

HENRY FIELDING'S SATIRICAL PORTRAYAL OF HYPOCRITICAL
CLERGYMEN IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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CHAPTER I

A LOOK AT THIS PAPER'S PURPOSE, STRUCTURE, AND RESOURCES: AN INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER

The purpose of this paper is to show how Henry Fielding's theory of satire and his attitudes towards religion are illustrated in the clergymen who appear throughout his fiction. The second chapter is the most general, for it provides the background needed for an analysis of the subject of this paper, Henry Fielding's Satirical Portrayal of Hypocritical Clergymen in Eighteenth-Century England. In this second chapter, the very general topic of Fielding's concept of history is gradually but increasingly limited to how his satire is related to his concept of fiction as history, to how his satire fits into the satiric tradition, and, finally, to why his satire is moralistic. The second chapter concludes with a discussion of Fielding's ethical intention in his satire which leads into the third chapter's discussion of how Fielding uses ethical satire to elevate the professional standards of clergymen in eighteenth-century England. Thus, Chapter III is directly concerned with the clerical characters that Fielding creates and satirizes in his fiction. Chapter IV is the "point" of the inverted pyramid structure, for this chapter provides an interpretation of

Fielding's philosophy of hypocrisy, the central trait that Fielding satirizes in his clergymen. Thus, the structure and content of this paper narrows from the general to the particular.

Each of the three chapters of this structure develops one of the triad of subjects--satire, clerical characterization, and hypocrisy. Consequently, each chapter has its own distinct goal.

The second chapter, which is the broadest in scope and which is titled "A Look at the Tradition and Technique of Satire: A Theoretical Study," gives the reasons for Fielding's use of satire to present his clergymen, shows Fielding's rhetorical use of satire, and examines his ethical-historical intent. It is shown that Fielding, following in the tradition from Aristotle to Ben Jonson, accepts the concept that the historian acts as a mirror to record and reflect what he observes. The first part of the chapter, which relies upon Fielding's famous prefaces to Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones for its main documentation, briefly interprets Fielding's role as an historian and explains how his concept of the historian affects his concept of the satirist. Fielding's objective is to present truth, and he presents such truth by acting as an historian who reveals the foibles of man through satire. Therein, satire is shown to be the precise tool for Fielding's historical and ethical purpose. Chapter II then proceeds

to place Fielding in a literary tradition. Fielding is shown to follow in the technical tradition of his contemporaries Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift with his use of antithesis and persona, in the theoretical tradition of Jonson and Molière with his style of characterization and his emphasis on morality, and in the ideological tradition of Chaucer and Cervantes with his deluded but benevolent Parson Adams. Chapter II continues with a description of Fielding's altruistic type of satire and how his respect for a profession motivates him to satirize those members who degrade their group. This description leads to the concluding analysis of Fielding's ethical intent in order to show that his moral concepts control his motives and methods for presenting a satirical-historical picture of a specific eighteenth-century profession, the English clergy.

The third chapter, "A Look at Fielding's Clergymen: Application of Theory," becomes more specific by giving concrete examples of characters who embody the ideas and theories of Fielding as set forth in Chapter II, for the specific purpose of Chapter III is to show how Fielding uses satire to express his attitudes towards eighteenth-century English clergymen and some of their religious beliefs. This third chapter includes a brief description of the state of religion in the eighteenth century in order to show the social conditions upon which Fielding's satire is

founded. It is shown that Fielding's respect for the clerical office and its exemplary members is a prime reason for his satirization of those clergymen who do not worthily fulfill their professional duties. Parson Adams in Joseph Andrews and Dr. Harrison in Amelia are described and established as the standards by which all the other clerical characters are contrasted and judged. After establishing the clerical standards, the paper takes two approaches in analysing Fielding's ridicule of clergymen. In the first approach, Parson Supple (Tom Jones), Parson Trulliber and Parson Barnabas (Joseph Andrews), the Ordinary at Newgate (Jonathan Wild), the clergymen in The Author's Farce, a nameless parson in Joseph Andrews, and a pluralist in A Journey from This World to the Next are satirized for being obsessed by a particularly predominant clerical vice--whether it be sycophancy, pluralism, selfishness, or pride. The second approach focuses on Fielding's ridicule of religious ideologies, for he satirizes those clergymen who are obsessed by their philosophical and dogmatic sectarianism. In this section, Fielding ridicules the Methodists in the persons of Cooper (Amelia), Shamela and Parson Williams (Shamela); the deists, Robinson (Amelia) and Square (Tom Jones); and the orthodox Anglican, Thwackum (Tom Jones). Chapter III concludes with an analysis of Fielding's benevolent and Latitudinarian beliefs in order to present his

constructive and positive attitudes on what clergymen and religion should be.

Chapter IV, "A Look at Fielding's Thematic Focus: Exposure of the Hypocrite," zeros in on Fielding's thematic focus and is therefore the chapter most narrow in scope. Chapter IV draws Chapters II and III together in a concluding analysis of Fielding's views on hypocrisy, the common and dominant vice of the clergy and religion. Fielding's attitudes towards hypocrisy are examined in the light of his concept of the nature of man. Involved in the discussion of the nature of man is Fielding's view of the role that a man's passions play in determining his actions and motives. Fielding's philosophical vacillation between the ideas of Hobbes and Shaftesbury is interpreted, and it is concluded that Fielding, who wanted to believe in the ideal, leaned toward Shaftesbury when writing theory but occasionally voiced the philosophy of Mandeville when he created his clerical characters, for he recognized the reality of the world. As he grew older, he became more disillusioned with man, as is evidenced by the change in tone from that of light-hearted ridicule in his first novel, Joseph Andrews, to that of pessimistic doubt with little satire in his last novel, Amelia. As a result, Fielding, in an article written in his later years entitled "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," warns the reader to beware of hypocrisy. In fact, Fielding's essay provides the reader with a manual

on how to avoid and overcome the hypocrite. Thus, the specific purpose of Chapter IV is to present Fielding's view of hypocrisy, the trait which Fielding sees as the most prevalent among eighteenth-century clergymen and the character flaw which he considers most harmful to society's ability to communicate effectively.

In order to accomplish the purposes of this paper, I have selected three of Fielding's novels, Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia, as my primary sources. Each of these three novels was written at a different stage in Fielding's lifetime and therefore provides a gauge by which to measure the author's revision of and change in attitudes from his first novel to his last. In addition, the first two of these novels, Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, contain valuable critical information necessary to understand Fielding's theory of satire. Consulted also were other works by Fielding: his fiction, Jonathan Wild and A Journey from This World to the Next; his weekly journalistic writings from The Champion, with an emphasis on the series of four essays entitled "Apology for the Clergy"; his "Knowledge of the Characters of Men" and "Proposals for the Poor" in the Miscellanies; and two of his plays--The Author's Farce and Pasquin. Fielding's novels, fiction, and plays provided the fictional characters who illustrate the theories that he sets forth in his journalistic essays.

Aside from my primary sources I have found the scholars Miller, Paulson, Durant, Battestin, and Dudden to be my most valuable secondary sources. Henry Knight Miller's Essays on Fielding's Miscellanies: A Commentary provided an analysis of Fielding's pertinent essays. Ronald Paulson's Satire and the Novel and The Fiction of Satire not only aided me in interpreting Fielding's satiric techniques but also led me to comparative materials, such as Richard Steele's The Tatler and Joseph Addison's The Spectator. Will and Ariel Durant's The Age of Voltaire furnished information needed concerning the cultural and historical background of eighteenth-century England. Martin Battestin's The Moral Basis for Fielding's Art also provided useful historical background material and gave excellent information on Fielding and the Latitudinarians. Frederick H. Dudden's Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times contributed to a wider understanding of Fielding's milieu.

CHAPTER II

A LOOK AT THE TRADITION AND TECHNIQUE OF SATIRE: A THEORETICAL STUDY

Henry Fielding utilizes the rhetorical techniques of satire in order to present a true picture of the clergyman in eighteenth-century England. Throughout The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and The History of Tom Jones, Fielding calls himself an historian, one who uses fiction as a medium to present the reality beneath the appearances. In both Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, Fielding takes careful pains to explain his role as a literary historian and his fitness for the role, for he explicitly defines the qualifications that a writer of fiction must possess if he is going to portray historical truth. Not being modest, Fielding states that the first and major qualification is natural genius¹ (Tom Jones, IX, i, 411). Learning or a "competent knowledge of the belles-lettres" is the second criterion, and, happily, more within the average author's reach. The third, and the most important,

¹Henry Fielding, The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling (New York: The New American Library, 1963), p. 411. Hereafter I list within parentheses the title, book, chapter, and page, using large and small Roman numerals and Arabic numbers respectively.

qualification necessary for an author who satirizes a serious profession such as the clergy is the ability to "understand the characters of men" (Tom Jones, IX, i, 412). Fielding insists that "we have good authority for all our characters, no less indeed than the vast authentic book of nature" (Tom Jones, IX, i, 411). Factual characterization is essential, and Fielding reiterates its importance in the tenth book and fourth chapter in Amelia when he states that "it is our business to discharge the part of a faithful historian, and to describe human nature as it is, not as we would wish it to be."¹

In describing human nature in the eighteenth century, Fielding observed both high and low life, for, as he states in the ninth book of Tom Jones,

. . . this conversation in our historian must be universal, that is, with all ranks and degrees of men; for the knowledge of what is called high life will not instruct him in the low, nor é converso, will his being acquainted with the inferior part of mankind teach him the manners of the superior. And though it may be thought that the knowledge of either may sufficiently enable him to describe at least that in which he hath been conversant, yet he will even here fall greatly short of perfection, for the follies of either rank do in reality illustrate each other. For instance, the affectation of high life appears more glaring and ridiculous from the simplicity of the low, and again, the rudeness and barbarity of this latter strikes with much stronger ideas of absurdity when contrasted with and opposed to the politeness which controls the former. (IX, i, 413)

Thus, by showing the people who inhabit the eighteenth-century world, Fielding fulfills his stated historical

¹Henry Fielding, Amelia, 2 vols. (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1930), I, 188.

function of acting as a mirror in order to "laugh mankind out of their favorite follies and vices" ("Dedication to the Honourable George Lyttleton, Esq.," Tom Jones, viii).

Since, according to Gilbert Highet, satire tells the truth, and since Fielding, being an historian who writes fiction, wants to reveal the truth, the novelist uses satire in order to present a humorous and truthful characterization of clergymen. Gilbert Highet writes:

Satire pictures real men and women, often in lurid colors, but always with unforgettable clarity. It uses the bold and vivid language of its own time The satirist cries, 'I am a camera! I am a tape-recorder!' . . . In the work of the finest satirists there is the minimum of convention, the maximum of reality.¹

Fielding's insistence that satire reveals the truth about human nature is seen in his preface to Joseph Andrews.

In this famous preface, Fielding explains the difference between the satirically comical and the burlesque in terms of historical accuracy. According to Fielding,

. . . no two species of writing can differ more widely than the comic and the burlesque, for as the latter is ever the exhibition of what is more monstrous and unnatural so in the former, we should ever confine ourselves strictly to nature from the just imitation of which will flow all the pleasures we can this way convey to a sensible reader.²

In other words, in the comic the author reproduces the truth with a laughing satire, while in the burlesque, the laughter is a result of the truth's distortion.

¹Anatomy of Satire (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 3.

²Henry Fielding, "Preface," The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and His Friend Mr. Abraham Adams (New York: The New American Library, 1960), p. vi.

However, according to Ronald Paulson, the comic and the satiric are not synonymous terms. Paulson states that to determine whether or not a piece of writing is more satirical than comical is dependent upon the author's code of values. If an author feels that two characters who are possessed by a ridiculous affectation are equally moral, then those two characters are presented comically. However, if one character is considered superior, then that person's moral behavior is regarded as the standard by which to judge the second character. When this judgment reflects the ridiculous nature of one of the characters, the author is more satirical than comical. Moreover, when the character who is established as the standard is idealized, the satire becomes more severe because the contrast between the characters is greater.¹ Thus, according to George Sherburn, Fielding emphasizes the foibles and vices of the eighteenth-century clergymen by establishing Doctor Harrison in Amelia and Parson Adams in Joseph Andrews as the ideal standards² by which all the other clergymen who appear throughout Fielding's works are judged.³ According to Maynard Mack,

¹Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth Century England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), p. 16.

