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FIELDING'S "THE LIFE OF MR. JONATHAN WILD THE GREAT": A TEXTUAL AND CRITICAL STUDY

City University of New York PH.D. 1982

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FIELDING'S THE LIFE OF MR. JONATHAN WILD THE GREAT:

A TEXTUAL AND CRITICAL STUDY

by

ROY BENNIS FRIEDMAN

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in English in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1982

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1982

This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in English in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Jan. 25, 1982
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Abstract

FIELDING'S THE LIFE OF MR. JONATHAN WILD THE GREAT:
A TEXTUAL AND CRITICAL STUDY

by

Roy Bennis Friedman

Adviser: Professor Robert A. Day

This comprehensive study of Fielding's The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great is divided into three sections. Part 1 consists of a historical survey of criticism of Jonathan Wild, an examination of the life of the real Jonathan Wild in the light of newly published information, and a discussion of the "literary" and politically motivated treatments of Wild's life that had appeared before Fielding's book.

Part 2 describes the specific circumstances surrounding the composition and publication of Jonathan Wild in 1743 and analyzes the extensive revisions that Fielding made for the second edition of 1754. On the basis of internal and external evidence, it is argued that Fielding wrote Jonathan Wild hurriedly under great stress in 1741-42, and not in several stages some time between 1737 and 1742 as most scholars believe. A comparison of the texts of 1743 and 1754 demonstrates how Fielding refined his style, sharpened characterizations, increased verisimilitude, expanded authorial commentary, enhanced pacing and structure, and more fully developed literary, legal,

religious, and political themes.

Part 3 analyzes and assesses the text of 1754, which Fielding completed nine months before his death. The first chapter discusses Fielding's aim and design as expressed in the Preface to the Miscellanies (1743) and as revealed in the action, characterizations, allusions, and style of the revised text. The second chapter examines the similarities and differences between Jonathan Wild and the various literary traditions, forms, and techniques that were available to Fielding. The third chapter explores the art with which Fielding juxtaposed numerous genres, modes, and devices in imitation and burlesque to produce a work of varied expectations, effects, and implications that is truly sui generis.

Also examined in this chapter are Fielding's narrative techniques; his characterizations, some of which are more fully drawn than has generally been recognized; and his style, which is created in part by the opposition and interplay of two personae, the mock biographer and the narrator. The study concludes with a discussion of the vision--at once reassuring and challenging--that Fielding expresses through the artful integration of the literary elements previously considered.

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Part 1

PERSPECTIVES

Chapter I

JONATHAN WILD: HISTORICAL SURVEY OF CRITICISM

Originally published in 1743 as the third volume of Fielding's Miscellanies, The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great has, through the years, been quietly neglected, roundly condemned, and, at best, only partially studied by even its most ardent admirers.

Fielding was of course well known during his lifetime as a playwright, essayist, and novelist, yet his fictional treatment of the notorious thief who had been hanged at Tyburn in 1725 failed to attract the attention of most eighteenth-century readers and critics. In his study of the first volume of the Miscellanies, Henry K. Miller writes that Jonathan Wild "seems not to have excited any general comment at the time. . . . [N]o one was prepared to see it as a significant contribution to the world's literature."[1] Frederick Blanchard, who compiled an exhaustive survey of Fielding criticism from the 1740s to the 1920s, observes that "only during the final years of the [eighteenth] century, when it appeared in popular editions, did Jonathan Wild enter into its career of wider esteem--nor even then does it seem to have been a particular favorite."[2]

During most of the nineteenth century Fielding's book was widely censured because of its vivid portrayal of "low" life. Many critics failed to recognize Fielding's moral intentions and even those who understood his purpose and appreciated some aspects of his writing

were repelled by the subject matter. Subsequent scholars examined Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia in considerable detail but for the most part were content to describe Jonathan Wild in general terms, restating the theme, summarizing the plot, and making an obligatory remark or two about the work's distinctive irony. More recently, there has been a tendency among Fielding specialists to avoid a serious critical study by categorizing the book as tract, apologue, or satire, the implication being that Jonathan Wild does not merit the careful attention that has been given to Fielding's other full-length prose fictions, which belong unquestionably to the genre of the novel.

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The scholar searching for eighteenth-century opinions about Jonathan Wild has his work cut out for him. On the one hand, it is perhaps not surprising that during a period when the English novel was undergoing extraordinary changes and when men of letters had not yet developed the habit of examining literary works systematically, there is no comprehensive treatment of Fielding's book. On the other hand, it is curious that among the number of reviews, essays, letters, and memoirs of the day that have survived, so little mention is made of a book-length work by a writer of Fielding's recognized stature. The list of subscribers printed at the beginning of Volume One of the subscription edition of the Miscellanies includes the names of 427 persons, many of whom may be presumed to have read Jonathan Wild. An investigation of available published works by or about these subscribers, however, reveals no evidence (with the exception of the Dodington reference noted below) of their personal reactions to Fielding's book

or of any response to it on the part of the public in general.

Jonathan Wild was not totally ignored by Fielding's political enemies, however. As part of its continuing vilification of Fielding as a turncoat, an obscene writer, and a thoroughly depraved individual, William Kenrick's paper Old England made several derogatory allusions to Jonathan Wild. The March 5, 1748 number included the following hit:

> Some, to push on the Jest, on lewd Trotplaid did call,
> Who has wrote a great deal, and yet nothing at all;
> .....
> For his low abject Themes, abject Learning purloins,
> Thief-Catchers his Heroes, and Wh*res his He-roins.

Other numbers ridiculed Fielding for having "a Knack of Old Baily Biography" and attempted to equate his character with the "low" subject matter of his plays, of Joseph Andrews, and of Jonathan Wild:

> .....
> Some Plays he wrote,
> Sans Wit or Plot,
> Adventures of Inferiors!
> Which, with his Lives
> Of Rogues and Thieves,
> Supply the Town's Posteriors.[3]

This last doggerel epitaph, written on the occasion of the demise of the Jacobite's Journal, was reprinted in both the Gentleman's Magazine and the London Magazine of November 1748 and undoubtedly helped to promote the view of Fielding as a writer of unworthy fiction.

An indication of Fielding's own evaluation of Jonathan Wild, at least in comparison with Joseph Andrews and perhaps in comparison to his plays and essays, may be inferred from a letter that Joseph Warton wrote to his brother on October 29, 1746, two and a half years after the publication of Jonathan Wild and over three and a half years after the appearance of Joseph Andrews. Warton, who had recently

spent two entertaining evenings talking with Fielding until one or two in the morning, reported that Fielding "values, as he justly may, his Joseph Andrews above all his writings."[4]

George Bubb Dodington, to whom Fielding addressed the "Epistle on True Greatness" and who subscribed for six sets of the Miscellanies, apparently enjoyed Jonathan Wild so much that he read it to company. In his Memoirs, Richard Cumberland wrote that Dodington treated the dowager Ladies Stafford and Hervey "with the whole of Fielding's Jonathan Wild, in which he certainly consulted his own turn for irony rather than their's for elegance, but he set it off with much humour after his manner, and they were polite enough to be pleased, or at least to appear as if they were."[5]

Perhaps the earliest written appreciation of Fielding's characterizations in Jonathan Wild was by Jane Collier, a family friend who temporarily stayed with Fielding upon his retirement to Fordhook in 1754 (most probably while collaborating with Sarah Fielding in the composition of The Cry [1754]). In her satiric essay on The Art of Tormenting (1753), Miss Collier had written that she would not enlarge on the interested use that was to be made of one's friends because there were so many good examples already published "to which I could refer my reader for his practice on that head; particularly the behaviour of Jonathan Wild towards his friend Mr. Heartfree."[6] It is interesting to note that Miss Collier concluded her book with a facetious maxim, just as Fielding included numerous such maxims in Jonathan Wild, particularly in the final chapter, where there is a list of fifteen of the hero's maxims for attaining greatness.[7]

Although her single reference to Wild and Heartfree and her use of irony and the maxim, two techniques that Fielding employed liberally in Jonathan Wild, hardly constitute a serious consideration of the work, it does suggest that Jonathan Wild was not totally ignored by those interested in the literature of the day.

Samuel Johnson did not write specifically about Jonathan Wild, but his bias against Fielding and his novels has been well documented and no doubt helped shape the response to Jonathan Wild during the years to follow. Boswell tells us that Johnson considered Fielding to be a "'blockhead'" and "'a barren rascall'" and that he criticized Fielding's novels on both aesthetic and moral grounds. In Dr. Johnson's opinion, Fielding's characters of manners were entertaining but superficially observed and the pictures that Fielding drew were "of very low life."[8] Johnson undoubtedly had Fielding's fiction in mind when he wrote in The Rambler: "It is justly considered as the greatest excellency of art, to imitate nature; but it is necessary to distinguish those parts of nature, which are most proper for imitation: greater care is still required in representing life, which is so often discoloured by passion, or deformed by wickedness. If the world be promiscuously described, I cannot see of what use it can be to read the account."[9] Although there is no evidence that Johnson ever read Jonathan Wild,[10] if he had, it is not difficult to imagine the objections that he might have made to it.

The first substantial study of Fielding was written by Arthur Murphy, a playwright, lawyer, and essayist, who edited Fielding's collected works in 1762. Prefixed to the four-volume collection was

"An Essay on the Life and Genius of Henry Fielding, Esq.," which was to influence criticism of Fielding for the next century and a half.[11] Murphy readily acknowledged the genius of his subject, but he also depicted vividly the follies and vices to which Fielding was allegedly addicted.

Less imaginative but considerably more accurate than his account of the author's life was Murphy's modest discussion of Jonathan Wild. Unlike numerous editors and critics who were to write after him, Murphy understood Fielding's purpose, technique, and achievement. After excerpting a lengthy passage from the Preface to the Miscellanies in which Fielding explained his intention and moral doctrine, Murphy commented:

> Thus hath our author developed the design, with which he wrote the history of Jonathan Wild; a noble purpose, surely, and of the highest importance to society. A satire like this, which at once strips off the spurious ornaments of hypocrisy, and shews the genuine beauty of the moral character, will be always worthy of the attention of the reader, who desires to rise wiser or better from the book he peruses; not to mention that this performance hath in many places such seasonings of humour, that it cannot fail to be a very high entertainment to all, who have a taste for exhibitions of the abusrd and ridiculous in human life.[12]

Murphy discerned three remarkable periods in Fielding's life during which the author's genius first broke forth, then achieved a fullness of perfection, and finally tended to decline. These three eras corresponded precisely to the creation of Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia. Although Murphy did not discuss when Fielding wrote Jonathan Wild, he was the first of many to consider the book as belonging to an earlier period of Fielding's life in which he seemed to be "preluding, as it were, to some great work, in which all the

component parts of his genius were to be seen in their full and vigorous exertion." Without setting forth specific reasons for his literary judgment, Murphy opined, "But though the merit of the Life of Jonathan Wild be very considerable, yet it must be allowed to be very short of that higher order of composition which our author attained in his other pieces of invention."[13]

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By the beginning of the nineteenth century the bias against Fielding's depiction of low life that Dr. Johnson had expressed and the portrait of Fielding as a talented but dissolute novelist that Murphy had fabricated became well established.[14] Representative of the critical view of Jonathan Wild that prevailed during the early nineteenth century are the opinions of Dr. John Aikin, William Mudford, and John Nichols. In his General Biography (1802), Aikin wrote of Fielding:

> His "History of Jonathan Wild" may be regarded as the commencement of that kind of humorous and satiric delineation of character in fictitious adventures which he afterwards practised with so much distinction. At the same time it displays a familiarity with the scenes of low profligacies, which it is extraordinary a person in decent life should ever acquire. But there is no doubt that his course of early licentiousness and extravagance had laid an unhappy foundation for too much knowledge of this kind.[15]

William Mudford, who included Jonathan Wild in his series of collected works of The British Novelists (1811), had some harsher comments about Fielding's book. In his preface, "Critical Observations upon Jonathan Wild," Mudford wrote that Fielding "was so unfortunate in his subject, that had he produced the Foundling [Tom Jones], the present work [Jonathan Wild] would now be forgotten, as some, perhaps may

think it deserves to be." Mudford did appreciate Fielding's use of language in Jonathan Wild, however, conceding that even those who are most offended at the licentiousness of the book's incidents "will not surely deny that it contains much good writing, a tone of grave irony which is exquisitely preserved, and even an eloquence in some parts which I know not where to parallel in any other of Fielding's works." The purpose and moral thrust of the book apparently eluded Mudford altogether, for he remarked, "Why Fielding has tempted to expand, into a regular narrative, the actions of such a man [Wild], cannot easily be conjectured."[16]

John Nichols demonstrated the influence that Arthur Murphy's essay had in the nineteenth century by quoting at considerable length Murphy's commentary on Jonathan Wild in his Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century (1812). Like Murphy, Nichols considered Jonathan Wild to be an early work of Fielding's, which afforded "an agreeable foretaste of that talent for the delineation of life and manners which Mr. Fielding afterwards so fully displayed." Nichols did not value Fielding's book as much as Murphy, however, finding that it was "rendered disagreeable by the low scenes of profligacy and vice with which it abounds. The representations may be just, and introduced with a laudable intention; but they are odious and disgusting."[17]

Another kind of objection to Jonathan Wild, which became more common during later years, was first raised by Anna Barbauld in her biographical and critical essay on Fielding in The British Novelists (1810). Mrs. Barbauld devoted only a brief paragraph to Jonathan Wild, writing, "The humour and strokes of character in this piece

first gave indications of the mode of writing from whence he [Fielding] was to derive his celebrity. It is, like Gay's Beggar's Opera, an exhibition of scenes of the greatest profligacy in low life, with an implied satire on the world in general, and particularly of the world of high life. Joseph Andrews was his first regular novel."[18] Mrs. Barbauld did not include Jonathan Wild in her collection of British novels, and her reference to the book as a "piece" in contrast to her designation of Joseph Andrews as Fielding's "first regular novel" are an early indication of the difficulty that editors, scholars, and critics were later to experience in finding a suitable generic classification for Jonathan Wild, although many have been quick to assert that the book is not a novel.

