

Section Two: *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*

*Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* present a panoramic, and a rather rumbustious, view of eighteenth-century English manners. In this presentation, the town-country contrast is central. In *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding's argument, that traditional manners were being driven out of London and preserved only in rural England, is summarised at the novel's architectural midpoint, in the story of Mr Wilson's town career and subsequent rural retirement. Two chapters are devoted to this story, chapters which, like *The Champion*, February 26, 1739-40, assemble most of the country-city motifs used by Fielding throughout his writings. Wilson's town career demonstrates the disastrous influence which Fielding believed contemporary London exerted on English youth, and, therefore, on the maintenance of traditional standards. At the age of sixteen, Wilson, defying his late father's will that he receive his estate at twenty-five: "for he constantly asserted that was full early enough to give up any man entirely to the guidance of his own discretion", obtained the estate, left school and travelled to London, himself viewing in hindsight the significance of this folly: "And to this early introduction into life, without a guide, I impute all my future misfortunes".<sup>1</sup> In London, Wilson adopted the prevailing view, that good-breeding consisted in forms rather than essentials. He explains this to the well-bred country parson, Abraham Adams:

The character I was ambitious of attaining was that of a fine gentleman; the first requisites to which I apprehended were to be furnished by a tailor, a periwig-maker, and some few more tradesmen, who deal in furnishing out the human body. ....

The next qualifications, namely, dancing, fencing, riding the great horse, and music, came into my head: but as they required expense and time, I comforted myself, with regard to dancing, that I had learned a little in my youth, and could walk a minuet genteely enough; as to fencing, I thought my good-humour would preserve me from the danger of a quarrel; as to the horse, I hoped it

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<sup>1</sup>JA, III, iii. (Henley I, p 229f.)

would not be thought of: and for music, I imagined I could easily acquire the reputation of it; for I had heard some of my school-fellows pretend to knowledge in operas, without being able to sing or play on the fiddle.

Knowledge of the town seemed another ingredient; this I thought I should arrive at by frequenting public places. Accordingly I paid constant attendance to them all, by which means I was soon master of the fashionable phrases, learned to cry up the fashionable diversions, and knew the names and faces of the most fashionable men and women.

Nothing now seemed to remain but an intrigue, which I was resolved to have immediately; I mean the reputation of it; and indeed I was so successful that in a very short time I had half a dozen with the finest women in the town.

At these words Adams fetched a deep groan, and the blessing himself, cried out, "Good Lord! what wicked times these are!"

Not so wicked as you imagine, continued the gentleman; for I assure you they were all vestal virgins for any thing which I knew to the contrary. The reputation of intriguing with them was all I sought, and was what I arrived at; and perhaps I only flattered myself even in that; for very probably the persons to whom I showed their billets knew as well as I that they were counterfeits, and that I had written them to myself. "Write letters to yourself!" said Adams, starting. O Sir, answered the gentleman, it is the very error of the times. Half our modern plays have one of these characters in them.

Thus Wilson became a complete town fop. Reversing the conventional description of the *beatus vir*'s happy day in the country, he describes to the disgusted Adams the course of the *beau*'s happy day in town:

Well, sir, in this course of life I continued full three years. - "What course of life?" answered Adams; "I do not remember you have mentioned any". - Your remark is just, said the gentleman, smiling; I should rather have said, in this course of doing nothing. I remember some time afterwards I wrote the journal of one day, which would serve, I believe, as well for any other during the whole time. I will endeavour to repeat it to you.

In the morning I arose, took my great stick, and walked out in my green frock, with my hair in papers (a groan from Adams), and sauntered

about till ten. Went to the auction; told Lady -- she had a dirty face; I laughed heartily at something Captain -- said, I can't remember what, for I did not very well hear it; whispered Lord --; bowed to the Duke of --; and was going to bid for a snuff-box, but did not, for fear I should have had it. From 2 to 4, dressed myself. *A groan.*  
 6 to 8, coffee-house.  
 8 to 9, Drury-Lane playhouse.  
 9 to 10, Lincoln's Inn Fields.  
 10 to 12, Drawing-room. *A great groan.*  
 At all which places nothing happened worth remark.

At which Adams said, with some vehemence, "Sir, this is below the life of an animal hardly above vegetation: and I am surprised what could lead a man of your sense into it." What leads us into more follies than you imagine, doctor, answered the gentleman - vanity; for as contemptible a creature as I was, and I assure you yourself cannot have more contempt for such a wretch than I now have, I then admired myself, and should have despised a person of your present appearance (you will pardon me), with all your learning and those excellent qualities which I have remarked in you.<sup>1</sup>

Wilson's degradation was accelerated by a shameful incident at St James' Coffee-house, which obliged him to withdraw to The Temple, where he became a "Temple *beau*" of the type satirised by Fielding in *The Temple Beau*, and deplored by Wilson himself: "the beaus [sic] of the Temple are only the shadows of the others. They are the affectation of affectation. The vanity of these is still more ridiculous, if possible, than of the others."<sup>2</sup> His manners thus corrupted by the town environment, Wilson's moral degradation ensued. He became an abandoned rake, experimented with atheistic and anarchical clubs and then lost his estate by gambling. As with all of Fielding's protagonists in London, the major urban transgression Wilson suffered from, was the lack of charity amongst the great who, instead of promoting the public welfare, spent their money in idleness and luxury. Reduced to poverty, Wilson reached the *nadir* of his London misfortunes in a debtors' prison, but was saved the fate of Bedlam, suffered by Tom Rakewell of

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<sup>1</sup>JA, III, ii. (Henley I, p 229ff.)

<sup>2</sup>JA, III, iii. (Henley I, p 233.)

Hogarth's "The Rake's Progress"<sup>1</sup> by the charity of Harriet Hearty, whom he married. He then renounced the town for the country:

In short, I had sufficiently seen that the pleasures of the world are chiefly folly, and the business of it mostly Knavery, and both nothing better than vanity, the men of pleasure tearing one another to pieces from the emulation of spending money, and the men of business from envy in getting it. ...

We soon put our small fortune, now reduced under three thousand pounds, into money, with part of which we purchased this little place, whither we retired soon after her [Mrs Wilson's] delivery, from a world full of bustle, noise, hatred, envy, and ingratitude, to ease, quiet, and love.<sup>2</sup>

Wilson's simple country life, which is conventionally described through the course of the happy day, is in all points antithetical to his former sophisticated town life, being governed by wise and traditional values. Like the clergyman's family in *The Champion*, February 26, 1739-40, the Wilsons lead a vigorous, healthy, contented life, living without ostentation, yet still comfortably, in a plain house, surrounded by a simple garden, themselves producing most of their wholesome household goods. Their behaviour is also unsophisticated and well-bred. They entertain Adams, Joseph and Fanny warmly and generously, and their benevolence extends to their substantial dinner-table, which offers the good old English hospitality to its guests. Benevolence also characterises the family's conjugal and filial relationships, which were founded upon freely expressed affection and respect, exemplifying the warm, loving community relationships which Fielding considered as necessary in stratified society. Although the Wilsons extend their benevolence to their neighbours: "for they had nothing which those who wanted it were not welcome to",<sup>3</sup> unlike the clergyman's family, they do not, by their example, make their neighbourhood a "family of love", but are isolated in their rural happiness, as Wilson explains to Adams:

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<sup>1</sup>R. Moore discusses the similarities between Wilson's and Rakewell's careers (*op.cit.*, p 125ff).

<sup>2</sup>*JA*, III, iii (Henley I, pp 253 and 254).

<sup>3</sup>*JA*, III, iv (Henley I, p 258).

We have here lived almost twenty years, with little other conversation than our own, most of the neighbourhood taking us for very strange people, the squire of the parish representing me as a madman, and the parson as a Presbyterian, because I will not hunt with the one nor drink with the other.<sup>1</sup>

This does not deter Adams from declaring, on his departure: "that this was the manner in which the people had lived in the golden age".<sup>2</sup> It exemplifies the traditional manner of living, disappearing from London, as demonstrated by Wilson's town career, and remaining only in the country which, through the Wilsons, is presented by Fielding as an ideal pattern according to which English society in general should return to the *status quo*. Thus, the story of Wilson's London adventures and subsequent rural retirement, occurring at the novel's architectural midpoint, summarises the contrast between town and country manners in *Joseph Andrews*. It also focuses and moralises the career of Wilson's real son, Joseph Andrews, whose simple rural manners are also corrupted by the town environment, which he wisely rejects for a country life modelled on that of his father.

In *Joseph Andrews*, several characters in town and country exemplify everything which Fielding deplored in contemporary manners. Bellarmine, the sophisticated courtly suitor for whom Leonora exchanges the plain country gentleman Horatio, represents the English Court's love of French fashions, which Fielding deplored as undermining the national interest. The attitude Fielding is opposed to is expressed by Bellarmine himself:

"Yes, madam, this coat, I assure you, was made at Paris, and I defy the best English tailor even to imitate it. There is not one of them can cut, madam; they can't cut. If you observe how this skirt is turned, and this sleeve; a clumsy English rascal can do nothing like it. Pray, how do you like my liveries?" Leonora answered, "she thought

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<sup>1</sup>JA, III, iii (Henley I, p 254).

<sup>2</sup>JA, III, iv (Henley I, p 260).

them very pretty." "All French," says he, "I assure you, except the great-coats; I never trust any thing more than a great-coat to an Englishman. You know one must encourage our own people what one can, especially as, before I had a place, I was in the country interest, he, he, he! But for myself, I would see the dirty island at the bottom of the sea rather than wear a single rag of English work about me; --".<sup>1</sup>

The "practical-joking" country squire of *JA*, III, vii, who combines rural brutality with foreign foppery, acquired on the "tour of Europe", demonstrates Fielding's view that the undermining of traditional standards was largely due to the faulty education of the young:

The master of this house, then, was a man of a very considerable fortune; a bachelor, as we have said, and about forty years of age: he had been educated (if we may here use the expression) in the country, and at his own home, under the care of his mother, and a tutor who had orders never to correct him, nor to compel him to learn more than he liked, which it seems was very little, and that only in his childhood; for from the age of fifteen he addicted himself entirely to hunting and other rural amusements, for which his mother took care to equip him with horses, hounds, and all other necessaries; and his tutor, endeavouring to ingratiate himself with his young pupil, who would, he knew, be able handsomely to provide for him, became his companion, not only at these exercises, but likewise over a bottle, which the young squire had a very early relish for. At the age of twenty his mother began to think she had not fulfilled the duty of a parent; she therefore resolved to persuade her son, if possible, to that which she imagined would well supply all that he might have learned at a public school or university - that is, what they commonly call travelling; which, with the help of the tutor, who was fixed on to attend him, she easily succeeded in.

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<sup>1</sup>*JA*, II, iv (Henley I, p 129f).

Through Bellarmine, Fielding satirises Sir Robert Walpole's courtiers whom the Opposition alleged were undermining traditional English culture with French fashions, particularly with regard to dress. (G. Goldgar, *op.cit.*, p 75.)

He made in three years the tour of Europe, as they term it, and returned home well furnished with French clothes, phrases, and servants, with a hearty contempt for his own country, especially what had any savour of the plain spirit and honesty of our ancestors. His mother greatly applauded herself at his return. And now, being master of his own fortune, he soon procured himself a seat in Parliament, and was in the common opinion one of the finest gentlemen of his age ...<sup>1</sup>

This squire, who represents the worst aspects of both town and country manners, is one of many country squires in *Joseph Andrews*, whose ignorance and brutality are represented as being just as irresponsible as the vices of London. The country environment in *Joseph Andrews* produces several other characters, for example, "bull parsons"<sup>2</sup> such as Barnabas and Trulliber, and boorish lawyers and justices, such as Scout and Frolic, whose behaviour, although vigorous, is also represented as endangering the social stability Fielding wishes to use the country to promote. By bringing in characters such as these, Fielding is able to accommodate a realistic portrayal of country life within his rhetorical strategy of setting country against city, using the country as an attainable, but necessarily imperfect, ideal.

The disintegrating effect of the degeneracy of the upper class on the boundaries between the social classes in town and country is a prominent theme in *Joseph Andrews*. In a chapter devoted to discussing class rivalry, "A dissertation concerning high people and low people, ...", Fielding censures "high people", or, "people of fashion", for asserting their superiority by means of a snobbery which is so easily emulated by the lower classes:

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<sup>1</sup>*JA*, III, vii (Henley I, p 275f). Country squires are satirised in *JA* in II, viii, IX, xvi and xvii. Exceptionally brutal are the squire and his son who harass the Wilson family. *JA*, III, iv (Henley I, p 258f).

<sup>2</sup>The country parsons of Fielding's ballad operas, for example, Puzzletext of *The Grub Street Opera*, and Commons of *The Letter Writers*, are conventionally inept parsons according to the stage tradition. The country parsons of *JA* are more hypocritical and destructive. See, for example, the vindictive rector of Adams' parish, who delights in ruining his parishioners by petty litigation (*JA*, I, iii), the proud and disdainful parson of the "false promising" squire (*JA*, II, xvi) as well as the selfish parson Barnabas (*JA*, I, xiii to xvii) and the avaricious parson Trulliber (*JA*, II, xiv). Their transgressions will be dealt with more fully in Chapter Four of this thesis.