²Although I refer to Adams and Harrison as ideal clergymen, I recognize that they are not perfect parsons. However, Adams and Harrison come as close as Fielding expects a clergyman to come to achieving perfection. Consequently, Adams and Harrison are clerical models.

³"Fielding's Social Outlook," Philological Quarterly, XXXV (January 1956), 17.

satire is an art in its own right, especially when it is used by an idealist,¹ and idealism appears to be Fielding's primum mobile in his satirical characterizations of professions. Stirred by the contrast between the ideal and the actual, Fielding follows in the tradition of Cervantes, Chaucer, Jonson, and Molière.

Cervantes' Don Quixote is one of the earliest satirical novels written from an idealist's point of view, and Fielding, along with many other eighteenth-century novelists and poets, was influenced by Cervantes. In fact, Fielding's Parson Adams closely parallels Cervantes' knight, for both characters are simple and pure idealists in a complicated and corroded, un-ideal world. The result of such a situation is comedy with an emphasis on satire. Paulson says that although the humor of the comedy is a result of the actions of the idealists, the satire, which is more vituperative, is directed against the society that cannot strive for or achieve the ideal.²

If Fielding, the truthful historian, does write satire from an idealist's point of view, he never really expects the ideal in man or society. Fielding, being an historian who wants to present reality, recognizes and accepts man

¹"The Muse of Satire," in The Practice of Criticism, edited by Sheldon P. Zitner, James D. Kissane, and M. M. Libermann (Dallas: Scott, Foresman Co., 1966), p. 17.

²The Fiction of Satire (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1967), p. 101.

for what he is, for, as A. E. Dyson says, "Fielding is happiest when making fun of people for being what they are rather than for not being what they ought to be" ¹ In short, Fielding is interested in revealing conditions of the real world, and satire is his way of revealing truth.

Irony is the most effective satiric method that Fielding uses to present that truth. Ironically, the satirist is not generally praised for revealing the truth, for, as Highet points out,

The truth is sometimes so contemptible, sometimes so silly, sometimes so outrageous, and sometimes, unhappily, so familiar that people disregard it. Only when the reverse of such a truth is displayed as though it were vertical, can they be shocked into understanding it. Sometimes even then they are not convinced. They attack the satirist as a provocator, a liar. That is the penalty of being a satirist who uses irony. ²

Irony, a powerful weapon, was developed and most actively used in the eighteenth century, the Age of Satire. In fact, the eighteenth century considered irony to be synonymous with satire. ³ Charles Jarvis' statement in 1792 that "the ironical is the most agreeable and perhaps the strongest of all types of satires" attests to the eighteenth century's confusion of literary terms. ⁴

¹"Satiric and Comic Theory in Relation to Fielding," Modern Language Quarterly, XVIII (September 1957), 236.

²Highet, p. 55.

³George R. Levine, Henry Fielding and the Dry Mock (The Hague: Mouton, 1967), p. 12.

⁴Charles Jarvis, trans., "Preface," Don Quixote (1742), pp. vi-vii, cited in Levine, p. 124.

The most popular types of irony practiced were blame by praise and praise by blame. These types of irony simply require the reader to invert whatever the author actually states. Inversion of meaning leads to a total unreliability of surface meanings, for the author appears to favor what he really rejects.¹ According to Robert Alter, "Sentence after sentence in Fielding's fiction proves to be . . . a series of hidden quotation marks" ² In addition, Empson believes that Tom Jones is an "habitual double irony."³ Both Alexander Pope in verse and Jonathan Swift in prose were perfect practitioners of irony by inversion. Moreover, Pope and Swift were Fielding's models; Fielding read and learned from the works of these two famed authors. Thus, Fielding's use of irony is strictly conventional, for he follows and imitates the techniques of his illustrious contemporaries.

From Pope, Fielding imitates the use of the mock heroic and the art of sharp antithesis.⁴ Just as Pope uses the heroic couplet for ironic contrast, Fielding balances his prose statements in see-saw movements in order to emphasize his points. A perfect example of Fielding's symmetrical practice is presented in the scene in Tom Jones

¹Levine, p. 21.

²Fielding and the Nature of the Novel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 371.

³Empson, "Tom Jones," p. 219, cited by Levine, p. 24.

⁴Alter, p. 56.

which shows Bridget's and Squire Allworthy's reactions to Captain Blifil's death. In the ninth chapter of the second book of Tom Jones, Fielding transforms the episode of bereavement into farce, employing antithesis as his principal instrument in the process. At the opening of the scene, Bridget and the Squire are seated at opposite ends of the table when the family realizes that the captain is missing. Squire Allworthy is so upset that he cannot speak, but "as grief operates variously on different minds, so the same apprehension that depressed his voice elevated that of Mrs. Blifil" (Tom Jones, II, ix, 92). Later, when the Captain's fate is finally known, Bridget remains silent while Squire Allworthy can no longer suppress a torrent of tears.

Here the curious reader may observe another diversity in the operation of grief; for as Mr. Allworthy had been before silent, from the cause which had made his sister vociferous, so did the present sight, which drew tears from the gentleman, put an entire stop to those of the lady . . . (II, ix, 93).

After the arrival of Dr. Y and Dr. Z, themselves an antithesis, Bridget is antithetically linked with her dead husband. The resulting picture is that on one side is Bridget, a woman whose feelings are strained artifice, and on the other side is Captain Blifil, a man who, being dead, has no feelings. Squire Allworthy, who has the feelings of a sincere person, is placed midway between the two extremes.¹

¹Ibid., p. 57.

Fielding constantly describes events and persons in such a see-saw movement, adapting Pope's antithetical procedure in order to focus on his satiric meanings.

Fielding was also influenced by Swift, a supreme satirist. Almost all eighteenth-century satirists, including Fielding, read Swift and imitated his ironic techniques. Fielding was specifically influenced by Swift's use of a persona who wears an ironic mask. Just as Swift developed an unnamed but distinct persona in each of his satirical essays, Fielding creates the characters of Job Vinegar and Sir Alexander Drawcansir as his narrators in his journalistic essays. Swift creates Gulliver; Fielding creates a distinct persona for each of his three main novels. However, no matter what masks their narrators adopt, both Swift's and Fielding's personae always speak ironically.¹

Of all the types of irony, Fielding most often uses verbal irony as a vehicle for his satiric characterization of a professional group in order to reveal its hypocrisy.² In his play The Historical Register, Fielding explains his reasons for writing satirically.

I would have a humming deal of satire, and I would repeat in every page that courtiers are cheats and don't pay their debts, that lawyers are rogues, physicians blockheads, soldiers cowards, and ministers hypocrites (I, i, 13)³

¹Levine, pp. 37-43.

²Ibid., p. 120.

³The Historical Register for the Year 1736, edited by William W. Appleton (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), p. 13.

In his Champion papers, Fielding, as Job Vinegar, carries, says Paulson, a club with which he knocks one hundred lawyers, ninety-nine courtiers, seventy-three priests, eight physicians, and thirteen beaux.¹ Colley Cibber, in his An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber Comedian (1740), comments on Fielding's method. Cibber states that Fielding knocks "all Distinctions of Mankind on the Head . . . Religion, Laws, Government, Priests, Judges, and Ministers were all lay'd flat at the Feet of this Herculian Satyrist."²

However, Fielding was not the first writer to satirize and thereby criticize professions through irony. Although the extent of Fielding's knowledge of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales is debatable, the two English authors are surprisingly parallel in content, approach, and tone.³ Through his satire, Chaucer presents real-life characters representing the professions in the fourteenth century. Chaucer's characters, like Fielding's, are taken from all levels of society--rich and poor, educated and illiterate, religious and hypocritical. Although Chaucer satirizes all of the professions, when he presents the monk, the friar, the

¹Satire and the Novel, p. 97.

²Colley Cibber, Apology, p. 164, cited in Glenn Hatfield, Fielding and the Language of Irony (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 128.

³Arthur Sherbo, "Fielding and Chaucer--and Smart," Notes and Queries, CCIII (October 1958), 441.

prioress, and the pardoner, it becomes obvious, says Hugh Walker, that the Church is the special object of his satire.¹ In addition to similarities in content, both Chaucer and Fielding have the same "robust, good humor toward life,"² for both feel that nothing human can be wholly bad. Moreover, both English authors use irony and understatement to achieve their satiric effect. Although the authors are four centuries apart, they make some of the same criticisms concerning the professions. Thus, even though Chaucer's and Fielding's characters are involved in practices contemporary with each author's century, man's vices and follies have not changed. It appears that human nature remains constant, for both Chaucer's and Fielding's topical characters are often universal types.

Fielding repeatedly emphasizes the universality of his characters. In the preface to Joseph Andrews, he denies that the characters in his novels are drawn from living persons (Preface, x). Although he admits that he may have received an original impulse from a known trait of someone he knew, he claims that his characters are taken from life and are universal types (Preface, x).

Andrew Wright shows that Fielding, in order to present types, employs the method of scant detail, a method that

¹English Satire and Satirists (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1925), p. 21.

²Ibid.

paradoxically produces both round and flat characters.¹ For example, Parson Adams' entire character can be suggested by associating him with the following items: a pipe, a crabstick, snapping fingers, and Aeschylus.² Although characterization by such few points is meager, it is totally complete, for every item describes some important trait of Adams' character. The pipe shows his desire for pleasure; his crabstick indicates his physical prowess; his snapping fingers reveal his spontaneous and unaffected happiness; and Aeschylus' book represents Adams' pedantic learning. The result of Fielding's method is that he brings Parson Adams "to life rather than to liveliness,"³ for Fielding develops particular habits of manners which reflect the customs of the age in which the character lives. Thus, the individualized characters reflect their times but possess universal qualities.

Fielding's method of characterization closely parallels Ben Jonson's use of types, for Fielding admired Jonson and adapted the seventeenth-century playwright's theory of humors for his own formulation of the theory of the ridiculous. In the preface to Joseph Andrews, Fielding acknowledges Jonson's understanding of humors characterization.

¹"Adams and the Anatomy of Priesthood," Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), p. 150.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Fielding writes, "I might observe that our own Ben Jonson, who of all men understood the Ridiculous the best, hath chiefly used the hypocritical affectations [in his portrayal of characters]" (Preface, ix). Although Jonson did not invent the concept of the humors character (it had existed in Theophrastus' day),¹ he furthered its use and acceptance when he perfected its techniques. Mina Kerr believes that when Jonson created particular types who were possessed by a prevailing humor, he "gave the portrayal of English character a new importance in English comedy."² John Dryden, probably the most respected critic of his time, defined a humors character and considered Jonson its best practitioner.

By humor is meant some extravagant habit, passion or affectation, particular to which he is immediately distinguished from the rest of men The description of these humors drawn from the knowledge and observation of particular persons, was the peculiar genius and talent of Ben Jonson.³

Thus Jonson is considered the master of the character of humors.

In the "Induction" to Every Man Out of His Humor, Jonson defines and establishes the criteria of a humors

¹Matthew Hodgart, Satire (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1969), p. 163.

²The Influence of Ben Jonson on English Comedy (New York: Phaeton Press, 1967), p. 11.

³"An Essay on Dramatic Poesy" (1668) in Literary Criticism, I (2 vols.), edited by Allan H. Gilbert (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962), 641.

character. According to Jonson, a humors character occurs

When some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man that it doth draw
All his effects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluents, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humor¹

In order to emphasize their comical traits, Jonson gives his humors characters such allegorical names as Subtle, Brainworm, La-Foole, and Zeal-of-the-Land-Busy.² His use of allegorical names shows that his attention is fixed on a quality embodied in a person rather than on a person possessing a certain quality.³ Consequently, Jonson's characters always act consistently, for they act according to their humor. Mixed motives are not considered. The result of such a technique is a detached rather than a sympathetic view of human nature.⁴

Although Fielding does give some of his characters symbolic names--such as Allworthy, Thwackum, and Square--his use of name-labels is much more limited than Jonson's. In order to emphasize the reality of the situation and the universality of human nature, Fielding gives his characters common names. The name Tom Jones reflects his theory that characters should be representative of all mankind.⁵

¹Ben Jonson: Three Plays, II (New York: Hill and Wang, 1961), 6.

²Kerr, p. 12.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵I. P. Watt, "The Naming of Characters in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding," Review of English Studies, XXV (October 1949), 335.