Perhaps the most egregious misreading of Jonathan Wild by an eminent literary figure appeared in Sir Walter Scott's biography of Fielding (1819). Scott apparently did not take the time to read Jonathan Wild very carefully or, for some reason, was incapable of comprehending the design and details of the book. Ignoring Fielding's Preface in the Miscellanies and the characterizations of the Heartfrees, Scott stated:

> It is not easy to see what Fielding proposed to himself by a picture of complete vice, unrelieved by any thing of human feeling, and never by any accident even deviating into virtue; and the ascribing of a train of fictitious adventures to a real character, has in it something clumsy and inartificial on the one hand, and, on the other, subjects the author to a suspicion that he only used the title of Jonathan Wild, in order to connect his book with the popular renown of that infamous depredator.[19]

In contrast to Scott, both Byron and Coleridge had little difficulty in recognizing the moral purpose of Fielding's work and

in appreciating its social and political implications, particularly as they applied to their own age. Byron was the first to recognize the radical or revolutionary elements implicit in Fielding's vision. While involved in the Italian revolutionary movement in 1821, Byron noted in his journal:

> They talk of Radicalism, Jacobinism, etc., in England (I am told), but they should turn over the pages of "Jonathan Wild the Great." The inequality of conditions, and the littleness of the great, were never set forth in stronger terms; and his [Fielding's] contempt for Conquerors and the like is such, that, had he lived now, he would have been denounced in "The Courier" as the grand Mouthpiece and Factionary of the revolutionists. And yet I never recollect to have heard this turn of Fielding's mind noticed, though it is obvious in every page.[20]

Coleridge also commented on the relevance of Jonathan Wild to the political situation on the day. In a notebook entry of February 27, 1832, he observed: "Chap. vi, Book 2 on Hats,--brief as it is, exceeds any thing even in Swift's Lilliput or Tale of the Tub. How forcibly it applies to the Whigs, Tories, and Radicals of our own times." Coleridge's main concern, however, was with the difficult artistic challenge that Fielding had set for himself, the psychological response that readers were likely to have to a portrait of utter depravity, and the efforts that Fielding made in order to compensate for the drawbacks inherent in such a work. Coleridge wrote:

> JONATHAN WILD is assuredly the best of all the fictions in which a villain is throughout the prominent character. But how impossible it is by any force of genius to create a sustained attractive interest for such a ground-work, and how the mind wearies of, and shrinks from, the more than painful interest, the Μίσητον, of utter depravity,--Fielding himself felt and endeavored to mitigate and remedy by the (on all other principles) far too large a proportion, and too quick recurrence, of the interposed chapters of moral

> reflection, like the chorus in the Greek tragedy,--admirable specimens as these chapters are of profound irony and philosophic satire. . . .
>
> Whether the transposition of Fielding's scorching wit (as B. iii c. xiv.) to the mouth of his hero be objectionable on the ground of incredulus odi, or is to be admired as answering the author's purpose by unrealizing the story, in order to give a deeper reality to the truths intended,--I must leave doubtful, yet myself inclining to the latter judgement.[21]

This concise notebook entry of Coleridge's was the most probing observation written about Jonathan Wild since its publication almost a century before. The "low" setting of the book and the alleged vices of Fielding did not prevent Coleridge from comprehending the work's overriding moral satire. Unlike most of his contemporaries, Coleridge accepted Fielding's choice of subject matter, he recognized its appropriateness to Fielding's artistic purpose, and he perceived the deeper realities beneath the surface story. Coleridge's subtle point about the rhetorical and generic strategies that Fielding employed in order to manipulate the reader's interest, expectations, and views anticipates an important subject that has only been touched upon by scholars and which forms an important part of the final chapters of this study. What Coleridge termed the "unrealizing" of the story so as to give a deeper reality to intended truths is, it will be shown, the result of Fielding's artful combination of diverse literary elements in order to achieve an impressive range of effects that encompasses the comic, the satiric, the tragic, and the allegoric.

After Coleridge, other critics and editors began to pay closer attention to the design and purpose of Jonathan Wild. In Lives of Eminent and Illustrious Englishmen (1837), which was to

become one of the chief reference works of the mid-century, George Cunningham referred to Fielding's book as "perhaps the most ingeniously arranged description of a tissue of blackguardisms which has ever been given to the world."[22]

Edward Bulwer-Lytton observed in "On Art in Fiction" (1838), a two-part essay in the Monthly Chronicle, that "Fielding always commenced with a plan--with a conception--with a moral end, to be achieved by definite agencies, and through the medium of certain characters pre-formed in his mind." Bulwer believed that "in the greatest works of Fielding a very obtuse critic may perceive that the author sat down to write in order to embody a design previously formed. The perception of moral truths urged him to the composition of his fictions. In Jonathan Wild, the finest prose satire in the English language, Fielding, before he set pen to paper, had resolved to tear the mask from False Greatness."[23] Bulwer's observation about Fielding's reliance on a moral plan and his creation of character in conformity with that plan was well taken, if not sufficiently amplified. Although he emphasized the importance of Fielding's moral perceptions in his "fictions," it is worth noting that Bulwer did not classify Jonathan Wild as a novel but rather as prose satire --a designation that a number of subsequent scholars have applied to the book without regarding it as highly as Bulwer did.

The literary merit of Jonathan Wild was by no means generally agreed upon during the mid-nineteenth century, however. An example of the bias that still existed against the book because of its subject matter may be seen in an essay by E.P. Whipple that appeared in the

North American Review of January 1849, ostensibly as a review of the collected edition of Fielding's works edited by Thomas Roscoe.[24] Although Whipple recognized that "the episode of Heartfree and his wife has many touches of genuine pathos, and the humanity of Fielding finely underlies the mocking praise he awards to their hard-hearted and selfish persecutor," he maintained that "this work smacks of the vulgarity of the localities to which its characters are principally confined."[25]

Frederick Lawrence's The Life of Henry Fielding (1853) contained some favorable comments about Jonathan Wild but, in the end, censured it on aesthetic and moral grounds that recall Dr. Johnson's views on Fielding's other novels. "None of his [Fielding's] works display greater shrewdness of observation; and in none do we meet with sounder philosophical reflections," Lawrence wrote, yet he concluded that Fielding's explanation of his design and intention could "scarcely be held a sufficient excuse for the mass of disagreeable details--the revolting villainies and unrelieved depravities which it unfolds to the general reader. With all its wit and cleverness, it cannot be classed with his other fictions, nor read with the same degree of pleasure."[26]

Whitwell Elwin, editor of the Quarterly Review, was even more critical of Fielding's book. "But with numerous excellent passages, 'Jonathan Wild,' on the whole, is clumsy in the conception, and coarse in the details," he wrote in the December 1855 number of the magazine. "To preserve the consistency of a long allegorical satire requires more thought and care than Fielding could bestow.

What is admirable was due to his genius; what is defective to his haste, with the exception of sundry repulsive particulars, which were due, we fear, to an inherent grossness of taste."[27]

Thomas Keightley was the first to discuss the pervasive political satire in Jonathan Wild that Byron and Coleridge had commented briefly upon in their notebooks almost a generation earlier. In an essay "On the Life and Writings of Henry Fielding," which appeared in Fraser's Magazine during January and February of 1858, Keightley suggested that Fielding exerted far more care in the writing of the book than earlier critics had appreciated. "The Life of Jonathan Wild has proved a perfect crux to the critics, a proof perhaps that it may have a recondite sense," he wrote. Instead of a vulgar book about an infamous criminal, Keightley saw "a scathing political satire, like Dante's Inferno, where, from fear of the consequences, the real meaning is so veiled as to be hardly discoverable without a key."[28] Keightley deciphered the key, outlining the correlation between the worlds of crime and politics. He pointed out that Prigs and Prigism stood for Whigs and Whiggism, that Jonathan Wild represented Sir Robert Walpole, and that throughout the text Fielding made allusions to the public and private life of the Prime Minister.

Keightley's identification of the strong political element in Jonathan Wild led him to an influential hypothesis about the book's genesis and method of composition. Without offering any internal or external evidence, Keightly speculated:

> Fielding may have written the satire in the heat of his indignation at the Licensing Act, but he did not publish it. With time and the fall of Walpole in 1742, his anger

> probably expired, and the satire would never have seen the light, had he not been pressed for materials to make up his Miscellanies in the following year. He may then have gone over his Life of Jonathan Wild, have made additions to it, and altered it so that the satire might not easily have been discovered, or that he might be able to deny that it contained any individual satire.[29]

During the decades following Keightley's probing essay, men of letters continued to undervalue or misread Jonathan Wild. In Poets and Novelists (1876), George Barnett Smith referred to Fielding as "England's first great novelist," yet he noted that Jonathan Wild "was written for a special purpose; it fulfilled that purpose admirably; but beyond that fact, and that it contains much of its author's sarcastic genius, the fragment is not in any other aspect very noticeable."[30]

In "An Essay on Comedy" (1877), George Meredith incorrectly cited a scene from Fielding's book in order to distinguish the comic (which he described as a perceptive spirit that evokes thoughtful laughter) from the satiric and the humorous. Meredith wrote:

> Fielding's Jonathan Wild presents a case of this peculiar distinction, when that man of eminent greatness remarks upon the unfairness of a trial in which the condemnation has been brought about by twelve men of the opposite party; for it is not satiric, it is not humorous; yet it is immensely comic to hear a guilty villain protesting that his own "party" should have a voice in the law. It opens an avenue into villains' ratiocination. And the comic is not canceled though we should suppose Jonathan to be giving play to his humor.

While Meredith's example may accurately illustrate his theory of the comic, it is not an accurate description of what Fielding had written. Meredith caught his mistake, however, commenting parenthetically: "(I may have dreamed this, or had it suggested to me, for, on

referring to Jonathan Wild, I do not find it.)"[31]

Leslie Stephen's ten-volume edition of Fielding's Works (1882) included a biographical essay in which he commented imperceptively, if not inaccurately, that Jonathan Wild was one of Fielding's "most characteristic if not his most pleasing performances."[32] A few years earlier Stephen had not considered the book to be such a characteristic work. In a general discussion of the characters in Fielding's fiction, Stephen had set Jonathan Wild apart from the other books, remarking, "(for Jonathan Wild is a satire, not a history, or, as Mr. Taine fancies, a tract)."[33]

Even Austin Dobson, whose biography Fielding (1883) did much to correct the unjust view of the novelist's personal life, seemed partial to the longstanding prejudice against the "low" material depicted in Jonathan Wild. Dobson admired the skill and concentration with which Fielding pursued his plan but judged that the book's place in Fielding's works was "immediately after his three great novels, and this is more by reason of its subject than its workmanship, which could hardly be excelled."[34]

In A History of Eighteenth Century Literature (1888), Edmund Gosse suggested a possible explanation for the public's lack of enthusiasm for Jonathan Wild. In Gosse's opinion, the book was never a favorite among Fielding's readers "because of its caustic cynicism and the unbroken gloom of its tone, but it is equal to the best he has left us in force and originality. . . . The inexorable irony which is sustained all through, even when the most detestable acts of the hero

are described, forms rather a strain at last upon the reader's nerves, and no one would turn to Jonathan Wild for mere amusement."[35]

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Towards the end of the nineteenth century and in the beginning of the twentieth, Sir Walter Raleigh, William Henley, and George Saintsbury expressed increased appreciation of both the intellectual and aesthetic qualities of Fielding's book.

Raleigh's The English Novel (1894) contained a succinct but astute consideration of Jonathan Wild in which he praised Fielding's "polished irony" and "his taste for clearness and unity of intellectual structure." While Raleigh admired the degree to which Fielding's irony presented a picture "of almost 'perfect diabolism,'" he also appreciated the range of shadings of Fielding's humor and the skill with which he juxtaposed the repulsive with the attractive. In Raleigh's opinion, Fielding's humor

> is at its grimmest in this work, not so much in depicting Wild, the horror of whose character is almost forgotten in its artistic unity, as in sundry subordinate details, such as the conduct of Heartfree's debtors when he is in prosperity, and of his creditors when he is in prison. . . . The writer whose eyes are thus open to the possible profundities of human wickedness has earned a right to speak of human virtue, and by means of the little group of amiable figures --Heartfree, Mrs. Heartfree, the good magistrate, and Friendly--Fielding relieves the blackness of his picture.[36]

William Ernest Henley first defended Fielding's reputation in Views and Reviews (1890), observing that "in certain chapters of Jonathan Wild the Great there is enough of sustained intellectual effort to furnish forth a hundred modern novels."[37] When, in 1902, Henley edited the most inclusive edition of Fielding's works to date,

he wrote in his perceptive essay, "The Life, Genius and Achievement of Henry Fielding," that Jonathan Wild was "in some ways Fielding's masterpiece" and "certainly one of the masterpieces of English Literature." Henley described Jonathan Wild as "that tremendous achievement in pure Irony, that masterpiece in a mode in which none save Swift has excelled this author" and in a footnote was prompted to add: "Swift was a master; but in all his work there is no Jonathan, no Miss Tishy, no Mr. Snap--in fact no Jonathan Wild the Great."[38]

George Saintsbury was perhaps the most perceptive and persistent admirer of Fielding's book writing at this time. In an introduction to his 1893 edition of Jonathan Wild, Saintsbury had stated: "I at least have no doubt that the book is a very great book. It has been described as 'the evolution of a purely intellectual conception.' But I think we must add that the purely intellectual conception here puts on robes of fleshly and vital execution."[39] In two subsequent studies, Saintsbury called attention to the singular qualities of Jonathan Wild, praising its satiric style while also affirming its novelistic aspects. In The English Novel (1913), Saintsbury wrote that Jonathan Wild

> really is a novel and a remarkable one--superior even to Vanity Fair, according to Thackeray's own definition, as a delineation of "a set of people living without God in the world." But it is even more (and here its only parallel is A Tale of a Tub, which is more desultory and much more of a fatrasie or salmagundy of odds and ends) a masterpiece and quintessential example of irony."

