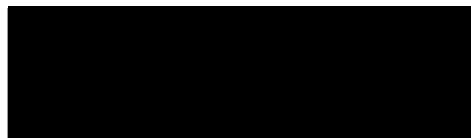


THE COUNTRY AND THE CITY IN THE WORKS
OF HENRY FIELDING: A Study in the
Selection and Adaptation of Literary
Conventions

A Thesis Submitted for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in the
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by
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I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree. All help received in preparation of the thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in the thesis.



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PREFACE

This thesis is based upon a reading of Fielding's complete writings, as these have been collected and published to date. Although much of the excellent Wesleyan edition has now been published, the most complete edition when I commenced this thesis was that by W. E. Henley. As most of this was already available in Braille and was suitable for my purposes, I have used it in this study. Where it is incomplete, I have turned to other editions, such as that by M. Locke of *The True Patriot*, W. Coley of *The Jacobite's Journal* and G. Jensen of *The Covent Garden Journal*. References to Fielding's works discovered since the publication of the Henley edition are acknowledged in the text. Biographical information has been taken mainly from W. Cross, *The History of Henry Fielding*. In tracing the literary conventions on the contrast between the country and the city which Fielding selected and used in his writings, I read widely in English literature and in Classical literature in translation. Where Fielding's sources are specific I have noted them, and where they are general I have described the tradition from which they are taken. Naturally it has not been possible to trace all conventions; to do so was not the ultimate aim of this study. To understand the various uses to which Fielding put the country-city contrast throughout his writings, I read widely in the general critical literature on Fielding himself and in the ethical, political, social, cultural and comic writing of the eighteenth century. For the tri-partite division of Fielding's career, I have taken ideas from many commentators, such as A. McKillop, R. Paulson and W. Cross. In discussing the changes in creative technique which took place throughout Fielding's career I have taken ideas from such critics as W. Rogers, R. Alter and C. Rawson. Materials drawn from Fielding's commentators are acknowledged in the text.

Whilst most of Fielding's critics have noted the prevalence of the country-city contrast in Fielding's writings, and whilst many have observed that his creative methods changed throughout

his career, I believe that this is the most thorough analysis of the significance which these different artistic procedures have for his use of the rural and urban dichotomy. This thesis, then, builds on old materials, but introduces new perspectives, observations and analyses.

The study could not have been undertaken without the assistance of many people whose contributions I gratefully acknowledge. To the staff of the Dixson Library of the University of New England and the Student Services Department of the Royal Blind Society of New South Wales I am indebted for the provision and transcription of books. To the voluntary readers of the Royal Blind Society I am indebted for many hours of service. I thank Keith and Kathleen Ward for invaluable technical assistance, and express my deep gratitude to Associate Professor W. G. Hoddinott and Dr Elaine Moon for excellent supervision and assistance in the preparation of the text. I thank Mrs Marion Brown for so patiently typing the text from a very difficult manuscript. Finally, thanks are due to Dr David Evans for invaluable clerical assistance and for proof reading the final copy against two draft manuscripts.

List of Abbreviations

<i>CGJ</i>	<i>The Covent Garden Journal</i>
<i>JA</i>	<i>Joseph Andrews</i>
<i>JJ</i>	<i>The Jacobite's Journal</i>
<i>JW</i>	<i>Jonathan Wild</i>
<i>TJ</i>	<i>Tom Jones</i>
<i>TP</i>	<i>The True Patriot</i>
<i>Inquiry</i>	<i>An Inquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers</i>
<i>Proposal</i>	<i>A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor</i>
<i>Coley</i>	Coley, W.B. (ed.), <i>The Jacobite's Journal and Related Writings</i> , Oxford, 1974
<i>Cross</i>	Cross, W.L., <i>The History of Henry Fielding</i> , 3 vols., New York, 1963
<i>Henley</i>	Henley, W.E. (ed.), <i>The Complete Works of Henry Fielding, Esq.</i> , 16 vols., New York, 1967
<i>Jensen</i>	Jensen, G.E., <i>The Covent Garden Journal</i> , 2 vols., New York, 1964
<i>Locke</i>	Locke, Miriam A. (ed.), <i>The True Patriot: and the History of Our Own Times</i> , London, 1965
<i>EC</i>	<i>Essays in Criticism</i>
<i>ELH</i>	<i>English Literary History</i>
<i>JEGP</i>	<i>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</i>
<i>JWCI</i>	<i>Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes</i>
<i>MLN</i>	<i>Modern Language Notes</i>
<i>MLQ</i>	<i>Modern Language Quarterly</i>
<i>MP</i>	<i>Modern Philology</i>
<i>NQ</i>	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
<i>PMLA</i>	<i>Publications of the Modern Language Association</i>
<i>PQ</i>	<i>Philological Quarterly</i>
<i>RES</i>	<i>Review of English Studies</i>
<i>SP</i>	<i>Studies in Philology</i>

