, he was well aware of the advantages the tradition of mock-epic held for underscoring those modes of the ridiculous that arise from affectation. Cloaking the most unheroic of figures in the garments of the heroic makes their affectation and essential absurdity stand out all the more clearly. As Mack points out, Fielding includes for what he calls his classical reader numerous mock-epic jokes -- ranging from Homeric similes through the epic genealogy of Joseph's cudgel to the hilarious travesty of Oedipus at the close -- where the humor is largely at the expense of epic forms and the heroic attitude toward life. But the language is fully functional, we do more than take delight in the burlesque of heroic diction. The novel does not stop while we take pleasure in this added attraction for it is an integral part of the exposure of the ridiculous.

When Parson Adams is set upon by the hunters' dogs, Joseph comes

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to his rescue in a truly heroic manner;

No sooner did Joseph Andrews perceive the distress of his friend, when first the quick-scenting dogs attacked him, than he grasped his cudgel in his right hand — a cudgel which his father had of his grandfather, to whom a mighty strong man of Kent had given it....

(I, 270)

And on it goes, with the battle itself described in elevated language suitable for an epic event. The burlesque turns the situation into a humorous affair simply through the incongruity of the description and the participants themselves. But it is not Joseph and Parson Adams that are affecting a heroic stance and thus being made victims of the satire, instead, they emerge as being truly brave, and it is the squire and his companions that appear in a petty, mean light. Fielding is playful as he explains why he could find no simile adequate for his purpose. Joseph Andrews himself becomes a symbol for "friendship, courage, youth, beauty, strength, and swiftness":

Let those therefore that describe lions and tigers, and heroes fiercer than both, raise their poems or plays with the simile of Joseph Andrews, who is himself above the reach of any simile.

(I, 271)

The satire is essentially good-natured, but the novel is nonetheless one of purpose, and this purpose is to expose the vanity and hypocrisy in society while at the same time recommending their antithetical virtues -- charity, chastity, and the classical ideal of a virtuous life. The journeying of Fielding's heroes can be seen

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11 Battestin, pp. 88-89.
allegorically as a moral pilgrimage from the corruption of the great city to the relative naturalness and simplicity of the country. This same pilgrimage is undergone in reverse in *Tom Jones*, with the final resolution being the marriage of Tom and Sophia and the promise of their retirement to a life of pastoral bliss on the Western's estate.

Rural retirement with a virtuous and loving wife was a classical ideal and the 'reward' Fielding provided the heroes in all his novels. This symbolic use of country and city life as representative of good and evil is dramatized in the Wilson episode. This gentleman relates to Adams and Joseph a story of a youth of incredible dissipation. His narrative seems momentarily to interrupt the main stream of the novel, but a second glance reveals that it is central to the story itself as well as being a conventional epic device. Wilson's tale is a variation on a major theme of the novel. It is a tale of a dissipated and thoughtless youth, it is the confession of the life of a man of unbridled passion, but it is also the tale of a man's coming through experience to a deeper understanding of himself. Wilson's narrative, and later, in *Tom Jones*, the Man on the Hill's tale, reveal Fielding's attitude towards such experience. Tom and Booth (*Amelia*) are men of a similar breed -- they learn their lessons a little more easily perhaps, but still they learn partly through experience.

Wilson was by his own confession a complete scoundrel. After contesting his father's will (on the advice of his lawyers) he went to London where he soon acquired the character of a "fine gentleman."
The first requisites, he tells us, were "supplied by a tailor, a periwig maker, and some few more tradesmen, who deal in furnishing out the human body." Again the satirist attacks the shallowness of the moral character of such a beau — just as the principles of Wild's gang were equated to their hats, so here the character of such a rake can be directly attributed to his tailor and "periwig-maker." What follows is a listing of all the vices which can be acquired by a young man entering the fast and frivolous London society. However, even in this intensified satiric narrative, Fielding's humor is almost as predominant as the satire itself. This coupling of the good-humored with the strictly satiric lends the satire added depth. Wilson tells his guest of his initiation into society:

The next qualifications, namely, dancing, fencing, riding the great horse, and music, came into my head, but as they required expense and time, I comforted myself, with regard to dancing, that I had learned a little in my youth, and could walk a minuet genteely enough, as to fencing, I thought my good-humour would preserve me from the danger of a quarrel, as to the horse, I hoped it would not be thought of, and for music I imagined I could easily acquire the reputation of it, for I had heard some of my school-fellows pretend to knowledge in operas, without being able to sing or play on the fiddle. (1, 230)

The description of the fashionable beau is surely meant to be contemptuous, but Wilson can look back on his own foolish youth with such amused understanding that this becomes the predominant attitude in us, as readers, as well. The passage reveals the sham involved in offering the desired front to society. Fielding's satire is intense but it is also sympathetic, he laughs at the "poor, bare,forked animal," but it is an understanding laugh. Wilson had his intrigues, kept mis-
tresses, debauched a young maiden, gambled, frequented the playhouses, even wrote poetry and plays -- interrupted by numerous unpleasant visits to his surgeon -- and finally ran himself hopelessly into debt. Rescue came in the shape of Harriet Hearty, the daughter of the gentleman to whom he had sold his winning lottery ticket. Wilson tells how he eventually married his benefactress and subsequently retired to a life in the country, away "from a world full of bustle, noise, hatred, envy, and ingratitude, to ease, quiet, and love" (I, 254). The Wilson episode is an intensified portrayal of an ideal that Fielding held forth in all his writings. Wilson's is a life of experience crowned with idyllic retirement, an arrival at the understanding of good through the experiencing of evil. The serene life this couple shares seems to Adams the modern counterpart of life in the golden age.

Both Joseph and Parson Adams are objects of laughter in the novel. The former in his incredible struggle to hold onto his chastity, and the latter in his innocence and unconquerable idealism, present us with countless laughable adventures, but it is hardly satiric laughter, for the element of contempt is absent. At least we feel no contempt for them. They are ridiculous upon occasion, often amusing and even silly, but they are never false or malicious. There is no false layer to strip from them, leaving them shivering in their hypocrisy, for they are at all times sincere and completely, admirably themselves. Adams and Joseph bring forth our smiles, but never our sneers. They are the key figures with whom the author carries out his instructive purpose. In their innocence they reveal the possibilities for good as well as
the many evidences of evil in a diseased society.

When Joseph is set upon by two robbers and beaten and left lying naked in the ditch, we note that it is the postilion who first tries to get the coachman to stop. This same postilion, "a lad who hath since been transported for robbing a henroost" (I, 65), is the only one to volunteer a garment to cover a suffering fellow creature. This, however, is one of the redeeming features of the world Fielding presents for us. The lawyer, the wit, the prude, the gentleman, and the heartless coachman, are all objects of the satirist's attack. They would monopolize the stage in their selfishness and cruelty if it were not for this one young fellow who possessed more charity and kindness than the rest of them put together. The point is not that the poor are better human beings than the rich, but rather that goodness can be found in all walks of life.

In his Preface, Fielding acknowledged his responsibility as censor of the manners, tastes and morality of his age. This responsibility, we noticed, he felt heavily even in the earliest stages of his writing career. "In Joseph Andrews the selfishness of the lawyer, the avarice of Peter Pounce, the hypocrisy of Parson Trulliber, the lust of Lady Booby, the bad art of Pamela -- all are laid bare by the knife of ridicule." 12 And these same vices Fielding had attacked unceasingly in his

12 Battestin, op. cit., p. 152.
plays and miscellaneous writings. The targets are the same, only the form has altered. Fielding as satirist has changed his approach, he has broadened it through the use of the novel to present the complete picture of good and evil in all their intricate blendings. However, he has retained enough emphasis of the satiric to add a sober note to the laughter of the novel.