Early in the morning arises the postilion, or some other boy, which great families, no more than great ships, are without, and falls to brushing the clothes and cleaning the shoes of John the footman, who, being dressed himself, applies his hands to the same labours for Mr Second-hand, the squire's gentleman; the gentleman in the like manner, a little later in the day, attends the squire; the squire is no sooner equipped than he attends the levees of my lord, which is no sooner over than my lord himself is seen at the levee of the favourite, who, after the hour of homage is at an end, appears himself to pay homage to the levee to his sovereign. Nor is there, perhaps, in this whole ladder of dependence, any one step at a greater distance from the other than the first from the second, so that to a philosopher the question might only seem, whether you would choose to be a great man at six in the morning, or at two in the afternoon. And yet there are scarce two of these who do not think the least familiarity with the persons below them a condescension, and, if they were to go one step further, a degradation.<sup>1</sup>

Elsewhere in the novel, Fielding describes those "high people" who treat with supercilious insolence, those below them, as disgracing their ancestors and abusing the social order.<sup>2</sup> He outlines traditionally appropriate behaviour for the landed and mercantile classes, as represented by Lord Chesterfield and Ralph Allen respectively, whose manners are governed by the dignity and benevolence which Fielding regarded as necessary in a well-ordered society:

... for instance, in our description of high people, we cannot be intended to include such as, whilst they are an honour to their high rank, by a well-guided condescension make their superiority as easily as possible to those whom fortune chiefly hath placed below them. Of this number I could name a peer no less elevated by nature than by fortune; who, whilst he wears the noblest ensigns of honour on his person, bears the truest stamp of dignity on his mind, adorned with greatness, enriched with knowledge, and embellished with genius.

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<sup>1</sup>JA,II, xiii (Henley I, p 181f).

<sup>2</sup>JA,III, i (Henley I, p 217).



I have seen this man relieve with generosity, while he hath conversed with freedom, and be to the same person a patron and a companion. I could name a commoner, raised higher above the multitude by superior talents than is in the power of his prince to exalt him; whose behaviour to those he hath obliged is more amiable than the obligation itself; and who is so great a master of affability that, if he could divest himself of an inherent greatness in his manner, would often make the lowest of his acquaintance forget who was the master of that palace in which they are so courteously entertained.<sup>1</sup>

Although in Lady Booby's avaricious steward, Peter Pounce, Fielding is probably satirising Peter Walter, a self-made middleman, whose extreme wealth exemplified to the socially conservative the encroachment of commercial power on the supremacy of the landed interests,<sup>2</sup> Fielding, in *Joseph Andrews*, generally represents the middle classes sympathetically, criticising them when they emulate upper-class degeneracy.<sup>3</sup> In *Joseph Andrews*, as in his plays, Fielding's main satirical target is the well-born. In satirising them he uses the device of "appropriating the manners of the highest to the lowest, and *e converso*",<sup>4</sup> that is, of portraying the vices of the rich and their easy emulation by the lower classes, the method which, as discussed earlier, he had used in his ballad operas and *Jonathan Wild*, and again in *Shamela*, (published

<sup>1</sup>*JA*, III, i (Henley I, p 216f).

<sup>2</sup>Peter Pounce has generally been seen as a representation of Peter Walter of Stalbridge Park (Cross, *op.cit.*, I, p 348). Pope, Swift, and the Tories regarded Walter's wealth in land as exemplifying the encroachment of mercantile power on the supremacy of the landed classes (M. Mack, *op.cit.*, p 183). Fielding presents another ambitious steward in *JA*, II, v (Henley I, p 143). Ralph Allen, however, is complimented throughout *JA*. See *JA*, III, i (Henley I, p 216f) and *JA*, III, vi (Henley I, p 266).

<sup>3</sup>Wilson describes London's mercantile classes as being avaricious, for example *JA*, III, iii (Henley I, p 230) and *JA*, III, iii (Henley I, p 253). There is conventional Whiggish praise of tradespeople, however, in *JA*, II, xvii (Henley I, p 210).

<sup>4</sup>*JA*, Preface (Henley I, p 19).

anonymously in 1741). Here Shamela's vulgar, "rustical" aspirations to fashion belittle contemporary town manners. Shamela's ambition to become a fine lady in fashionable town society serves the same satirical function as such aspirations did with Chloe in *The Lottery* and Lucy in *Miss Lucy in Town*. Shamela, however, unlike these two naïve country gentlewomen is cunning and unscrupulous, and, therefore, a more effective satirical vehicle. In *Joseph Andrews*, Mrs Slipslop, Lady Booby's chambermaid, emulates and belittles the lady's indolent town breeding. In the incident occasioning Fielding's "Dissertation concerning high people and low people", Slipslop, imitating Lady Booby's dismissal of the lower classes as: "strange persons, people one does not know, the creatures, wretches, beasts, brutes",<sup>1</sup> snubs the well-mannered country milkmaid, Fanny Goodwill. Slipslop also claims town-bred superiority over the well-bred country parson, Abraham Adams; "as she had been frequently at London, and knew more of the world than a country parson could pretend to".<sup>2</sup> Denigrated herself by Lady Booby: as, "thou art a low creature, of the Andrews breed, a reptile of the lower order, a weed that grows in the common garden of the creation", Slipslop reveals her own rustic ignorance of the town by mistaking "common garden" for Covent Garden: "I assure your ladyship, ... I have no more to do with Common Garden than other folks."<sup>3</sup> Town manners are also criticised through their adoption by the footman, Joseph Andrews, whose simple rural manners are contaminated in London, and who becomes a type of the "livery beau" portrayed in Fielding's ballad operas:

No sooner was young Andrews arrived at London than he began to scrape an acquaintance with his party-colored brethren, who endeavoured to make him despise his former course of life. His hair was cut after the newest fashion, and became his chief care; he went abroad with it all the morning in papers, and dressed it out in the afternoon. They could not, however, teach him to game, swear, drink, nor any other genteel vice the town abounded with. ... He was a little too forward in riots at

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<sup>1</sup>JA,II, xiii (Henley I, p 181).

<sup>2</sup>JA,I, iii (Henley I, p 32).

<sup>3</sup>JA,IV, vi (Henley I, p 338).

the playhouses and assemblies; and when he attended his lady at church (which was but seldom) he behaved with less seeming devotion than formerly; however, if he was outwardly a pretty fellow, his morals remained entirely uncorrupted, though he was at the same time smarter and genteeler than any of the *beaux* in town, either in or out of livery.<sup>1</sup>

In *Joseph Andrews* servants emulate and belittle not only town *beaux*, but also country squires. The disintegration of boundaries between the social classes in the country is demonstrated in this conversation between a squire and his coachman, overheard by Adams at the Dragon Inn. The squire, coachman and a brace of pointers are being conducted by Mr Tow-Wouse into an apartment, "whither, as they passed, they entertained themselves with the following short facetious dialogue":

"You are a pretty fellow for a coachman, Jack!" says he from the coach; "you had almost overturned us just now." "Pox take you!" says the coachman; "if I had only broke your neck, it would have been saving somebody else the trouble; but I should have been sorry for the pointers." "Why, you son of a b...", answered the other, "if nobody could shoot better than you, the pointers would be of no use." "D..n me," says the coachman, "I will shoot with you, five guineas a shot." "You be hanged," says the other; "for five guineas you shall shoot at my a..." "Done," says the coachman; "I'll pepper you better than ever you was peppered by Jenny Bouncer." "Pepper your grandmother!" says the other: "Here's Tow-Wouse will let you shoot at him for a shilling a time." "I know his honor better," cries Tow-Wouse; "I never saw a surer shot at a partridge. Every man misses now and then; but if I could shoot half as well as his honor I would desire no better livelihood than I could get by my gun." "Pox on you," said the coachman; "you <sup>2</sup>demolish more game now than your head's worth ..."

And the two continue on their way, betting for vast sums on the prowess of their respective dogs.

In *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding uses humble country life to satirise Westminster, not so much by emulation as by direct contrast. Many low-born rustics display better manners than their

<sup>1</sup>JA, I, iv (Henley I, p 34).

<sup>2</sup>JA, I, xvi (Henley I, p 87ff).

betters: for example, the postilion who lends Joseph his great-coat, after Joseph, robbed and beaten, is refused assistance by the well-to-do stage-coach passengers; Betty the chambermaid who assists Joseph at the inhospitable Dragon Inn; and the pedlar who pays Adams' debt at an ale-house. This contrast is made clear to us by Fielding's amused yet pointed authorial irony but is also most explicitly dramatised in the relationships between Joseph Andrews, the footman, Fanny Goodwill, the milkmaid, and Abraham Adams, the gentle-born, yet poverty-stricken curate, all of Somersetshire, and Lady Booby and Beau Didapper of London. Lady Booby's sophistication and hypocrisy, and Beau Didapper's ignorance and French and Italian foppery exemplify the displacement of traditional nobility by modern ill-breeding, which Fielding saw in fashionable town society. The dignity, gentility and courtesy traditionally appropriate to their exalted rank is displayed, instead, by the simple country-dwellers, Adams, Fanny and Joseph. Adams is generous, honest, brave, learned and courteous. Despite these qualities, he is neglected by society's town-based leaders, represented by Sir Thomas and Lady Booby, who are blinded to his merits by his poverty:

Adams had no nearer access to Sir Thomas or my lady than through the waiting gentlewoman; for Sir Thomas was too apt to estimate men merely by their dress or fortune; and my lady was a woman of gayety, who had been blessed with a town education, and never spoke of any of her country neighbours by any other appellation than that of the brutes.<sup>1</sup>

On account of his shabby dress, Adams is welcome only to the kitchen of Booby Hall, which is a far cry from those hospitable country houses long celebrated in English literature as ideal patterns for responsible social leadership. In contrast to the inhospitable treatment which he received at Booby Hall, Adams heartily welcomes Lady Booby and Beau Didapper when they visit his humble rural cottage. His hospitality is poorly received

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<sup>1</sup>JA,I, iii (Henley I, p 32).

by his high-born guests, who visit only to harass Joseph and Fanny, and to divert themselves with the sight of Adams' ragged family, in response to whose good-will Lady Booby declares: "*Quelle Bete ! Quel Animal!*"<sup>1</sup> Not only Abraham Adams, but also Fanny Goodwill, has better manners than her betters. Despite her illiteracy, rusticity and poverty, Fanny "had a natural gentility, superior to the acquisition of art, and which surprised all who beheld her."<sup>2</sup> This natural gentility renders her superior not only to Lady Booby but also the town-bred Leonora, whose preference for the country fop, Bellarmine, over the plain, country gentleman, Horatio, serves as a negative analogue to Fanny's preference for the simple countryman, Joseph Andrews, over Beau Didapper. In the novel, the superiority of humble country manners over sophisticated town manners is most clearly dramatised, however, through the character of Joseph Andrews. In introducing Joseph, Fielding describes the frequent disparity between rank and merit:

Indeed, it is sufficiently certain that he had as many ancestors as the best man living, and, perhaps, if we look five or six hundred years backwards, might be related to some persons of very great figure at present, whose ancestors within half the last century are buried in as great obscurity. But suppose, for argument's sake, we should admit that he had no ancestors at all, but had sprung up, according to the modern phrase, out of a dunghill, as the Athenians pretended they themselves did from the earth, would not this autokopros have been justly entitled to all the praise arising from his own virtues? Would it not be hard that a man who hath no ancestors should therefore be rendered incapable of acquiring honor, when we see so many who have no virtues enjoying the honour of their forefathers?<sup>3</sup>

Although Joseph's simple manners are temporarily contaminated in London, throughout the novel he displays a natural gentility and elegance and "an air which, to those who have not seen many noblemen, would give an idea of nobility",<sup>4</sup> which render him

<sup>1</sup>JA,IV, ix (Henley I, p 356).

<sup>2</sup>JA,II, xii (Henley I, p 176).

<sup>3</sup>JA,I, ii (Henley I, p 28).

<sup>4</sup>JA,I, viii (Henley I, p 48).

superior to Lady Booby and Beau Didapper, by whom he is mistreated. Even Lady Booby, who tries to seduce him, sees Joseph's real merits, and the tyranny of custom which prevents the high-born from judging by merit rather than by rank:

"Is he not more worthy of affection than a dirty country clown, though born of a family as old as the flood? or an idle, worthless rake, or little puisny *beau* of quality? And yet these we must condemn ourselves to, in order to avoid the censure of the world; to shun the contempt of others, we must ally ourselves to those we despise; we must prefer birth, title, and fortune, to real merit. It is a tyranny of custom - a tyranny we must comply with, for we people of fashion are the slaves of custom."<sup>1</sup>

Joseph, despite his humble rural origins and temporary contamination in London, easily sees the basic vice of town society, its lack of benevolence and community: "London is a bad place, and there is so little good fellowship that the next-door neighbours don't know one another."<sup>2</sup> Joseph's town career begins like that of his father, Wilson, that is, with the contamination of his simple rural manners but unlike Wilson, who lacked the moral guidance of a parent and was completely debauched by London society, Joseph, who had been strictly educated by Parson Adams, remains morally uncorrupted. Like Wilson before him, only relatively intact, he rejects the town for a country life.<sup>3</sup> As he journeys away from London towards Somersetshire, gaining in wisdom and stature as he travels,<sup>4</sup> Joseph makes increasingly astute observations on London's social corruptions, as in the following speech to Adams, in which he contrasts Westminster's obsession with ostentation and luxury with the charity and benevolence of two country-dwellers:

<sup>1</sup>JA, IV, vi (Henley I, p 335f).

<sup>2</sup>JA, I, vi (Henley I, p 40).

<sup>3</sup>The relationship between Joseph's and Wilson's town careers is discussed by M.C. Battestin in *The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art*, p 119f.

<sup>4</sup>For an examination of the development of Joseph's character, see D. Taylor Jr., "Joseph as Hero of *Joseph Andrews*", *Tulane Studies in English*, 7, 1957, p 91.