In Saintsbury's view, Jonathan Wild demonstrated "of what immense and exalted application the novel-method was capable; . . . But it is an

exercise in a by-way of the novel road-system, though an early proof of the fact that such by-ways are endlessly open."[40]

Three years later Saintsbury again returned to Jonathan Wild in The Peace of the Augustans (1916): the delight of Fielding's book, he wrote, "is almost as purely intellectual as any which can be, at the same time, aesthetic." He recognized "a certain interest of story" and praised Fielding's ability to make many of the characters "so utterly human in their inhumanity that a fresh scale of values arises under which they justify themselves, and by help of which the surpassing irony--never excessive, never inadequate--of style and treatment can have free play." According to Saintsbury, "the gravity as well as the easy supremacy of art with which the manipulator [Fielding] of these diabolically alive puppets handles them; the absence alike of savagery and of mere amusement in his vivisection, preparation, and exhibition of them; the perfection with which this artistic object, certainly the actual, whether it was the conscious one or not, is achieved, make the thing absolutely unique."[41]

At about the time when Saintsbury was writing his general appreciations of Fielding's book, other scholars turned their attention to a brief satirical life of Wild that had appeared shortly after the real thief's execution and to a more thorough examination of the historical and political aspects of Fielding's text. Notes and Queries published a lively controversy between Alfred F. Robbins and J. Paul De Castro over the purported authorship of an article about the real Wild that had been published in Mist's Weekly Journal on June 12 and June 19, 1725. Robbins saw the first germ of

Jonathan Wild in the article and, in fact, argued that Fielding, although only eighteen at the time, was its author.[42] De Castro maintained that Robbins' theory was mere opinion unbuttressed by reason and set forth convincing arguments in rebuttal.[43] In a more solidly documented study, John Edwin Wells elaborated upon the political satire in Jonathan Wild that Thomas Keightley had first discussed over fifty years before. Wells examined Fielding's earlier works, the attitudes and beliefs of the day, and the text of the book itself, concluding that the story of Wild and his gang was "largely political satire, the chief butt of which is Robert Walpole" and that Fielding wrote Jonathan Wild "with his eye steadily on the Great Man of the age."[44]

The major work of Fielding scholarship to appear during this period was Wilbur Cross's The History of Henry Fielding (1918). Although still considered the definitive biography by many scholars today, Cross's three-volume study added little to the criticism on Jonathan Wild except for the matter of its date of composition. Cross greatly admired Fielding's book, which he referred to as "the glory" of the Miscellanies, but he devoted only a few pages of his voluminous work to it. Cross did, however, contradict the longstanding assumption that Fielding had written part of Jonathan Wild before Joseph Andrews. Citing limited internal and external evidence, Cross fixed the date of composition as 1742 and opined that "as a sustained piece of irony, occasionally breaking into burlesque, there has been nothing in our literature comparable with it outside of Swift."[45]

Five years after Cross's biography, the French scholar Aurelien Digeon published two works that added substantially to the literature on Jonathan Wild. In Le Texte des romans de Fielding (1923), Digeon compared the 1743 edition of the book that had been published as Volume III of the Miscellanies with the revised edition that Fielding completed in 1754. In Les Romans de Fielding (1923), Digeon systematically analyzed the content and structure of Jonathan Wild and also formulated a hypothesis (following Keightley) about its dates and method of composition. Although he appreciated the harmony of the book as a whole, Digeon discerned two distinct elements that he theorized were written at different times. He believed that Fielding began the work in 1737 by writing a short, mordant biography of Wild and then, after completing Joseph Andrews, added the story of the Heartfrees, which was "so obviously written in his new manner." Digeon held that the most vigorous political allusions were found in the "original nucleus of the novel, or rather in what remains of it in the final version."

Fascinating as Digeon's theory is, the arguments that he sets forth in its support are based either on unsubstantiated assertions or on inaccurate textual evidence. As will be seen, my own comparison of the texts of 1743 and 1754 contradicts Digeon's findings about the incidence of revisions and rebuts his strongest point in favor of multiple dates of composition. Digeon's undeveloped remark that Jonathan Wild is "at bottom purely anarchical"[46] may be a more astute observation than his elaborate speculations about Fielding's methods of composition.

After Digeon two scholars made brief but cogent observations regarding Jonathan Wild. In Henry Fielding: Playwright, Journalist, and Master of the Art of Fiction (1929), H.K. Banerji wrote that Jonathan Wild was "the greatest and sternest" of all Fielding's satires. He believed that "what humour there is in the book is almost invariably grim" and concluded that "Fielding's enthusiasm for righteousness aroused such indignation in him that his terrible irony oppresses the reader."[47] In A Survey of Burlesque and Parody in English (1931), George Kitchin identified an important element of parody in Fielding's book. "Jonathan Wild, however, is more than a mere comic extravagance on crime," he wrote. "The spirit of parody enters into the style, which is that of the impassive historian."[48] As Part III of my study will demonstrate, Fielding of course parodies more styles than just that of the historian or biographer, but Kitchin's terse remark provided a fruitful approach to the text that was not explored for many more years.

In 1941 William Robert Irwin completed The Making of Jonathan Wild: A Study in the Literary Method of Henry Fielding, which is to date the only book-length study concerned wholly with Jonathan Wild. The word "making" in Irwin's title is said to summarize the process by which Fielding synthesized existing biographical, historical, ethical, and literary data. Irwin provides a useful treatment of the real Wild, a brief sketch of the political situation during the Walpole years, a valuable chapter on eighteenth-century ethical commonplaces that inform Fielding's work, and a rather sketchy discussion of some of the literary traditions and forms that were available to Fielding.

The merits of Irwin's study lie in his ~~scrupulo~~us delineation of diverse background materials; this perspective, however, leads to a consideration of Jonathan Wild as a lifeless historical curiosity, rather than as an independent living work of art. Irwin acknowledges the need for a full critical analysis of Jonathan Wild and recognizes the interesting problem in literary form and techniques that it presents, yet he ignores the implications and thematic meanings of the various literary elements that he identifies; he barely examines the plot, characterization, and style of the text itself; and he makes little or no attempt to explore how Fielding adapted and combined sundry material to give fullest expression to his far-ranging ideas.

Despite his thorough investigation of the traditions, facts, and ideas that contributed to the "making" of Fielding's book, Irwin's assessment of the finished product is quite meager. In his opinion Jonathan Wild is "one of Fielding's minor works" and "plainly not a novel." While acknowledging the difficulties in labeling the form into which Fielding cast his work, Irwin fails to take into sufficient account the originality, force, and substance of Fielding's book, and his overall conception of the work is both oversimplified and misleading: "The peculiarity of Jonathan Wild can be very simply stated," Irwin wrote. "It represents an imperfect version of the comic epic poem in prose, a kind of writing which Fielding developed in his great novels."[49]

A year after Irwin's well-documented study appeared, Louis Kronenberger wrote a lively introduction for an edition of Jonathan Wild (1942). Although not a scholarly discussion, Kronenberger's

introduction contains some perceptive observations about Fielding's irony and novelistic techniques. "A Tale must not be less a tale--must not be less interesting, less coherent, less plausible--because it implies the opposite of what it says: irony is not worth having if irony is all we are to have," Kronenberger wrote. "Happily Fielding contrived to make his story interesting in itself, to vary the feats that made Wild ever more splendid, to shuffle the qualities that made him ever more glorious; he contrived to show us Wild the friend, and Wild the lover, and Wild the husband, as well as Wild the boss and Wild the businessman."

Although Kronenberger appreciated Fielding's intention of showing that "what seemed like nonsense had in it a disconcerting amount of sober truth," he also felt that Fielding "reminds us too often and too emphatically that he is being ironic." Apparently Kronenberger did not recognize all of the ways by which Fielding tried to compensate for the pervasive irony, for he objected to Fielding's "humane lapses" in depicting the Heartfrees "with undisguised and open sympathy" and he missed the allegorical-satirical aspects of Mrs. Heartfree's tale, commenting that "there is something a little overblown about Mrs. Heartfree's escaping ravishment five times in twenty-odd pages."[50]

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During the early post-war years, a few scholars turned their attention to Jonathan Wild with varied results. A succinct but forceful dismissal of Fielding's book appeared in The Great Tradition (1948), in which F.R. Leavis wrote: "Jonathan Wild, with its famous

irony, seems to me mere hobbledehoydom (much as one applauds the determination to explode the ganster-hero)." Leavis's comment was part of a broader attack on Fielding's attitudes and concerns, which he found to be "simple, and not such as to produce an effect of anything but monotony."[51]

In contrast to Leavis's terse remarks, F. Homes Dudden wrote a lengthy but lackluster study of Jonathan Wild in Henry Fielding: His Life, Works, and Times (1952). Just as Dudden relied heavily on Wilbur Cross for biographical material, so he relied heavily on the works of earlier scholars and critics (most unacknowledged) in his consideration of Fielding's book. Dudden lucidly discusses the biography and literary history of the real Wild, the correspondence between Fielding's protagonist and Walpole, the probable dates of composition, and the structure, characters, and themes of the work. At best, the study is one of consolidation, for despite his thoroughness, Dudden presents no new facts or insights into Fielding's artistry.

Two critics in the 1950s concentrated on the moral aspects of Jonathan Wild. Arnold Kettle devoted several pages of An Introduction to the English Novel (1951) to Fielding's work, which he classified as a moral fable. "There is no doubt about Fielding's moral intention or the moral pattern which shapes the book," Kettle wrote. "Indeed it may well be argued that this moral pattern is too insistent." In addition to designating certain compromises embedded in the plot and a too stringent reiteration of the ironical anti-thesis of "great" and "good," Kettle also criticized the characterization of Heartfree, who he believed "is not vital because Fielding castrates him as a

moral agent and yet at the same time makes him bear the positive values of the fable on his shoulders."[52]

In "The Moral Allegory of Jonathan Wild," Allan Wendt provided a corrective reading of both the plot and the characterization of Heartfree. Instead of the traditional view of Jonathan Wild as primarily a bifurcated work of political satire and praise of innocence, Wendt perceived an integrated moral allegory with a doubly ironic story involving "conscious reference to the limitations of Heartfree's passive goodness as well as to the evil of Wild's immoderate greatness."[53] Valuable as Wendt's insight is in helping to bring Fielding's moral vision into proper perspective, his article does not investigate the stylistic and structural application of allegory in Jonathan Wild, nor does it explain how the allegory is integrated with other literary elements.

During the following decade, while Fielding's plays, essays, and other novels were studied in detail, only a handful of articles examined Jonathan Wild. Robert Hopkins, William Farrell, Glenn Hatfield, and Hollis Rinehart discussed limited rhetorical aspects of the text. Hopkins viewed Jonathan Wild as "a comic masterpiece, whose humor lies in Fielding's play on language and metaphor." The meaning of the book, for Hopkins, resided "in both structure and language, not ultimately in the extrinsic theses abstracted from these elements."[54] William Farrell enumerated the rhetorical similarities in Jonathan Wild to high biography and epideictic oration and concluded that "only by recognizing the relation of Jonathan Wild to the traditional history and the speech of praise can we completely appreciate the

artistic tightness and full complexity of Fielding's satire."[55] Glenn Hatfield observed that Fielding's irony is not one of simple reversal but also related to the irresponsible usage of the day, particularly by Walpole's hired panegyrists,[56] while Hollis Rinehart explored Fielding's use of canting terms to establish the basic parallel between the worlds of thieves and of the great.[57]

Both Richard Dircks and David Evans commented on the social and moral themes of Fielding's book. In addition to recognizing certain affinities that Jonathan Wild had with sentimental drama, Dircks emphasized Fielding's examination of the social effects of crime and poverty as dramatized in Heartfree's story. For Dircks, "the political satire directed against Walpole and his administration should be viewed as a less significant facet of Fielding's design than the social implications of the Heartfree episode."[58] Evans pointed out that although most critics and scholars have accepted the goodness-greatness conflict as the core and ultimate significance of the work, "there is a different (but not unrelated) set of opposites that actually informs and controls the book. This is the opposition between moral imprisonment and moral freedom, or between a real as opposed to a false conception of social and moral freedom."[59]

The important longer studies of Fielding's novels that appeared during the 1960s disregarded Jonathan Wild, which was variously categorized as tract, apologue, or satire. In Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast (1966), Andrew Wright examined the stance, structure, and characters of Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia, but dismissed Jonathan Wild as being "neither a novel nor a philosophical work:

it is an entirely simple handling of one idea--or at most two. It is a diatribe against 'greatness' and an apology for 'goodness.' Jonathan Wild is a tract."[60]

Sheldon Sacks did not consider Jonathan Wild in Fiction and The Shape of Belief (1967) but mentioned the book as an example of apologue, which he defined, in contrast to a novel or satire, as "a work organized as a fictional example of the truth of a formulable statement or a series of such statements."[61] In Henry Fielding: The Tentative Realist (1967), Michael Irwin referred to the form of Jonathan Wild as "non-fictional" and placed the work "apart from the novels" since he believed that in that book Fielding was not concerned "in the sense he was later to be, with telling a story."[62] Similarly, Robert Alter excluded Jonathan Wild from Fielding and the Nature of the Novel (1969) except for the passing observation that Fielding's strategy of attack in the book "was that of formal satire, through a generalizing rhetorical design and highly schematized narrative pattern."[63]

Of the most recent scholarship concerned with Fielding, two works are well documented but conventional, and two are provocative, if not radical. Arthur Sherbo's Studies in the Eighteenth Century Novel (1969) contains chapters on the narrators and style of all of Fielding's novels, including Jonathan Wild, although Sherbo considers the latter as a novel "for reasons of strategy rather than of conviction." Sherbo criticizes the impressionistic taxonomy employed by several contemporary scholars in describing Fielding's narrators,[64] he sensibly warns against confusing the man Fielding with the

narrators that appear in his fiction, and he attempts to demonstrate that the narrators are "essentially the same man in all four of the novels." Despite his diligence in compiling illustrations of the common identity of Fielding's narrators, Sherbo offers no new insights into the role of the narrator in any of the books. The few descriptive statements that Sherbo does venture about the narrator and style of Jonathan Wild are either undeveloped or defensively vague. "Examples of the narrator's ironic attitude towards his reader in Jonathan Wild are tricky," Sherbo observes, "for while many would have it that the narrator of that work is a naif, he is more likely a thoroughgoing ironist." In a subsequent discussion of Fielding's use of perverted language in order to describe perversion, Sherbo writes: "I reserve decision, it must be understood, on the narrator's stance in all this--and everything else in Jonathan Wild."[65] Part of the reason for Sherbo's tentativeness may result from his failure to recognize that there are two personae present in Jonathan Wild, the mock biographer and the "narrator," and that the juxtaposition and interplay between these two identities accounts for much of the book's singular style.