**Tom Jones** is Fielding's most entertaining novel. It is a fuller, richer, livelier production than **Joseph Andrews**. However, in expanding many of the beauties of his first comic epic there was an unavoidable sublimation of the satirical elements. Satire demands a certain impersonal tone that is quite the opposite to that found in the story of Tom. **Joseph Andrews** stretched to its limits the relationship between the aloof satirist and the amiable comic artist. There is enough of the lovable human in Parson Adams to personalize the satire and give it a warmth that strengthens it, while yet permitting the work to retain many of the allegorical qualities of **Jonathan Wild**. But Joseph and Fanny never take on the life for us that Tom and Sophia do. Identification with the first couple is both impossible and undesired. It is this difficulty we have seeing them as humans in a human situation that helps illuminate the preposterousness of the moral pretensions of **Pamela**. For Joseph's actions, amusing and amazing as they are, are nonetheless morally more sound than those of his sister, Pamela. The characters in **Joseph Andrews** are memorable, but with the exception of Parson Adams, they lack the depth that the author gives their successors in **Tom Jones**. Mrs. Slipslop, Mrs. Tow-Wouse, Parson Trulliber, Peter
Pounce, Mr. Wilson, and even Joseph and Fanny are not placed under our observation in full enough detail or for a long enough period to become "people" in the fullest sense. We see them as unchanging people flashed before us only long enough for them to become imprinted upon the memory as types.

It would appear that the satiric elements in *Tom Jones* are included more for their contribution to the comic effect than for criticism *per se*. The novel has much the same moral purpose as *Joseph Andrews*, or rather, like the earlier work it was meant to be instructive, but the lesson is not taught as expressly through satire.

Fielding's role as narrator in *Tom Jones* is a fascinating one. His *persona* or mask as narrator is that of the story-teller standing between the people in his tale and his readers. It is an obtrusive position that places him in the role of public benefactor. This stance recalls the device Fielding used in his farces, that of presenting a play under rehearsal with the playwright explaining it to all who will even pretend an interest. In the plays the scheme becomes a method of ridicule, with the playwright-within-the-play unintentionally exposing the absurdities in both his own work and the society it deals with. However, in the novel there is the basic difference that the novelist elaborates on his own positive beliefs and the satirical

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elements are subordinated to the role of reinforcing these positive beliefs. Rather than having positive ideals suggested through implication, aiming at an awareness of good brought about by a concentration on evil (which I see as the principle behind satire), Fielding shifts the emphasis to the good itself. But he does not neglect the evil, and the satirical elements, which are often of a comic nature, ensure a varied tone in the work. Fielding can never sound pompous, he never gives us the monotonous drone of the die-hard moralist, he is too busy laughing at society and at himself. For example, when he satirizes the professional classes in *Tom Jones*, he does more than just tell us that a lawyer, for example, might be a vain, affected ass, he shows us why we should consider him so. The novel abounds in examples of the jargon which is the disease of the pretentious among the professional classes. The philosophical Square and the parsonical Thwackum epitomize the affected types Fielding sought to ridicule. Partridge, the academic barber, is cursed with the same disease -- he can scarcely complete a sentence without inserting some Latin, only a portion of which, the narrator explains, he "applied properly enough."

In *Tom Jones* Fielding has gone far beyond the self-imposed limits of the satirist, but he has not abandoned the tools of the satirist's trade. It has been suggested that:

As a satirist he is overwhelmingly interested in actions, and his aim is to distinguish the good from the evil, but, as he learns how misleading not only words but even actions and consequences can be, he finds it increasingly difficult to judge them except in terms of motives. In short, he rejects the satirist's simple but commonsensical acceptance of effect
as the chief criterion of virtue in favor of the Shaftsburyian belief that an action can be neither good nor evil in itself, but only as its motive is charitable or self seeking. 14