"I have often wondered, sir," said Joseph, "to observe so few instances of charity among mankind; for though the goodness of a man's heart did not incline him to relieve the distresses of his fellow-creatures, methinks the desire of honour should move him to it. What inspires a man to build fine houses, to purchase fine furniture, pictures, clothes, and other things, at a great expense, but an ambition to be respected more than other people? Now, would not one great act of charity, one instance of redeeming a poor family from all the miseries of poverty, restoring an unfortunate tradesman by a sum of money to the means of procuring a livelihood by his industry, discharging an undone debtor from his debts or a jail, or any such-like example of goodness, create a man more honour and respect than he could acquire by the finest house, furniture, pictures, or clothes that were ever beheld? For not only the object himself who was thus relieved, but all who heard the name of such a person, must, I imagine, reverence him infinitely more than the possessor of all those other things; which, when we so admire, we rather praise the builder, the workman, the painter, the lace-maker, the tailor, and the rest, by whose ingenuity they are produced, than the person who by his money makes them his own. For my own part, when I have waited behind my lady in a room hung with fine pictures, while I have been looking at them I have never once thought of their owner, nor hath any one else, as I ever observed; for when it hath been asked whose picture that was, it was never once answered the master's of the house; but Ammyconni, Paul Varnish, Hannibal Scratchi, or Hogarthe, which I suppose were the names of the painters; but if it was asked - who redeemed such a one out of prison? Who lent such a ruined tradesman money to set up? Who clothed that family of poor small children, it is very plain what must be the answer. And besides, these great folks are mistaken if they imagine they get any honour at all by these means; for I do not remember I ever was with my lady at any house where she commended the house or furniture but I have heard her at her return home make sport and jeer at whatever she had before commended; and I have been told by other gentlemen in livery that it is the same in their families: but I defy the wisest man in the world to turn a true good action into ridicule. I defy him to do it. He who should endeavor it would be laughed at himself, instead of making others laugh. Nobody scarce doth any good, yet they all agree in praising those who do. Indeed, it is strange that all men should consent in commending goodness, and no man endeavor to deserve that commendation; whilst, on the contrary, all rail at wickedness, and all are as eager to be what they abuse.

This I know not the reason of; but it is as plain as daylight to those who converse in the world, as I have done these three years." "Are all the great folks wicked then?" says Fanny. "To be sure there are some exceptions," answered Joseph. "Some gentlemen of our cloth report charitable actions done by their lords and masters; and I have heard Squire Pope, the great poet, at my lady's table, tell stories of a man that lived at a place called Ross, and another at the Bath, one Al.. Al.. I forget his name, but it is in the book of verses. This gentleman hath built up a stately house too, which the squire likes very well; but his charity is seen farther than his house, though it stands on a hill - aye, and brings him more honor too!"<sup>1</sup>

Joseph's description of the *beau monde*'s degenerate manners, that is, their obsession with luxury as a means of procuring honour and respect as being symptomatic of their degenerate morals, and their lack of benevolence, expresses Fielding's perennial indictment against Westminster's allegedly poor social leadership. Joseph's contrasting commendation of John Kyrle, the "Man of Ross" and Ralph Allen of Bath, men complimented in Pope's poetry for living with dignity yet concentrating on charity, represents Fielding's first significant use of the "country house" ideal to present benevolent landlords dwelling on their estates (as opposed to the landed classes dwelling permanently in London) as exemplary patterns for responsible social leadership.<sup>2</sup> Joseph's discourse then, encompasses the full social significance of the town-country contrast in Fielding's writings. Thus, through both word and deed, Fielding uses Joseph Andrews, the footman, to criticise fashionable town society. At home in Somersetshire, Joseph himself is discovered to be gentle-born, but continues to renounce the town which he left behind. Married to his Fanny, he adopts the simple

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<sup>1</sup>JA, III, vi (Henley I, p 264ff).

Joseph's views on the *beau monde* resemble those of Thomas the footman in *An Old Man Taught Wisdom*, Henley X, p 348f).

<sup>2</sup>"The man of Ross" whom Joseph compliments is John Kyrle, praised by Pope for his benevolence in the *Epistle to Bathurst* (ll. 250-290). The "Al.. Al.." to whom Joseph refers is Ralph Allen of Prior Park, whom Pope also commends for benevolence in the Epilogue to the Satires, Dialogue I (ll. 135-136), and who was also a patron of Fieldings.



rural life adopted by his parents, Mr and Mrs Wilson: "the happiness of this couple is a perpetual fountain of pleasure to their fond parents; and, what is particularly remarkable, he declares he will imitate them in their retirement, nor will be prevailed on by any booksellers, or their authors, to make his appearance in high life."<sup>1</sup> As in his ballad operas, Fielding, in *Joseph Andrews*, uses humble country life to satirise London's high life, not to sabotage, but to endorse the traditional stratified system, based on the supremacy of the landed classes. At the end of the novel it is the country gentleman, Squire Booby, who restores law and order. Although introduced with Pamela as a butt of satire, Booby is carefully rehabilitated by Fielding for his important role as ideal social leader.<sup>2</sup> In providing handsomely for Joseph, Fanny, Gaffer and Gammer Andrews, and in placing Parson Adams and the poor pedlar in positions of responsibility, Booby fulfils the traditional paternalistic obligations of his class: to promote merit and virtue for the benefit of the individual and society. Thus, as in Jonson's "To Penshurst", Carew's "To Saxham", and Marvell's "Upon Appleton House", Fielding endorses traditional society by presenting a country landlord who is benevolent to all social classes as a model for responsible government. In describing Booby's generous reception of his guests, Fielding explicitly states his perennial argument that the traditional old English hospitality, the archetypal symbol of social love in the "country house" poems, was being preserved in the eighteenth century only in rural England: "The company, arriving at Mr Booby's house, were all received by him in the most courteous and entertained in the most splendid manner, after the custom of the old English hospitality, which is still preserved in some very few families in the remote parts of England."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>JA, IV, xvi (Henley I, p 393f). In the closing words of this line, Fielding takes a shot at Richardson's Pamela, who does make her appearance in high life.

<sup>2</sup>I. Donaldson discusses the social significance of Squire Booby's appearance at the end of the novel in *The World Upside-Down* (p 205f).

<sup>3</sup>JA, IV, xv. (Henley I, p 390).

In *Joseph Andrews* Fielding uses the town-country contrast to recommend the restoration of other traditional English practices. He frequently contrasts the modern, unwholesome life-style of the town with the traditionally healthy life-style of the country, as in his descriptions of Mr Wilson's unwholesome town life and his subsequent healthy country life. The traditionally plain fare and hearty appetites of the country-dwellers are seen as preferable to the sophisticated cuisine and enervated palates of the town-dwellers, as this description of Adams, Joseph and Fanny eating their bread and cheese at a country ale-house shows: "the three travellers fell to eating, with appetites infinitely more voracious than are to be found at the most exquisite eating-houses in the parish of St James's."<sup>1</sup> The sturdy physical strength of the rural-dwellers is contrasted with the puny weakness of the Londoners, as in this comment on Joseph's carrying his Fanny down a steep hill:

Learn hence, my fair countrywomen, to consider your own weakness, and the many occasions on which the strength of a man may be useful to you; and duly weighing this, take care that you match not yourselves with the spindle-shanked *beaux* and *petit-maitres* of the age, who, instead of being able, like Joseph Andrews, to carry you in lusty arms through the rugged ways and downhill steps of life, will rather want to support their feeble limbs with your strength and assistance.<sup>2</sup>

This antithesis is extensively dramatised in the contest between Joseph Andrews and Beau Didapper for Fanny Goodwill, herself the picture of robust rustic health. Fielding frequently opposes the plain customs of "our prudent ancestors",<sup>3</sup> still used in the country, with the modern luxury of London, as in this description of the old travelling method of "riding and tying", used by Joseph and Adams:

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<sup>1</sup> *JA*, II, xvi (Henley I, p 197).

<sup>2</sup> *JA*, III, ii. (Henley I, p 220).

Fanny physically repulses one such "spindle-shanked" *beau* - Beau Didapper - at the end of the novel. (*JA*, IV, vii, p 345.)

<sup>3</sup> *JA*, II, ii (Henley I, p 108).

This was the method in use in those days when, instead of a coach and six, a member of parliament's lady used to mount a pillion behind her husband; and a grave sergeant at law condescended to amble to Westminster on an easy pad, with his clerk kicking his heels behind him.<sup>1</sup>

In all these contrasts Fielding implicitly recommends that the traditionally robust English life-style, which he saw remaining most visibly in the country, replace the modern, enervating luxury, which he saw prevailing in London.

Important in Fielding's idealisation of his rural-dwellers as possessing the values necessary for the maintenance of traditional stratified society, is their emotional sincerity in human relationships, particularly marital and family relationships. In the loving conjugal and filial relationships of the Wilson family, wherein all members of the hierarchically organised unit fulfil their obligations with affection and respect for one another, Fielding presents a microcosm of the ideal society, in which all members of a hierarchy are bound together by love and esteem.<sup>2</sup> Another example of this ideal is presented in Parson Adams' parish, which Adams frequently calls his family,<sup>3</sup> over which he lovingly presides like a benevolent patriarch. He cares openly and paternalistically for all his parishioners, who respond with affection and obedience. Thus, in Wilson's family and Adams' parish, Fielding portrays miniature models of that close-knit, stratified community which, throughout the novel, he represents as being driven out of London by cynicism and sophistication. At the end of the novel, Joseph and Fanny establish another model of social love in the simple rural environment. As in his ballad operas, Fielding partly establishes the emotional integrity of his rural lovers by burlesquing the pastoral tradition's extravagant idealisation of country love.

<sup>1</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup>The symbolic significance of the Wilson family in this connection is analysed by J.L. Duncan, *op. cit.* (Section 2).

<sup>3</sup>*JA*, II, xvi (Henley I, p 197f).

In the wanton song sung by Joseph before his reunion with Fanny, Fielding ridicules the romantic pastoral ideal by characteristically undercutting the pastoral swain's artificial languishings with earthy sexuality, as demonstrated in the song's concluding lines:

"My soul, whilst I gaze, is on fire:  
But her looks were so tender and kind,  
My hope almost reach'd my desire,  
And left lame despair far behind.  
Transported with madness, I flew,  
And eagerly seized on my bliss;  
Her bosom but half she withdrew,  
But half she refused my fond kiss.

"Advances like these made me bold;  
I whisper'd her, - love, we're alone. -  
The rest let immortals unfold;  
No language can tell but their own.  
Ah, Chloe, expiring, I cried,  
How long I thy cruelty bore!  
Ah, Strephon, she blushing replied,<sup>1</sup>  
You ne'er were so pressing before."

No satire is here intended against Joseph and Fanny. An air of bucolic charm clings to their simple love, rendering it superior to the sordid lusts and mercenary alliances of the Londoners. The satire keeps their romance within realistic bounds. At the end of the novel, Joseph and Fanny marry and their love is absorbed into an extended family of love. As with the Wilson family and Adams' parishioners, their warmly expressed benevolence exemplifies the loving relationships which Fielding considered essential in binding all social classes together, into a close-knit community. In the novel, Fielding represents such community as disintegrating in London under the impact of human folly and social change. In the moral and social order achieved by the Wilsons, Adams, Joseph and Fanny, and also Squire Booby, in the relatively simple rural environment, he presents ideal models - tempered by humour and clear-sighted realism, but ideals, nonetheless - according to which such community should be reinforced over society in general.

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<sup>1</sup>JA, II, xii (Henley I, p 177f).

Dick Taylor Jr. examines the significance of this song in the novel's moral design (*op.cit.*, p 92). Fielding's satire against the pastoral tradition in JA is mainly directed at the pastoral elements in the currently popular romance stories, in *Astraea* which Fielding names in the Preface.

During the years between the publication of *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *Tom Jones* (1749), Fielding produced many miscellaneous writings, in which he contrasted town and country with the same didactic intention as in the novels. Just as he had satirised contemporary urban degeneracy by translating part of Juvenal's *Sixth Satire* (published in the *Miscellanies*, 1743), in which he changed Rome's follies into those of eighteenth century London, so again, with the publication in 1747 of lines translated from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*, he makes his customary criticisms of fashionable town society. Returning briefly to the drama as "Madame De La Nashe" with a puppet-show in Penton Street, in 1748, Fielding satirised the *beau monde's* idleness, luxury and ostentation as he had done in his dramatic writings. In the letters he contributed<sup>1</sup> to the *Familiar Letters Between the Principal Characters of David Simple*, published in 1747, Fielding also extensively contrasts town and country manners. Letter XL, from Valentine in London to David Simple in the country, conventionally describes traditional English honour, honesty and hospitality as being swept away from London by modern luxury. This theme is expanded in Letters XLII and XLIII. The description of town life in Letter XLII, from Prudentia Flutter, a naïve country girl, newly arrived in London, to her sensible friend, Lucy Rural, who remains in the country, catalogues all of Fielding's customary criticisms against the *beau monde*. The contrasting portrait of country life in Letter XLIII, from Lucy Rural to Prudentia Flutter, summarises the rural ideal.

The Jacobite Rebellion of 1745 and the renewed Jacobitical activity of 1747-48 prompted Fielding to advocate more urgently a reformation in English manners. In *The True Patriot*, published from November, 1745 to June 1746, Fielding attempts to arouse the patriotic zeal of the English nation by representing the Pretender's success as owing much to their degeneracy, particularly as this was exemplified in London. In *The True Patriot* 7, December 17th, 1745, through the character of Parson Adams, he describes the rebellion as; "the just Judgement of God against an offending People".<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Henley XVI, p 27ff.

<sup>2</sup>Locke, p 81, col. 1.

Adams describes the luxury which he saw on his visit to London:

I remember Dining last Winter at a great Man's Table, where we had among many others one Dish, the Expense of which would have provided very liberally for a poor Family a whole Twelvemonth. In short, I never saw, during my Abode in the Great City, a single Man who gave me Reason to think, that he would have enabled himself to be charitable, by retrenching the most idle Superfluity of his Expense.<sup>1</sup>

Adams recommends "a total Amendment of Life, a total Change of Manners"<sup>2</sup> to restore the nation to health. In *The True Patriot* 9, December 31st, 1745, Fielding criticises the Italian opera, and represents support of this diversion during a time of rebellion as being treasonable, since Italy was a national enemy. He claims that

such a Nation would not be worth invading. No powerful Prince could look on such a People with any Eyes of Fear or Jealousy, nor no wise One would send his Subjects among them, for fear of enervating their Minds, and debauching their Morals.<sup>3</sup>

In *The True Patriot* 15, February 4th-11th, 1746, Fielding continues to represent the luxury of the *beau monde*, particularly in dress, as being irresponsible at a time of national danger.<sup>4</sup> Echoing Juvenal, he describes this luxury as:

that Pest and Bane of Society, which, according to the *Roman* Poet, was a crueller Mischief to the *Romans*, than all their Wars had been, and avenged all the Injuries which that People had done to those Countries which they conquered, and from whence they brought Home this Pestilence.<sup>5</sup>

In *The True Patriot* 13, January 21st to January 28th, 1746, Fielding again attributes the age's alleged degeneracy to the faulty education of the young. Adams and Wilson of *Joseph Andrews* are introduced

<sup>1</sup>*Op.cit.*, p 82, col. 1.