Sean Shesgreen's Literary Portraits in the Novels of Henry Fielding (1972) analyzes Fielding's adaptation of the biographical character sketch, idealized literary portrait, emblematic portrait, and literary caricature. Shesgreen considers the personages of Jonathan Wild to be Fielding's "first attempts at character drawing in prose fiction"; he agrees with Sacks's classification of the book as an apologue rather than as a novel; and he maintains that particularly in Jonathan Wild direct literary portraiture is more important

than dialogue or action in revealing the nature and function of character. While Shesgreen offers a valid analysis of the ideological schema which the characters of Jonathan Wild represent and a useful discussion of the traditions and techniques of portraiture that Fielding employs, his assessments of characterization are extremely limited. In Shesgreen's opinion, the characters of Jonathan Wild are neither individualized nor life-like. He finds that "the ties between the figures are not based on natural or personal factors, such as blood or psychological and physical affinities. . . . The figures in the apologue are allegorical and semi-allegorical; no attempt is made to create 'round' characters"; nor is there "any attempt to understand individual motivation."[66]

The focus of Shesgreen's study tends to isolate Fielding's characters from their setting, situation, and each other; the schemata of his thesis seem to prevent him from appreciating the overall vitality and complexity of the hero and, to a lesser extent, the verve of many of the minor characters. In addition Shesgreen sorely underestimates Fielding's comic undercutting of Wild--"only a few casual incidents (comic in intent) suggest that the hero may not be completely synonymous with greatness"[67]--and he is even less attentive to the satirical treatment of the Heartfrees. While it would be a mistake to ignore direct portraiture in Jonathan Wild, Shesgreen's valid observations are at best only a partial study of Fielding's methods of characterization. As the following chapters will show, other important techniques include situational irony, dialogue, and of course action (or inaction in the case of Heartfree).

In Narrative Form in History and Fiction: Hume, Fielding and Gibbon (1970), Leo Braudy offers an admittedly corrective and reductive interpretation of Jonathan Wild. Braudy views the book primarily as a critique of rationalist historiography and abstract systematizing, and believes that Fielding's main concern was with examining "the assumptions about history and the nature of historical truth that lie behind the biographical method." According to Braudy, "Wild's personal story and the veiled allusions to Walpole, as well as the great moralizations about the 'good man' and the 'great man,' have a supplementary importance at best."[68] While there is little to quarrel with in Braudy's discussion of Fielding's views on historical truth and the biographical method as expressed in Jonathan Wild, Braudy is perhaps his own best critic on the limitations of his thesis as a thorough study of Fielding's book.

Claude Rawson's Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal Under Stress (1972), a volume of overlapping essays, articles, and lectures about the Augustan loss of confidence in moral, social, and aesthetic harmonies, contains several essays in the second part that relate these themes to the subject and tone of Jonathan Wild. In "The Hero as Clown," Rawson perceives a dimension of black humor in Fielding's book because the hero "though in one sense diminished, yet acquires unexpected grandeur of a special kind." In "Epic vs. History," Rawson describes Jonathan Wild as oscillating "nervously between acerbity and fun, thereby achieving some new and unexpected triumphs, in some ways out of line with the work's ideological tendencies." Finally, in "Fielding's 'Good' Merchant," Rawson sees the character

of Heartfree as a sentimental but sincere tribute to the virtuous tradesman, "but one which involved for Fielding certain ambiguities of feeling whose effect . . . was to bring certain serious celebrations to the brink of subversion by unconscious humour."[69]

Rawson makes a valuable contribution in emphasizing the extensive comedic qualities of Jonathan Wild, but at the same time he overlooks other important literary elements that substantially enhance the characteriziations of Wild and the Heartfrees. In general Rawson fails to recognize the art with which Fielding combines and controls diverse forms and techniques in order to produce a singular work with a unity of its own. In Rawson's opinion "the stiff acerbities of the commentary on 'greatness' exist in a schematic separation from the action. . . . At times, the collision is untidy, fragmenting. The gap between what is said about Wild and what we see in the action is too great." Rawson is unsure of how Fielding's comic vision squares with the explicit objectives of Fielding the moral ironist. He acknowledges that some degree of assimilation of Wild's villainy to the domain of farce is intentional, yet he also writes that "it is not always clear how much Fielding is in control over this effect." Rawson fears that Fielding's comic impulse might have "run away" with his satiric intentions and that the urgency of Fielding's moralism might have become "unconsciously disarmed by the playful and uppish detachment of the gentleman novelist."[70]

In the concluding chapters of my study I take issue with several of Rawson's points. While his overlapping essays, emphasizing the tensions in Augustan social, moral, and aesthetic harmonies, present

a number of provocative ideas often expressed in a forceful and imaginative style, Rawson's book does not undertake the kind of full-scale critical examination of Jonathan Wild that is the aim of this study.

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As the foregoing historical survey of criticism demonstrates, during the past two hundred years Jonathan Wild has been neglected, unfairly condemned, and only partially studied even by those who have recognized Fielding's achievement. The reasons for this misunderstanding may perhaps be found in a number of cultural, psychological, and literary considerations. The original publication of Fielding's book as the third volume of the subscription edition of the Miscellanies may account for the public's initial lack of interest, but other factors were clearly involved after the immense popularity of Tom Jones and Fielding's extensive revisions of Jonathan Wild for its republication in a single volume in 1754.

The vehement, shortsighted criticism of the "low" material of Fielding's book and the view of the author as a talented but prodigal personality that prevailed well into the nineteenth century are no longer serious obstacles to appreciating Fielding's book. Yet one reason why Jonathan Wild has not enjoyed the popularity of Fielding's other novels, despite increasingly liberal attitudes towards literature and morals, may be the disturbing vision of human nature and of society that Fielding presents with unforgettable vividness. To put the matter another way, the fact that readers, scholars, and critics from 1743 until the present have preferred

Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews, and Amelia may say more about the human mentality than about Fielding's artistry in Jonathan Wild.

On a more specialized plane, the reluctance of men of letters to examine Fielding's book in detail may have been based, at least during the eighteenth century, on the hierarchical values of genres and more recently on the lack of agreement as to what genre Jonathan Wild belongs. Fielding's book plainly differs from the romances, "histories," and memoirs that belonged unquestionably to the burgeoning genre of the novel in the eighteenth century, and to a lesser extent the book still does not conform to what many general readers today consider the novel to be. That Jonathan Wild is not consonant with popular or scholarly conceptions of the novel is no reason, however, to ignore or to dismiss Fielding's work.

Two assumptions underlying this study are that the artist, rather than the critic or scholar, in the last analysis gives definition to an art form, and that the value of a significant literary work is worth more than its kind. While Chapter VII of the study strives to show what Jonathan Wild is and what it is not, the purpose of this section is not to arrive at a classifying label for the book but to present a clearer view of its singular qualities. The intended emphasis is not so much on determining what Jonathan Wild is as on better understanding how its various elements work together.

The overall aim of my study is to undertake a comprehensive critical examination of Fielding's book, bringing to bear on it as many resources, discoveries, and insights of modern scholarship as possible. Over the years many biased or misinformed opinions have

been written about Jonathan Wild. At the same time a number of perceptive scholars and critics, including Murphy, Coleridge, Keightley, Saintsbury, Cross, Irwin, and Rawson, have concentrated on particular aspects of the work or written brief general appreciations. While an increasing number of articles and books have appeared about Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia, as well as about Fielding's plays and journalism, the need still exists for a full study of Jonathan Wild that examines the book in relation to the facts of Fielding's life and times and that also considers the text as an independent work of fiction exhibiting qualities that can best be appreciated by a detailed investigation of its parts, organization, and style.

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The following study is divided into three sections. In addition to the foregoing survey of extant criticism, Part I includes an examination of the life of the real Wild in the light of newly published information and a discussion of the "literary" and politically motivated treatments of Wild's life that had appared before Fielding's book. My purpose in these next two chapters is to lay the groundwork for subsequent considerations of Fielding's selection, adaptation, and invention of material in Jonathan Wild.

Part II explains the specific circumstances surrounding the composition and initial publication of Jonathan Wild and analyzes the extensive revisions that Fielding made for the second edition in 1754. On the basis of internal and external evidence, I argue that Fielding wrote Jonathan Wild hurriedly under great stress in 1741-42,

and not in several stages some time between 1737 and 1742 as most scholars believe. The revisions of 1754 are the most extensive that Fielding made for a single edition of any of his novels and represent an interesting example of a mature artist's reworking of an earlier book under changed political and personal circumstances. My comparison of the texts of 1743 and 1754 indicates how Fielding refined his style, sharpened characterizations, increased verisimilitude, expanded authorial commentary, enhanced pacing and structure, and more fully developed literary, legal, religious, and political themes with the replacement of key words and the insertion of new material.

The three chapters of the final part of my study comprise a detailed analysis and assessment of the text of 1754, which is the version of Jonathan Wild that Fielding wanted to bequeath to his readers. In the first chapter, I discuss Fielding's aim and design as expressed in the Preface to the Miscellanies, and more importantly as revealed in the action, characterizations, allusions, and style of the revised text. The second chapter examines the similarities and differences between Jonathan Wild and the various literary traditions, forms, and techniques that were available to Fielding. My purpose here is to investigate how Fielding honored literary conventions at the same time that he challenged and expanded them in creating a novel that is truly sui generis. The concluding chapter explores the art with which Fielding juxtaposed numerous genres, modes, and devices in imitation and burlesque so that some elements define, deepen, and intensify others.

In this section I hope to demonstrate how Fielding's opposition and interplay of diverse elements create complex expectations, effects, and implications that greatly enhance the dimensions of the book. I also examine Fielding's skillful use of narrative techniques including dramatic irony, pacing, and the treatment of time; his characterizations, some of which are more fully drawn than has generally been recognized; and the style that Fielding creates in part through the interrelation of his two _personae_, the mock biographer and the narrator. Finally I discuss the unusual vision--at once reassuring and unsettling--that Fielding expresses through his artful integration of all of the above elements.

I hope that this comprehensive study will rectify some of the longstanding misconceptions and omissions regarding _Jonathan Wild_ and that it will make clear the originality, integrity, and substance of Fielding's achievement.

Notes

[1] Essays on Fielding's Miscellanies: A Commentary on Volume One (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 26.

[2] Fielding the Novelist: A Study in Historical Criticism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926), p. 563.

[3] Old England, No. 266, March 5, 1748, p. 1. (John Trottplaid, Esq. was of course Fielding's pseudonym in the Jacobite's Journal.) The other quotations are from unavailable numbers of Old England (January 7, 1749 and November 26, 1748), the first as quoted by Blanchard, p. 34, and the second as reproduced in the Gentleman's Magazine of November 1748, p. 515.

[4] John Wooll, Biographical Memoirs of the Late Reverend Joseph Warton (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1806), p. 215.

[5] Memoirs of Richard Cumberland (London: Lackington, Allen & Co., 1807), I, 192.

[6] An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting, 5th ed. (1753; rpt. London: for William Miller by James Ballantyne & Co., Edinburgh, 1811), p. 135.

[7] Cf. Miss Collier's summary of the whole of her "excellent SCIENCE" with the maxim "REMEMBER ALWAYS TO DO UNTO EVERY ONE WHAT YOU WOULD LEAST WISH TO HAVE DONE UNTO YOURSELF" (p. 226) and the second of Wild's fifteen maxims leading to greatness: "TO know no Distinction of Men from Affection; but to sacrifice all with equal Readiness to his Interest" (The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild The Great [London: A. Millar, 1754], IV.xv.257).

[8] Life of Johnson, ed. R.W. Chapman (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), pp. 480, 388, 480.

[9] No. 4, Saturday, 31 March 1750, The Rambler, ed. W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), I, 22. Bate and Strauss note that this paper was occasioned by the popularity of Roderick Random (1748) and Tom Jones (1749), and that Johnson was implicitly contrasting these works unfavorably with the novels of Richardson (p. 19, n. 1).

[10] Johnson considered Tom Jones to be a "'vicious'" book and scarcely knew "'a more corrupt work'" according to a letter written

by Hannah More to her sister in 1780 (Memoirs of the Life and Correspondence of Mrs. Hannah More by William Roberts [New York: Harper & Brothers, 1834], I, 101). Boswell says that Johnson read Amelia through without stopping but maintained that he had never read Joseph Andrews (Life of Johnson, pp. 747,480).

[11] For an excellent description of the limitations of Murphy's essay and the "shade" that Murphy cast over subsequent Fielding critics, see Wilbur Cross's The History of Henry Fielding (1918; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), III, 125f.

[12] "An Essay On The Life and Genius of Henry Fielding, Esq.," in The Lives of Henry Fielding and Samuel Johnson, ed. Matthew Grace (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1968), p. 259.

[13] Ibid.

[14] A notable exception to this unfortunate trend was Thomas Green, who seemed to enjoy Fielding's choice of subject matter. In the February 11, 1800 entry of Extracts from the Diary of a Lover of Literature (Ipswich: John Raw, 1810), Green observed that Fielding "appears to descend, con amore, into the vilest and most blasted depths of low life" (p. 199). Two weeks earlier Green had made the following entry: "Read Fielding's Life of Jonathan Wild; a caustic satire, in Swift's coarsest manner; but displaying a wonderful knowledge of low and villainous life" (p. 192).

In contrast William Watson, on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of Fielding's birth and two years after Murphy's death, wrote an introductory essay to The Select Works of Henry Fielding, Esq. (Edinburgh, 1807) in which he enlarged upon Murphy's biased portrait of Fielding but discussed Fielding's literary production in a cursory manner. An enlarged version of this introduction was published separately as The Life of Henry Fielding, Esq. With Observations on his Character and Writings (Edinburgh: Printed for Mundell, Doig, & Stevenson; and J. Murray, and T. Ostell, London, 1807). In this study Watson devoted only one paragraph to the content of Jonathan Wild, to which he appended a lengthy footnote of three pages summarizing the life of the real Jonathan Wild. That Watson was unable to locate a copy of the Miscellanies suggests the low repute into which Fielding's book had fallen at least in Edinburgh. Watson wrote: "No copy of this volume [sic] (the three-volume set of the Miscellanies) is now to be found. . . . The History of the Life of Jonathan Wild the Great appeared, it is supposed, at the same time with the foregoing" (pp. 53, 54).

[15] General Biography (London: Johnson, Robinson and Kearsley, 1803), IV, 90.

[16] The British Novelists (London: W. Clarke, 1811), IV, i,ii.

[17] Literary Anecdotes (London: Printed for the Author, 1812), III, 368, 369.

[18] "Fielding," in The British Novelists (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1810), XVIII, ix-x.

[19] "Henry Fielding," in The Lives of the Novelists (New York: A. Denham & Co., 1872), p. 92. Scott's biography of Smollett (1820) contains a comment on Fielding's plan in Jonathan Wild as well as a questionable assessment of the book's protagonist: "To compare Ferdinand Count Fathom to the Jonathan Wild of Fielding, would be perhaps unfair to the latter author; yet, the works being composed on the same plan, (a very bad one, as we think,) we cannot help placing them by the side of each other; when it becomes at once obvious that the detestable Fathom is a living and existing miscreant, at whom we shrink as if from the presence of an incarnate fiend, while the villain of Fielding seems rather a cold personification of the abstract principle of evil, so far from being terrible, that notwithstanding the knowledge of the world argued in many passages of his adventures, we are compelled to acknowledge him absolutely tiresome" (Lives, pp. 162-63).