In Jonathan Wild Fielding was portraying evil against a background of good, but in Joseph Andrews and more noticeably in Tom Jones, he was presenting society itself, a society made up of good and evil elements, each of which predominates upon occasion. Tom Jones, the likable young hero of the tale, functions as a satiric vehicle much as does Parson Adams in Joseph Andrews. His experiences in the Allworthy household, on the road, and finally in London itself, never dull the glow of innocence and sincerity that is his trade mark. He comes in contact with every conceivable type of vice and corruption but is never infected himself. Jones learns through his experiences, but he does not harden and lose his intrinsic kindheartedness. Physically he is handsome, big, strong, and healthy -- like Joseph, and later, Booth -- and filled with the joy of living. He has his share of a young man's natural foolishness, but his simplicity, and above all his sincerity, protects him from censure, both ours and the satirist's. Tom the boy foreshadows Tom the man. As a boy he lies to protect the position of his friend, Black George, the gamekeeper, and he holds steadfastly to his lie under a severe whipping. To lie is wrong, but his intentions are so good that we admire him the more. As a young man he steadfastly refuses to harm anyone, or to believe another capable

14 Paulson, op. cit., p. 9.
of performing an intentional evil action towards him. The novel insists we view even his affair with Lady Bellaston in the light of the young man's principles. Tom makes it clear that he could not bring himself to hurt the aging Lady Bellaston (offensive breath or not):

Though Jones saw all these discouragements on the one side, he felt his obligations full as strongly on the other, nor did he less plainly discern the ardent passion whence those obligations proceeded, the extreme violence of which if he failed to equal, he well knew the lady would think him ungrateful, and, what is worse, he would have thought himself so. He knew the tacit consideration upon which all her favours were conferred, and as his necessity obliged him to accept them, so his honour, he concluded, forced him to pay the price.

On the one hand this can be seen as a debasing incident in which Jones compromises all his morals simply for convenience. But I think this is unfair to the author's intention, it discounts the sincerity that the tale demands we credit young Tom. He makes a mistake, but it is not because of a conscious intent to deceive. It must be remembered how his affairs stood with Sophia at the time, the attractions Lady Bellaston possessed, as well as her determination -- and that Tom did not have the same armour as Joseph with which to defend himself against such attacks. Tom is a blend of good and not-so-good characteristics, of weakness as well as strength. However, the reproach is aimed as much at the society that views and condemns his actions as it is at Tom himself, for the evil lurks in their minds, alongside the hypocrisy, Tom lies, poaches, drinks, quarrels, fights, and loves to excess, but he has the excuse of his age for almost every fault, and the natural progression of the novel suggests both that he leaves these shortcomings
behind him and that he is a better man for having experienced such natural emotions. Tom is always true to his principles, and even his adventures with women can be defended on the grounds that they are harmless in intent. His reply to Nightingale's accusations clearly indicate his thoughts on the subject:

"Lookee, Mr. Nightingale," said Jones, "I am no canting hypocrite, nor do I pretend to the gift of chastity more than my neighbours. I have been guilty with women, I own it, but am not conscious that I have ever injured any. Nor would I, to procure pleasure to myself, be knowingly the cause of misery to any human being."

(V, 108)

Thus while we can often accuse Tom of imprudence and see him as being a little foolish, just as we found Parson Adams ridiculous upon many occasions, we can never think of him as the "canting hypocrite," the prime object of the satire.

With characters like Thwackum and Square the author gives us delightful satirical portraits. Fielding balances these two perfectly, each emphasizing the absurdity of the other by the sheer vividness of contrast of their views and personalities:

This gentleman Square and Mr. Thwackum scarce ever met without a disputation, for their tenets were indeed diametrically opposite to each other. Square held human nature to be the perfection of all virtue, and that vice was a deviation from our nature, in the same manner as deformity of body is. Thwackum, on the contrary, maintained that the human mind, since the Fall, was nothing but a sink of iniquity, till purified and redeemed by grace. In one point only they agreed, which was, in all their discourses on morality never to mention the word goodness. The favorite phrase of the former was the natural beauty of virtue, that of the latter was the divine power of grace. The former measured all actions by the unalterable rule
of right, and the eternal fitness of things; the latter decided all matters by authority; but in doing this, he always used the Scriptures and their commentators, as the lawyer doth his Coke upon Lyttleton, where the comment is of equal authority with the text.