<sup>2</sup>*Op.cit.*, p 81, col. 3.

<sup>3</sup>*Op.cit.*, p 98, col. 1.

<sup>4</sup>For a discussion of fashions and follies of London in *TP* see Dudden, I, p 530, n.1 and p 550, n.1.

<sup>5</sup>Locke, p 139, col. 1.

and comment on their meeting with a London *beau*:

In discoursing upon this Subject, we imputed much of the present Profligacy to the notorious Want of Care in Parents in the Education of Youth, who, as my Friend informs me, with very little School Learning, and not at all instructed (*ne minime quidem inbuti*) in any Principles of Religion, Virtue and Morality, are brought to the Great City, or sent to travel to other Great Cities abroad, before they are twenty Years of Age; where they become their own Masters, and enervate both their Bodies and Minds with all sorts of Diseases and Vices, before they are adult.<sup>1</sup>

Criticism of the *beau monde* is continued in *The Jacobite's Journal* which Fielding published from December, 1747 to November, 1748. Whilst Westminster is conventionally censured in this journal, responsibility for Jacobitism is placed mainly with the country squirearchy, who are portrayed as being ignorant and brutal and therefore, easy targets for Jacobitism. In *The Jacobite's Journal* 15, March 12th, 1748, Fielding claims that:

Ignorance is the Mother of Jacobitism. Hence the rural Sportsmen and Foxhunters will fall an easy Prey; and the Country will afford sufficient Plenty of younger Brothers, whose Eyes their good Mothers have kept betimes from poring on *Greek* and *Latin* Authors; those *Greek* and *Latin* Authors, which have been the Bane of the Jacobite Cause, and inspired Man with the Love of *Athenian* Liberty and old *Rome*, and taught them to hate Tyrants and arbitrary Government.<sup>2</sup>

Fielding mainly censures the upper classes in *The Jacobite's Journal* 9, January 30th, 1748. Through the character of Thomas Urtan of Thames Street, London, he broadens his attack to censure those merchants who trade with Britain's enemies. Yet, although in the *Jacobite's Journal* 4, December 26th, 1747, he congratulates the city of London for supporting the Ministry in an election, there is little reference to or portrayal of the manners of London's

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<sup>1</sup>Locke, p 128, col. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Coley, pp 192-3.

mercantile classes. In Letter XLI of the *Familiar Letters Between the Principal Characters of David Simple*, Fielding somewhat inconsistently compliments great merchants for living with aristocratic magnificence, as he comments (through a Frenchman writing to a friend in Paris) on the great villas belonging to the *bourgeoisie* which line the banks of the Thames river: "and they tend to give as magnificent an idea of the riches which flow into these people by trade, as the shipping doth, which is to be seen below the bridge of London."<sup>1</sup>

Fielding seems mainly concerned to keep the lower classes in their place. In *The True Patriot* 28, May 6th-13th, 1746, through the character of a footman, he warns other footmen of the dangers of emulating their masters:

a Folly in which we have made such a Progress, that whoever frequents the public Assemblies of this Town, must be obliged to confess, that we are very near as bad as *our Betters*; and as those have done us the Honour, especially in their Morning Dress to imitate us, it may very often puzzle People to distinguish the Man from the Master.<sup>2</sup>

Potential "livery *beaux*" are warned that:

"if nothing worse than being ridiculous was to happen to us from this Imitation, it might perhaps give us little apprehension ... but we are to consider that we live in a Nation where there are Laws provided against little Men making their Fortunes by Knavery and Thieving. Another Circumstance which should deter us from walking in the Septs of our *Betters*, whom those Laws do not reach."<sup>3</sup>

Returning to the theme of his ballad operas Fielding states:

"for as it is very wisely said in the *Beggar's Opera*: *If little Men will have their Vices, as well as the Great THEY will be punished for them.*"<sup>4</sup> He concludes the paper with a call to maintain the social boundaries:

<sup>1</sup>Henley XVI, p 233.

<sup>2</sup>Locke, p 225, col. 1.

<sup>3</sup>*Loc.cit.*

<sup>4</sup>*Op.cit.*, p 225, col. 3.



"let us content ourselves with that low State of Life to which it hath pleased God to call us; and not conclude when we see our Masters grow great, high and honourable by their Rogueries that it would succeed with us in the same Manner."<sup>1</sup>

Thus Fielding's major concern is not so much with the lower classes' becoming Jacobites, as emulating the behaviour of the upper classes. Jacobitism is also a minor theme in *Tom Jones*. Here it is seen as confined to rural areas and as no longer presenting a major threat to the nation. Of particular interest is its popularity, not only amongst the squirearchy, represented by Squire Western, but also amongst the lower classes, represented by several inn-keepers, mechanics and labourers, and most notably by Partridge, all of whom support the "king over the water" against the Hanoverian monarch in London, and all of whom are presented as being ignorant of their own and the national interest.<sup>2</sup>

*Tom Jones* is arguably Fielding's most accomplished full-length work. The considerable control of tone, and the sense of order and direction present from the beginning of the novel, enable Fielding to give a finely gauged comic treatment of manners consonant with the thrust of the earlier works. This is in spite of the fact that the theme of the "insubordination" of the rural poor, particularly their emulation of the upper classes, is more prominent in this novel than in *Joseph Andrews*, and anticipates Fielding's treatment of the urban poor in his social pamphlets, *Amelia* and *The Covent Garden Journal*. In these, his experiences as magistrate prompted him to present such "insubordination" as contributing to the disintegration of traditional society. Unlike the situation in *Joseph Andrews*, in *Tom Jones* there are few paragons of the virtues amongst the rural poor. Most of the low-born rustics in *Tom Jones* are brutal, malicious and uncharitable; amongst them, "there are enough backbiting, envy and gossip to supply a rustic school for scandal."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Loc. cit.*

<sup>2</sup>Two instances of the lower classes supporting the Jacobites occur in *TJ*, XII, vii, where Partridge, an innkeeper, a puppet-show master, and an attorney's clerk assert their preference for the rebels. (Henley IV, p 331ff.), and in *TJ*, XI, ii, where an innkeeper is congratulated by a squire on the supposed landing of the French. (Henley IV, p 255).

<sup>3</sup>Ehrenpreis, *op. cit.*, p 32.

Fielding points out that the *beau monde* are equalled and even surpassed in vice by their country-bred inferiors:

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

Nor are the women here less practised in the highest feminine arts than their fair superiors in quality and fortune. Here are prudes and coquettes. Here are dressing and ogling, falsehood, envy, malice, scandal; in short, everything which is common to the most splendid assembly or politest circle. Let those of high life, therefore, no longer despise the ignorance of their inferiors, nor the vulgar any longer rail at the vices of their betters.<sup>1</sup>

Irvin Ehrenpreis explains the satirical effect which Fielding achieves by thus using "the Somersetshire mob" to belittle high life:

Swift hardly goes further in his use of Yahoos and other animals to show up the corruptions of civilized men. The steady effect of such passages is to sneer at the city-dweller not for being made more corrupt than his country cousin but for possessing too limited an imagination to conceive of vices that are not freely enjoyed outside the capital.<sup>2</sup>

In *Tom Jones* Fielding again uses his device of "appropriating the manners of the highest to the lowest, and *e converso*", the efficacy of which procedure he explains to his readers:

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;

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<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, IV, vii (Henley III, p 169). See also *TJ*, XII, ix (Henley IV, p 339).

<sup>2</sup>I. Ehrenpreis, *op.cit.*, p 32.

and again, the rudeness and barbarity of this latter strikes with much stronger ideas of absurdity, when contrasted with, and opposed<sup>1</sup> to, the politeness which controls the former.

Throughout the novel, Fielding illustrates his argument that "all those who get their livelihood by people of fashion contract as much insolence to the rest of mankind as if they really belonged to that rank themselves."<sup>2</sup> In the scene between Sophia's maid, Mrs Honour, and Mrs Western's maid:

Mrs Western's maid claimed great superiority over Mrs Honour on several accounts. First, her birth was higher; for her great-grandmother by the mother's side was a cousin, not far removed, to an Irish peer. Secondly, her wages were greater. And, lastly, she had been at London, and had of consequence seen more of the world.<sup>3</sup>

Other humbly-born characters do not emulate upper-class impudence so well, as demonstrated in the different reactions of Molly Seagrim of Somersetshire and Lady Bellaston of Westminster, when they are caught in compromising situations with men. When Tom Jones discovers the philosopher Square behind the *arras* in her bedroom, Molly collapses in confusion, on which unsophisticated response Fielding comments:

this poor girl, who was yet but a novice in her business, had not arrived to that perfection of assurance which helps off a town lady in any extremity.<sup>4</sup>

When discovered in Tom Jones' bedroom by Mrs Honour, Lady Bellaston rises to the occasion with inimitable upper-class *panache*:

she then took up her fan, which lay on the ground, and without even looking at Jones walked very majestically out of the room; there being a kind of dignity in the impudence of women of quality, which their inferiors vainly aspire to attain to in circumstances of this nature.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, IX, i (Henley IV, p 159).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, VIII, vii (Henley IV, p 91f).

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, VII, viii (Henley III, p 264f).

<sup>4</sup>*TJ*, V, v (Henley III, p 229).

<sup>5</sup>*TJ*, XV, vii (Henley V, p 175).

The unsettling effect on social stability of such emulation is unwittingly summed up by the landlady of an inn where Tom and Partridge view a puppet-show depicting high life. After the show, Grace the chambermaid is caught making love with the "Merry Andrew". She justifies her behaviour with reference to the performance on stage by saying that, "if I am a w...e ... my betters are so as well as I. What was the fine lady in the puppet-show just now? I suppose she did not lie all night out from her husband for nothing."<sup>1</sup> The landlady comments to her husband:

and here you bring about a parcel of puppets dressed up like lords and ladies, only to turn the heads of poor country wenches; and when their heads are once turned topsy-turvy, no wonder everything else is so.<sup>2</sup>

In only one important instance does Fielding satirise the *beau monde* by direct contrast with humble country life, that is, in the portrayal of the Warwickshire gypsies, encountered by Tom and Partridge.<sup>3</sup> These plain-living gypsies display generosity and happiness unknown in high life. Most important, they have a high code of justice. They severely punish a married couple for conniving at the kind of prostitution which Fielding, in *The Modern Husband* and *Amelia*, portrays as being openly practised in Westminster. They therefore present Tom, on the eve of his entry into London, with a sharp contrast to the kind of corruption which he is to encounter in the town.

The portrayal of fashionable town manners in *Tom Jones* is much the same as in *Joseph Andrews* in that the great are represented as disgracing the honour of their ancestors by abandoning traditional English manners for modern idleness and luxury. Fielding characteristically describes the *beau monde* as:

those happy mansions where fortune segregates from the vulgar those magnanimous heroes, the descendants of ancient Britons, Saxons, or Danes, whose ancestors, being born in better days, by sundry kinds of merit, have entailed riches and honor on their posterity.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, XII, vi (Henley IV, p 324).

<sup>2</sup>*Loc.cit.*

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, XII, xii (Henley V, p 11ff).

<sup>4</sup>*TJ*, XIII, ii (Henley V, p 35).

The main vice of Westminster (this time represented by Lady Bellaston, Lord Fellamar and Mrs Western), is its lack of charity, which is neglected in favour of luxury and polite pursuits and, in the case of Lady Bellaston, lust and vice. The folly and vanity of town life are satirised in several scenes in the novel's last six books, where Fielding shifts the action to London. In the masquerade scene, for example,<sup>1</sup> Fielding censures that fashionable diversion which he finds always symbolic of town degeneracy. At the masquerade, Tom Jones, the genuinely innocent country boy, meets corrupt town-dwellers disguised as shepherds, shepherdesses and other figures. Lady Bellaston says of it to Tom:

"You cannot conceive anything more insipid and childish than a masquerade to the people of fashion, who in general know one another as well here as when they meet in an assembly or a drawing-room; nor will any woman of condition converse with a person with whom she is not acquainted. In short, the generality of persons whom you see here may more properly be said to kill time in this place than in any other; and generally retire from thence more tired than from the longest sermon."<sup>2</sup>

Thus, like the Londoners in *Joseph Andrews*, those in *Tom Jones* degrade themselves "in order to keep up the farce of the world".<sup>3</sup> Although the London of *Tom Jones* glitters like that of *Joseph Andrews*, it is a darker and more sinister world. The corrupt urban environment described by the Man of the Hill,<sup>4</sup> a Somersetshire lad, whose ruin at Oxford, London, and on the tour of Europe demonstrates yet again the disastrous consequences of faulty education, provides a satirical survey of town follies in the Juvenalian tradition. The world described is a more hostile and destructive one than that described by Wilson, being concerned less with the gambling dens and bawdy-houses of fashionable society, than with those of the sordid criminal underworld, thereby casting a deep shadow over the glitter of Westminster, portrayed in the novel's last six books. Although Fielding introduces us to fashionable town society, by asserting that, "the true characteristic

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<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, XIII, vii (Henley V, p 61ff).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, XIII, vii (Henley V, p 65).

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, XV, vii (Henley V, p 172).

<sup>4</sup>*TJ*, VIII, xi-xiii (Henley IV, p 114ff).

of the present *beau monde* is rather folly than vice, and the only epithet which it deserves is that of frivolous,"<sup>1</sup> the *beau monde* which we see is depraved and vicious, bringing the urban atmosphere of *Tom Jones* in some ways closer to that of *Amelia* than to that of *Joseph Andrews*.