[20] Letters and Journals, ed. Rowland E. Prothero (1900; rpt. New York: Octagon Books Inc., 1966), V, 465.

[21] The Complete Works, ed. W.G.T. Shedd (New York: Harper & Bros., 1871), IV, 382-83.

[22] Lives of Eminent and Illustrious Englishmen (Glasgow: A. Fullerton & Co., 1837), V, 224.

[23] The Monthly Chronicle (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1838), I, 139.

[24] Roscoe's The Works of Henry Fielding (London: H. Washbourne, 1840) was actually published nine years before Whipple's essay. The edition included an essay, "Life and Works of Henry Fielding," in which Roscoe described Jonathan Wild as an "able but imperfect fragment, full of keen satire and far-sighted views into the characters and motives of men" (p. xviii).

[25] "The Life and Works of Henry Fielding," North American Review, 142 (January 1849), 68, 67.

[26] The Life of Henry Fielding: With Notices of his Writings, his Times, and his Contemporaries (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue & Co., 1855), pp. 188, 189-90.

[27] "Henry Fielding," Quarterly Review, 98 (December 1855), 126.

[28] Fraser's Magazine, 57 (February 1858), 213.

[29] Fraser's, 57 (June 1858), 763.

[30] Poets and Novelists (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1876), pp. 253, 296.

[31] "An Essay on Comedy," in Comedy, ed. Wylie Sypher (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), p. 43. The passage that Meredith erroneously describes refers to one of Wild's forebears, James Wild, who during the Civil War "declared open War with both Parties" by robbing from either side until he was taken and "contrary to the Law of Arms, put basely and cowardly to Death, by a Combination between twelve Men of the Enemy's Party, who after some Consultation unanimously agreed on the said Murder" (I.ii.7). The ironic account is recorded by the mock biographer and is obviously satiric rather than merely comic or humorous.

[32] "Henry Fielding," in The Works of Henry Fielding (London: Smith & Elder, 1882), I, li.

[33] "Fielding's Novels," Cornhill Magazine, 35 (January-June 1877), 162.

[34] Fielding (New York: Harper & Bros., 1883), p. 100.

[35] A History of Eighteenth Century Literature (1888; rpt. London: Macmillan & Co., 1916), pp. 253-54. In an introduction to the Works of Henry Fielding (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), Gosse was more critical of Fielding's irony: "The radical fault of 'Jonathan Wild,'" he wrote, "is the excessive and fatiguing use of irony" (I, xxi).

A few years afterwards G.T. Bispham expressed a brief but perceptive alternate view. Bispham wrote: "The irony and power with which Wild is portrayed makes us regard him with more pleasure than horror. . . . We feel a personal satisfaction in the completeness of his knavery and renown" ("Fielding's Jonathan Wild," in Eighteenth Century Literature: An Oxford Miscellany [1909; rpt. Freeport: Books for Libraries Press, 1966], pp. 64-65).

[36] The English Novel (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1899), p. 167.

[37] Views and Reviews (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1890), p. 231.

[38] "Essay on the Life, Genius and Achievement of Henry Fielding," The Novels of Henry Fielding (New York: Harper & Bros., 1902), I, xxxvi-vii.

[39] "Introduction," The History of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1893), p. xvii.

[40] The English Novel (London: J.M. Dent, 1913), pp. 104-105.

[41] The Peace of the Augustans (1916; rpt. London: Oxford University Press, 1945), pp. 124-25.

[42] Notes and Queries, 11th Ser., 2 (October 1910), 261-63; 12th Ser., 3 (January 1917), 38-39; 12th Ser., 3 (March 1917), 237-38.

[43] Notes and Queries, 12th Ser., 2 (December 1916), 441-43; 12th Ser., 3 (January 1917), 74.

[44] "Fielding's Political Purpose in Jonathan Wild," PMLA, 28 (1913), 8, 54.

[45] The History of Henry Fielding (1918; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963), I, 403, 404.

[46] The Novels of Fielding (1925; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), pp. 119, 116, 127.

[47] Henry Fielding (1929; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), pp. 151, 155, 156.

[48] Survey of Burlesque and Parody in English (1931; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 170.

[49] The Making of Jonathan Wild (1941; rpt. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966), pp. vi, 108, 95.

[50] Reprinted as "Fielding's Jonathan Wild," in The Republic of Letters (New York: Knopf, 1955), pp. 86, 85, 87, 88. Other nonscholarly dicta about Jonathan Wild appear in the essays of Ford Madox Ford,

Graham Greene, J. Middleton Murry, and Rebecca West. Ford describes Thackeray's Barry Lyndon as being "a direct pastiche after the manner of Fielding's Jonathan Wild," in The March of Literature (London: Allen and Unwin, 1939), p. 812. Graham Greene echoes Kronenberger's reservations about Mrs. Heartfree's tale, asking, "How can one take seriously Mrs. Heartfree's five escapes from ravishment in twenty pages?" ("Fielding and Sterne," reprinted in The Lost Childhood and Other Essays [London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1951], p. 64). Murry writes that Jonathan Wild, "though I am far from thinking it the masterpiece of sustained irony it has been claimed, seems to me a still vital book, with some superb comic-ironic episodes" ("In Defence of Fielding," Unprofessional Essays [London: Jonathan Cape, 1956], p. 22). Rebecca West refers to Jonathan Wild as "an extravaganza, a farce, a political squib, a tract on penal reform," in The Court and the Castle: Some Treatments of a Recurrent Theme (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961), p. 100.

[51] The Great Tradition (1948; rpt. New York: New York University Press, 1964), p. 4.

[52] Introduction to the English Novel (1951; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1967), pp. 43, 47.

[53] ELH, 24 (December 1957), 306.

[54] "Language and Comic Play in Fielding's Jonathan Wild," Criticism, 8 (Summer 1966), 214.

[55] "The Mock-Heroic Form of Jonathan Wild," MP, 63 (February 1966), 226.

[56] "Puffs and Pollitricks: Jonathan Wild and the Political Corruption of Language," PQ, 46 (April 1967), 248-67.

[57] "Jonathan Wild and the Cant Dictionary," PQ, 48 (April 1969), 220-25.

[58] "The Perils of Heartfree: A Sociological Review of Fielding's Adaptation of Dramatic Convention," TSLL, 8 (Spring 1966), 13.

[59] "The Theme of Liberty in Jonathan Wild," PLL, 3 (Fall 1967), 303. Other articles published during this period that are concerned at least in part with Jonathan Wild include: Bernard Shea, "Machiavelli and Fielding's Jonathan Wild," PMLA, 72 (March 1957), 55-73; Robert A. Smith, "The 'Great man' Motif in Jonathan Wild and The

Beggar's Opera," CLAJ, 2 (March 1959), 183-84; Thomas C. Kishler, "Heartfree's Function in Jonathan Wild," SNL, 1 (Fall 1963), 32-34; Raymond Smith, "The Ironic Structure of Fielding's Jonathan Wild," BSUF, 6 (Autumn 1965), 3-9; and John Preston, "The Ironic Mode: A Comparison of 'Jonathan Wild' and 'Beggar's Opera,'" EC, 16 (July 1966), 268-80.

[60] Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 45.

[61] Fiction and The Shape of Belief (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 26.

[62] Henry Fielding: The Tentative Realist (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 41.

[63] Fielding and the Nature of the Novel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 149. To the above summary of book-length studies that omit Jonathan Wild should also be added Maurice Johnson's Fielding's Art of Fiction: Eleven Essays on Shamela, Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961). Although Johnson does not offer a generic classification for Jonathan Wild, Fielding's book clearly does not conform to the consistent line of artistic development that he envisions. In a prefatory note Johnson explains: "After writing tentatively on A Journey from this World to the Next and the incomparably superior Jonathan Wild, I have decided not to include essays on those works in this study of Fielding. They lie outside the direct progression from Shamela to Joseph Andrews to the achievement of Tom Jones and Amelia, in which I am more interested" (p. 5).

[64] Sherbo specifically cites observations of Wayne Booth in The Rhetoric of Fiction (pp. 71-72, 215-17); Alan D. McKillop in The Early Masters of English Fiction (p. 109); Richard M. Jordan in "The Limits of Illusion: Faulkner, Fielding, and Chaucer," Criticism, 2 (1960), 290-97; Irwin Ehrenpreis in Tom Jones (pp. 65, 9); Martin Price in To The Palace of Wisdom (pp. 294-95); Andrew Wright in Fielding: Mask and Feast (pp. 20-21, 55); and Sheldon Sacks in Fiction and The Shape of Belief (pp. 70-72).

[65] Studies in The Eighteenth Century Novel (Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1969), pp. 8, 27, 73.

[66] Literary Portraits (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1972), pp. 71, 69-71.

[67] Ibid., p. 70.

[68] Narrative Form in History and Fiction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), p. 136.

[69] The Augustan Ideal Under Stress (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 136, 165, 253.

[70] Ibid., pp. 109, 112, 233.

Chapter II

JONATHAN WILD: 1683-1725

Unlike the protagonists of Fielding's other novels, the character of Jonathan Wild is based on a real person who achieved an extraordinary notoriety that began almost a generation before the publication of Fielding's book. While The History of Jonathan Wild the Great does not seriously pretend to be either history or biography, Fielding clearly incorporated prominent aspects of the career and character of the infamous criminal who tyrannized over Londoners for more than a decade while Fielding was still a youth.

Although Fielding was only eighteen when Wild was executed at Tyburn in 1725, the name of Jonathan Wild was still very much before the public when Fielding turned to journalism and then began to write fiction. There were in fact two phases to Wild's notoriety. Between 1718 and 1725 his criminal activities were widely chronicled in the newspapers of the day, and his arrest, trial, and execution occasioned numerous newspaper accounts as well as a plethora of ballads, last speeches, epitaphs, and biographies. Subsequently Opposition writers capitalized on the public's memories of Wild as a ruthless and greedy manipulator by using his name as an effective symbol in attacking Robert Walpole, the most powerful political leader of the age.

It has often been observed that artists do not create in a vacuum. Some novelists subconsciously absorb details about real persons, well-known and otherwise, while other novelists consciously combine facts and qualities concerning several individuals in order to disguise their sources. Still others intentionally base important characters on real people, finding in these subjects an appropriate vehicle for the artistic expression of their own views.[1] Fielding obviously employed this last method in creating Jonathan Wild.

The aim of the following summary of Wild's life is to separate the myth of Wild, which grew in part as a result of Opposition literature, from the man himself, and to reconstruct from eighteenth-century newspapers, personal papers, and official records as accurate a view as possible of Wild's salient characteristics, the nature and extent of his criminal activities, and the attention that he commanded until his death. (Absent for the most part from these contemporary sources is a record of Wild's spoken words, specific descriptions of setting and circumstances, indications of Wild's sustained relationships, and suggestions of the thoughts and feelings that motivated him. These elements are of course all important tools that the novelist uses in order to give color, depth, and force to his work.)

If the portrait of Wild that emerges from the following records is somewhat pallid compared to Fielding's vital characterization, this fact should suggest at once the enormous difference between the historian's more restricted attempt to present an objective summary of what has actually happened and the artist's freedom to bring his subject into sharper focus by selecting and condemning material, by

exaggerating details, and by imagining events that could have happened. Fielding undoubtedly began to write Jonathan Wild with at least rudimentary knowledge of Wild as a bold and ruthless outlaw, a master organizer, an efficient administrator, and an astute manipulator of public opinion. His fictional portrait, as we shall see in subsequent chapters, does not always correspond to matters of historical record. Once the reader becomes familiar with the real Wild's career, he can better appreciate the art with which Fielding invented character and circumstances while utilizing the broad outlines of Wild's life and relevant historical details to create a work of fiction of lasting interest.

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Although the birthdate of Jonathan Wild has not been ascertained, records indicate that he was baptized at St. Peter's in Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, on May 6, 1683.[2] As far as is known, Wild's parents were honest people. His father, John Wyld, was a joiner, and his mother was said to have sold fruit and herbs in the town market.

Wild had two younger brothers and two sisters, one of whom married a buckle-maker and the other a comb-maker. Wild's brother John became a bailiff and town crier of Wolverhampton but experienced difficulties of his own with the law during the rebellion of 1715, when it was rumored that the Pretender was going to enter town. For having incited a mob to wreck the Presbyterian Meeting House, John was whipped at the cart's tail twice around Stafford Town Hall and imprisoned for two years. Apparently he had no further problems with the authorities before his death in 1720. Less is known about the second brother,

Andrew, who eventually became a small-time criminal in London. At the time of Jonathan's arrest in 1725, Andrew was imprisoned for debt in the Wood Street Compter, where he may have died.

Wild himself was educated at the Free School in St. John's Lane, Wolverhampton. According to Gerald Howson, his biographer, Wild there "acquired a fair skill at handwriting (though not, to judge by some letters that have survived, at grammar or spelling)" (p. 11).[3] At the age of fifteen, Wild was apprenticed to a local buckle-maker with whom he served out his time. He entered the trade about 1700 and shortly thereafter married his first wife, by whom he had a son.

It is thought that in 1704 Wild traveled to London as a servant to a lawyer known as Councillor Daniel. Wild either absconded or was discharged by Daniel and became a "setter" to bailiffs of the Marshalsea Court. This second job would have provided valuable preparation for Wild's subsequent career as a thief-taker. The Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue defines a setter as "a bailiff's follower, who like a setting dog follows and points out the game for his master."[4] The task of the setter was to hunt out debtors by whatever means necessary so that the bailiff could make the arrest. Because bailiffs were themselves often in financial straits, it was not uncommon for them to apprehend innocent people or resort to blackmail, extortion, robbery, and murder.

Although Wild's later activities indicate that he was well suited for the dangerous and sordid job of setter, it is not known how he fared in this position as a young man. After a while, he rejoined his family in Wolverhampton and remained there for about

four years. He then permanently abandoned his wife and son and returned to London, where he fell into debt. In Appendix I of his biography, Howson reproduces part of a schedule of suits on which Wild was committed to the Wood Street Compter in 1710. According to these documents, legal action was first brought against Wild on March 9, 1710 by Robert Pearson, to whom Wild owed £4 19s. During the following days, four other plaintiffs initiated suits against Wild, and on March 13 he was arrested and remanded to the Wood Street Compter, which was one of two debtors' prisons in the City of London (pp. 304, 14).