However, when Fielding wants to emphasize the satiric over the realistic, he will give facetious names to his minor characters. In creating characters, Fielding, like Jonson, starts with fabricated figures that illustrate various humors or passions. However, according to Dudden, Fielding "individualizes his characters by filling in the fictitious outlines with details copied from real men and women attentively observed."¹

In his definition of humors, Jonson states that for men to be dominated by a passion is "O! more than most ridiculous."² Fielding agrees, and, in the preface to Joseph Andrews, the novelist formulates an entire critical theory of the Ridiculous. Affectation is the source of the Ridiculous, and affectation is a result of either vanity or hypocrisy. Fielding believes vanity to be less severe than hypocrisy, for vanity, which is similar to ostentation, more nearly resembles the truth, while hypocrisy is deceit at its worst. According to Fielding, hypocrisy is worse than vanity,

for to discover anyone to be the exact reverse of what he affects is more surprising and consequently more ridiculous than to find him a little deficient in the Quality he desires the Reputation of. (Preface, ix)

¹Frederick Holmes Dudden, Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times, II (2 vols.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), p. 631.

²"Induction," Every Man Out of His Humour, p. 6.

In his "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," Fielding calls hypocrisy a "detestable fiend," and he warns the naive to be wary of the deceiver who is so possessed with his humor that he is ridiculous.¹

Fielding's theory of the Ridiculous is similar to that of Molière's comedy of manners.² The main forte of the comedy of manners is characterization, and character formation is Molière's most significant contribution to Fielding's art. Molière's characters are founded upon an idea and are thus "typically general."³ For example, Tartuffe's very name has become a synonym for hypocrisy, and Tartuffe is a universal type, for, like Fielding's Trulliber, Tartuffe typifies all those clergymen who live a life of double standards.⁴ Since Molière's characters are fixed types, they are generally static figures. No gradual development occurs.⁵ Such a technique results in characters that parallel Fielding's ridiculous one.

Fielding's admiration for and imitation of Molière is evidenced by the novelist's English translations of two of

¹Miscellaneous Writings, I (3 vols.) in The Complete Works of Henry Fielding, Esq., XIV (16 vols.), edited by William Ernest Henley (New York: Croscup and Sterling Co., 1902), pp. 282-283.

²Dudley Howe Miles, The Influence of Molière on Restoration Comedy (New York: Columbia University Press, 1910), p. 78.

³*Ibid.*, p. 149.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁵*Ibid.*

Molière's most popular plays, L'Avare and Le Médecin Malgré lui. He must have experienced success with his translations, for, as Wilbur Cross points out, Fielding promised his audiences that he would adapt more of Molière's plays.¹ Although Fielding never fulfilled his promise, he continued to borrow character types from the French playwright. In fact, Molière's misers, lawyers, soldiers, innkeepers, doctors, servants, and clergymen are often transported across the channel and given a new language. Thus, according to Dudley Miles, Molière's characters are Anglicized and reappear as minor characters in Fielding's novels.²

Both Fielding's theory of the ridiculous and Molière's comedy of manners are written in a liberal spirit with a contemptuous satire on the prevalent materialistic views of the times. In other words, Molière and Fielding write with the same comic spirit, for both authors delight in ridicule and raillery without bitterness or rage. They write critically but with a laughter full of vivacity.³ In the ninth book of Tom Jones, Fielding states that in writing about ridiculous characters "I am convinced I never make my

¹The History of Henry Fielding, II (3 vols.) (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1918), 280.

²Miles, p. 28.

³Ibid., p. 99.

reader laugh heartily but where I have laughed before him" (IX, i, 413-414). Although Fielding's presentation of the truth may have caused hypocritical clergymen to be wary of his arrows of ridicule, Fielding asserts in the preface to Joseph Andrews:

I have no intention to vilify or asperse anyone; for though everything is copied from the book of nature, and scarce a character or action produced which I have not taken from my own observation and experience; yet I have used the utmost care to obscure the persons by different circumstances, degrees, and colors, that it will be impossible to guess at them with any degree of certainty. (Preface, x)

The doctrine of ridicule as a test of truth is dependent upon one's concept of human nature, and in the eighteenth century, educated men were divided between the philosophical ideas of Thomas Hobbes and those of Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury.¹ Those men who supported the theory that all men fear one another and must therefore be controlled and forced to follow an ethical code were philosophical followers of a viewpoint established by Thomas Hobbes in the seventeenth century. According to Hobbes's reasoning, man is totally concerned with himself and will laugh at another man's folly in order to feel superior. Thus, man receives a sadistic pleasure from other men's errors.² At the opposite pole of the philosophical debate stands Shaftesbury, a man who did not like the Hobbesian view of human nature and consequently

¹Dyson, p. 226.

²Ibid., p. 230.

developed and expressed his own ideas. Although Shaftesbury is realistic enough to acknowledge man's frailties, he believes in the essential goodness of human nature and therefore ridicules man's waywardness with an encouraging and moral tone.¹

The ideas of Hobbes and Shaftesbury were disputed throughout the eighteenth century by those men who wrote satire. The followers of the Hobbesian view of man generally wrote Juvenalian, misanthropic satire. Such satirists leaned toward harsh lampoon and personal invective, making satire, in Mack's words, merely a "kind of dark night of the soul,/ dank with poisonous dew across which squibs of envy, malice, hate, and spite luridly explode."² On the other hand, the supporters of Shaftesbury wrote Horatian satire and, according to Mack, elevated satire to an art.³

According to Paulson, Richard Steele and Joseph Addison are Shaftesburian satirists whose critical statements are considered to be central documents of satiric theory in the eighteenth century.⁴ Both men encouraged the constructive rather than the destructive approach, and they labelled the humane satirist as the "true one."⁵ In number 272 of The Tatler for October 26, 1710, Richard

¹Ibid.

²Mack, p. 16.

³Ibid., p. 17.

⁴Satire and the Novel, p. 60.

⁵Ibid.

Steele draws the distinction between the true satirist and the false satirist. The most important trait of the true satirist is the Shaftesburian quality of benevolence.

When I had run over several such [persons] in my thoughts, I concluded . . . that good nature was an essential quality in a satirist. . . . [for] good-nature produces disdain for all baseness, vice, and folly. . . .¹

Fielding, along with other eighteenth-century satirists, agrees with Steele's belief that a "true" satirist must be good-natured, for in Tom Jones, Fielding states that genius, learning, and understanding in the characters of men are of no avail unless the historian "have what is generally meant by a good heart and be capable of feeling" (IX, i, 413).

In the 209th paper of the Spectator, Joseph Addison further explicates the concept of the true satirist by establishing good manners as the author's main requisite.² Addison tells the satirist to avoid lampoon and to attack only the corrigible. Rather than mistakenly satirize the class itself, the satirist should concentrate only upon the culpable in a class or a profession.³

Fielding, being a benevolent person, concurs with Addison's criticism. In The Champion essay of January 3, 1739/1740, Fielding writes:

¹George A. Aitken, ed., IV (4 vols.) (London: Duckworth and Co., 1899), 234.

²The Works of the Right Honorable Joseph Addison, Esq., III (4 vols.) (London: Jacob Tonson, MDCCXXI), 187.

³Ibid.

When wit hath been used, like that of Addison's to propogate virtue and morality; . . . it is then only that these become . . . truly worthy of our praise and admiration.¹

In his novels and in his journalistic writings, Fielding never condemns a profession in toto, for he recognizes the injustice of such an act. In his famous "Apology for the Clergy" in The Champion of March 29, 1740, Fielding states:

There is nothing so unjustifiable as the general abuse of any nation or body of men. . . . I have already condemned the custom of throwing scandal on a whole profession for the vices of some particular member. Can anything be more unreasonable than to cast an odium on the professions of divinity, law, and physic, because there have been absurd or wicked divines, lawyers, and physicians?²

Fielding had expressed this same idea in an earlier Champion paper dated February 12, 1739. He writes that

Nothing is a greater proof of the general fondness of mankind for scandal, than their readiness to extend any censure which may justly be incurred by a particular member of a profession to the profession itself.³

In fact, Fielding feels so strongly about the injustice of total condemnation that he reiterates his belief a third time in the narrative of Tom Jones. "Nothing is more unjust than to carry our prejudices against a profession into private life, and to borrow our idea of a man from our opinion of his calling" (XII, x, 560). Thus, Fielding honors the true practitioners of all professions. His satire is constructive, for his goal is to maintain the

¹Miscellaneous Writings, II, 136.

²*Ibid.*, p. 16.

³*Ibid.*, p. 193.

authentic ideals that pedantic doctors, dishonest lawyers, and canting clergymen ignore and corrupt.¹

However, although Fielding does not believe in attacking the entire profession because of its few evil members, neither does he support the prevalent practice of the group's concealing its felonious members in order to preserve their reputation. "For this reason good men have sometimes rather chosen to conceal the crimes of individuals than to be the innocent occasion of bringing aspersion on a whole society of men."² Fielding, in another Champion essay, points out that concealing the corrupt not only is dishonest but actually hurts the name of the entire group, for the deviators stand out and are not hid from society's eye.³ Therefore, Fielding encourages the professions to expose the undeserving, for the good writer will be able to preserve the characteristics in which most individuals agree and "at the same time, be able to diversify their operations" (Tom Jones, IX, i, 441). A true satirist can reveal the corrupt lawyer and physician and not "hurt an honest lawyer or a good physician" (Tom Jones, X, i, 441). If, Fielding adds, "the opposite to

¹Henry Knight Miller, Essays on Fielding's Miscellanies: A Commentary on Volume One (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 368.

²The Champion in Miscellaneous Writings, II (February 12, 1739-40), 193.

³Ibid. (March 29, 1739-40), p. 262.

these are the most general, I cannot help that."¹ But no matter how few or how many hypocrites there are within the professions, the avariciousness of doctors, the selfishness of lawyers, and the hypocrisy of parsons will all be laid bare by the satirist's knife of ridicule. Fielding's attitude towards those who are possessed by a hypocritical affectation is reflected in a statement made by Lucian, the ancient Greek rhetorician and satirist whom Miller asserts Fielding admired and imitated. Miller shows the parallel between the ancient and the eighteenth-century authors by quoting Lucian.

I am a bluff-hater, a cheat-hater, liar-hater, vanity-hater, and hater of all that sort of scoundrels I am a truth lover, a beauty lover, a simplicity lover, and a lover of all else that is kindest to love.²

Although Lucian wrote his philosophy in the second century A. D., it parallels Fielding's thoughts in the eighteenth century.

According to Paulson, Fielding uses satire as a critical tool for exploring, discovering, and judging.³ The satirist acts as a judge in order to expose those who fool or mislead society through their hypocrisy. Thackeray, probably Fielding's most faithful disciple, concisely states Fielding's historic-satiric intention: "He [Fielding]

¹Pasquin, edited by Charles B. Woods (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 173.

²Lucian, Pescator, quoted by Miller, pp. 31-33.

³Satire and the Novel, p. 23.

has an admirable, natural love of truth, the keenest instinctive antipathy to hypocrisy, the happiest satirical gift of laughing it to scorn."¹ Both the satirist and the historian judge human affairs by making moral pronouncements. Fielding considers the historian's role to be a moral one. In his prefatory letter to Lyttleton in Tom Jones, Fielding states his purpose. He writes, "I declare that to recommend goodness and innocence hath been my sincere endeavor in this history" (Tom Jones, vii).

Fielding's morality is further seen in Dr. Harrison's comments concerning Hogarth, the eighteenth-century "history" painter whom Fielding considers a "moral satyrism."

I esteem the ingenious Mr. Hogarth as one of the most useful Satyrists any age hath produced. In his excellent works you see the delusive scene exposed with all the Force of Humor, and, on casting your Eyes on the dreadful and fatal consequences, I almost dare affirm that those two works of his, which he calls the Rake's and Harlot's Progress are calculated more to serve the the cause of virtue, and for the preservation of mankind, than all the folios of morality which have ever been written.

The aristocratic Lady Luxborough, although not an admirer of Fielding's, praises his and Hogarth's moral purpose. "If Mr. Fielding and Mr. Hogarth could abate the vanity of the world by shewing its faults so plainly, they would do more than the greatest divines are capable of."² Thus,

¹Frederick Blanchard quoting William Thackeray in Fielding the Novelist (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 410.

²Lady Luxborough, Letters . . . to . . . Shenstone, pp. 88-89, cited in Blanchard, p. 71.

when Fielding presents a realistic and humanely life-like picture of eighteenth-century England, he also exposes and comments upon the follies and vices of the times.