However, just as, in general, the portrayal of the town in *Tom Jones* resembles that of *Joseph Andrews*, so too does the presentation of the country. Fielding himself, in describing the country-city contrast as the major organising principle in the novel's presentation of manners, draws an analogy between his own procedure and that of a famous cook who begins by serving plain dishes and then gradually rises to a more sophisticated *cuisine*:

in like manner, we shall represent human nature at first to the keen appetite of our reader, in that more plain and simple manner in which it is found in the country, and shall hereafter hash and ragoo it with all the high French and Italian seasoning of affectation and vice which courts and cities afford.<sup>2</sup>

By this analogy Fielding introduces into *Tom Jones* the antithesis between foaming ale and roast beef of old England, the healthy, vigorous constitutions and sturdy spirits of the country-dwellers, and the enervating luxury and French and Italian foppery of the Londoners. But Fielding also brings some of the elements of his earlier rural ideal into sharper and more socially significant focus in *Tom Jones*. Whereas in *Joseph Andrews* the rural alternative to Westminster had come mainly from the lower classes (Adams and the Wilsons, although gentle-born, are not wealthy and Squire Booby, although a great land-owner, is portrayed only briefly), that in *Tom Jones* is drawn from the upper levels of the English landed gentry, whom Fielding believed best qualified to govern society. The ideal is not the Tory, fox-hunting squirearchy, exemplified in the novel by Squire Western who, although portrayed as a splendid comic eccentric, is nevertheless also presented as

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<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, XIV, i (Henley V, p 95).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, I, i (Henley III, p 19).

ignorant, drunken, coarse, cruel to animals and indifferent to the well-being of humanity. This is, of course, reprehensible in a man of his responsible social position. Typical of Western's neglect of social duty is his treatment of Parson Supple, a type of the poverty-stricken, mean-spirited country parson, commonplace in contemporary literature. Instead of engaging Supple as a good shepherd to the flock, Western engages him as a kind of domestic servant and subjects him to great humiliation in return for his keep. In short, Western's barbarities, while comically treated, are seen to be antithetical to those dignified manners which Fielding regarded as the mainstay of civilised society. Such dignified manners are represented in the novel by Mr Allworthy, Tom Jones and Sophia Western, who are developed as the most significant alternative to the *beau monde* of Westminster. As with Sidney of Penshurst, Fairfax of Appleton House, Bathurst and Burlington, Allworthy of Paradise Hall, Somersetshire, in his life-style and behaviour, is an ideal country landlord. In accordance with the "country house" tradition, Allworthy's house and estate represent certain social values. The "country house" poets of the seventeenth century represented the houses and estates they celebrated as having been constructed by their owners in a socially responsible manner, that is, not with the greed and vanity which these poets claimed to see in the great mansions of London, and country estates under town influence, but rather, with moderation, practical commonsense and good taste. More, they saw them as harmonising with the land and presenting a mutual dependency. These plain, functional, yet elegant country houses then, were meant to symbolise the supposed values of the old social order.<sup>1</sup> Allworthy's house, as described by Fielding, expresses the values represented by its owner throughout the novel:

this Gothic style of building could produce  
nothing nobler than Mr Allworthy's house.  
There was an air of grandeur in it that struck

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<sup>1</sup>For the importance of the country house as symbol, see G.R. Hibbard, *op.cit.*, p 159.

you with awe, and rivalled the beauties of the best Grecian architecture; and it was as commodious within as venerable without.<sup>1</sup>

Allworthy's landscape garden is described as "owing less to art than to nature",<sup>2</sup> and thus house and garden combine beauty with commonsense and simplicity. As with Bathurst's and particularly Burlington's estates, as celebrated by Pope, Paradise Hall establishes its owner as an upholder of traditional standards. The materialistic values of the new economic order, satirised by Pope in his description of Timon's villa in the *Epistle to Burlington*, are censured by Fielding in this comment on the extravagant alterations which Captain Blifil plans for Paradise Hall, after Allworthy's eventual death:

even the luxury of the present age, I believe, would hardly match it. It had, indeed, to a superlative degree, the two principal ingredients which serve to recommend all great and noble designs of this nature; for it required an immoderate expense to execute, and a vast length of time to bring it to any sort of perfection.<sup>3</sup>

Allworthy's life is characterised by dignity and simplicity, by his well-bred behaviour, but, more important, by his benevolence to all Mankind.<sup>4</sup> Fielding makes one important departure from the "country house" tradition. Jonson and Pope represent the *nouveau riche* as being destructive of social order and represent only the landed classes as possessing proper leadership qualities. In presenting Allworthy as an alternative social leader to the great in Westminster, Fielding recommends not only members of the landed classes, for example, George Lyttleton, to whom the novel

<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, I, iv (Henley III, p 26). In Allworthy's Gothic house, Fielding compliments Sanderson Miller of "Radway Grange" Warwickshire, who was promoting a Gothic revival in architecture. (See Cross, *op.cit.*, II, p 164.)

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, I, iv (Henley III, p 27). In Allworthy's landscape, Fielding compliments the gardens of Prior Park, Hagley Park, and other famous estates, where the new vogue for natural landscape was being practised. In *TJ*, XI, ix (Henley IV, p 293f), he compliments other estates featuring natural landscapes. The major model for Allworthy's estate is "Sharpham Park" of Somersetshire, belonging to Fielding's grandfather Sir Henry Gould.

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, II, viii (Henley III, p 97f).

<sup>4</sup>*TJ*, I, x (Henley III, p 47).



is dedicated, but also a member of the mercantile classes, Ralph Allen, a humbly born man who had made a fortune in trade. Thus Fielding demonstrates his belief that people could rise from humble origins to social prominence by sheer talent but, in describing Allen's method of doing so, he stresses that it must be done with an eye to the general good of society. Fielding regards Allen as one "whose penetrating genius had enabled him to raise a large fortune in a way where no beginning was chalked out to him" and as one who, "had done this with the most perfect preservation of his integrity, and not only without the least injustice or injury to any one individual person, but with the highest advantage to trade, and a vast increase of the public revenue."<sup>1</sup> In encouraging the identification of Allworthy with Allen, Fielding describes the self-made proprietor of Prior Park as having the manners of a Bathurst or a Burlington:

his house, his furniture, his gardens, his table,  
his private hospitality, and his public beneficence,  
all denoted the mind from which they flowed, and  
were all intrinsically rich and noble, without  
tinsel, or external ostentation.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless Fielding makes Allworthy a gentleman, in accordance with his view that the landed classes were the best qualified to lead society. This is confirmed in the portrayal of Tom Jones, who, although a foundling, is discovered to be gentle-born. Tom is described as being naturally genteel,<sup>3</sup> and as being one "who, though he had never seen a court, was better bred than most who frequent it".<sup>4</sup> Tom's natural good manners are often contrasted with the sophisticated behaviour of the *beau monde*, when he meets Lady Bellaston, Mrs Fitzpatrick and the Irish peer, Tom, who behaves with "natural but not artificial, good-breeding"<sup>5</sup> is

<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, VIII, i (Henley IV, p 63).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, VIII, i (Henley IV, p 63f). Cf. *JA*, III, vi (Henley I, p 266).

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, IV, v (Henley III, p 158).

<sup>4</sup>*TJ*, XIII, ii (Henley V, p 38).

<sup>5</sup>*TJ*, XIII, iv (Henley V, p 46f).

ceremoniously ignored by the town-dwellers, whose "extremely brilliant" conversation revolves on town diversions and then descends into "vulgar abuse" of the country visitor after his departure.<sup>1</sup> It is Tom's benevolence, however, which ultimately establishes him as an exemplar of truly noble manners. As he is more closely modelled on the latitudinarian ideal of the "good-natured man", Tom's benevolence is more emotionally inspired than Allworthy's. His generosity, when unguarded by prudence, often takes the form of sexual generosity to women, but although he may resemble the rakes of genteel comedy, Tom is a good-natured rake and never seduces any woman to her ruin. Fielding dramatises many of Tom's good points by contrasting him with the young rake Nightingale who, although basically good-natured, has been corrupted by the town environment. Aspiring to the character of a man of "wit and pleasure"<sup>2</sup> about town, Nightingale has seduced, made pregnant and then forsaken the innocent Nancy Miller. Tom reforms him by preaching the doctrine of benevolence as opposed to more worldly codes of honour:

do not the warm, rapturous, sensations, which we feel from the consciousness of an honest, noble, generous, benevolent action, convey more delight to the mind than the undeserved praise of millions?<sup>3</sup>

In Tom's reformation of Nightingale, who marries Nancy and retires with her to the country, Fielding completely reverses the judgement on town and country which he had inherited from Restoration Comedy and which he had attempted unsuccessfully to reverse in his own comedies. Throughout the novel, Tom continually censures the way of the world, particularly its luxury and ostentation, and asserts the superiority of benevolence.

<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, XIII, iv (Henley V, p 46f).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, XIII, v (Henley V, p 49).

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, XIV, vii (Henley V, p 124).

After he gains wisdom in London, and his natural generosity is tempered by prudence, Tom returns to Somersetshire. Married to his Sophia, Tom becomes the landlord of Mr Western's estate and models himself on Mr Allworthy, whom he had earlier described as "a blessing to society, the glory of his country, and an honour to human nature."<sup>1</sup> Like Allworthy, he is presented by Fielding as an exemplary social leader.

In Tom's beloved Sophia Western, Fielding develops another rural alternative to the *beau monde*. Sophia's benevolence, modesty and innate wisdom render her superior to the inhabitants of Westminster. In idealising her, Fielding extensively uses the nature-art antithesis which was often present in the general contrast between country and city. Sophia's natural beauty favourably contrasts with the artificial appearance of Lady Bellaston, who had "roses in her cheeks" which were "like flowers forced out of season by art".<sup>2</sup> Sophia's simple behaviour is preferable to the excessive formality of Mrs Western, who "had lived about the court, and had seen the world" and was "a perfect mistress of manners, customs, ceremonies, and fashions."<sup>3</sup> Although preferring unsophisticated behaviour, Fielding did not, as his characterisation of Squire Western demonstrates, approve of unrestrained nature. He therefore qualifies his praise of Sophia's natural gentility by describing this as having been greatly improved, though not subdued, by courtly refinement:

It may, however, be proper to say that whatever mental accomplishments she had derived from nature, they were somewhat improved and cultivated by art, for she had been educated under the care of an aunt, who was a lady of great discretion, and was thoroughly acquainted with the world, having lived in her youth about the court, whence she had retired some years since into the country. By her conversation and instructions, Sophia was perfectly well bred, though perhaps she wanted a little of that ease in her behaviour which is to

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<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, V, ix (Henley III, p 252).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, XIII, ix (Henley V, p 74).

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, VI, ii (Henley III, p 274).

be acquired only by habit, and living within what is called the polite circle. But this, to say the truth, is often too dearly purchased; and though it hath charms so inexpressible, that the French, perhaps, among other qualities, mean to express this, when they declare they know not what it is, yet its absence is well compensated by innocence; nor can good sense and a natural gentility ever stand in need of it.<sup>1</sup>

Of great significance in the idealisation of Sophia is her lack of skill in witty raillery, that urbane accomplishment which Fielding was largely obliged to give the country heroines of his genteel comedies. Allworthy says of Sophia: "I never heard anything of pertness, or what is called repartee, out of her mouth; no pretence to wit", and adds, "indeed, she always showed the highest deference to the understandings of men".<sup>2</sup> Thus Sophia represents Fielding's emphatic rejection of "Millamantism". Unlike the country girls of Fielding's comedies, Sophia cannot cope with raillery. Whereas Helena ill-naturedly torments Lady Trap, her rival for Merital in *Love in Several Masques*, Sophia, when caught in a similar situation with Lady Bellaston, her rival for Tom Jones, is reduced to helplessness by the lady's cruelty.<sup>3</sup> In her vulnerability, Sophia also contrasts to her cousin, Harriet Fitzpatrick, with whom she was educated in the country by Mrs Western. Harriet, a vain girl, instinctively adapts to town society, first at Bath, then in London, and becomes corrupted by it. Sophia, on the other hand declining to take Harriet's advice to "leave the character of Graveairs in the country, for, believe me, it will sit very awkwardly upon you in this town",<sup>4</sup> remains uncontaminated by the great city. Sophia shows her integrity by displaying that sincerity in human relationships which Fielding associates with a rural environment. The contrast between love

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<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, IV, ii (Henley III, p 148f).

Lord Fellamar describes Sophia's manners as being courtly, despite her country education (*TJ*, XV, ii, Henley V, p 145).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, XVII, iii (Henley V, p 256).

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, XIII, vii (Henley V, p 87ff).

<sup>4</sup>*TJ*, XI, x (Henley IV, p 299).

and material advantage in marriage is also an issue which he extensively debates in *Tom Jones*. As with the earlier squires, Squire Western demonstrates that Fielding did not confine mercenary views on marriage to London: Western, "though he was a country squire in his diversions, was perfectly a man of the world in whatever regarded his fortune".<sup>1</sup> He "strongly held all those wise tenets, which are so well inculcated in that Politico-Peripatetic school of Exchange-alley."<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, the worldly attitudes towards matrimony are concentrated in London and are emphatically represented by Mrs Western, who considered marriage:

not as a romantic scheme of happiness arising from love, as it hath been described by the poets; ... she considered it rather as a fund in which prudent women deposit their fortunes to the best advantage, in order to receive a larger interest for them than they could have elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

She was thoroughly acquainted with:

all the arts which fine ladies use when they desire to give encouragement, or to conceal liking ... as they are at present practised in the *beau monde* ... no species of disguise or affectation had escaped her notice; but as to the plain simple workings of honest nature, as she had never seen any such, she could know but little of them.<sup>4</sup>

She therefore attributes to great artfulness Sophia's naturally cold behaviour towards Blifil, on which misinterpretation Fielding comments:

this conjecture would have been better founded had Sophia lived ten years in the air of Grosvenor Square, where young ladies do learn a wonderful knack of rallying and playing with that passion which is a mighty serious thing in woods and<sup>5</sup> groves an hundred miles distant from London.

<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, V, iii (Henley III, p 216).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, VI, ii (Henley III, p 279).

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, VII, iii (Henley III, p 338).