Apparently without resources when arrested, Wild managed, during the next two years, to extricate himself from the Common Side of the prison and gain the confidence of the gaolers as well as of some of the more well-off inmates. Accounts, in Wild's own handwriting, of monies owed by and to him indicate that he succeeded in paying off three debts, but that he incurred eight more. Although he was enterprising enough to loan £33 to four persons, and small amounts to "severall others w^{ch} I cant remember" (p. 305), his debts increased to £60 16s.

By 1912 Wild was granted the "Liberty of the Gate," which meant that as a trusty he was authorized to process prisoners who were arrested at night and to escort them the following morning to the nearest magistrate. The gate of the Wood Street Compter was a common meeting ground of disreputable persons; here Wild met Mary Milliner, a prostitute and pickpocket with whom he was soon to live.

Despite the fact that Wild managed to improve his situation as a prisoner, it seems likely that he would have remained in the Compter indefinitely had not "An Act for The Relief of Insolvent Debtors" been passed on September 12, 1712. This statute provided relief to debtors "by obliging their Creditors to accept the utmost Satisfaction they [the debtors] are capable to make and by restoring them to their Liberty" so that they and their families would not become "burthensome to the Nation."[5] Prisoners petitioning for their freedom were required to deliver a complete schedule of their assets and debits and take an oath in court attesting to the exactness of their account. The presiding justice subsequently gave notice to all creditors of the prisoner's petition, an announcement of which was also published in the London Gazette thirty days prior to the prisoner's appearance before Sessions.

In response to Wild's petition for release, Sir William Withers, justice of the peace and a member of Parliament for London, signed on October 27, 1712 a warrant to the Keeper of the Wood Street Compter requiring that "the Body of the said Jonathan Wilde together with the Copy or Copies of the Cause or Causes hee is charged with" (p. 304) be brought before justices at the next Sessions so that an oath could be administered to Wild and proceedings for his release be initiated. The November 4-8, 1712 number of the London Gazette published the following notice of Wild's petition:

> Thomas Grimes, Jonathan Wild [italics mine], John Fowles, John Lawford, Prisoners in Wood Street Compter, London, having petitioned one of her Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said City, and his Warrant Signed thereupon, directed to the Keeper of the said Prison, to bring them to

> the next General Sessions to be held for the said City, at Guildhall, on the 8th of December next, to be discharged pursuant to an Act lately passed for Relief of Insolvent Debtors; and they conforming themselves in all things as the Act directs, their Creditors are to take notice thereof.[6]

On December 8, 1712, Wild attended the Sessions of the Peace at the Guildhall. According to Howson, the Sessions Book records that Wild was "proved a Prisoner by William Sweetland" and that one Hannah Easely summoned his creditors (p. 20). A short time later Wild was discharged from the Wood Street Compter and set up house with Mary Milliner in Lewkoner's Lane, Covent Garden, a notorious street of brothels that is mentioned in the works of Dryden, Gay, and Pope.[7] After having spent almost three years in prison and having settled in a district famous for illegitimate activities, it is not surprising that Wild embarked in earnest on a career of crime.

At first he earned his living as a "Twang," or prostitute's bully. The common operating procedure was for the "Buttock," or prostitute, to entice a prospective client, pick his pocket, and then signal the Twang, who would attack the unsuspecting victim while his accomplice escaped. One of the disadvantages of this hazardous work was the difficulty in disposing of the booty, since Section VI of "An Act for the Encouraging the Discovery and Apprehending of Housebreakers" (6 Anne c. 31) made the receiver of stolen goods an accessory to the felony and in some cases liable to punishment by death.[8] Wild, as well as many other thieves, knew that Section VI, more commonly referred to as "The Receiving Act," could be circumvented by selling stolen goods to corrupt municipal officials, who because of their authority were less likely to be prosecuted. One of the most venal

officials of the day was Charles Hitchen, Under City-Marshal, who, less than ten months after buying his position for £700, was accused in ten separate complaints of having demanded exorbitant sums for the return of stolen property. On June 24, 1713, Hitchen was temporarily suspended from office, although he was permitted to retain the power of arrest. At this time he entered into a partnership with Wild, who had moved from Lewkenor's Lane to a brandy shop in Cripplegate, a thieves' quarter said to be under Hitchen's control.

As Hitchen's "Deputy" or "Man," Wild participated in widespread operations of protection, blackmail, extortion, and thief-taking. Using the authority of his semi-official position, Hitchen threatened thieves with arrest if they did not turn over their booty and keep him informed about other robberies. He became notorious for extorting money from innocent and guilty alike, for paying thieves less money than promised, and for disposing of stolen items before the owner could be persuaded to tender a reward.[9] On April 6, 1714, after submitting a paper proposing new methods for the detection of felons and promising better demeanor, Hitchen was reinstated as City Under-Marshal with full official power. About this time he quarreled with Wild, for whom he probably no longer had any use. Wild, however, had in the meantime developed a more sophisticated means of realizing money from stolen goods that did not rely upon corrupt officials or risk prosecution under the Receiving Act.

According to Howson, the May 26, 1714 number of the Daily Courant contained the following advertisement: "Lost on Friday Evening 19th March last, out of a Compting House in Derham Court

in Great Trinity Lane, near Bread Street, a Wast Book and a Day Book; they are of no use to any one but the Owner, being posted into a Ledger to the Day they were lost. Whoever will bring them to Mr. Jonathan Wild over-against Cripplegate-Church, shall have a Guinea Reward and no Questions asked" (p. 66). This is the earliest of hundreds of newspaper advertisements that Howson has found in which Wild represented himself as a returner of stolen goods.

In the Rare Manuscript Collection of the New York Public Library there is a booklet of 128 of Wild's advertisements that were clipped from newspapers dating back to 1719. These advertisements called the public's attention to articles that were "Lost or dropt out of a Gentleman's Pocket," "Stolen," "Taken out of a house," "Left in a Hackney Coach," "Deliver'd by Mistake," or handed over "to a Person falsely representing himself." The items advertised included bank notes, bills of lading, pocketbooks, letter cases, gold and silver watches, rings, necklaces, portmanteaux, wigs, linens, gowns, petticoats, waistcoats, shoes, slippers, plate (often marked with a coat of arms), saddles, mares, and even a Spanish pointing dog. All of the notices contained Jonathan Wild's name and address, and most promised to the person who produced the article a "Reward and no Questions ask'd," or a "Reward, and a Pardon according to Act of Parliament."[10]

These advertisements served a number of devious purposes simultaneously. First, they brought Wild's name before the public and established his "integrity" by portraying him as a sort of public benefactor. Second, they alerted the thieves, or in some cases the

victims, that a deal could be made for the property in question. Third, the advertisements enabled Wild to circumvent the Receiving Act by disclosing that he did not have the stolen goods in his possession.

In contrast to Hitchen's far riskier method, Wild did not actually receive booty. Generally, he acquired from his underworld contacts as much information as possible about the effects and how and where they were stolen. He then called upon the victim and offered his services in arranging for a return. As proof of his good faith, Wild advertised for the goods on his client's behalf.

A certain amount of complicity on the part of the public was, of course, necessary for the success of Wild's operation. Judging from the number of advertisements that Wild and individual victims of robberies placed in newspapers, the public seemed quite willing to pay for the return of its property without involving the authorities. Among Wild's numerous clients of all classes was Defoe, who acknowledged having paid a deposit for the return of a silver-hilted sword that Wild never recovered for him.[11]

Wild's success also depended to a great extent upon his shrewdness in dealing with victims of robberies. Several contemporary biographies, including Select Trials, The Life of Jonathan Wild . . . by "H.D. late Clerk to Justice R----," and Defoe's A True and Genuine Account of the late Jonathan Wild, describe Wild's cunning. Unlike the crude and overanxious Hitchen, Wild was reputedly a master in teasing victims with a number of delays and dodges until they were willing to pay a greater "reward" than first agreed upon for the

return of their belongings.

The actual transferral of stolen property was skillfully arranged in order to avoid prosecution. "H.D." reveals a particularly ingenious method that Wild was supposed to have used early in his career for the return of account books, diaries, and letters:

> After he [Wild] had bargain'd with the People; and they were come by his Appointment to pay the Money, and receive the Writings, he led them into a Room contriv'd for that Purpose; where pushing back a small Pannel of the Wainscot, a Hand us'd to appear with the Writings in it, and the Parties were to take them out of that Hand, and to put the Money into it, without their seeing the Body which belong'd to it; so that they could not say he had ever taken any of their Money, or receiv'd the stolen Goods.[12]

It seems more likely, however, that as traffic increased Wild instructed clients to go with the stipulated money to pre-arranged locations where the thieves or other intermediaries negotiated the exchange.

At the same time that his business of returning stolen goods flourished, Wild began to develop his reputation as a thief-taker. The first person recorded to have died as a result of Wild's actions was a woman, Elizabeth Shirley, who was hanged in January 1715 for having stolen a silver candlestick. Other victims soon followed. Howson writes that by 1716 "the capture of the highwayman Goodman, the destruction of Obadiah Lemon's gang, the apprehending of about fifty street-robbers and burglars and, as a climax, the discovery and capture of the gang that murdered Mrs. Knap, were the actions which made him [Wild] famous and put his office on to a secure foundation" (p. 76).

As was the case with his advertising for stolen goods, Wild's thief-taking activities fulfilled several purposes at once. According to "An Act for Encourageing the Apprehending of Highway Men" (4 William

and Mary c. 8), any person who was responsible for the arrest and conviction of felons was entitled to a reward of £40.[13] Thief-taking was, first of all, a lucrative activity. In addition Wild recognized that thief-taking provided an effective means of eliminating rival gangs and keeping troublesome criminals under his hand. Since Wild insisted that thieves retain possession of stolen property until an exchange with the victim was agreed upon, he was in an excellent position to inform on the perpetrators. The Sessions Papers and Wild's own list of criminals whom he claimed to have brought to justice indicate that he was indeed instrumental in betraying at least seventy-five highwaymen and housebreakers (pp. 306-11). A method favored by Wild was to persuade one member of a gang to impeach another; then he would secure a third person to impeach the original informer. In this manner, Wild succeeded in eliminating rebellious individuals and entire gangs at the same time that he reaped rewards and increased his reputation as a public benefactor.

In the summer of 1716 Wild moved to Little Old Bailey, where he opened what was more or less formally designated as an Office for the Recovery of Lost and Stolen Property. Although he could not incorporate himself as a city business because he was not a freeman of London, Wild and his office, located minutes from Newgate and the Justice House, became something of a national institution. Howson writes that "as a matter of course, newspapers such as the Universal Journal put 'From Jonathan Wild's at the Old Bailey' as a heading to their weekly crime reports" (p. 5).[14] The location of the office and Wild's skillful promotion of it did much to lend a pseudo-official

aura to brazenly illegal activities.

Instead of receiving Wild at home, the public now went to his office in Little Old Bailey, where they were obliged to pay a deposit or search fee of five shillings. Wild recorded all details of the robbery or loss in a register and initiated inquiries about the missing property. By comparing the victims' descriptions of articles with that of items reported stolen by thieves, Wild was able to maintain discipline and determine who was or was not under his control. According to the folklore of the day, when a thief reported his stolen goods Wild placed a cross beside his name if there was sufficient evidence to hang him; if he eventually used this evidence to have the thief hanged, Wild added a second cross, the operation being referred to as a double-cross.

Wild's fame as a receiver, underworld boss, and thief-taker continued to grow. In April 1718 he was attacked by his former partner Under-Marshal Hitchen in a pretentious tract entitled A True Discovery of the Conduct of Receivers and Thief-Takers, In and about the City of London. This was followed a few months later by a revision titled The Regulator: or, a Discovery of the Thieves, Thief-Takers, and Locks, alias Receivers of Stolen Goods, in and about the City of London, in which Hitchen branded Wild as "King among Thieves, and Lying Master General of England, Captain General of the Army of Plunderers, and Ambassador Extraordinary of the Prince of the Air."[15]

Despite the rhetoric, there seems to be considerable truth in Hitchen's denunciation of Wild as a receiver, a suborner, and a protector of coiners, pickpockets, and prostitutes. The pamphlet

describes how, in 1717 and in the early part of 1718, Wild rigged evidence and framed innocent men so that his own thieves would not be imprisoned. Referring to Wild, whom he considered a dangerous competitor, Hitchen wrote: "The Thief-Taker is a thief-maker and hath likewise found out a way to prevent the good intention of the Act of Parliament, which was designed to break the knots of thieves and robbers by making them evidences against each other. And this he does by stifling and setting up an evidence of his own choosing, by which means the greatest criminal, as well as himself, escapes the hand of justice."[16]

Wild responded to Hitchen's first tract with An Answer To A Late Insolent Libel, in which he attempted to dispose of the Under-Marshal's accusations point by point. In addition to attacking Hitchen as "the Original Grand Thief-Taker . . . and my Old Master in Iniquity," Wild vigorously defended his reputation as a Thief-Taker who, "indeed, may be truly esteemed such for his apprehending and bringing to justice many notorious malefactors." Sanctimoniously assuming the pose of a wronged hero, Wild claimed that he could not refrain from mentioning "the prejudice and ill-nature with which the author [Hitchen] is possessed in attacking a person [Wild] who so little deserves a barbarous treatment from him or any others . . . and which is highly obvious to the whole magistracy of the City."[17]

Hitchen's attack apparently had little effect on Wild's multiple operations. Howson writes that Wild "neatly turned the Marshal's attack by inserting a notice in one of the weekly journals

in which he now seriously proclaimed himself 'THIEF-TAKER GENERAL OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND'" (p. 111).[18]

In October or November 1719, Wild moved to a still larger house in Great Old Bailey in order to accommodate his increasing trade. At these new quarters, Wild was said to have lived like a man of quality. In the mornings, while being dressed and served an elaborate breakfast, he received lawyers, clients, and criminals. In the evenings he held soirées to which he invited aldermen, councillors, magistrates, wealthy clients, and nobles. Although Chesterfield's "memoirs" of Wild in the December 23, 1738 number of Common Sense were conceived as an attack upon Walpole, the description of Wild's manner and of his unique social position seems to have been based to a certain degrée on historical fact. In his account "of the Life of a certain great Man, deceas'd," Chesterfield wrote: "His [Wild's] Levee was crowded with Personages of the first Rank, who never regretted any Expence or Imposition, that gave them an opportunity of paying their Court to so illustrious a Man. Jonathan was a merry facetious Fellow, had a very dextrous Volubility of Speech, yet receiv'd them rather with an awkward Familiarity, than with that Submission and Civility which he ow'd to his Superiors."[19]

By 1719, Wild had systematically organized his operations to encompass a wide variety of interlocking activities. For the robbery of travelers he employed gangs who plundered wagons on the road and thieves, disguised as porters, who collected baggage at coach stops under the pretense that the goods were to be delivered to their owners. For thefts in town, Wild directed gangs of house breakers, "spruce

prigs," and "lodging lay specialists." Spruce prigs were furnished with fine clothes and equipages so that they could attend operas, plays, and assemblies, where they picked the pockets of the wealthy. Lodging lay specialists rented expensive apartments from which they removed anything that could be carried, or ordered costly goods to be delivered to fashionable addresses from which they were then removed.