Since Fielding sees himself as a moralist, it seems ironic to note that his novels were denounced as vulgar, obscene, and impious.¹ The number and degree of attacks that Fielding received throughout his lifetime and in subsequent years is reminiscent of Molière's fate. Both Fielding and Molière joined wit with seriousness and gave a fascinatingly truthful portrait of English and French life respectively. Both men were observant humorists who were assaulted for presenting the truth, but both of the humanists answered their attackers with a series of brilliant satires.

Although Mack prefers to emphasize Fielding's satirical rather than his moral purpose² and although Battestin fears that revealing Fielding the novelist will conceal Fielding the satirist,³ the two aspects of Fielding's art are inseparable, for the most effective teaching technique is humor. Fielding holds a place midway between the wit and the preacher, for he uses the weapons of the first in

¹Blanchard, passim.

²Mack, p. 19.

³Martin C. Battestin, The Moral Basis for Fielding's Art: A Study of Joseph Andrews (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959), p. xi.

order to reveal the purposes of the second. As an historian who exposes and thereby instructs, Fielding attempts to improve morals and correct taste with a smiling countenance. In his letter to Lyttelton in Tom Jones, Fielding states that his purpose is to "laugh mankind out of their favorite follies and vices" (Tom Jones, viii). The laughter of Fielding's satire is purposeful, and his purpose is Christian.

CHAPTER III

A LOOK AT FIELDING'S CLERGYMEN:

APPLICATION OF THEORY

The Christian religion that had formerly given the Englishman his spiritual and social support nearly collapsed in the eighteenth century.¹ Ironically, the commendable trait of religious tolerance became more widespread as a result of the decline of religious conviction and faith. With the exit of the Stuarts, Catholicism had been humiliated and the Established Church, which had supported the now-exiled dynasty, had lost face. Although John and Charles Wesley were founding the Methodist movement, a movement that initiated a new religious zeal, the fervor of Methodism was widely ridiculed by statesmen, scholars, and artists such as Hogarth and Fielding. It has been estimated that in 1792 not more than five or six members of the House of Commons went to church,² and according to Captain Job Vinegar of Fielding's The Champion, the few magistrates who did attend promptly went to sleep, leading

¹Will and Ariel Durant, The Age of Voltaire (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), p. 116.

²Ibid., p. 129.

the captain to conclude that "there is nothing religious in their meetings . . . although the behavior of the performers would otherwise have inclined me to the contrary opinion since they espouse the lessons of morality."¹ In 1728, Lord Hervey gives further proof that religion is declining, for the peer states in his Memoirs of the Court of George III:

. . . this fable of Christianity . . . was now so exploded in England that any man of fashion or condition would have been almost as much ashamed to own himself a Christian as formerly he would have been to profess himself none. Even the women who prided themselves at all on their understanding took care to let people know that Christian prejudices were what they despised being bound by.²

Three years later, in 1731, the Frenchman Montesquieu, a man who was looked upon as having little religion, visited England and reported that "there is no religion in England . . . [and that] if religion is spoken of, everybody laughs."³ Henry Fielding supports Montesquieu's observations, for in the Court of Enquiry⁴ in The Covent-Garden Journal of January 14, 1752, Fielding has C. Towns charge

¹Henry Fielding, The Voyages of Job Vinegar, edited by S. J. Sackett (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1958), pp. 2-3.

²Quoted by Durant, pp. 116-117.

³John Davidson, "Introduction," Molière's Persian Letters, cited by Durant, p. 116.

⁴A recurring feature in Fielding's Champion papers in which authors and their works are satirically analyzed. Because of the criticism of Amelia, Fielding presented his own novel to the court in order to defend it. C. Towns is the character who acts as prosecutor.

Amelia with failing to gratify the laughter-loving public that wants to turn religion and the clergy into a jest. Thus, Town's criticism of Amelia is a result of Fielding's refusal to make religion an object of ridicule. The populace simply expected an author to disparage religion at all opportune moments.¹

Although Fielding's, Hervey's, and Montesquieu's statements are hyperboles, they have some validity, for the position of religion in the eighteenth century was not admirable, and Fielding knew it. Fielding repeatedly asserts in his journals and novels that the eighteenth century treats religion as almost negligible. Fielding's attitude toward his contemporaries' concept of religion is seen in his satirical definition of religion. To the eighteenth-century man, religion is simply "a word of no meaning, but which serves as a bugbear to frighten children with."² Something that is crucial to everyman's life has been reduced to a threatening device that adults use whenever children misbehave.

Fielding's concern for the state of religion is evidenced by his numerous comments on the subject. Moreover, his concern shows his respect for religion and the clergymen who are its true practitioners. Whenever Fielding

¹The Covent-Garden Journal (January 14, 1752), cited by Dudden, II, 897.

²Fielding, "Modern Glossary," appended to an article in The Covent-Garden Journal of January 14, 1752 in Miscellaneous Writings, I, 91.

mentions religion, he writes with the most profound respect,¹ for he feels that faith leads to virtue and virtue to a better society. In his "Proposal for the Poor," Fielding states that the one thing that will help the vagrant find meaning in his life and at the same time economically contribute to the well-being of the state is religion. Fielding writes, "I am no less persuaded that it is religion alone which can effectually accomplish so great and so desirable a work."² In short, Fielding feels that religion is important not only for the individual but also for the state.

Fielding's respect for religion and the clergy is best revealed in the four essays in The Champion jointly entitled "Apology for the Clergy." Drawing upon observation, sermons, and books of divinity, including the Bible, Fielding studies and presents the clerical character in order to remove the contempt for the clergy and to discuss the causes of such contempt. After listing the numerous good qualities of the clergy, Fielding analyzes the stock phrase of the eighteenth century, "contempt of the clergy." According to Fielding, clergymen are ridiculed for their insufficient education. Such clergymen as the Ordinary at Newgate in Jonathan Wild and Parson Barnabas in Joseph Andrews are representative examples of the ignorant but pedantic

¹Dudden, II, 687.

²Cited by Dudden, II, 965.

clergymen who preach fallacious and empty oratory. However, although Fielding ridicules the pedantic clergyman, he resents wholesale condemnation of a profession because of the examples of the unworthy few.¹

In addition to criticizing the clergy's lack of education, eighteenth-century men degraded the clergy for their lack of money. Ever since the Anglican Church had been forced to submit to the triumphant Whigs in the reign of George I, its clergymen had become humble dependents of the ruling class. The parson was regarded as a servant, and as a result, the priesthood was degraded both socially and economically.² According to Fielding, poverty "brought more contempt on our own clergy, than hath been cast upon them by the utmost malice of Infidels or Libertines."³ In The Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy and Religion (1670), John Eachhard states that the clergy's poverty has caused "their sacred profession [to be] much disparaged, and their doctrines undervalued."⁴ Because the populace does not respect a poor parson, his sermons go unheeded.

¹Miscellaneous Writings, II (March 29, 1740), 262-265.

²Battestin, p. 132.

³Fielding, The Jacobite Journal (July 9, 1748), cited by Battestin, p. 139.

⁴Cited by Battestin, p. 132.

Fielding presents the economic predicament of the country parson's family through the characters of Mrs. Honour (Tom Jones), Goody Seagrim (Tom Jones), and Mrs. Bennett (Amelia), three women who are forced to become servants and live meagerly because they are descendants of poor parsons. Even Parson Adams' oldest daughter can only hope that she will eventually receive Mrs. Slipslop's position as a personal servant to Lady Booby. Fielding was concerned with the problem of women descendants of the clergy, and in five separate articles in The Jacobite Journal, he advocates the establishment of a public charity for the widows and children of the indigent clergy who have received only contempt from their congregations.¹

Because of his economic state, the country parson of the eighteenth century was the favorite butt of literary satire or vulgar ridicule. In fact, the Oxford English Dictionary considers parson to be as much a pejorative term for a clergyman as quack and pettyfogger are for doctor and lawyer respectively. Fielding knew that most people would associate the word parson with ineptitude and hypocrisy; consequently, he called most of his false clergymen parsons. However, though a parson was held in contempt, Fielding's Parson Adams in Joseph Andrews is an exception. Yet, as Andrew Wright points out, although Adams is not a bad person, he is shown to be inadequate as a parson, for his

¹Cited by Battestin, p. 139.

theoretical formulations do not coincide with his intuitive sympathy.¹ Adams frequently rejects provable facts if they do not fit into his already established and organized system. As a result, the parson's naiveté hurts his parishioners and himself.

Whenever Adams tries to help his parishioners, either financially, morally, or educationally, he always bungles the job. Throughout Joseph Andrews Adams gets Joseph and Fanny into unnecessary trouble. When Adams tries to preserve Fanny's virtuous character, he causes both himself and Fanny to be arrested (II, x, 123). In another instance, when Lady Booby questions Adams concerning Joseph and Fanny's impending marriage, Adams' unguarded responses are more detrimental than helpful to the couple's cause (Joseph Andrews, IV, ii, 241-243). Thus, although Adams' intentions are good, the result of his actions is confusion. Despite his love of order, Parson Adams causes disorder.

Adams' simplicity of thought not only hurts others but also hurts himself. In the eighteenth century, the clergy were a powerful force in local politics. The parson swayed not only men's morals but also their votes.² In an anonymous passage written in the eighteenth century, the problem of parsons and politics is mentioned:

What have the clergy to do with State affairs? What obligation lies upon them to be civil magistrates? It's

¹Wright, pp. 153-154.

²Levine, p. 140.

their duty to explain the truths of the Gospel, and really 'tis business enough. Whenever the law and the Gospel meet together in the same Person, it's well if the Tares do not choak the good Seed.¹

Bribery was a common practice, for politicians would use clergymen to act as their agents in swaying votes. In the first act of his play Pasquin, Fielding shows clerical bribery in action,² and in Joseph Andrews Parson Adams' control of his nephew's vote shows the complications that can arise when church and state are not separated. When Adams refuses to let his nephew vote for Colonel Courtly, the candidate that the Rector supports, Adams loses his cure (II, viii, 115-117).

Adams' guilelessness in the affairs of this world is partly responsible for his poverty. However, the parson does not become hypocritical because he is poor. Although Adams must sell his sermons to supplement his income, he states that "though I am a poor parson, I will be bold to say I am an honest man and would not do an ill thing to be made a bishop" (II, viii, 115). Since Adams never intends to deceive anyone, he does not suspect deceit in others. In absent-mindedness and inefficiency, Adams resembles Sterne's Uncle Toby and Goldsmith's Doctor Primrose. Adams' physical appearance in a torn cassock and disarranged

¹Lord Gorrell, ed., Characters and Observations: An Eighteenth Century Manuscript, 1st ed. (London: John Murray, 1930), p. 40.

²Pasquin, edited by Charles B. Woods (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. 173.

clothes indicates his neglect of the things of this world. Although unconcern for material objects is commendable, Adams has often been "highly condemn'd because he knew not the world, and could not, therefore, council his parishioners how to live in it."¹

Adams' goodness can be compared to that of Chaucer's "povre parson" of the Canterbury Tales. Both Adams and Chaucer's parsons are pastors concerned with the happiness and good fortune of their flock instead of mercenaries concerned only with themselves and their financial advancement. Both Adams' and Chaucer's parsons draw folks to heaven by setting a good example. Therefore, even though Fielding calls Adams a parson, the benevolent minister is an honored exception to the wearers of the generally odious label, for Fielding redeems and justifies Adams' eccentricities by subordinating his role as a clergyman and by enlarging his individual personality. Fielding combines the comic with the serious and consequently creates a laudable and agreeable character who becomes the ideal standard by which all the other parsons in Joseph Andrews are judged.

Another country parson that Fielding establishes as a standard pattern for all clergymen to emulate is Doctor Harrison in Amelia. However, Harrison is not a comic or a ridiculous character and therefore does not wear the label

¹Anonymous, The Student, or The Oxford and Cambridge Monthly Miscellanies, II, 178, cited by Blanchard, pp. 51-52.

of parson. Harrison is addressed by the more illustrious title doctor in acknowledgment of his learning and in order to avoid all the derogatory connotations associated with the term parson. Harrison differs from Adams in that the doctor's learning is less pedantic and more useful to his congregation. Harrison actually helps Amelia solve her problems concerning her husband and the bothersome Colonel James. As a result, Amelia's minister is more aware of the world and of the true nature of man than is Joseph's spiritual guide.