(III, 114)

The pair are living examples of the harmful effects of the misapplication of such ideal philosophies or religious doctrines. The theories in themselves are fine, the only trouble is they do not make their holders better men. This type of philosophy, Fielding points out, yields no good to mankind when its sole manifestations are in idle mouthings; this type of religion must be seen as hypocritical and selfish when it destroys goodness. The author is at his humorous best in his treatment of this pair of arch-hypocrites. Thwackum is shown revelling in his religion:

When I mention religion I mean the Christian religion; and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion; and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England. And when I mention honour, I mean that mode of Divine grace which is not only consistent with, but dependent upon this religion, and is consistent with and dependent upon no other.

(III, 115)

It is the same type of pigheadness and chop-logic that the satirist attacked in his "Essay on Nothing" and "Some PAPERS Proper to be Read before the R----l Society," with the difference that these characters we come to know and understand and consequently share a deeper involvement with.

Banerji points out that one conspicuous feature of Fielding's satire is that it is only in exceptional cases that it makes objects
The portrayal of Blifil is one of these "exceptional cases." He is the most despicable creature in the novel; his every move is revealed to be the result of selfish cunning and designed towards furthering his own malicious ends. Even as a child Blifil is seen as a calculating villain. When out of meanness and jealousy he let a bird that Tom had given Sophia escape, he had all the correct answers to justify his actions. He tells the adults in the group that he could not help giving the creature its liberty: "I always thought there was something very cruel in confining anything," he says (III, 151). They can judge only from without and must therefore find his action praiseworthy; but we have the advantage of knowing his true motive, and see him for the vicious liar he is. Blifil is the blackest of hypocrites, and one on whom the author unleashes tremendous scorn.

As in *Joseph Andrews*, in this novel we see a society that is in many ways corrupt; and this corruption is perhaps most evident in the scenes depicting life in the capital. But Fielding also uses a slightly different approach in *Tom Jones*. Here, rather than making country retirement appear less corrupt than the town life, he has his country folk expose the Londoners not by contrast, but by emulation. Every conceivable vice or intrigue usually associated with the city finds its


counterpart in a country setting. Even Blifil, the vilest of them all, cannot attach any blame to city influences, for he has not had so much as a city education. Fielding’s comment on the vanity of Molly Seagrims as she parades to church in Sophia’s cast-off dress clearly illustrates this idea:

The great are deceived if they imagine they have appropriated ambition and vanity to themselves. These noble qualities flourish as notably in a country church and churchyard as in the drawing-room or in the closet. Schemes have indeed been laid in the vestry which would hardly disgrace the conclave. Here is a ministry, and here is an opposition. Here are plots and circumventions, parties and factions, equal to those which are to be found in courts.

Nor are the women here less practised in the highest feminine arts than their fair superiors in quality and fortune. Here are prudes and coquettes. Here are dressing and ogling, falsehood, envy, malice, scandal; in short, everything which is common to the most splendid assembly or politest circle. Let those of high life, therefore, no longer despise the ignorance of their inferiors, nor the vulgar any longer rail at the vices of their betters.

(III, 169)

There is the feeling in the novel that the inhabitants of the country do have an advantage over those of the city, but the suggestion seems to be that it is through no virtue of their own. However, those who are aware of the advantages of country life, people like Allworthy, and Wilson, are able to practice a benevolence in this rural setting that would be impossible in the city. It is easier to live "the good life" in the country, away from the evils of the town, for it is man that is the evil, and the crowded, bustling conditions of the city breed corruption.

There is more criticism of society involved in the novel than is
usually supposed. But while the satire is often sharp, there is the tendency to forget Fielding the satirist in the presence of Fielding the humorist. The humor overrides the satire in such instances as, for example, Tom's discovery of the philosopher Square "among other female utensils" in Molly Seagrim's closet. It is a vivid picture we get of Square squatting in ridiculous fashion, one of Molly's nightcaps on his head, and his two large eyes staring directly at Jones. We almost forget in the laughter of the moment the serious implications involved in Tom's sudden unveiling of his teacher's hypocrisy.