The disposal of stolen goods was handled with commensurate imagination and organization. According to Howson, Wild operated "locks" or warehouses in Rosemary Lane (Wapping), Newington Butts (Southwark), and Chick Lane (north of Smithfield), where stolen property was stored until it could be returned to the owner or sold abroad (p. 141). In his chronicle of Wild's life, Arthur Vincent writes that goods taken from shopkeepers were often transferred to a special department for alteration and that watches, rings, and other jewelry were melted down.[20]

Goods that were not returned to their owner or resold in altered form were disposed of abroad. It seems likely that Wild at first dealt with Channel smugglers, but in 1720 or 1721 he bought his own sloop and installed as captain Roger Johnson, a well-known thief. Howson states that within a year Wild and Johnson had made enough money to buy a larger ship in which Johnson transported stolen goods to Flushing and Ostend and brought back contraband goods to England. In addition, Johnson used the ship to run immigrants and those evading the law to and from Ireland (p. 144).

The "Transportation Act" of 1719 (6 George I c. 23),[21] which offered a £40 reward to anyone who arrested and convicted a returned transportee, provided Wild with both a new source of employees and of revenue. Wild hired agents in the ports and county towns to keep him informed about the movements of criminals, particularly transportees who returned to England before their sentences were completed. Records indicate that these agents arrested men in places as far apart as Bristol, Portsmouth, Oxford, Gravesend, Maidstone, and Dover. Howson writes that Wild's agents "were everywhere; his posse could move freely all over the country and had a greater range even than the City Marshals" (p. 126).

The transportees who were not turned in for the £40 reward made ideal employees for Wild. If they became troublesome, all Wild had to do was reveal their identity and commit them to Newgate, for which he would receive a handsome recompense, and they would lose their freedom or life. With such power, Wild was able to employ transportees as false witnesses at little or no cost, and with little danger of being exposed.

Apparently Wild made increasingly frequent appearances at the Old Bailey in connection with his thief-taking operations. Howson found Wild's name as the claimant for reward on the back of several indictments in the Gaol Delivery Rolls, and Frederick Lyons writes that the 1735 edition of Select Trials contains thirty-two references to Wild between August 1721 and May 1725.[22] According to biographies of the day, Wild frequently suborned witnesses and devised means to keep uncorruptible deponents out of court in order to secure the

acquittals of those he wanted to protect. If he wanted to convict a thief, Wild would have his men turn King's evidence and provide them with false impeachments, false depositions, and false witnesses. Many of Wild's appearances in court were related to a prolonged effort in the early 1720s to destroy large gangs that were not under his control. Since there are no records of large gangs that operated in London from 1723 until after Wild's death, Howson concludes that Wild's purge was successful.

While Wild was busy using the courts for his own ends, Parliament passed parts of two separate acts that were obviously directed against him. Leon Radzinowicz writes in A History of English Criminal Law that a section of the Transportation Act of 1717, which made it a felony to take a reward for returning stolen property without arresting and prosecuting the thief, was in fact popularly known as the "Jonathan Wild Act."[23] Section IV of this statute stated:

> IV. And whereas there are several Persons who have secret Acquaintance with Felons, and who make it their Business to help Persons to their stolen Goods, and by that Means gain Money from them, which is divided between them and the Felons, whereby they greatly encourage such Offenders: Be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That where-ever any Person taketh Money or Reward, directly or indirectly, under Pretence or upon Account of helping any Person or Persons to any stolen Goods or Chattels, every such Person so taking Money or Reward, as aforesaid, (unless such Person doth apprehend, or cause to be apprehended, such Felon who stole the same, and cause such Felon to be brought to his Trial for the same, and give Evidence against him) shall be guilty of Felony, according to the Nature of the Felony committed in stealing such Goods, and in such and the same Manner as if such Offender had himself stole such Goods and Chattels, in the Manner, and with such Circumstances as the same were stolen.[24]

The Jonathan Wild Act was not enforced, and two years later Parliament passed the Transportation Act of 1719, which contained a

section offering a special award of £40 to anyone who could arrest and successfully prosecute an offender under the Jonathan Wild Act:

> IX. And whereas the Practice of taking Money to help Persons to their stolen Goods, and sharing it with the Felons, is still continued in Defiance of the Laws, and to the Encouragement of Felons: Be it enacted by the Authority aforesaid, That whoever shall discover, apprehend and prosecute to Conviction of Felony without Benefit of Clergy, any Person or Persons for the said Offence of taking Money or other Reward, directly or indirectly, to help any Person or Persons to their stolen Goods (such Offender not having apprehended the Felon who stole the same, and brought him or her to Trial for the same, and given Evidence against him or her as required by Law) Offender so convicted, as aforesaid, and shall have the like Certificate, and like Payments made without Fee or Reward as any Person or Persons may be entitled unto for the apprehending, prosecuting and convicting of Highwaymen by any law or Laws for that purpose.[25]

Both of the above laws relating to Wild's activities contained a number of loopholes and were not vigorously applied for another few years. In the interim, Wild was unsuccessfully prosecuted under the Receiving Act for having allegedly received stolen goods, as well as for having committed assault and interfered with the course of justice. Howson notes that A Collection of Select Cases Relating to Evidence (1754), by Sir John Strange, shows how ingeniously Wild, or his attorneys, challenged the correctness of the indictments and turned the law inside out to avoid conviction (p. 95).

Despite the enactment of two statutes directed against him and an attempt to prosecute him under a third law, Wild appears to have enjoyed a favorable reputation during this period. At least part of the public regarded him as an intrepid combatant against crime, and the Privy Council consulted Wild in 1720 about means of controlling the increasing number of highway robberies. Whether Wild's reputation was

based on genuine respect, on fear, or on his effectiveness as a thief-taker is a question that biographers and historians have not been able to answer completely. It is evident, however, that Wild astutely recognized the importance of maintaining his reputation by nurturing what today is referred to as a favorable public image.

Howson credits Wild with being "the first criminal to become a 'celebrity' known to everyone in Town, a good neighbour, a prominent citizen who petitioned for the Freedom of London, and a donator to charitable causes" (p. 115). Some writers of the day record that Wild carried a short silver staff which he used as a badge of authority, and Vincent observes that Wild helped build his fame by paying newspapers "to insert references to the Thief-catcher General, and by treating condemned prisoners at Newgate on the condition that they made a reference to his prowess in their dying speeches from the gallows-cart."[26]

One wonders if Wild paid the Daily Journal to print the following item in its November 2, 1721 number: "They write from Bath and Bristol, that their Roads are much infected with Robbers, and that application having been made to Jonathan Wild, that Gentleman has resolved to take a Tour of those Cities, as soon as his Equipages can be got ready" (quoted by Howson, p. 124). Other accounts in newspapers that Howson cites present Wild as a forceful upholder of law and order and a confederate of officials, who at times acted on his own with a semblance of legitimate authority.

According to Applebee's Original Weekly Journal of January 28, 1721:

> Last Saturday Night, Mr. May, a 'Change Broker, was set upon by a single Highwayman against the Men hanging in Chains upon Holloway, who took his Watch, Rings and Money. But the Place being immediately alarm'd, it happened that Jonathan Wild and one of the Turnkeys of Newgate, were drinking on Horseback at the Three Foxes in Holloway. Jonathan took to the Road, and fir'd a Pistol at the Highwayman, who got clear off: but they track'd him beyond Highgate by the Blood, the Slugs having wounded either him or his Horse.

The August 19, 1721 number of the Daily Journal reported: "On Thursday last there was a small Plate ran for at Acton, upon which Occasion a vast concorse of People were assembled there, a Quarrel arose between the Town folks and the Strangers, which last being chiefly on Horseback, and the famous Jonathan Wild the Thieftaker being at their Head, as General, obliged the Country People to retire" (quoted by Howson, pp. 117-18).

Wild's downfall did not begin until 1724, when there was a violent change in public opinion, perhaps due at first to Wild's role in the impeachment of Jack Sheppard and Blueskin Blake. Sheppard, a nimble 5'4" housebreaker, became a celebrated folk hero for his astonishing escapes from Newgate before being executed on November 17, 1724. Blueskin was a luckless thief who had been arrested and mistreated by Wild several times. When on October 14, 1724, Wild refused to use his influence in Blueskin's behalf, the enraged prisoner attempted to murder Wild in the yard of the Sessions House, where he was awaiting trial. According to an account in the British Journal of October 17, 1724: "Mr. Wild being there [in the Sessions House yard] drinking a Glass of Wine with him [Blueskin], he said to Mr. Wild, 'You may put in a Word for me as well as for another Person.'

To which Mr. Wild replied, 'I cannot do it, you are certainly a dead Man.' Whereupon Blake on a sudden seized Wild by the Neck, and with a little Clasp-Knife cut his Throat in a very dangerous Manner. . . ."[27]

Wild recovered from the attack but soon faced further difficulties. Roger Johnson, captain of his sloop, was fined £700 for a cargo of contraband, and Tom Edwards, a "waggon lay" expert who had informed the Customs House of the sailing, procured a warrant against Johnson on a charge of felony. Johnson managed to evade the attempt to arrest him and appealed for help to Wild, who had Edwards detained briefly. Despite additional legal maneuvers by Wild, Edwards obtained a second warrant and arrested Johnson in Stratford East. While Edwards, Johnson, and a constable were waiting in an alehouse, Wild arrived with a posse that enabled Johnson to escape once again.

About this time Wild also became involved with Thomas Kelley, one of the fugitives Johnson had illegally transported from Ireland, who might have deliberately set a trap which led to Wild's apprehension and to his hanging. On January 22, 1725, Kelley visited Mrs. Johnson, who was staying at Wild's house while her husband was in hiding. A short while later Margaret Morphew, an Irish girl, arrived and presented Wild's wife Mary[28] with a pair of brocaded shoes and a pair of clogs. After drinking several quarterns of gin with the visitors, Wild, in an apparent act of gratitude, proposed that while he waited on the street as a lookout Kelley and Morphew should steal some lace from Mrs. Statham, an elderly, short-sighted woman who had a shop near Holborn Bridge. The robbery was consummated and Wild paid Kelley and Morphew three guineas and four broad pieces from the tin box of

lace that they stole. Mrs. Statham, who had done business with Wild before, consulted him about the return of her lace. After describing the goods and the thieves whom she suspected, she was told to return in a few days. Mrs. Statham was not able to see Wild again until February 15, the same day that he was arrested for having assisted Johnson in making his escape from Stratford East.

The Weekly Journal of February 20, 1725 reported the arrest of Wild and one of his trusted confederates: "On Monday Jonathan Wild, together with one Quilt Arnold, was apprehended, by Virtue of a Search-Warrant, at his House in the Old-Baily; and after an Examination of several Hours before Sir John Fryer and Sir Gerrard Conyers, two of the Aldermen of this City, they were both committed to Newgate for felonious Practices."[29] Howson has found the entry in the London Gaol Delivery roll for February that records the offense that Wild was charged with: "Rem. 14: Jonathan Wilde & Quilt Arnold committed by Sir John Fryer Bart. & Sir Gerard Conyers Knight. Upon an Information on Oath for rescuing one Roger Johnson, a felon Convict, from a Constable who had him in Custody" (p. 235).

A second charge made against Wild on the same date suggests that certain magistrates might have been determined to keep the famous Thief-taker under lock and key. On the Calendar wrapped around the Middlesex Gaol Delivery Roll for February 1725, Howson discovered this entry: "Prisoner No. 31: Jonathan Wilde, Charged in Custody by L. Street, E. Ridley, Jonathan Beaver, William William Esquires upon an Information on oath for feloniously taking 3 Lottery Ticketts from a person unknown and a Bank Note of £50 from another person unknown.

Dat. 15 Feb." (p. 235). Because he could not locate any other documents relating to this charge, Howson believes that it was improvised to prevent Wild from obtaining bail.

Evidence that the authorities were attempting to build a case against Wild seems substantiated by the comprehensive warrant of Detainer, setting forth eleven general reasons why Wild should be kept in custody, that the City Recorder, Sir William Thomson, presented to the court twelve days later on February 27. Unfortunately, Thomson's original document has not survived, but it seems likely that his eleven charges were essentially the same as the eleven Informations listed in The Political State of Great Britain as having been lodged against Wild at the time of his trial.

The eleven charges were:

> I. That he had for many Years past, been a Confederate with great Numbers of Highwaymen, Pick-pockets, House-breakers &c.
>
> II. That he had form'd a kind of Corporation of Thieves, of which he was the Director; and that his pretended Services, in detecting and prosecuting Offenders, consisted only in bringing those to the Gallows who concealed their Booty or refused to share it with him.
>
> III. That he had divided the Town and Country into Districts, and appointed distinct Gangs for each, who regularly accounted with him for their Robberies. He had also a particular Set to steal at Churches in time of Divine Service; and also other moving Detachments to attend at Court on Birth-Days, Balls, &c. and upon both Houses of Parliament, Circuits and County Fairs.
>
> IV. That the Persons employ'd by him were for the most part Felons convict, who have returned from Transportation before their due Time was expired; of whom he made Choice for his Agents, because they could not be legal Evidence against him, and because he had it in his own Power to take from them what Part of the Stolen Goods he pleased, and otherwise abuse, or even Hang them, at his Will and Pleasure.

V. That he had from time to time supplied such convicted Felons with Money and Cloaths, and lodged them in his own House, the better to conceal them; particularly some, against whom there are now Informations for diminishing and counterfeiting Broad-Pieces and Guineas.

VI. That he had not only been a Receiver of Stolen Goods, as well as of Writings of all Kinds for near 15 Years last past, but frequently been a Confederate, and robb'd along with the abovementioned convicted Felons.

VII. That in order to carry on these vile Practices, and gain some Credit with the ignorant Multitude, he usually carried about him a short Silver Staff, as a badge of Authority from the Government, which he used to produce when he himself was concerned in robbing.