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

A contrast between the country and the city is one of the most pervasive motifs in Henry Fielding's writings. In most of Fielding's works, the central geographical, social, political, cultural and ethical division is that between rural and urban England. In these works, the city is the source of most, but not all, of the negative qualities being portrayed, whilst the country, although not idyllic, is the source of nearly all of the positive values. The action of Fielding's major works generally consists of a journey, by virtuous characters, from the relatively innocent rural environment, to the corrupt urban environment, where they triumph over evil persecution and are rewarded with a retirement to the country, where they establish, as far as this is possible, the ideal, happy life. In fact, the country-city contrast is seldom absent from Fielding's writings, occurring either incidentally as motif, or substantially as a major thematic and structural principle in the works involved. Most of Fielding's critics have noted this, but generally concentrate on one aspect of the contrast in one particular work or group of works.¹ This thesis undertakes a study of the contrast as it occurs throughout Fielding's complete writings, arguing that the nature of the country-city contrast in Fielding's writings and, as far as these can be ascertained, Fielding's reasons for using it, are thoroughly in accordance with contemporary trends, and remain consistent

¹J. Loftis deals with the contrast in Fielding's plays (*Comedy and Society from Congreve to Fielding*, Stanford, 1960, p 116ff, and *The Politics of Drama in Augustan England*, Oxford, 1963, p 132f).

J.L. Duncan deals with the contrast in *JA* ("The Rural Ideal in Eighteenth-Century Fiction", *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, VIII, 1968, Section II).

I. Ehrenpreis discusses the contrast in *Fielding: Tom Jones*, *Studies in English Literature* No. 23, London, 1967, p 32ff.

G. Sherburn notes the contrast in *Amelia* ("Fielding's *Amelia*: An Interpretation", *ELH*, III, 1936; reprinted in R. Paulson (ed.), *Fielding: A Collection of Critical Essays*, New Jersey, 1962, p 157. Many other critics have dealt with the contrast.

throughout his career; also, that whilst the uses to which Fielding put the contrast remain consistent throughout his career, the artistic techniques with which he portrays the two environments change significantly. The argument of this thesis is that these different creative techniques which, broadly speaking, progress from being rhetorical to realistic, largely determine the effectiveness with which Fielding uses the rural-urban contrast to express his observations on life.

In Fielding's early works, the country-city contrast is chiefly interesting in that it reveals the wide range of conventions which he selected from various sources and later adapted to suit his own purposes in his major works.

As a mature writer, at the height of his creative faculties in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, Fielding successfully combines use of literary convention with realistic techniques to create a dynamic artistic procedure. With this dual procedure he transforms local and contemporary details about rural and urban life into universal statements about humanity and society. This fusion of literary tradition and contemporary realism renders his rural and urban environments thoroughly convincing in the significances which he assigns to them. Optimistic about life and literature during this period of his life, and able to fully adapt his materials to suit his own purposes, Fielding is in complete control of all forces in both novels, and transforms the highly derivative presentation of the country and the city in his early writings into an elaborate system of contrasts for the analysis of humanity and society.

As an older writer, somewhat disillusioned by increasing illness and his depressing experiences as a London magistrate, Fielding largely abandoned his earlier "literary" approach to life in favour of a more direct one. Whilst he retains in his later writings some of the literary conventions with which he had formerly portrayed the country and the city, he largely discards these in favour of a more authentic account of contemporary society. As a result of this new creative technique, and his general disillusionment during these years, his portrayal of urban life is so harshly realistic that it hinders his attempts to use the country-city contrast to effect the same moral and social resolutions which it

had effected at the end of *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. The situation in his later writings, then, is similar to that in his early works but, instead of an excessive use of literary conventions, it is an awareness of harsh realities which cannot be ordered by art which ultimately prevents his successfully using the country-city contrast to present his vision of life.

This thesis, then, is a study in the selection and adaptation of literary conventions.