In *Tom Jones* Fielding's mock-epic diction reaches its greatest heights. The battle scenes, invocations, and heroic similes have an exuberance that surpasses anything in the earlier works. Molly's battle in the churchyard (Bk IV, ch 8), the fist fight involving Tom, Thwackum, Western and Blifil (Bk V, chs 10-12), and the struggle at the inn at Upton (Bk IX, ch 3), provide opportunities for the author to exercise his talents for this type of burlesque diction to the fullest. But the burlesque of the heroic tradition is carried on primarily for the sake of the comedy it provides. These scenes add life and colour, and the pleasure is in the language itself more than in any satiric implications there might be. The heroic similes though, are more subtly blended with the narrative than are the mock-epic battles.

For example, early in the novel Mrs. Wilkins is described as a kite:

Not otherwise than when a kite, tremendous bird, is beheld by the feathered generation soaring aloft, 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.

Fielding goes on to explain his simile:

It is my intention, therefore, to signify, that, as it is the nature of a kite to devour little birds, so it is the nature of such persons as Mrs. Wilkins to insult and tyrannize over little people. This being indeed the means which they use to recompense to themselves their extreme servility and condescension to their superiors; for nothing can be more reasonable than that slaves and flatterers should exact the same taxes on all below them, which they themselves pay to all above them. (III, 32)

Now this idea is in essence little different from that expressed in the dissertation concerning high people and low people in Joseph Andrews. Depending upon one's position in the social order, one must choose whether "to be a great man at six in the morning, or at two in the afternoon" (I, 181). The satirist brings out the essential pettiness of human nature as he describes a basic truth of our social structure.

In Joseph Andrews, and to a greater extent in Tom Jones, we see Fielding the moralist emerging and the satirist fading further and further into the background. The term moralist seems somehow to have the wrong connotation to be applied to the author of these two comic novels, but Fielding's purpose was to instruct as well as to entertain. It is a fine line I am drawing between satirist and moralist; by the former I mean the artist concerned primarily with the exposure of vice, with the presentation of the evil in society; whereas with the latter, the moralist, I refer to the artist intent upon depicting a way of life as an alternative. The latter is one who sees the evil but also the possibilities of good in society and describes both. In Tom Jones
Fielding struck a happy balance between satirist and moralist that was not to be reproduced in *Amelia*, his final novel.

There is a darkening of tone in *Amelia*, it suggests an angrier Fielding, one whose years as police-court magistrate of first Bow Street, and then the whole of the County of Middlesex, were obviously having their effects. One critic, Andrew Wright, feels that in the novel "the satiric mode becomes open and raw; the festive intention of the author of *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* has given way to the severities of angry hope, and angry despair." It is more a case of the satirist giving way completely to the moralist. The work represents an inexorable exposure of the wrongs in society. There is little evidence of comic enjoyment, rather than the absurd and ridiculous we are shown evil in its most sombre tones. There is no sudden exposure of sham and hypocrisy that dissolves the satiric target in ridicule. The victim is driven ahead of the hunter like a lion before the beaters until there is simply no place left to hide. The hunter is relentless, the evil is exposed, but the sport of satire is lacking. Fielding is intent upon describing moral wrongs in his society but not upon satirizing those wrongs. *Amelia* is characterized by a sentimentalism quite foreign to the author's earlier works. Never before had he so indulged in emotionalism and melodrama. Fielding's preoccupation with Booth's unrewarded merit and with the general indifference of the

aristocracy in their treatment of the lower classes is expressed in gloomy tones. Satire has been replaced by sour sentiment. Fielding laments these wrongs in dour fashion, but he does not employ satire to lash out at the evil. Booth's weaknesses and his own convictions that fate had dealt too harshly with him, for example, would themselves have been objects of satiric attack in the earlier Fielding. Booth's weaknesses are forgivable perhaps, but not so his own insistence that he should be pitied rather than arraigned because of his great personal suffering.