Nevertheless, Harrison is not always successful, for like Adams, Amelia's minister is also involved in political bribery (Amelia, XI, ii, 226-227). When Harrison asks a lord to help the unemployed Captain Booth, the lord tries to attach conditions to his favor. The lord wants Harrison to use his influence for a political candidate named Colonel Trampington, for the peer knows that "it is in your [Harrison's] power to do the business and turn the scale" (XI, ii, 226). Despite the lord's remonstrances, Harrison, like Adams, refuses to be intimidated. A result of his refusal is the loss of the lord's favor, but Harrison's character remains unblemished.

Dr. Harrison possesses all of the qualities that Fielding associates with a good clergyman. In Fielding's "Apology for the Clergy," the ideal clergyman possesses the traits of temperance, charity, patience, and benevolence.

In addition, he is void of all envy, pride, and vanity.¹ Since the clergyman is entrusted with the salvation of man's soul, he "must therefore keep in daily communication with his flock in order to guide the soul in its journey."² Parson Adams' pride and vanity in his learning and teaching abilities prevent him from being totally ideal. Dr. Harrison, however, is not an innocent fool but more nearly resembles the perfect clergyman.

Although both Adams and Harrison support Fielding's contention that blatant condemnation of the clerical profession is unjust, Fielding does satirize those clergymen who deviate from the established standards. Fielding's ridicule of the clergy is not incongruous with his respect for that profession. In fact, his ridicule of false clergymen elevates the entire profession, for by showing the negative, Fielding advocates the positive.

In a discussion with a young clergyman who has so much pride that he asserts that "the lowest clergyman in England is in real dignity superior to the highest nobleman" (*Amelia*, IX, x, 157), Dr. Harrison states that sometimes the clergy do set bad examples and deserve contempt.

. . . the whole blame doth not lie [with the government]; some little share of the fault is, I am afraid, to be imputed to the clergy themselves. . . . They are not taxed

¹Miscellaneous Writings, II (April 19, 1740), 283.

²*Ibid.*

with giving any other support to infidelity than what it draws from the ill examples of their lives; (Amelia, IX, x, 158)

However, even though Doctor Harrison condemns the practices of his colleagues, he recognizes that not all the clergy are contemptible. In order to preserve the clergy from contempt, Fielding exposes its rotten members. He reveals the Murdertexts and Puzzletexts¹ that twist scriptures and religion to their own advantage, and he shows the hypocritical priests whose only sense of calling is the promise of a good living. Moreover, the false qualities of these clergymen are further emphasized when they are contrasted with the morality of Parson Adams and Doctor Harrison.

In the "Apology for the Clergy" Fielding gives an explicit and colorful description of the false clergyman, and he ends his analysis with a cutting and thoughtful rhetorical question.

Let us suppose then, a man of loose morals, proud, malevolent, vain, rapacious, and revengeful, not grieving at, but triumphing over the sins of men, and rejoicing like the devil that they will be punished for them; deaf to the cries of the poor, shunning the distressed; blind to merit; a magnifier and spreader of slander; not shunning the society of the wicked for fear of contamination, but from hypocrisy and vainglory; hating not vice but the vicious; resenting not only an injury but the least affront with inveteracy. Let us suppose this man feasting himself luxuriously at the tables of the great, where he is suffered at the expense of flattering their vices, and often too as meanly submitting to see himself and his order, nay often religion itself,

¹Two characters in Fielding's play The Author's Farce, who want to mutilate the English language.

ridiculed, whilst that he may join in the Burgundy, he joins in the laugh, or rather is laughed at by the fools he flatters Is this a Christian?¹

Contempt for the clergy is the natural attitude of men when such clerics as Fielding describes in the passage above are allowed to remain within the order and contaminate all of its members. Throughout his works, Fielding exposes the flaws of the clergy by creating characters who embody a ridiculous affectation.

In order to elevate popular opinion towards a profession that should act as man's spiritual guide, Fielding attacks the clerical vices of ignorance, sycophancy, pluralism, selfishness, and prideful bigotry. The clergy's ignorance can best be seen in Fielding's The Author's Farce. In this play, the divines, represented by Firebrand, war against Queen Common Sense, for the clergy, along with doctors and lawyers, support Queen Ignorance. Queen Common Sense is hated by the clergy because she will not grant them illimitable freedom, give them more than half the profits of the land, or recognize their claim to infallibility.²

Moreover, Queen Common Sense does not approve of the clergy's sermons, for they are merely ranting oratory.³ Even though a country parson preaches before an uneducated

¹Miscellaneous Writings, II (April 19, 1740), 284.

²Pasquin, p. 172.

³Ibid.

congregation, the egotistical minister insists on incorporating Latin terminology into his sermons. Although Mrs. Slipslop tells Parson Adams that Latin "is very proper for you clergymen . . . because you [a clergyman] can't preach without it" (Joseph Andrews, I, iii, 25), this literary ancestor of Mrs. Malaprop is mistaken, for a clergyman can preach without Latin, and he would probably be more effective. According to Glenn Hatfield, the clergy's use of language is a means to an unworthy end. For all professions, including the clergy, language is merely a stock in trade. Communicating their ideas is secondary to the purpose of persuasion. The specialized jargon of the clergy shows that they are "not [concerned] with understanding but with personal advantage or reward; not with truth but with form or effect."¹ Thus, the young pedantic clergyman who argues with Doctor Harrison over a verse in the book of Matthew is not concerned with the meaning of the scripture but with debating technical points about phraseology. Dr. Harrison, speaking for Fielding, ridicules the clergyman's entire argument by facetiously interpreting the disputed line of "love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you" as meaning "You are to love them and hate them, and bless and curse, and do them good and mischief" (Amelia, IX, viii, 148). An understanding of his attitude toward language helps to account for

¹Hatfield, p. 16.

Fielding's hatred of hypocrisy, for as Bishop Wilkins states (1668),

. . . varieties of phrases in language may seem to contribute to the elegance and ornament of speech, yet, like other affected ornaments, they prejudice the native simplicity of it, and contribute to the disguising of false appearances This grand imposture of phrases hath almost eaten out solid knowledge in all professions; such men generally being of most esteem who are skilled in these canting forms of speech, though in nothing else.¹

Because of their affected speech, the clergy in The Author's Farce succeed in overthrowing Queen Common Sense; however, Queen Ignorance is fortunately subverted by Common Sense's allies.²

Another type of ignorance of the clergy is illustrated by the country parson in Joseph Andrews who pronounces Adams' book of the dramas of Aeschylus to be a manuscript of the church fathers. In order to account for the language problem, Fielding's nameless parson actually proclaims that "the beginning of the catechism is in Greek" (II, xi, 129). Although this parson's ignorance saves the lives of Fanny and Parson Adams, his lack of knowledge is not admirable and verifies an eighteenth-century saying that "a man's profession is often the only thing he has the least knowledge of."³

¹Essay Towards a Real Character and Philosophical Language, p. 18, cited by Hatfield, p. 132.

²Passim.

³Characters and Observations, p. 39.

The sycophant clergyman is best represented by the weak Parson Supple in Tom Jones and the Ordinary in Jonathan Wild the Great. Although Parson Supple, pastor for the boisterous and belligerent Squire Western, is a minor character, he typifies the self-seeking flatterer who lives to eat. In the fourth book of Tom Jones, Fielding describes Supple as "a worthy, easy-going man, with one of the best appetites in the world, who patiently tolerated his host's grossness and profanity for the sake of the good fare at his table" (IV, x, 155). Parson Supple is not necessarily presented as a vile character, but he is certainly not a laudable one. His indifference to his professional position and purpose is deplorable and is exceeded only by his hypocrisy. Parson Supple, being a man who tries to avoid dissension, is a "very religious good sort of man and talks of the badness of such doings behind the squire's back, yet he dares not say his soul is his own to his [Squire's] face" (XV, vii, 692). Fielding's satirical thrust at Parson Supple shows that even if the parson occasionally expresses his thoughts, he only talks about them and never acts upon them.

The Ordinary at Newgate in Jonathan Wild is presented as a brutal and scandalous clergyman who is befuddled by punch. At first, the Ordinary sounds like the orthodox, canting minister when he unsympathetically states that Wild will probably be one of the leaders of hell. Although Wild

justly replies that a parson should not condemn but redeem his soul, the Ordinary ignores Wild's entreaties. After the Ordinary has given his opinion of the state of the prisoner's soul, the parson goes on to complain about his own troubles. Although Wild is the prisoner who has a death sentence hanging over his head, the clergyman can only cry tears for himself. Thereupon, the shrewd Wild reviles those wicked clergymen who "wallow in wealth and preferment" because of political affiliations.¹ Wild adds, however, that the Ordinary is a man of merit and should therefore receive advancement. In fact, Wild asserts, the Ordinary should be a bishop. The result of Wild's flattery is that the Ordinary, who was once ready to send Wild to the devil without a hearing, begins to excuse the thief's behavior, for "if you [Wild] are guilty of theft you make some atonement by suffering for it, which many others do not" (IV, xiii, 207). When Wild then asks what will become of his soul if a reprieve is not granted, the Ordinary nonchalantly replies, "Pugh, never mind your soul, leave that to me," whereupon the hypocritical Ordinary pulls a sermon out of his pocket (IV, xiii, 208).

In addition to ignorance and sycophancy, Fielding ridicules parsons who hold two or more ecclesiastical benefices at the same time. Although such clergymen possess

¹Henry Fielding, The History of the Life of the Late Jonathan Wild the Great (New York: The New American Library, 1961), pp. 206-207.

enough wealth to be charitable towards their indigent parishioners, they are usually penurious with their money. Unlike Adams, who would give all he had to make someone more comfortable, the pluralist in A Journey from This World to the Next allows a poor family of his parish to starve rather than provide a small sum for their existence.¹

Parson Trulliber and Parson Barnabas in Joseph Andrews, the most infamous of Fielding's bad clergymen, possess almost all of the clerical vices, for both clergymen are ignorant, selfish, negligent, and prideful. Parson Trulliber is a clergyman only on Sundays, for he is a hog-raiser the rest of the week (II, xiv, 140). In order that a clergyman might better attend to his spiritual office, there was a law in England which forbade the clergy to farm, buy, or sell in the markets. However, the law was not enforced.² Consequently, Parson Trulliber, who is as fat as the hogs he raises, is more interested in the money he can make by selling his hogs than in the comfort he should give his congregation. Although his ministerial position gives Trulliber the community respect in which he wallows, his hogs take priority in his life. Trulliber's

¹Henry Fielding, A Journey from This World to the Next in Miscellaneous Writings, XI of The Works of Henry Fielding, 12 vols., edited by G. H. Maynadier (London: Gay and Bird, 1903), pp. 45-46.

²Martin C. Battestin, ed., "Notes," The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and Shamela (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 354.

preoccupation with money is what leads him to mistake Adams for a hog buyer. Before he realizes his error, Trulliber treats Adams with respect and courtesy (II, xiv, 141). After Trulliber discovers his mistake, he no longer cares to be bothered with a man who needs help. In order to pay for his own, Joseph's, and Fanny's lodging, Adams asks Trulliber to lend him fourteen shillings. At first, Trulliber accuses Adams of not even being a parson and therefore refuses the destitute man his request. Adams replies, "I am nevertheless thy Brother and thou, as a Christian, much more as a clergyman, art obliged to relieve my distress" (II, xiv, 144). Trulliber rejoins with the classic unchristian comment, "I know what charity is better than to give to vagabonds" (II, xiv, 144-145). To make matters worse, Trulliber's wife, in an attempt to rationalize her husband's behavior, adds that they pay the poor rate. Adams, who is shocked at such treatment because he would never act thus, states with dignity that he is sorry that Trulliber does not know what charity is: "since you practice it no better, I must tell you; if you trust to your knowledge for your justification, you will find yourself deceived, tho' you should add faith to it without good works" (II, xiv, 145). However, Trulliber is not affected by Adams' sermon, for he remains a coarse-minded, coarse-bodied brute.