<sup>4</sup>This attitude towards marriage is often censured in the novel; e.g. *TJ*, I, xii (Henley III, p 54), *TJ*, VII, x (Henley IV, p 23) and *TJ*, VII, ix (Henley IV, p 18).

<sup>5</sup>*TJ*, VI, iii (Henley III, p 281).

The romantic effect of the rural environment on the female emotions is described by another town sophisticate, Lady Bellaston:

the bane of all young women is; the country.  
There they learn a set of romantic notions of  
love, and I know not what folly, which this  
town and good company can scarce eradicate in  
a whole winter.<sup>1</sup>

Sophia, who wishes to marry for love, must run the gauntlet of two proposed mercenary alliances before she finally marries Tom Jones. Squire Western, who considers his and Allworthy's adjoining estates as being, "in a manner joined together in matrimony already, and it would be a thousand pities to part them",<sup>2</sup> decrees an alliance with Blifil and hunts Sophia like an animal<sup>3</sup> all the way to London to bring it about. In London, Lady Bellaston, with the acquiescence of Mrs Western, who had formerly supported Blifil, proposes to marry Sophia to Lord Fellamar. Western rejects this courtly match and when Tom Jones is announced Allworthy's heir, marries Sophia to her beloved.

As in his ballad operas and *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding, in *Tom Jones*, contrasts the innocent rural love of his rural hero and heroine to the sordid lusts and mercenary alliances of London, partly by weaving around the romance an air of bucolic charm. Once again, he achieves this bucolic atmosphere by using the pastoral tradition in its burlesque form. In the mock-heroic introduction of Sophia, he lightly ridicules the pastoral tradition's extravagant idealisation of women:

Hushed be every ruder breath. May the heathen  
ruler of the winds confine in iron chains the  
boisterous limbs of noisy Boreas, and the sharp-  
pointed note of bitter biting Eurus. Do thou,  
sweet Zephyrus, rising from thy fragrant bed, mount  
the western sky, and lead on those delicious gales,  
the charms of which call forth the lovely Flora  
from her chamber, perfumed with pearly dews, ...

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<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, XV, ii (Henley V, p 146). See also *TJ*, VI, xiv (Henley III, p 329).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, VI, ii (Henley III, p 278).

<sup>3</sup>Fielding often portrayed the pursuit of women by ambitious fathers or husbands-to-be in terms of "the hunt"; e.g. *TJ*, XVII, iv (Henley V, p 262).

when on the 1st of June, her birthday, the blooming maid, in loose attire, gently trips it over the verdant mead, where every flower rises to do her homage, till the whole field becomes enamelled, and colours contend with sweets which shall ravish her the most.

So charming may she now appear! and you the feathered choristers of nature, whose sweetest notes not even Handel can excel, tune your melodious throats to celebrate her appearance. From love proceeds your music, and to love it returns. Awaken therefore that gentle passion in every swain: for lo! adorned with all the charms in which nature can array her, bedecked with beauty, youth, sprightliness, innocence, modesty, and tenderness, breathing sweetness from her rosy lips, and darting brightness from her sparkling eyes, the lovely Sophia comes!<sup>1</sup>

No satire against Sophia is intended here. As with his similar hyperbolic introduction of Fanny in *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding's implication is that the beauty and innocence of his country heroine are sufficiently attractive and do not need the excesses of pastoral diction to recommend them. Nevertheless, an air of bucolic charm clings to the portrayal of Sophia throughout the novel. Sophia's swain, Tom Jones, in most of his escapades, belongs more to the earthy world of the *pastourelle* than to the innocent world of the pastoral. Tom is ridiculed through a mockery of Arcadian posturing in this scene:

It was now a pleasant evening in the latter end of June, when our hero was walking in a most delicious grove, where the gentle breezes fanning the leaves, together with the sweet trilling of a murmuring stream, and the melodious notes of nightingales, formed all together the most enchanting harmony. In this scene, so sweetly accommodated to love, he meditated on his dear Sophia ...

"O Sophia, would heaven give thee to my arms, how blest would be my condition! Cursed be that fortune which sets a distance between us. Was I but possessed of thee, one only suit of rags thy whole estate, is there a man on earth whom I would envy! How contemptible would the brightest Circassian

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<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, IV, ii (Henley III, p 145f).

beauty, dressed in all the jewels of the Indies, appear to my eyes! But why do I mention another woman? Could I think my eyes capable of looking at any other with tenderness, these hands should tear them from my head....

At these words [vowing to engrave Sophia's name on every tree] he started up, and beheld - not his Sophia - no, nor a Circassian maid richly and elegantly attired for the grand Signor's seraglio, No; without a gown, in a shift that was somewhat of the coarsest, and none of the cleanest, bedewed likewise with some odoriferous effluvia, the produce of the day's labor, with a pitchfork in her hand, Molly Seagrim approached.<sup>1</sup>

The bathos is completed when, after a brief parley, the couple retire into the thickest part of the bushes and Fielding compares their behaviour to that of animals in "the season of *rutting*".<sup>2</sup> Although Fielding ridicules the Arcadian convention here, something of the rural swain remains in the portrayal of Tom throughout the novel, particularly in those scenes on Mr Western's estate where the romance with Sophia blossoms in an idyllic world of innocence and simplicity. The lovers' bucolic tranquillity is shattered, however, when Western learns of their relationship and invades their refuge, an invasion which Fielding describes with mock-pastoral hyperbole:

As when two doves, or two wood-pigeons, or as when Strephon and Phyllis (for that comes nearest to the mark) are retired into some pleasant solitary grove, to enjoy the delightful conversation of Love, that bashful boy, who cannot speak in public, and is never a good companion to more than two at a time; here, while every object is serene, should hoarse thunder burst suddenly through the shattered clouds, and rumbling roll along the sky, frightened maid starts from the mossy bank or verdant turf, the pale livery of death succeeds the red regimentals in which Love had before dressed her cheeks, fear shakes her whole frame, and her lover scarce supports her trembling, tottering limbs.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, V, x (Henley III, p 256f).

<sup>2</sup>*TJ*, V, xi (Henley III, p 260).

<sup>3</sup>*TJ*, VI, ix (Henley III, p 305f).



In a comic passage, Fielding describes Western's abuse of Tom, and sums up an important factor in the contrast between town and country as he sees it; namely, that if the country is ignorant, coarse and brutal, it at least has a redeeming honesty which is absent from the town:

He then bespattered the youth with abundance of that language which passes between country gentlemen who embrace opposite sides of the question; with frequent applications to him to salute that part which is generally introduced into all controversies that arise among the lower orders of the English gentry at horseraces, cock-matches, and other public places. Allusions to this part are likewise often made for the sake of the jest. And here, I believe, the wit is generally misunderstood. In reality, it lies in desiring another to kiss your a... for having just before threatened to kick his; for I have observed very accurately that no one ever desires you to kick that which belongs to himself, nor offers to kiss this part in another.

It may likewise seem surprising that in the many thousand kind invitations of this sort, which every one who hath conversed with country gentlemen must have heard, no one, I believe, hath ever seen a single instance where the desire hath been complied with - a great instance of their want of politeness; for in town nothing can be more common than for the finest gentlemen to perform this ceremony every day to their superiors, without having that favor once requested of them.<sup>1</sup>

Despite this brutal reminder that Tom and Sophia in Somersetshire do not live in an idyllic *Arcadian* world, their love is nevertheless idealised in a rural setting. By portraying this love in mock-pastoral terms, Fielding once again achieves the clear-eyed effect of "placing" his rural ideal while at the same time facing the objections to it. Tom's and Sophia's relationship cannot remain in the realm of romance, it has an important social function to perform in the novel. At the end, they are married, and their marriage unites the two great estates, the union of which had been unacceptable when calculated on an alliance between Sophia and Blifil. By effecting the union of estates with a marriage founded

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<sup>1</sup> *J*, VI, ix (Henley III, p 307f).

upon love, rather than on mercenary considerations alone, Fielding fosters the illusion that traditional society, founded upon the supremacy of the landed estates which were often united by marriage, was governed by moral rather than materialistic values. Thus the marriage of Tom and Sophia, like that of Mr and Mrs Wilson, Joseph and Fanny, serves a symbolic function as well as a moral one. Tom's and Sophia's loving family relationships extend into the surrounding neighbourhood, and their benevolence brings together all social classes into a close-knit community:

and such is their condescension, their indulgence,  
and their beneficence to those below them, that  
there is not a neighbour, a tenant, or a servant,  
who doth not most gratefully bless the day when  
Mr Jones was married to his Sophia.<sup>1</sup>

In these words, with which the novel concludes, Fielding completes his rural ideal, this time represented by the owner of a great country estate, exemplifying those traditional virtues which Fielding wished to prevail over society in general.

In *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* Fielding is successful in using the town-country contrast to present his own judgements on contemporary manners. The reasons for the successes in these novels will be more fully discussed in the next chapter of this thesis, which examines the more profound moral dimensions of the country-city contrast in Fielding's writings. Relevant to issues in this chapter, these successes may be summarised as the introduction of a more authentic realism into the portraits of country and city life, the inclusion of more town and country motifs from contemporary literature and the welding together of these various elements to form two vital and impressive rural and urban environments, which are consistently polarised, emphasising that the town is a more fertile breeding-ground for temptation and vice, and the country for virtue. Both novels clearly present authentic accounts of contemporary manners, ways of life, customs and behaviour in Somersetshire and London, in and between which areas Fielding was working and travelling at the time. As A.D. McKillop observes, Fielding in *Tom Jones*

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<sup>1</sup>*TJ*, XVIII, Chapter *the Last* (Henley V, p 373).

varies his style of writing to suggest the quality of life in the different environments. The scenes in Somersetshire are portrayed in a leisurely pace; those on the road in a brisk pace and those in town by means of a series of rapidly-changing scenes.<sup>1</sup> The novel's characters, many of whom are based on personages living at the time, although not as three-dimensional as Richardson's characters, are more complex than those in Fielding's dramatic writings and therefore represent rural and urban manners more impressively and convincingly, while retaining some of the qualities of the characters of Restoration drama. Along with this realism, Fielding, in these novels, continues to portray the country and to a greater extent, the city, with old artistic conventions. He re-introduces many of the stereotype characters from the stage, such as the country squire and the town fop. In fact, the London of *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* is very much the fashionable Westminster of Fielding's genteel comedies. The survey of town manners in the stories of Mr Wilson and the Man of the Hill owe much to Hogarth's "The Rake's Progress" and the portrayal of the country in both novels is extremely Hogarthian. Many other familiar themes and motifs from urban satire and the pastoral and *beatus ille* traditions of poetry feature in the portraits of town and country. Fielding's use of conventions in these novels, however, is not as baldly derivative as in his early writings. He selects and adapts elements to serve his own purposes and welds together the diverse raw materials from life and literature to form authentic and impressive portraits of the country and the city, which are convincing in the didactic significance assigned to them. Moreover, unhampered by any attitudes towards country and city inherent in the new novel form, Fielding was able to resolve that conflict between urbane medium and rural message which had hindered his success in the genteel comedy. Modern degeneracy is emphatically associated with the urban environment, which has no redeeming

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<sup>1</sup>*The Early Masters of English Fiction*, Lawrence, 1956, p 125f.

attractiveness, and the rural environment, although not perfect, is the only source of traditional standards. The optimistic atmosphere of these novels, which are presided over by a benign, Providential creator, gives the impression that the traditional values retained in the country may possibly be re-instated over society in general, even the town.

### Section Three: The Final Works

Because of his experiences as London magistrate, from 1749 on, Fielding, directly confronted with the evidence of social disorder, insisted even more urgently on the maintenance of what he saw as traditional standards. This emphasis is apparent throughout the later works even though these take a variety of forms and are written for different purposes. In his legal and social pamphlets, in *Amelia*, in *The Covent Garden Journal* and *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, Fielding attaches great importance to manners, seeing the maintenance of the traditional ways of life and behaviour of the various classes of society as ensuring the strength of the stratified system. In this connection, the emulation of the ways of the life of the upper classes by the lower becomes his chief concern, and in general, he discards his earlier comic portrayal of such emulation, in favour of a harsher and more direct approach. In the introductory sections to his *Inquiry Into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers*, published in 1751, and *Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor*, published in 1753, he asserts more emphatically than ever before that the ideal civilisation is a system governed by the landed classes, with the middle and lower classes providing tradesmen, mechanics and labourers, and with all ranks ideally bound together through concern for the common welfare. He represents this system, which he believed to have prevailed in England's past, as being destroyed in the mid eighteenth century by an increase in "luxury". In the *Inquiry* where he analyses, amongst other things, the transformation in English manners brought about by the age's economic prosperity, he pronounces Bernard Mandeville's principle, that luxury is necessary to a healthy society, as being economically sound, but morally repugnant.<sup>1</sup> Fielding considered luxury to be nationally beneficial only when pursued by the upper classes. He considered it to be socially

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<sup>1</sup>Henley XIII, p 21f.

destructive when it descended down the social scale, as the gentleman emulated the nobleman, and the tradesman the gentleman:

nor doth the confusion end here; it reaches the very dregs of the people, who aspiring still to a degree beyond that which belongs to them, and not being able by the fruits of honest labour to support the state which they affect, they disdain the wages to which their industry would entitle them; and abandoning themselves to idleness, the more simple and poor-spirited betake themselves to a state of starving and beggary, while those of more art and courage become thieves, sharpers, and robbers.<sup>1</sup>

Like his conservative contemporaries then, Fielding attributed such social problems as unemployment, poverty and crime, which in reality resulted largely from the economic system's inability to cope with the accelerating change, to wilful insubordination by the lower classes, who were allegedly attempting to overthrow established order. Drawing a parallel between eighteenth-century London and Rome, which he saw as having progressed from virtuous industry to wealth, luxury and decadence, until it fell victim to a tyrant and sank into its original barbarism, Fielding attributed the present decline to "luxury" amongst the lower classes, who sought an improvement in their living conditions. Realising that the upper classes would never consent to be restrained by laws, he grudgingly states:

let them have their plays, operas, and oratorios, their masquerades and ridottos; their assemblies, drums, routs, riots, and hurricanes; their Raneleigh and Vauxhall; their Bath, Tunbridge, Bristol, Scarborough, and Cheltenham.<sup>2</sup>

Warning that "when this vice descends downwards to the tradesman, the mechanic, and the labourer, it is certain to engender many political mischiefs",<sup>3</sup> he urges harsh repressive legislation against the lower classes, pointing out:

<sup>1</sup>Henley XIII, p 22.