The novel is filled with the melodrama, the sudden inexplicable changes in character, and the extraordinary coincidences that Fielding satirized in his plays. Booth's miraculous conversion after reading the sermons of Dr. Barrow during his last confinement is as unexpected and unconvincing as any of the fifth-act reversals of character which the author so effectively mocks in his "chapter concerning the marvellous" in Tom Jones. It is a change that instead of being dramatically rendered is seemingly made for the sake of convenience. The plot requires this change in Booth, unconvincing as it may be. Similarly, the coincidence that brings the supposedly dying Robinson into the same house with Booth so that he may confess, and the subsequent restoration of Amelia's legacy, is the same last-minute turn of fortune that Fielding satirized with the ending of The Author's Farce when Luckless was revealed to be a prince and all the characters on stage to be in some way connected with royal families. In Amelia, Fielding has all but abandoned satire as a weapon to use against the evil he
sees in the society around him.

In *Tom Jones* we find the author remarking: "In my humble opinion, the true characteristic of the present beau monde is rather folly than vice, and the only epithet which it deserves is that of frivolous." (Bk xiv, ch 1) How different in tone is this from the remarks he makes in his dedication to Ralph Allen which prefaces *Amelia*, in which he says his design is "to promote the cause of virtue, and to expose some of the most glaring evils, as well public as private, which at present infest the country." How much darker and more serious the intent. The lively satire of the earlier works has been replaced by the sentimental and the moralistic.
Conclusion

With the privilege of being able to look at the author's complete works, we have the advantage of seeing what a natural change it was in Henry Fielding from satirist to novelist. Throughout his literary career he was compelled to write with instruction in mind. As a dramatist this instructive bent took the form of the satire of his farces and burlesques through which he pointed out the corruption in contemporary politics, the degeneracy of the literary standards and tastes of the age, and the general diseased state of his society's morals. After the Licensing Act ended his dramatic career he continued this satiric vein in his prose, assuming the role of Augustan satirist upon many occasions and revealing an admirable competence in writing satire of a Swiftian nature. The Miscellanies, and Jonathan Wild in particular, represent a climax to this mode of writing. Shamela then can be seen as a new direction in his work, the beginning of a new form of satire. This parody of Richardson's novel is primarily lit-
erary satire, "fiction laughing at fiction," but the burlesque was to lead him towards a completely new kind of English novel. *Joseph Andrews* was a continuation of the attack on Richardson, but it was a deeper, subtler and further-reaching attack. More than a comment on literary style or even false premises, it attacked Richardson's whole concept of life as it appeared in his novel. The result was a work of art and morality, a work which, for all its uproarious humour, is ultimately a moral book.

*Tom Jones* is the next stage along this path, but at every step the satirical elements fade further into the background in relation to the moral overtones of the work. There is still the implied criticism of the type of novel Richardson was writing, still the mock-epic devices used to emphasize the absurdity of man's pretensions, but there is offered so much more as well. In *Tom Jones* the novelist is concerned more with pointing out the total structure of society than he is with depicting the evils in it. The element of exposure is present, but the emphasis has shifted from the negative to a positive portrayal, one in which the good elements win out over the evil. The satire is imbedded deeply in the larger function of the novelist which is to write an entertaining novel that is at the same time morally instructive. There is the same exposure of vice, corruption, malice, and pride on

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every social level and in both country and city settings, but the satire exists for what it contributes to the essential human comedy that is Tom Jones.

With Shamela, then, Fielding embarked on a path that was to see him gradually change from satirist to the moralist author of Amelia. Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, however, his mock-epics of the road, represent a delightful blending of satirist and moralist. In these works we can appreciate the sincere morality that lay behind his fiction while at the same time enjoy the benefits of his lively, often playful, satiric nature.
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