Parson Barnabas, Fielding's second infamous clergyman in Joseph Andrews, resembles the Ordinary at Newgate, for

Barnabas is a "pleasure-loving custodian of the punch bowl."¹ Although Barnabas is not an actively bad man, for he does eventually attend to the spiritual health of a footman, the parson's heart is really in gourmandizing. After the inept surgeon predicts Joseph's death, Parson Barnabas is called in to administer the last rites. However, even though Joseph is on the verge of dying, Barnabas must first drink tea with the landlady and punch with the landlord (I, xiii, 53). When Barnabas finally sees Joseph, the parson tells the servant to forgive the thieves who nearly killed him. When Joseph says that he does not believe that he can forgive, Barnabas replies that "it is lawful to kill a thief; but can you say you forgive him as a Christian ought?" (I, xiii, 54). Joseph then asks Barnabas what forgiveness is, but Barnabas, who is anxious to get back to the punch for "no one will squeeze the orange till he came," hurriedly replies that he does not know (I, xiii, 54).

Barnabas not only loves punch, but he also loves himself. Parson Barnabas is not humble. He unabashedly states that he writes the best funeral sermons in the countryside. He then asks Adams for a ready-made funeral sermon, for the blustering egotist needs one that afternoon (I, xvi, 68). From this scene, one can see that Barnabas' concern and effort for his parishioners is nil.

¹Battestin, The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art, p. 143.

Moreover, the pastor is unethical. After telling Adams that his sermons will not sell because of the crowded market, Barnabas attempts to steal Adams' sermons through a crooked bookseller (I, xvi, 67-69).

The corrupt parson's vanity is probably best exemplified in the scene where Barnabas shows his vanity and ignorance of the law. After capturing the thieves who had beaten and stripped Joseph, Barnabas and the town surgeon conduct an instant trial.

As this parish was so unfortunate as to have no lawyer in it; there had been a constant contention between the two doctors, spiritual and physical, concerning their abilities in a Science, in which as neither of them professed it, they had equal pretensions to dispute each other's opinions To display their parts, therefore, before the Justice and the Parish was the sole motive, which we can discover, to this zeal, which both of them pretended to be for public justice. (I, xv, 61-62)

Thus, Barnabas' vanity leads to the parson's hypocrisy.

In his satirical portrayal of the clergy, Fielding not only ridicules those clergymen who are possessed by a ridiculous affectation that is unworthy of their profession, but he also creates and satirizes clerical characters who represent a particular religious sect that Fielding considers ridiculous. Although he tolerates all types of men, Fielding is not tolerant of some of those men's beliefs, and he indicates his contempt through a benevolent satire.

Since Fielding supports the concept of good works, i.e., that good actions are more commendatory than verbal intentions, he satirizes the Methodist belief that only

God's grace will save a soul. Throughout his sermons, Wesley denounces the Anglican clergy for their materialistic concerns.¹ In the scene in Joseph Andrews where Parson Barnabas tries to undersell Parson Adams' sermons, Barnabas comments on Wesley's purpose: "He [Wesley] would reduce us to the example of the Primitive Ages. Forsooth! I would insinuate to the people, that a clergyman ought to be always preaching and praying" (I, xvii, 72). Of course, Barnabas objects to Wesley's insistence that the Church relinquish some of its wealth, for Barnabas is avaricious. In an attempt to rationalize his greed, Barnabas states that Wesley believes that since the Church was once poor it should always remain so. Such an idea is so horrible to Barnabas that he considers Methodism to be worse than Deism (I, xvii, 72).

Although he is once again satirizing Parson Barnabas' religious attitudes, Fielding does not support Methodism. Using Adams, one of the representatives of the true clergyman, as his spokesman, Fielding writes:

If Mr. Whitefield had carried his doctrine no farther than you [Barnabas] mention, I should have remained, as I once was, his well-wisher. I am myself as great an Enemy to the Luxury and Splendour of the [city] clergy as he can be. I do not more than he, by the flourishing estate of the Church, understand the Palaces, Equipages, Dress, and Furniture, rich Dainties, and vast fortunes of her Ministers . . . ; but . . . when he set up the detestable doctrine of faith against good works, I was his friend no longer. (I, xvii, 72)

¹Ibid., p. 135.

Thus, Fielding agrees with Wesley that the clergy should not make a trade of divinity. However, both Adams and Fielding consider the Methodist belief of faith over good works to be a pernicious doctrine coined in hell and preached by the devil (Joseph Andrews, I, xvii, 72). Fielding's most famous reference to Whitefield, the leader of the Methodist movement, is in the eighth book of Tom Jones. Tom has arrived in Gloucester and is staying at the Bell Inn. The landlord of this actual inn is the brother of Whitefield, and the landlord's wife had once been "tainted with the pernicious principles of Methodism," which Fielding considered to be a heretical sect (VIII, viii, 362).

Captain Blifil in Tom Jones, Shamela and Parson Williams in Shamela, and Cooper in Amelia are four Fielding characters who typify the Methodist doctrine of grace over good works. Captain Blifil is a Methodist who states, in one of his frequent arguments with the benevolent Allworthy, that charity is opinion rather than action (Tom Jones, II, v, 79). In Shamela Fielding has Parson Williams distort the famous Wesley aphorism of "be not righteous overmuch." According to Williams, a Methodist minister, Wesley's statement is interpreted to mean that there is no reason to try being good since salvation is simply a matter of confidence in God's grace.¹ Shamela, a girl who likes a

¹Henry Fielding, Shamela, edited by Battestin (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1961), p. 319.

convenient religion, writes to her mother that, according to Williams, "to go to Church, and to Pray, and to sing Psalms, and to honor the clergy, and to repent is true Religion; and 'tis not doing good to one another."¹

In Amelia Fielding once again criticizes the Methodist concept of good works when he satirizes Cooper, a man who is in the same prison as Amelia's husband, Captain Booth. Cooper is a pickpocket; he consistently steals other people's valuables which he sells to the original owner at a profit (I, v, 23). Cooper is also a Methodist minister who tries to force his beliefs on everyone else. Since Cooper follows the Methodist doctrine of faith over good works, the thief never reforms because he illogically rationalizes that the worse a man is the more room there is for salvation. Cooper states that "The spirit is active and loves best to inhabit those minds where it may meet with the most work" (I, iv, 19). Such an absurd philosophy leads to repentance but never to reformation. Thus, Fielding depicts Methodism as a convenient rationale for accomplished hypocrisy. That Fielding associates Methodism with hypocrisy is exemplified when he has Blifil, a well-known hypocrite and the villain in Tom Jones, turn Methodist so that he might "marry a very rich widow of that sect" (XVIII, xiii, 849).

¹ Ibid.

In his retort to Parson Barnabas concerning Methodism, Parson Adams gives a second reason for changing from Whitefield's admirer to Whitefield's ridiculer. Parson Adams changed his opinion of the Methodist leader when Whitefield "began to call nonsense and enthusiasm to his aid" (Joseph Andrews, I, xvii, 72). The Methodist religion was active and fervent, for a Methodist felt that religion went beyond the reach of man-made logic. Fielding resented the stress that the Methodists placed on emotionalism, for arousing a person's emotions was not reasonable but led to extravagant religion. Fielding agreed with Hogarth's engraving entitled Enthusiasm Delineated, for Hogarth portrays a howling dog upon whose collar is written "Whitefield."¹ Fielding objected to the shrieking, roaring aloud, wild breathing, and convulsive fits that were part of a Methodist revival.²

Although the rationalism of Deism produces an effect opposite to the emotionalism of Methodism, Fielding is equally against Deism. His contempt for the philosophy that attempted to reduce Christianity solely to a belief in God and immortality is evidenced by his essay attacking Bolingbroke's defense of Deism.³ A. R. Humphreys says that

¹Richard M. Baum, "Henry Fielding and Hogarth as Social Critics," Art Bulletin, XVI (March 1934), 37.

²Battestin, Moral Basis for Fielding's Art, p. 23.

³Henry Fielding, "Essay Against Bolingbroke's Defense of Deism," appended to A Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon (London: Oxford University Press, 1907), passim.

the Deists wanted to construct an "ordered and objective pattern of universal morality."¹ Deists regarded God as an ethico-mathematician who made the blueprint for the world that man constructed.²

Robinson in Amelia and Square in Tom Jones are two characters in whom Fielding displays his attitudes toward the Deists. Fielding considers a Deist to be an atheist, for in describing Robinson, Fielding uses the two terms interchangeably. Moreover, from his description of Square's philosophy, Fielding indicates that the "moralist" is totally immoral, for the philosopher's affair with Molly Seagrim is totally incongruous with his verbal piety (Tom Jones, V, v, 192).

Fielding did not attack Deism from a position of ignorance. The novelist owned and read books written by eminent Deists. Cudworth's True Intellectual System of the Universe, a noted treatise on Deism, is listed as entry 463 in the catalogue to Fielding's library.³ His creation of Robinson, a gambler and prisoner with Booth at Bridewell, shows Fielding's familiarity with the writings of Cudworth, for Cudworth's ideas are spoken by Robinson. In defining

¹"The Eternal Fitness of Things: An Aspect of Eighteenth Century Thought," Modern Language Review, XLII (April 1947), 188.

²Ibid.

³Ralph W. Rader, "Ralph Cudworth and Fielding's Amelia," Modern Language Notes, LXXI (May 1956), 336.

his religious stance, Cudworth states that his religious belief is "not absolutely to disclaim and discard a Deity, yet utterly to deny Providence."¹ Robinson explains his philosophy in almost the exact phraseology, for he tells Booth that he "did not absolutely deny the existence of God, yet he entirely denied his providence" (Amelia, I, iii, 14).

Although not all critics agree, the majority feel certain that Fielding's Square is based upon an eighteenth-century Deist named Thomas Chubb.² Square's disputations with Squire Allworthy and with Thwackum parallel Chubb's constant engagement in controversy. In addition, Fielding has Square reiterate all of the famous catchwords and cliché phrases for which Chubb was so well known. Such phrases as "the natural beauty of virtue," "the unerring rule of right," and, of course, "the eternal fitness of things" are perpetually mouthed by Square.

The outcome of the lives of both Robinson and Square reflects Fielding's attitudes toward Deism. Although Robinson vows he will be honest after he has made a confession that saves Booth's life, the gambler is unable to keep his promise and ends in jail once again (Amelia, XII, ix, 310-311). The scene where Square is caught at Molly Seagrim's shows that the philosopher's mouthings are not sufficient for a man to live by. Moreover, Square's final

¹Ibid., p. 337.

²Dudden, II, 649.

confession indirectly indicates that the life of a Deist is void of meaning. Battestin writes that Fielding "liked to scoff at those captious theorists like his own philosopher Square, whose chop-logic speculations were inadequate to the business of life."¹ According to Fielding, strict intellectual philosophy with no emotions is as bad as extreme fanaticism, if not worse.

The theoretical religion of Square with its emphasis on rationalistic and philosophical argument becomes insignificant and unchristian. In the scene between Tom and the Man of the Hill in Tom Jones, Fielding best summarizes his own beliefs. After hearing the Man of the Hill's Hobbesian, fatalistic attitude toward human nature, Tom tells the disheartened man that

philosophy makes us wiser, but Christianity makes us better men. Philosophy elevates and steels the mind, Christianity softens and sweetens it. The former makes us objects of human admiration, the later of divine love. That ensures us a temporal position, but this an eternal happiness. (VIII, xiii, 396)

Throughout Tom Jones, the Deistic Square is pitted against and contrasted with the orthodox Thwackum. Although Fielding does not approve of Square's rational philosophy, neither does he support orthodox Anglicanism as represented by Thwackum. Despite the fact that Fielding was a member of the Anglican church, he objects to any religion that places rules and creeds above virtue. Fielding thinks that

¹Battestin, p. 150.

Thwackum makes virtue so difficult to attain that weaker men become frightened and give up the struggle (Tom Jones, III, iii, 104). Also, Fielding resents Thwackum's assertion that only the "divine powers of grace" can save a man's soul (III, iii, 104). Thus, the tenets of Thwackum and Square are

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 the 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. (Tom Jones, III, iii, 104)

Fielding does not accept either Square's philosophical theorizing or Thwackum's dogma, for neither's concept of religion involves active virtue.

According to Fielding, good nature and a Shaftesburian benevolence are antecedent and necessary grounds for the growth of true religion. Fielding does not approve of the needless ceremonies that are practiced by the various religious sects, for the novelist's religious beliefs, and the ones which he sets forth in his works, are simple. Consequently, he also objects to the constant bickerings among the moralists over interpretations of scriptures. Fielding satirizes such quarrels when he repeatedly shows the ever-recurring debates between Adams and Barnabas, Captain Blifil and Allworthy, and, of course, Thwackum and Square. What makes these quarrels so ridiculous is that

the topic under consideration is usually irrelevant. If ever the topic is significant, such as a discussion of charity, the idea is merely dissected and mutilated by philosophical query.