<sup>2</sup>Henley XIII, p 27.

<sup>3</sup>Henley XIII, p 22.

the business of the politician is only to prevent the contagion from spreading to the useful part of mankind, ... and this is the business of persons of fashion and fortune too, in order that the labour and industry of the rest may administer to their pleasures, and furnish them with the means of luxury.<sup>1</sup>

In Section One of the *Inquiry* he advocates laws to prevent the labouring classes from attending masquerades, those "temples of drunkenness, lewdness, and all kinds of debauchery"<sup>2</sup> which he describes as being carried to excess:

and especially in and near the metropolis, where the places of pleasure are almost become numberless; for, besides those great scenes of rendezvous, [at the Haymarket] where the nobleman and his tailor, the lady of quality and her tirewoman, meet together and form one common assembly, what an immense variety of places hath this town and its neighbourhood set apart to the amusement of the lower order of the people; and where the master of the house, or wells, or garden, may be said to angle only in the kennels, where, baiting with the vilest materials, he catches only the thoughtless and tasteless rabble; these are carried on, not on a single day, or in a single week; but all of them during half, and some during the whole year.<sup>3</sup>

This passage, which describes the lower classes in terms which he usually deprecated, demonstrates the harshness with which Fielding, as a magistrate, viewed the situation. In Section Two of the *Inquiry* he urges the suppression of drunkenness, which he saw as being one of the most destructive aspects of London life; while in Section Three he advocates laws to prevent the labouring classes from attending London's brothels and gambling houses, in the suppression of which he himself played an active part.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Henley XIII, p 28.

<sup>2</sup>Henley XIII, p 29.

<sup>3</sup>Henley XIII, p 26.

<sup>4</sup>Fielding is reported as having disbanded one gambling house in the Strand (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, February, 1751. See Zirker, *op.cit.*, p 92, n.29.) In a similar episode he is reported as giving preferential treatment to upper-class gamblers. (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, June, 1751. See Zirker, *op.cit.*, p 93, n.30.)

Taken together, the *Inquiry* and the *Proposal* present stringent programmes for keeping the lower classes in their traditionally subordinate place. They represent the logical and repressive conclusion to the theme of the one of emulation which is so prominent in Fielding's earlier writings.

Relief from this magisterial harshness comes in *The Covent Garden Journal*, published from January to November, 1752, in which Fielding, as Sir Alexander Drawcansir, "Knt. Censor of Great Britain", returns to many of his older rhetorical strategies. Indeed, *The Covent Garden Journal* gathers together most of the issues and features most of the artistic techniques in Fielding's earlier presentation of manners. In line with the more serious mood of Fielding's later years, however, the journal brings the discussion of manners into sharper and more socially significant focus. Moreover, whilst the older rhetorical strategies are still present, they are rarely indulged in for their own sakes, but are always subordinated to ulterior didactic purposes. In *The Covent Garden Journal* Fielding is more vigorous than ever before in idealising England's past as a criticism of the allegedly decadent present. In *CGJ*, 54, July 11th, 1752, we see the culmination of his use of the Elizabethan Age to censure Augustan London. In this dialogue, between the English family, visiting London from the country, and their landlady, Mrs Plumtree, Fielding praises all those traditional ways which he constantly recommended as an alternative to modern luxury, such as, travelling on horseback, residing in simple lodgings, dressing plainly, eating wholesome fare, engaging in tasteful diversions and above all, behaving with decency, dignity and a concern for the common welfare. In *CGJ*, 2, January 7th, 1752, entitled: "Old Sat-n himself is come to Town",<sup>1</sup> Fielding ironically censures the practice of condemning the present by idealising the past, of claiming that "Virtue, Taste, Learning, indeed, every Thing worthy of Commendation, were never

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<sup>1</sup>Jensen I, p 139.



at a lower Ebb than they are at present among us".<sup>1</sup> He compares Augustan London with infamous cities of the past, Sodom, Gomorrah, Corinth and Nero's Rome. In the ensuing ironic panegyric on London, Fielding represents the capital as being in a state of moral, social, cultural and political chaos. In *CGJ*, 17, February 29th, 1752, reversing this tactic, he projects himself into the fortieth century A.D. and describes the incredible follies of eighteenth-century London as representing England's decline into an age of anarchy.<sup>2</sup> He sums up the reigning ethos of the age in his "Modern Glossary", in *CGJ*, 4, January 14th, 1752, in which he re-defines, according to the current values, some commonly-used words, of which the following are a few examples:

BEAR. A Country Gentleman; or, indeed, any Animal upon two Legs that doth not make a handsome Bow.

COXCOMB. A Word of Reproach, and yet, at the same Time, signifying all that is most commendable.

VIRTUE) Subjects of Discourse  
VICE )

DRESS. The principal Accomplishment of Men and Women.

RICHES. The only Thing upon Earth that is really valuable, or desirable.

MODESTY. Awkwardness, Rusticity.

WORTH. Power. Rank. Wealth.

WISDOM. The Art of acquiring all Three.

NO BODY. All the People in Great Britain, except about 1200.<sup>3</sup>

The causes which Fielding assigns to such town degeneracy throughout the journal are those which he presented in his earlier writings as being responsible for the problems: money,<sup>4</sup> France,<sup>5</sup> and the faulty education of youth.<sup>6</sup> The importance of education is indeed

<sup>1</sup>Jensen I, p 140.

<sup>2</sup>Jensen I, p 239ff.

<sup>3</sup>Jensen I, p 155f.

<sup>4</sup>*CGJ*, 35, May 2nd, 1752.

<sup>5</sup>*CGJ*, 53, July 4th, 1752.

<sup>6</sup>*CGJ*, 34, April 28th, 1752.

prominently emphasized. Young men are described as being deprived of instruction in the Classics, Christianity and principles of government, and taught to squander their estates in rural and urban amusements.<sup>1</sup> In *CGJ*, 42, May 26th, 1752, a fictitious correspondent, Tom Telltruth, points out that a Classical education is useless to those aspiring to a town career:

a Scholar when he first comes to this town from the University comes among a Set of People, as entirely unknown to him, and of whom he hath no more heard nor read, than if he was to be at once translated into one of the Planets; *the World* in the Town and that *in the Moon* being equally strange to him, and equally unintelligible.<sup>2</sup>

Telltruth then applauds the modern system, which, in town, produces *beaux*, rakes and self-interested courtiers, and in the country:

a Sett of honest Fellows, who are the Guardians of Liberty, and are actually getting drunk in the Service of their Country.<sup>3</sup>

The most extensive analysis of education in Fielding's writings is in *CGJ*, 55, July 18th, 1752, and *CGJ*, 56, July 25th, 1752, in which Fielding examines the "humour" or eccentric character. In *CGJ*, 55 he describes this character as one whose eccentricities are given free expression, without being restrained by "good-breeding".<sup>4</sup> He describes the two main types of humour characters in England as being the country clown and town coxcomb, which are produced when young people receive no education except the Grand Tour after leaving school:

part of these return to the Place from whence they came, their Fathers Country Seats; where Racing, Cock fighting, Hunting, and other rural Sports, with Smoaking, Drinking, and Party become their Pursuit, and form the whole Business and Amusement of their future lives. The other Part escape to Town in the Diversions, Fashions, Follies and Vices of which they are immediately initiated. In this Academy some finish their Studies, while others by their wiser Parents are

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>Jensen 2, p 2.

<sup>2</sup>Jensen 2, p 3.

<sup>4</sup>Jensen 2, p 63.

sent abroad to add the Knowledge of the Diversions, Fashions, Follies and Vices of all Europe, to that of those of their own Country.<sup>1</sup>

Young women fare no better than young men:

as to the Counterpart of my Country Squire, the Country Gentlewoman, I apprehend, that except in the Article of the Dancing-Master, and perhaps in that of being barely able to read and write, there is very little Difference between the Education of many a Squire's Daughter, and that of his Dairy Maid, who is most likely her principal Companion.

In the town things are no better:

here, besides the Professors of Reading, Writing, and Dancing, the French and Italian Masters, the Music Master, and of Modern Times, the Whist Master, all concur in forming this Character. The Manners Master alone I am afraid is omitted.<sup>2</sup>

Fielding advocates that the education system be improved and that all natural eccentricities be refined away by good-breeding, a proposition which, as a comic artist, he would have found singularly unattractive, but which, as a social reformer, he saw as being in the interests of civilised living.

Many numbers of *The Covent Garden Journal* are, as one would expect, devoted to analysing the disintegration of boundaries between the social classes in London. In the journal, written at a time when Fielding was more concerned than ever before to maintain the social order, rivalry between the Cities of London and Westminster, which had been a relatively minor theme in the earlier works, now becomes a major issue. In *CGJ*, 37, May 9th, 1752, Fielding again represents the upper classes as displaying the indication of their superior rank in forms rather than essentials. He defines "people of fashion" or "people of fascination" as "People whose Essence consisteth in Appearances, and who, while they seem to be something, are really nothing,"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jensen 2, p 65f.

<sup>2</sup>Jensen 2, p 67f.

<sup>3</sup>Jensen 1, p 345.

and describes their formation into a "circle", in London's fashionable north-west, where they had, since the late seventeenth century, been pursued by the middle classes:

Within the Memory of many now living, The Circle of the People of Fascination included the whole Parish of Covent Garden, and great Part of St Giles's in the Fields; but here the Enemy broke in, and the Circle was presently contracted to Leicester-Fields, and Golden-Square. Hence the People of Fashion again retreated before the Foe to Hanover-Square; whence they were once more driven to Grosvenor-Square, and even beyond it, and that with such Precipitation, that had they not been stopped by the Walls of Hyde-Park, it is more than probable they would by this time have arrived at Kensington.<sup>1</sup>

Fielding then describes the *bourgeoisie's* pursuit of aristocratic manners:

Numberless are the Devices made use of by the People of Fashion of both Sexes, to avoid the Pursuit of the Vulgar, and to preserve the Purity of the Circle. Sometimes the Periwig covers the whole *Beau*, and he peeps forth from the midst like an Owl in an Ivy Bush; at other Times his Ears stand up behind half a dozen Hairs, and give you the Idea of a different Animal. Sometimes a large black Bag, with wings spread so broad as a Raven's adorns his Back, at other Times, a little lank Silk appears like a dead Black-bird in his Neck. Today he borrows the Tail of a Rat, and To-morrow that of a Monkey; for he will transform himself into the Likeness of the vilest Animal, to avoid the Resemblance of his own Species....<sup>2</sup>

In the confrontation between Lord Squanderfield and Moses Buckrum, and Lady Fanny Rantum and the pawnbroker's wife, in *CGJ*, 61, August 29th, 1752, Fielding represents the Court as leading idle and extravagant lives at the expense of the City and he censures

<sup>1</sup>Jensen 1, p 346.

<sup>2</sup>Jensen 1, p 347f.

In the sequel to this essay, the contamination of the middle classes by aristocratic degeneracy is further elaborated in a London merchant's description of the genteel corruption of his daughter (Jensen 2, p 7ff).

the West End for treating with supercilious contempt those sober and industrious Citizens on whom they prey. In *The Covent Garden Journal*, however, London's citizens do not always escape censure. In *CGJ*, 56, July 25th, 1752, Fielding ridicules those merchants who emulate aristocratic manners without proper genteel education.<sup>1</sup> But in general, Fielding's healthy respect for the mercantile community remained with him till the end. In *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, in the entry to June 30th, 1754, when describing the shipping in the Thames, he conventionally eulogises the traders' contribution to the national welfare.<sup>2</sup> In general, he reserves his severity for the upper classes, and the labouring classes, whose contamination he saw as being disastrous.

As in his *Inquiry and Proposal*, Fielding in *The Covent Garden Journal* represents London's labouring classes as trying to overthrow established order. This is the argument of *CGJ*, 49, June 20th, 1752, entitled: "I hate the Mob",<sup>3</sup> in which the London "mob" are portrayed as having appropriated to themselves the footpaths, streets, highways, the Thames and other areas, thereby disrupting the lives of their supporters. Fielding advocates laws to suppress this alleged insubordination. In describing the manner in which he was jeered by the Thames sailors and watermen as he was carried aboard his ship in *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, Fielding represents the lower classes as being little better than brutes:

... it was a lively picture of that cruelty and inhumanity, in the nature of men, which I have often contemplated with concern; and which leads the mind into a train of very uncomfortable and melancholy thoughts. It may be said, that this barbarous custom is peculiar to the English, and of them only to the lowest degree; that it is an excrescence of an uncontroul'd licentiousness mistaken for liberty, and never shews itself in men who are polish'd and refin'd, in such manner as human nature requires, to produce that perfection of which it is susceptible, and to purge away that malevolence of disposition, of which, at our birth, we partake in common with the savage creation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Jensen 2, p 68.

<sup>2</sup>Henley XVI, p 208f.

<sup>3</sup>Jensen 2, p 31.

<sup>4</sup>Henley XVI, p 200f.

For Fielding, all mankind should be refined by manners. Whenever the lower classes take their manners from the upper classes, however, he censures them. In general, the major target is the upper classes. Fielding, in satirising the debating club of a group of London mechanics, warns of the social dangers when the lower classes emulate the anarchical principles of the great. For example, in *CGJ*, 17, February 29th, 1752, he censures the *beau monde* for treating with contempt the lower orders who are seen as their moral superiors, and in *CGJ*, 27, April 4th, 1752, he presents honest and industrious people from London's poorer districts as models of behaviour for the degenerate inhabitants of Westminster. Thus he says of the ambitious "great man":

what a glorious Use might such a Person derive to himself, as he is rolled through the Outskirts of the Town by due Meditations, on the Lives of those who dwell in Stalls and Cellars! What a noble lesson of true Christian Patience and Contentment may such a Person learn from his Betters, who enjoy the highest Cheerfulness in their poor Condition; their Minds being disturbed by no unruly Passion, nor their Heads by any wracking Cares!<sup>1</sup>

In direct contradiction to *CGJ*, 49, June 20th, he concludes:

I do not pretend to say, that the Mob have no faults; perhaps they have many. I assert *no more* than this, that they are in all laudible Qualities very greatly superior to those who have hitherto, with much Injustice, pretended to look down upon them.<sup>2</sup>

The most extensive presentation of lower-class manners in *The Covent Garden Journal* is in *CGJ*, 33, April 21st, 1752, in which Fielding, describing his sojourn at an inn in Somersetshire, contrasts the manners of a visiting London apprentice with those of the inn-keeper. The apprentice, emulating the illbreeding and foppery of the *beau monde*, rides out into the country to practise his impudence on the ignorant "country puffs", deliberately shocking the landlord's simple "country breeding" by such invitations as:

<sup>1</sup>Jensen I, p 294.

<sup>2</sup>Jensen I, p 298.

if you'll come and see me in London, I'll give you your Skin full of Wine, and treat you with a Play and a Whore every Night you stay. I'll show you how it is to live, my Boy,

to which the landlord responds:

we have a Saying here, *in our Country*, that 'tis a[s] sure as the Devil in London, and he was not there, they could not be so wicked as they be.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to the apprentice, this landlord exemplifies truly good manners, being a man of "obliging behaviour" and one who:

tho' a downright Rustic, had an awkward Sort of Politeness, arising from his good Nature, that was very pleasing, and, if I may be allowed the <sup>2</sup> Expression, was a Sort of good Breeding undrest.

Thus both landlord and apprentice underscore the ill-breeding of the great world.

Fielding's most significant idealisation of humbly-born country-dwellers in these later years is not seen so much in short sketches as in a much more extensive work, his final novel, *Amelia* (1751), in the characterisation of Sergeant Atkinson and old Mrs Atkinson. The Atkinsons' chief merits are their humility and total submission to the will of their master and mistress, whom they assist with self-sacrificing loyalty. After one instance of Atkinson's generosity in the Hobbesian world of London, Booth claims:

to confess the truth, I am afraid we often compliment what we call upper life with too much injustice at the expense of the lower. As it is no rare thing to see instances which degrade human nature in persons of the highest birth and education, so I apprehend that examples of what is really great and good have been sometimes found amongst those who have wanted all such advantages. In reality, palaces, I make no doubt, do sometimes contain nothing but dreariness and darkness, and the sun of righteousness hath shone forth with all its glory in a cottage.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Jensen I, p 330.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p 327.

<sup>3</sup>*Amelia* III, vii (Henley VI, p 139). See also *Amelia* VII, x (Henley VI, p 61).

When Booth and Amelia finally obtain their estate, the Atkinsons are rewarded for their loyalty, but whilst these latter play an important part in the novel, they are relatively dull and unimpressive compared to the humble country-dwellers whom Fielding had earlier idealised as an alternative to the *beau monde*. It is through Booth, Amelia and Dr Harrison, all members of the landed gentry, that Fielding, in these later years, presents his most significant rural alternative to Westminster. Interestingly, there are no boorish country squires or bull parsons in *Amelia*. The fact that there is no journey around the countryside in this novel means that there is no presentation of the great variety of rustic characters which had characterised the portrayal of manners in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. *Amelia*, as a novel, differs quite considerably from *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. It owes much to *Clarissa* and Richardson, and attempts to deal with the predicament of the good woman at the mercy of male seducers and predators, as well as with a satiric exposure of manners and morals in society and humanity in general. In *Amelia*, the greatest part of the action takes place in London and, as the novel is much more harshly realistic than its predecessors, there is no comic delight in the presentation of the country which, in keeping with the sobriety of Fielding's later years, is almost entirely didactic. Dr Harrison's rural retirement, like that of the clergyman in *The Champion*, February 26th, 1739-40, and Mr Wilson in *Joseph Andrews*, is plain and simple:

the situation of the parish under my good friend's care is very pleasant. It is placed among meadows, washed by a clear trout-stream, and flanked on both sides with downs. His house, indeed, would not much attract the admiration of the virtuoso. He built it himself, and it is remarkable only for its plainness; with which the furniture so well agrees, that there is no one thing in it that may not be absolutely necessary, except books, and the prints of Mr Hogarth, whom he calls a moral satirist.

Nothing, however, can be imagined more agreeable than the life that the doctor leads in this homely house, which he calls his earthly paradise.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>*Amelia* III, xii (Henley VI, p 164).

Cf. Mr Allworthy and Paradise Hall, in *TJ*. Dr Harrison shares Allworthy's moral views but is not ignorant of the ways of the world and is therefore less vulnerable to hypocrisy; he is a better model for social leadership.



When Booth and Amelia return from the Continent, they live in the same plain and simple manner in Harrison's house but, although Booth describes his, Amelia's and Harrison's rural happiness in conventional *beatus ille* terminology, his descriptions are superficial and brief. In *Amelia* the retirement creed is presented less elaborately than in the earlier novels and is therefore less impressive as an alternative to London. But London is so dangerous that it is a nonetheless attractive refuge. In *Amelia* there is no idealisation of the foaming ale and roast beef of old England as an alternative to the luxury of London, as in the earlier novels. Fielding makes some attempt at this old motif in *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon*, when describing the simple meal of seafood and beans enjoyed by his family, in a barn, on the Isle of Wight:

we completed the best, the pleasantest, and the merriest meal, with more appetite, more real, solid luxury, and more festivity, than was ever seen in an entertainment at White's.<sup>1</sup>

The Booths' rural felicity is destroyed when Booth abandons his plainness and purchases a coach, which financially ruins the couple and obliges them to flee to London. In London, their life-style is of necessity plain, a plainness which contrasts well with the extravagance of the *beau monde* as represented by the noble peer, Colonel and Mrs James and Captain and Mrs Trent. Whilst Booth succumbs to the temptations of the town, Amelia leads a retired life, avoiding the expensive diversions. In this she contrasts with Mrs Bennet who, together with her husband, had pursued the diversions, become impoverished and fallen easy prey to the peer and Mrs Ellison. As with Fielding's earlier rural exemplars, Booth's and Amelia's dignified behaviour contrasts to the excessive sophistication of the Londoners. Although simple, their behaviour is still genteel, as Fielding says of Amelia: "for, though she knew nothing of the town, she had had a genteel education, and kept the best company the country afforded."<sup>2</sup> In their innocence,

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<sup>1</sup>Henley XVI, p 229f.

<sup>2</sup>*Amelia* V, iii (Henley VI, p 239).

however, they are easily deceived by the Londoners. As always in Fielding's writings, symbolic of town deception is the masquerade.<sup>1</sup> At this masquerade, urban lust, represented by Colonel and Mrs James, Miss Matthews and the peer, disguised as shepherds, shepherdesses and other rustic figures, attempts to corrupt genuine country unworldliness, represented by Booth and "Amelia" (Mrs Bennet in disguise). The masquerade in *Amelia*, however, is a far more sinister affair than that in *Tom Jones*. Earlier in the novel Mrs Bennet has described her ruin at the masquerade by the noble peer.<sup>2</sup> This casts a menacing shadow over the masquerade attended by Booth and "Amelia", a shadow which is not dispelled until afterwards, when "Amelia" is revealed to be Mrs Bennet, disguised. In *Amelia*, this diversion, which Fielding always criticised, is presented not so much as a symbol of town folly, as it had been in earlier works, as an instrument of destruction. The central figure is a woman who is besieged and who is a prospective Clarissa. The novel is indeed very much more Richardsonian than what we have come to expect from early Fielding.

As in his earlier novels, the issue on which Fielding greatly focuses the town-country contrast in *Amelia*, with all its usual social implications, is that of emotional integrity in human relationships. The Londoners are adroit in disguising their feelings and at simulating others. This is exemplified by Colonel James who, under pretext of great friendship to Booth, plots to seduce Amelia. Booth's honourable and trusting nature is easily imposed upon by James, who uses all the courtly arts of hypocrisy, as in this scene where he affects pleasure at finding Booth at home with Amelia, when he expected otherwise:

the great joy which he suddenly conveyed into his countenance at the unexpected sight of his friend is to be attributed to that noble art which is taught in those excellent schools called the several courts of Europe. By this, men are enabled to dress out their countenances as much

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<sup>1</sup> *Amelia* X (Henley VII, p 185ff).

<sup>2</sup> *Amelia* VII, vii (Henley VII, p 48ff).

at their own pleasure as they do their bodies,  
and to put on friendship with as much ease as  
they can a laced coat.<sup>1</sup>

Art completely stifles nature in Mrs James. Fielding describes her as one to whom:

outward form and ceremony constituted the whole essence of friendship; who valued all her acquaintance alike, as each individual served equally to fill up a place in her visiting roll; and who, in reality, had not the least concern for the good qualities or well-being of any of them.<sup>2</sup>

Mrs James and Amelia had been friends on the Continent but, when they meet again in London, Mrs James treats her former friend with ceremonial disdain, on account of Amelia's poverty. The excessive politeness of the former and the sincerity of the latter are often contrasted.<sup>3</sup>

As in the earlier novels, marriage is one of the main issues around which these particular contrasts revolve. The Jameses' marriage is founded on mutual contempt, as one would expect of a town match in Fielding's writings. The Jameses, as with Captain and Mrs Trent, even organise adulterous relationships, like Mr and Mrs Modern of *The Modern Husband*, a play which *Amelia* greatly resembles. *Amelia* breaks with the earlier dramatic conventions in that the hero and heroine are married and, in contrast to the futile alliance of the Jameses is the loving, fruitful union of Booth and Amelia. The marriages are often contrasted directly, as in this description of the different activities of Mrs James and Amelia after their formal meeting in town:

she [Mrs James] went from Amelia directly to a rout, where she spent two hours in a crowd of company, talked again and again over the diversions and news of the town, played two rubbers at whist, and then retired to her own apartment, where, having passed another hour in undressing herself, she went to her own bed.

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<sup>1</sup> *Amelia* IX, ii (Henley VII, p 128).

<sup>2</sup> *Amelia* V, iv (Henley VI, p 247).

<sup>3</sup> *Amelia* IV, viii (Henley VI, p 209).

Booth and his wife, the moment their companion was gone, sat down to supper on a piece of cold meat, the remains of their dinner. After which, over a pint of wine, they entertained themselves for a while with the ridiculous behaviour of their visitant. But Amelia, declaring she rather saw her as the object of pity than anger, turned the discourse to pleasanter topics. The little actions of their children, the former scenes and future prospects of their life, furnished them with many pleasant ideas; and the contemplation of Amelia's recovery threw Booth into raptures. At length they retired, happy in each other.<sup>1</sup>

Unlike the romantic love of Joseph and Fanny, Tom and Sophia, that of Booth and Amelia is not portrayed in bucolic terms. Nevertheless, Amelia's constantly expressed preference for love in a cottage as opposed to misery in a palace, sentimentalises the relationship, and firmly associates it with the innocent rural environment where they met and married. It is greatly endangered by the town environment, where Booth is seduced in Newgate by Miss Matthews, but the relationship survives the town, and the couple, following their tribulations, retire to Wiltshire. Here the marriage serves a symbolic function in Fielding's representation of ideal social order. Although Amelia constantly asserts her willingness to live in a cottage, Fielding, as with his earlier country heroines, never puts her to that test. She and Booth are rewarded for their moral triumph with one of the largest estates in Wiltshire. Thus, for his rural ideal in *Amelia*, Fielding once again draws on the "country house" tradition. At the end of the novel Booth and Amelia are portrayed as living and behaving with the simplicity, dignity and hospitality which Fielding regarded as essential in the gentry. As with Tom and Sophia, their benevolence to all creates a close-knit community. Fielding describes their arrival at the Wiltshire estate:

amidst the acclamation of all the neighbours and every public demonstration of joy.

They found the house ready prepared to receive them by Atkinson's friend the old sergeant, and a good dinner prepared for them by Amelia's old

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<sup>1</sup>*Amelia* IV, vi (Henley VI, p 208). See also *Amelia* IX, vii (Henley VII, p 155).

nurse, who was addressed with the utmost duty by her son and daughter, most affectionately caressed by Booth and his wife, and by Amelia's absolute command seated next to herself at the table. At which, perhaps, were assembled some of the best and happiest people then in the world.<sup>1</sup>

All the familiar symbols are present, the warm welcome, the generous table, but most important is the instance of a loving acceptance of the hierarchy. Such a society, with all ranks bound together out of duty and love, is manifestly absent from London in the novel and, offered in a rural setting, is Fielding's perennial vision of an ideal social order.

Unlike the situation in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, in *Amelia* we are not left with the impression that traditional standards can be maintained. The use of the town-country contrast to present manners in *Amelia* is indeed consistent. The two environments are indeed polarised into sharp moral contrasts, degeneracy being emphatically associated with the urban *milieu* and traditional manners with the country environment. It is Fielding's failure to control totally, as he had done in his earlier novels, the materials under his hands, which largely undermines his success. Whereas the London of the earlier novels had been mainly portrayed through literary conventions, thereby creating the impression of being under control, that in *Amelia* is not. The London of *Amelia* is portrayed harshly and realistically, giving the impression of being uncontrollable, creating the impression that the degeneracy which it represents will predominate. The rural protagonists, although attractive, are powerless in this urban environment. The concluding rural ideal which they achieve is not so much an alternative to London's chaos, as a refuge from it. In general, Fielding's portrayal of manners in *Amelia* is secondary to an analysis of more profound moral and social problems. Fielding is more concerned to present the unjust social system created by aristocratic irresponsibility, rather than the luxurious life-styles and sophisticated behaviour which is symptomatic of such injustice.

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<sup>1</sup>*Amelia* XII, viii (Henley VII, p 338).