Fielding, who had read the Bible in its Greek version,¹ feels that the New Testament's concept of charity as expounded in the Sermon on the Mount contains all the necessary teachings of Christianity.² Moreover, the Sermon on the Mount needs no further explication, for secondary analysis only ruins the effect. Concerning the Sermon, Fielding writes in 1740 that

it is so concise and yet so full, it is also plain that no law ever less needed a comment; notwithstanding which, there is scarce one word which hath not been explained in more pages than have been written on all the obstruse and dark pages of the ancient philosophers.³

Charity seems to be Fielding's favorite topic. In the April 5 installment of The Champion Fielding defends charity as a cardinal virtue.⁴ To Fielding, charity unifies both the passion and the reason of religion. Throughout his novels and journalistic writings, Fielding satirizes those characters who talk of charity but are not charitable.

Fielding's concept of the charitable and truly good man is seen in his characterization of Tom Jones. Through

¹Dudden, I, 267.

²Miscellaneous Writings, II (December 25, 1739-40), 118.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., (April 5, 1740), pp. 269-273.

Tom Jones Fielding shows that a charitable person is not necessarily a prudent one, for although Tom becomes involved in several promiscuous affairs his creator observes:

. . . he was one of the best natured fellows alive and he had all that weakness which is called compassion, and which distinguishes this imperfect character from that noble firmness of mind which rolls a man, as it were within himself, and, like a polished bowl enables him to run through the world without being once stopped by the calamities of others. (XIV, vi, 648)

Tom becomes emotionally involved with other people's sorrows and dangers "without the least apprehension or concern for his own safety" (IX, ii, 415). For example, in one instance, Tom "expressed a great compassion for those highwaymen who are by unavoidable distress, driven, as it were, to such courses as generally bring them to a shameful death" (XII, xiv, 580). In particular Tom feels sorry for a man named Andrews who, because of his wife's illness, is forced to rob Tom and Partridge. After Tom has given Andrews more money than the robber requested, the narrator comments upon Tom's act of charity.

Our readers will probably be divided in their opinions concerning this action; some may applaud it as an act of extraordinary humanity, while those of a more saturnine temper will consider it as a want of regard to that justice which every man owes his country. (XII, xiv, 579)

Allworthy, the man whom Tom loves and admires, would consider Tom's act to be a humanitarian one, for, as Allworthy once confessed to Captail Blifil, "I fear that I have shown kindness in my life to the unworthy more than once. But charity does not adopt the vices of its objects" (II,

v, 79). Such a statement not only justifies Tom's act but also reflects Fielding's personal belief. Tom's reply to Partridge, the man who mouths but never practices charity, seems to coincide with Fielding's religious philosophy.

Tom states that

if there are men who cannot feel the delight of giving happiness to others, I sincerely pity them, as they are incapable of tasting what is, in my opinion, a greater honor, a higher interest, and a sweeter pleasure than the ambitious, the avaricious, or the voluptuous man can ever obtain Can any man who is really a Christian abstain from relieving one of his brethren in such a miserable condition? (Tom Jones, XIII, x, 619)

Thus, according to Fielding, charity is a distinctly Christian virtue.

It is therefore ironic that the clergy are the least beneficent members of society. The second chapter of the second book of Tom Jones is ironically entitled "Religious Cautions Against Showing Too Much Favor to Bastards" (66). Bridget Allworthy is condemned by the orthodox Mrs. Wilkins "for showing too great a regard to a baseborn infant, to which all charity is condemned by law as irreligious" (II, ii, 66). When Julian in A Journey from This World to the Next is reincarnated as a beggar, he sarcastically states that

if all men were so wise and good as to follow the clergy's example, the nuisance of beggars would soon be removed. I do not remember to have been above twice relieved by them during my whole state of beggary. (I, xix, 115)

Parson Trulliber knows what "charity is better than to give to vagabonds" (Joseph Andrews, II, xiv, 144). Parson Adams,

the most charitable of all Fielding's parsons, tells Trulliber:

I am sorry . . . that you do know what charity is, since you practice it no better Whoever . . . is void of charity, I make no scruple of pronouncing that he is no Christian. (Joseph Andrews, II, xiv, 145)

In a discussion with Peter Pounce, Adams reasserts his position towards charity by defining that benevolent trait.

Pounce tells Adams that it does not become a gentleman to be called charitable, for charity "is a mean Parson-like quality; tho' I would not infer many parsons have it neither" (Joseph Andrews, III, xiii, 234). When Adams replies that charity is "a generous disposition to relieve the distressed," Pounce interprets charity to be a state of mind rather than an act (III, xiii, 234).

Battestin points out that Fielding adopted his definition of charity as espoused by Adams from the famous Latitudinarian Isaac Barrow. In "The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor," Barrow states that "we should be always in affection and disposition of mind, ready to part with anything we have for the succour of our poor brethren."¹ Fielding read the sermons of Barrow, Samuel Clarke, and John Tillotson--all famous Latitudinarians.² Fielding's respect for Tillotson is seen in the novelist's repeated reference to the clergyman's name. In Joseph Andrews, the

¹Battestin, Moral Basis of Fielding's Art, p. 179.

²Ibid., pp. 17-20.

surgeon at Tow-wouse Inn tells Parson Barnabas that "if a man practiced half so much as is in one of those [Tillotson's] sermons, he will go to heaven" (I, xvi, 68).

Tillotson and other Latitudinarians avoided dogma. Their only creed was to enjoy and allow themselves to feel the benevolent emotions. Thus, the Latitudinarians felt that the virtuous heathen was more Christian in spirit than the vicious believer. In "The Condition of the Gospel," Tillotson writes:

I have more hopes of him that denies the divinity of Christ, and lives otherwise soberly, and righteously, and godly in the world, than of the man who owns Christ to be the son of God and lives like a child of the devil.¹

Likewise, Fielding, through the character of Parson Adams, espouses the same belief. Adams tells Barnabas that

a virtuous and good Turk, or heathen, are more acceptable in the sight of their creator than a vicious and wicked Christian, tho' his faith was as perfectly orthodox as St. Paul himself. (Joseph Andrews, I, xvii, 72)

Thus, even though the Ordinary at Newgate in Jonathan Wild and Thwackum in Tom Jones are perfectly orthodox and do not believe anyone is saved who is not a member of the Anglican Church, they are both dishonest and deceitful Christians. Likewise, Trulliber, Barnabas, Robinson, Square, and Cooper are also self-righteous dogmatists who are hypocritical. Because they are untrue to their professional ideal, Fielding ridicules their personal vices and religious

¹Ibid., p. 21.

beliefs through satire, thereby giving his readers a picture of the clergy and the state of religion in eighteenth-century England.

CHAPTER IV

A LOOK AT FIELDING'S THEMATIC FOCUS:

EXPOSURE OF THE HYPOCRITE

To use hypocrisy as the tool of deception has been the object of dissection and vilification by countless satirists and moralists.¹ Henry Fielding uses satire to present an ethical interpretation of reality in the eighteenth century. Being a realist and a moralist, Fielding despises the hypocrite and especially the hypocritical clergyman, for because of his social and spiritual position, the clergyman should be exemplary. Although Fielding respects the office of the clergyman, he does not always admire its holder. In order to maintain and even elevate the clerical profession, Fielding satirizes the clergyman's hypocrisy, for hypocrisy is the trait which leads to a priest's sycophancy, pluralism, and pride. In the preface to Joseph Andrews, Fielding defines hypocrisy as a trait that "sets us on an endeavor to avoid censure, by concealing our vices under an appearance of their opposite virtues," for hypocrisy makes a man seem outwardly to be that which he ought to be inwardly (Preface, viii). In his satiric portrayal of clergymen,

¹Miller, p. 199.

Fielding goes behind the appearances or the surface reality. He exposes the reality that is hid beneath appearances and the motives behind the actions.

In Characters and Observations, an unknown eighteenth-century author writes that a hypocrite is "an affected person with the advantage of religion on his side: join religion to affectation and it is hypocrisy, for hypocrisy has all the marks of true religion except the reality."¹ Such a belief coincides with Fielding's theory of the ridiculous and aptly summarizes his intolerance for irreligious religionists who use the divine profession as a cloak for their unjust and unethical behavior. Deceit, the product of selfish determination, is the universal trait which dominates the majority of the clergymen who appear in Fielding's writings. Barnabas is concerned only with his punch and his oratorical abilities, and Trulliber wants only to buy and sell hogs. Both Square and Thwackum are mean, selfish, and bigoted characters who make moral judgments that habitually justify the conniving Master Blifil at the expense of the warm-hearted Tom. These and most of the other clergymen in Fielding's works are concerned only with appearing virtuous.

However, the clergy are not the only profession who are hypocritical. In fact, Fielding is appalled at the complacent acceptance of the superficiality that he sees

¹Characters and Observations, p. 103.

all about him. In The Voyage of Job Vinegar, Fielding's persona states that the English are a "nation of hypocrites," and that it is "a truly political rule to have regard to appearances."¹ Fielding further shows his opinion of eighteenth-century English society when in Eurdyce Damn'd Mr. Spindle declares to the Infernal Majesty that the life on earth is like life in hell except that the former is worse, for "one vice in particular, that we excel you in, is hypocrisy."² According to Fielding, the world is a vast masquerade that judges everyone's moral behavior by his costume.

In his "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," Fielding points out that the person who thinks he can judge by countenance is easily taken in by exaggeration and sham, for "true symptoms being finer, and less glaring make no impression on our physiognomy; while the grosser appearances of affectation are sure to attract his eye and deceive his judgement."³

Parson Adams is a representative example of one who is deceived because he judges by appearances. According to Fielding, Adams never "saw farther into people than they desired to let him" (Joseph Andrews, II, x, 125). Consequently, Adams bases his entire philosophical system upon

¹Cited by Levine, p. 61.

²Cited by Dudden, I, 192.

³Miscellaneous Writings, I, 289.

his belief in appearances. If the actions of men do not parallel the assumptions that he makes on the basis of appearances, Adams foolishly questions the actions rather than his interpretation. For example, when the gentleman who offers Adams horses never fulfills his generous offer, Adams observes that the man's face had the appearance of that of a good Christian. With this idea firmly rooted in his brain, Adams will not believe that he has been fooled. In order to uphold his idea, Adams concocts the story that the gentleman's servants have probably held the old man prisoner. Even after Joseph, Fanny, and the innkeeper persuade Adams to admit the man's falseness, the parson is not thoroughly convinced, for he still has lingering doubts (Joseph Andrews, II, xvi, 148-154). Leo Braudy comments on Adams' naive acceptance of a man's countenance.

Adams relies totally on physiognomy and appearances in general, because he believes he has a deductive system--the authority of the ancients and the precepts of Christianity--into which the facts of existence automatically fit. His philosophy has little sense of immediate context. The world fulfills the forms established by books; change and time are not a factor. The views of the ancients are equally applicable to their time and his own.¹

Dr. Harrison, Fielding's second most famous parson, also judges by appearances. When Amelia tells Dr. Harrison of Colonel James's villainy, the doctor acts shocked. When Amelia asks the minister if James's conduct surprises him,

¹Leo Braudy, Narrative Form in History and Fiction: Hume, Fielding, and Gibbon (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 106.

Dr. Harrison replies negatively but states that he is "shocked at seeing it so artfully disguised under the appearance of so much virtue" (Amelia, IX, v, 131). Moreover, Dr. Harrison is upset because he did not see beneath the appearance, but he consoles himself by saying that Colonel James had a "good face," and "a good face, they say, is a letter of recommendation. O! Nature, nature, why art thou so dishonest as ever to send men with these false recommendations into the world?" (IX, v, 131). Thus, Dr. Harrison blames nature instead of himself.

In another instance, Dr. Harrison actually caused Booth and Amelia great heartache and mental suffering by his judgment of appearances. When, in the first chapter of the ninth book, Dr. Harrison saw the children's trinkets which they had received from the noble lord, the parson erroneously concluded that Booth and Amelia had wastefully spent their money. His interpretation of what he saw caused Booth and Amelia much distress. In short, "ocular demonstration appeared to be the evidence against them" (IX, i, 112).

Because he is deeply concerned with the relationship between the mind and the reality outside of it, Fielding's plays and novels have the recurring theme of outward action and inward motive. Fielding praises a virtuous man such as Adams whose mind is so disposed as to motivate his actions only for the good of society. Such a man can be pleased

only if he acts virtuously. However, as Golden points out,

. . . because of the ambiguity which is inherent in attempts to communicate, a man's good will may not be evident. It is the hypocrite, who by appearing to be virtuous while really corrupt, corrupts communication and causes others confusion about reality and therefore about the direction in which virtuous action is to go.¹

The hypocrite is an immoral agent in society, for his distortion of reality causes people to distrust one another. Fielding's emphasis on the untrustworthiness of appearances underscores the Pelagian basis of his morality. He warns his readers not to place too much faith in nominal distinctions or professions of goodness. Actions only are a true index of one's character and are the only means of salvation.²

In his "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," Fielding writes that "the actions of men seem to be the justest interpreters of their thoughts, and the truest standards by which we may judge them"³ Fielding's belief that virtue is active rather than passive explains the author's abhorrence of Methodism. Blifil, a converted Methodist, always appears virtuous in his actions, but his motives are sinister. Likewise, Cooper, the Methodist pickpocket, talks of virtue and practices theft. Both Blifil and Cooper are philosophical followers of Jonathan

¹Morris Golden, Fielding's Moral Psychology (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1966), p. 13.

²Miscellaneous Writings, I, 289.

³*Ibid.*

Wild, Fielding's most hypocritical character. In the fifteenth chapter of the fourth book of Jonathan Wild, Wild sets forth the hypocritical creed.

. . . little greatness [is] to be expected in a man who acknowledged his vices, but always much to be hoped from him who professed great virtues; wherefore, though he would always shun the person whom he discovered guilty of a good action, yet he was never deterred by a good character, which was more commonly the effect of profession than action; for which reason, he himself was always very liberal of honest professions and had as much virtue and goodness in his mouth as a saint. (XV, iv, 215)

To Fielding, then, mouthing statements of good deeds is not sufficient; doing good deeds is the only trustworthy way to salvation.

However, even though Fielding believes that charitable acts speak louder than professions of charity, even acts of charity are worthless if they are done from motives other than love. Once again, Fielding follows the belief that Tillotson sets forth in the sermon entitled "Of Doing All to the Glory of God." Tillotson writes that

if we are selfishly virtuous only to serve our temporal interest, though the actions we do be never so good, yet all the virtue and reward of them is lost, by the mean end and design which we aim at in the doing of them.¹

A man's motive for his actions is what determines the goodness of the act. If a minister collects donations for charity because he wants the Church to become wealthy, his real motive disparages his action, which springs from hypocritical and devious origin.

¹Battestin, Moral Basis for Fielding's Art, p. 19.

The reason a man acts in the way he does is the central issue to be determined, and a man's motives are often determined by analyzing the nature of his character. In Tom Jones, Fielding writes that ". . . life most exactly resembles the stage, since, it is often the same person who represents the villain and the hero; . . ." (VIII, i, 276). Through all of his writings, Fielding states that man's motives are mixed because man partakes in some things of the nature of God and in other things of the nature of the beasts.

Although Fielding believes that man is both good and bad, he wishes to believe that man's overall nature is good. Consistently unwilling to believe that all men are, in any theological sense, naturally evil, and certainly unable to believe that all men are naturally good, Fielding sought (unsystematically) various ways to propound a theory of human nature that would sort with the psychology of the day and prove amenable to the purpose of the moralist as well.¹

Holding such a belief, Fielding, in a passage from Tom Jones, explains the wickedness in the world and justifies his assertion that human nature is basically good.

If there was indeed much more wickedness in the world than there is, it would not prove such general assertions against human nature, since much of this arrives by mere accident, and many a man who commits evil is not totally corrupt and bad in his heart. In truth, none seem to have any title to assert human nature to be necessarily and universally evil, but those whose own mind affords them one instance of this natural depravity. (Tom Jones, VIII, xvi, 407)

¹Miller, p. 215.

Nevertheless, despite Fielding's assertions, he has often been referred to as a Mandevillian skeptic, for Fielding did read and occasionally espoused Mandeville's philosophy. Mandeville, who some critics feel anticipated Freud, believes that man is motivated by undisciplined and ignoble deeds of the self as the unconscious perceives them. In short, selfish motives largely control human behavior.¹ In his novels Fielding examines the theoretical and the actual man in eighteenth-century English society, and the result of his examination is that he fluctuates between the belief that human nature is good and the belief that it is bad. In his first novel, Joseph Andrews, Fielding is tolerant of man's follies. This benevolent tone is continued throughout Tom Jones, his second novel. However, in Amelia, Fielding's last novel and the one written in his middle age, the novelist has become more bitter and less tolerant of man's gullibility. As a result, Amelia is less satirical than Joseph Andrews or Tom Jones. Nevertheless, even though Fielding is less prone to overlook man's vices, his opinion of mankind continues to fluctuate. His vacillation is reflected in the opinions of the character of Booth in Amelia. At one point in the novel, Booth tells his wife that ". . . all men . . . act alike from the principle of self-love," for a man

¹Leroy W. Smith, "Fielding and Mandeville: The War Against Virtue," Criticism, III (Winter 1961), 7-15.

acts according to his predominant passions of pride and vanity"(X, ix, 214). A result of this theory is that benevolence is not a totally altruistic act, for the benevolent man receives psychological gratification from his act. However, Booth had stated earlier, in an argument with the Deistic Robinson, that Mandeville distorts human nature, for the skeptical philosopher ignores "the love [that] exists in the mind of man as that its opposite hatred doth" (Amelia, X, ix, 214). In short, Fielding accepts the idea that there is good in human nature, but he does not fall into the trap of an easy and universal benevolence, for he recognizes evil as a reality and knows that the goodness of human nature is maintained with a great deal of effort. Whenever Fielding satirically exposes the hypocritical in man or society, he seems to follow Mandeville's philosophy, for Fielding is being practically realistic. However, when Fielding abstractly theorizes, Shaftesbury's ideology is predominant.¹

According to Golden, man's actions do not coincide with his motives because man wishes to appear flawless in order to appease an internal sense of righteousness. In other words, although any ruling passion can cause a man to mistake reality, the passion of vanity, which leads to selfishness and thereby to hypocrisy, is the only one which

¹Golden, p. 4.

cannot be satiated.¹ Pride is the chief cause of misunderstanding and false communication, for pride leads to self-deception, and it is bad for our moral character when men are strangers to the causes of their own actions. Thus, the clergymen who are hypocrites are totally concerned with their own self-interest.

In all other Professions, self-interest hears the Bell, everyone takes care of his own mother's child. The clergy have a different way of speaking: When they look after their dues and their rights, it is not for themselves by no means; what they do is purely for the sake of their successors. This is their form of speaking; but their form of thinking and acting is just the same with men of other professions.²

The false clergymen who are ruled by the passion of pride become so concerned with their own self-interest that they become deceitful in order to gratify this uppermost passion.

The hypocrisy that results from such an affectation as pride prevents men from effectively communicating with and caring for others, and feeling for others is the ultimate benevolent act. Of all the clergymen Fielding portrays, Parson Adams is the most benevolent and emotional. In fact, Adams is totally controlled by his benevolent emotions, for he instinctively reacts to situations before thinking. Adams' repeated gesture of jumping around and clapping his hands whenever someone receives good fortune is a physical manifestation of the parson's benevolent emotions. Adams

¹Ibid., p. 11.

²Characters and Observations, p. 42.

simply reacts kinetically to other people's happiness. Thus, when the unthinking parson throws his beloved Aeschylus into the fire because he is so happy for Joseph's and Fanny's reunion, Adams acts instinctively rather than logically.

However, although Adams is not selfish, even he lives in a self-enclosed world. Like the deluded knight in Don Quixote, Adams is enclosed within his vision of an ideal world. The result is that both the knight and Adams appear to be mad in a world of greed, for, as Fielding points out in his play The Coffee-House Politician, "the well-intentioned man concerned about the happiness of others, has a hard time in this selfish world."¹ Nevertheless, the deluded but ideal vision of Adams is morally superior to the actuality of Trulliber's world, and, for that reason, Adams' world is more admirable.

Dr. Harrison also preaches and practices the philosophy of benevolence. After Booth has asserted that all men act according to their predominant passion, Amelia wishes he would talk to Doctor Harrison, for that clergyman would be able to convince Booth that such things as religion and virtue do exist (X, ix, 214). Amelia wants Booth to believe in a sentiment that Dr. Harrison once told her: "I am a man myself, and my heart is interested in whatever can befall the rest of mankind" (X, ix, 214). Golden's

¹Cited by Dudden, p. 71.

explication of Harrison's humanitarian philosophy shows that

at the very center of all is the feeling heart, the semi-divine instrument by which the lover is made aware of the special humanity of another human being . . . by which all people are aware that they are dealing with others like themselves and not objects . . . [through benevolence] one reaches out of the enclosure of the self, and when the awareness of this reaching is registered with the self, internal harmony ensues¹

Dr. Harrison's golden rule perfectly summarizes the benevolent doctrine that a clergyman should follow.

Unfortunately, such clergymen as Barnabas, Trulliber, Square, and Thwackum take advantage of the benevolent minister. Both Parson Adams and Doctor Harrison are victimized by hypocrites. In his "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," Fielding actually provides a handbook on hypocrisy so that the innocents can inform and protect themselves. The worthy person must acquire an awareness of evil. He must not follow Adams' naiveté and believe in someone's professions, for "many a credulous person hath been ruined by trusting to the assertions of another, who must have preserved himself had he placed a wiser confidence in his actions."² Man must defend himself against the selfishness of others, for the hypocrite sees others as the ministrants for his own needs and desires. Thus, Trulliber thinks Adams is a hog-buyer because the part-time clergyman wants to sell his hogs.

¹Golden, p. 75.

²Miscellaneous Writings, I, 290.

Although Fielding loves and admires Adams, as the novelist grew older he became more irritated with men who were duped because of their gullibility. Fielding repeatedly emphasizes that man must learn to see more than the reflections of his own well-disposed mind. In other words, man should use his reason to control his indiscriminate passions.¹

Fielding presents his theoretical ideas about hypocrisy in his "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," but his attitudes toward hypocrisy are not as acute in the essay as they are in the novels, for in his novels, as Miller says, Fielding

. . . turned from a theory of descriptive psychology to the dramatization of human comedy and based his portraits of men more largely upon his own superb intuition and upon empirical observations drawn from the vast authentic Domsday book of nature.²

Through the method of satiric characterization, Fielding exposes the hypocrite in order to warn the innocent and benevolent. In his "Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men," Fielding singles out the flatterer, the promiser, and the sanctified hypocrite as those persons who should be distrusted and avoided by prudent men. Of these three, Fielding considers the sanctified hypocrite to be "the most detestable character in society as its malignity is more particularly bent against the best and worthiest

¹Ibid.

²Miller, p. 228.

men, the sincere and open-hearted whom it persecutes."¹ Because he abhors the sanctified hypocrite, Fielding satirizes the miscreant members of the clerical profession, for "no honest undesigning man can ever be too much on his guard against the hypocrite, or too industrious to expose and expel him out of society."¹ For the clergy to use religion as a cloak under which they can practice hypocrisy and therefore cheat the world is detrimental to society's spiritual success.

Both religion and virtue have received more real discredit from hypocrites than the wittiest profligate or infidel could ever cast upon them; nay, further, as these two, in their purity, are rightly called the bands of civil society, and are indeed the greatest of blessings, so when poisoned and corrupted with fraud, pretence, and affectation, they have become the worst of civil curses, and have enabled men to perpetuate the most cruel mischiefs to their own species. (Tom Jones, III, iv, 85)

Fielding respects virtue and religion and believes that the clergy should not "cover the foulest transgressions with the cloak of religion."² Instead, the clergy should be virtuous and strive for the ideal state in their religious profession. The basis of Fielding's social satire against hypocritical clergymen rests upon his belief that all men possess the human potential to attain the perfection of Adams and Harrison. In order to accomplish his idealistic purpose, Fielding uses satirical characterization to expose the reality beneath the appearance and the motive behind the action.

¹Ibid., p. 304.

²Ibid.

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