VIII. That he had under his Care and Direction several Warehouses for receiving and concealing Stolen Goods, and also a Ship for carrying off Jewels, Watches, and other valuable Goods to Holland, where he had a superannuated thief for his Factor.

IX. That he kept in Pay several Artists to make Alterations, and transform Watches, Seals, Snuff Boxes, Rings, and other valuable Things, that they might not be known, several of which he used to present to such Persons as he thought might be of service to him.

X. That he seldom help'd the Owners to lost Notes and Papers, unless he found them able to specify and describe them exactly, and then insisted on more than half the Value.

XI. That he had frequently sold humane Blood, by procuring false Evidence to swear Persons into Facts of which they were not Guilty; sometimes, to prevent them from being Evidences against himself, at other Times for the Sake of the Great Reward given by the Government.[30]

When Thomson presented the Warrant of Detainer to the court on February 27, he claimed that each of the eleven articles was supported by sworn informations and witnesses. Wild was consequently remanded to Newgate and advised that he was to be ready to stand trial in the April Sessions. An attempt to obtain bail for Wild was unsuccessful according to the Weekly Journal of March 6, 1725: "Jonathan Wild having mov'd the Court, by his Council, to be admitted to Bail; it was oppos'd by the Council against him, and he was order'd to remain."[31]

On March 10, while in Newgate, Wild sent for Mrs. Statham, who was given to understand that if she brought ten guineas, the return of her lace could be arranged. Although he was careful to refuse an offer of reward, Wild did insist that the shopkeeper give a waiting porter ten guineas, which Wild claimed he had to spend for recovery of the goods.[32] A short while later, the porter returned with the lace, which he delivered to Mrs. Statham.

With rumors circulating that the Privy Council was about to pardon two criminals who had agreed to charge him with capital crimes, Wild apparently realized that the authorities were making a concerted effort to convict him. On March 23, he wrote to William Legge, 1st Earl of Dartmouth,[33] for help:

> I doe not doubt that your Lordship will be surrprized at my presumeing to write to you, but I cannot but hope your Lordship will pardon me for soe doeing, because I am Compell'd to Seek Protection, by the Violent Prosecution of Some Magistrates (whom I never Offended) who have Encouraged severall Notorious Thieves to Swear against me, and to Quallify them to be Legall Evidences, have procured his Majesties Most Gracious Pardon for them, for Crimes for which they have been Condemned, Tho' when this is done, all they can or dare pretend to swear, Amounts to no more than that they have paid back Goods to me, which they had Stollen, and which I gott restored to the right Owners, and for this my Service, the Mistaken zeale of those Gentlemen hurries them on to seek my ruine: But if your Lordship would be pleased to give me a Letter to such person as you shall Judge proper to hear and redress me, I am confident that the Designes of my Enemyes will be frustrated, and I thereby at Liberty to Discover Apprehend and Convict Numbers of Notorious Criminalls, which will be a great Service to the Public.[34]

A few days later, on April 10, Wild was ordered to stand trial on the charge of having taken £50 for the return of a stolen banknote without subsequently apprehending and prosecuting the thief. The

Weekly Journal of April 17 records Wild's response to the indictment: "Jonathan Wild was set to the Bar, in order to his Tryal for Felony, Mr. Attorney and Mr. Sollicitor-General being present on the part of his Majesty; but upon a Motion of Mr. Kettleby, and an Affidavit of the Prisoner, that two material Witnesses for him were out of Town, and after several learned Arguments on both Sides, the Tryal was put off till the next Sessions, and he was remanded back to Newgate, and strict Orders given the Keepers to take Care of him."[35]

It was in requesting a delay to the May Session for this trial that Wild, normally an adroit and persuasive speaker, made what was to prove a fatal slip of the tongue. He claimed that only the night before he had learned that the Grand Jury was charging him with another felony, but that he did not know specifically what the alleged crime was and needed time to procure material witnesses for his defense. When questioned about the identity of these witnesses, Wild replied that although he did not know what he was being indicted for, he had heard that it involved a person named Statham.

Howson, who has examined the dates of all documents relating to the Statham case, comments: "Although it is regrettable to have to say so, it was neither the diligence of Sir William Thomson nor the efficiency of his judicial machine (as Defoe and everyone since has believed) that unearthed the evidence to hang Wild, but that, on the contrary, the first they [the authorities] ever heard of Mrs. Statham was from Wild's own mouth" (p. 250). A new indictment was hurriedly drawn up and a Grand Jury especially convened to hear the charges.

While Kelley was being arrested and recognizances taken for Margaret Morphew and Mrs. Statham, Wild attempted a number of maneuvers to improve his tenuous position. Howson has found an account in the April 30 number of Parker's Penny Post reporting an unsuccessful attempt by Wild to initiate a "Writ of Salivation," according to which he had claimed that he was unable to speak properly because of mercury ointment taken to cure syphilis (p. 257). Wild did manage to have his trial postponed one day, from May 14 to May 15, which was enough to allow for the publication by Applebee's Original Weekly Journal of a list of criminals that he had arrested. Apparently Wild made this agreement with the paper in exchange for an interview he granted to "Applebee's Man," who most scholars believe was Defoe.

On May 14, the day before his trial, Wild distributed to jurymen outside the Old-Bailey copies of a pamphlet which recalled the service he had done his country, and which listed the names of seventy-five men and women whom he had "discover'd, apprehended, and convicted of several Robberies on the Highway; and also for Burglaries and House-breakings; and also the several Persons hereunder named, for returning from Transportation."[36]

Wild was first tried under the Shoplifting Act (10 William III c. 12),[37] which made the theft of 5s. or more from a shop a capital felony. The formal charge lodged against him was that of having privately stolen in the shop of Catherine Statham fifty yards of lace valued at £40. Wild's attorneys argued that according to the testimony of Morphew and Kelley their client had not committed the actual robbery, but had remained outside of the shop as a lookout and

therefore was not guilty of the capital offense.

Acquittal on this count was recommended by the court, but Wild was then tried under the Jonathan Wild Act. He was specifically charged with having received ten guineas from Catherine Statham for the return of her lace and not having apprehended and prosecuted the thieves.

Select Trials records Catherine Statham's testimony about her dealings with Wild after the theft. She describes visiting Wild at Newgate on March 10, giving ten guineas to the porter upon Wild's instructions, and receiving from the porter a while later a box with all of her lace except one piece. Mrs. Statham's account of her parting conversation with Wild suggests the cunningly hypocritical pose that he maintained almost to the end:

> Now, Mr. Wild says I, what must I give you for your Trouble? ---- Not a Farthing, Madam, says he, not a single Farthing; I don't do these Things for worldly Interest, but for the Benefit of poor People who have met with Misfortunes. As for the Piece of Lace that is missing, I would not have ye be uneasy, for I hope to get it for you e'er be long; nay, and I don't know, but in a little Time, I may not only help ye to your ten Guineas again, but to the Thief too. And, if I can, much Good may it do ye; and, as you are a Widow, and a good Christian, I desire nothing of ye but your Prayers, and for them I shall be thankful.[38]

After hearing the defense arguments, the jury acquitted Wild of the first indictment but found him guilty of the second. Howson has analyzed the evidence and various legal maneuvers of both prosecution and defense, and concluded: "It is almost certain that had the prisoner been anyone else but Wild, or even Wild at an earlier time, he would have got away with it" (p. 266). Instead Wild was brought back to court that same night to hear the sentence of death passed upon him.

On May 19, the day the Dead Warrant came down, Wild petitioned George I for clemency:

> I have indeed been a most wicked and notorious Offender, but was never Guilty of or inclin'd to Treasonable Practices or Murder, both of which I ever had in the utmost Detestation and Abhorrence which affords me great Comfort in the midst of my Calamity and Affliction.
>
> I have a sickly Wife loaded with Grief who must inevitably come to the Grave with me if I suffer; or lead a most miserable Life, she being already non compos Mentis.
>
> If I receive Your Majesty's Royal Favour of a Reprieve I do firmly resolve to relinquish my wicked Ways and to detest (as far as in me lays) all such who shall persevere therein, as a Testimony of which I have a List ready to show to such whom your Majesty shall appoint to see it.[39]

Many newspapers published accounts of Wild's last days in prison, which were not among his most glorious. Mist's Weekly Journal of May 22 contained the following report of Wild's condition at this time: "Jonathan is attended in the Condemn'd Hold by the Reverend Mr. Nicholson, Lecturer of St. Sepulchres, to prepare him for his approaching Change. He is, as yet, under the greatest Horrors and Agonies of Mind; which, 'tis hop'd, may work a good Effect for the short Time he has to live, as well upon his wicked Companions as himself."[40]

The most vivid depiction of Wild's breakdown in prison is contained in an account by T. Purney, Ordinary and Chaplain of Newgate:

> He [Wild] appeared to be very much disordered and confused in his Thoughts, which he said was owing to those Wounds [received in apprehending robbers], and in particular to two fractures in his Skull, which disordered his Brain, tho' cover'd with Silver Plates. He never went to the Chappel during the whole time that he continued under Sentence of Death, saying he was lame and unable to go up so far; another Reason he added, was, that certain Enemies of his would not only interrupt his Prayers, by pointing, whispering, &c. but would, he had reason to

> believe, insult, and if they dared, would raise a Tumult and Riot upon his Account.

The day before Wild died he requested the sacrament. He also inquired about what happened to the soul when it was separated from the body and why Greek and Roman heroes who killed themselves were revered if suicide was a crime. According to the Ordinary's account, "The Prisoner confessed that Self Murder was impiety, but his confession appeared to be Hyprocrisy; for, about 2 of the Clock in the Morning he endeavour'd to prevent his Execution by drinking Laudanum."[41]

Wild's failure to appear in the Newgate Chapel on the Sunday before his execution disappointed a great number of spectators. According to Howson, Parker's Penny Post of May 28 reported that between three and four hundred people, who had paid an admission fee of 8d., waited in the chapel from nine a.m. to noon, but there was no chaplain, no prisoners, and no service. When what the Penny Post described as a "General Mutiny" began, the turnkeys were obliged to parade three other prisoners before "the Mob" in order to appease them (p. 272).

Other newspaper accounts cited by Howson indicate that Wild had attempted to obtain a reprieve. The Daily Post of May 24 reported: "We hear that Jonathan Wyld, in order to obtain a Reprieve, has offer'd to make some Discoveries in Relation to the late Robbery of the Exchequer, about which he hath been examined on Saturday last: whether he is capable of giving any Light into that Affair, we know not; but we are assured, there was no Reprieve for him yesterday in the Evening."

The London Journal of May 29 stated that in petitioning for a reprieve of a fortnight or three weeks Wild had maintained "That he had convicted above 40 malefactors, and received several Wounds and Pistol-shots in the apprehending of them: That he could make such Discoveries as would greatly benefit the Public; and that he would propose Means to prevent, in a great Measure, if not totally suppress, all future Thefts and Robberies. But being examin'd on Saturday, he could offer Nothing material . . . " (quoted by Howson, pp. 270, 271).

When Wild endeavored to prevent his execution by drinking laudanum, he took too large a dose and vomited the greatest part during the night. Some contemporary writers observed that Wild was still in a stuporous state the following morning, on May 24, when he was conveyed to Tyburn in an open cart, escorted by about fifty of the Sherriff of Middlesex's officers as well as officers from the two City Compters.

Of Wild's final hour, The Political State of Great Britain relates succinctly: "There was the Greatest Concourse of People to see him executed that was ever known on such an Occasion; and the Mob with unusual Barbarity, insulted him all the Way he passed."[42] Other accounts reveal with more detail the ferocity and indignation that Wild's death seems to have kindled in the public. Mist's Weekly Journal of May 29 notes: "On Monday Jonathan Wild was executed at Tyburn. Never was there seen so prodigious a Concourse of People before, upon any Occasion; and, what's very remarkable, in all that numerous Crowd there was not one pittying Eye to be found, or compassionate Word heard; but, on the contrary, all the Way he went, nothing but Hollowing and Huzzas, as if he had been a Triumph, particularly when

he was turn'd off."[43]

The report of Wild's death that appeared in Applebee's Original Weekly Journal of the same date contains many of the same phrases that are in the Mist's Weekly article, but also includes a more graphic depiction of the violence as well as a bit of moralizing. After describing how the crowd broke Wild's head with stones so that his blood ran copiously, the writer (most probably Defoe) expresses the hope that the "Barbarity, tho' as unjustifiable as unusual, yet may serve to deter others from treading in his Steps, when they find the Consequence so universally odious."[44]

In his pamphlet A True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the late Jonathan Wild, which appeared on June 8, fifteen days after Wild's execution, Defoe observed: "In short, there was a kind of an universal rage against him, which nothing but his death could satisfy or put an end to, and if a reprieve had come, it would have, 'twas thought, been difficult for the officers to have brought him back again without his receiving some mischief, if not his death's wound, from the rabble."[45]

The violent reaction on the part of the public apparently resulted from a long-standing but expediently repressed hatred of Wild and of the criminal operations that he both directed and symbolized. An indication that at least some of the more thoughtful members of society were concerned about the conditions that had fostered the rise of Wild and other criminals may be found in Bernard de Mandeville's pamphlet An Enquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Executions at Tyburn, which was published in April 1725,[46] a month before Wild's death.

Mandeville wrote his tract in order "to lessen if not prevent the Common Practice of Thieving"[47] and to warn against the destructive consequences of theftbote[48] and the harm that the public sustained from trade directed by thief-catchers. "As soon as any Thing is missing, suspected to be stolen, the first Course we steer is directly to the office of Mr. Jonathan Wild,"[49] Mandeville complained. He decried the shameful negotiations with thieves for the recovery of stolen property and advocated that the bookkeeping of stolen goods cease, that gangs of thieves be broken, and, above all, that thief-catchers be punished severely.

Other accounts and documents of the period suggest that even when Wild was at the height of his power, he was not universally respected. The Weekly Journal of October 3, 1719 satirized Wild's pose of righteousness as well as his willingness to assume official duties in the following manner: "On Wednesday Mr. Lorraine, Ordinary of Newgate, departed this Life at his House in Town-Ditch: and we hear the Rev. Mr. Jonathan Wild (who is recovered from his late Indisposition) offers to officiate till another is elected in his Room, being, as he says, thoroughly qualify'd for the Place by the late State of Mortification pass'd through" (quoted by Howson, p. 119). A subsequent number continued the attack: "Though there are several very eminent Divines who stand Candidates to succeed Paul Lorrain, as the learned Mr. Ford and Mr. Battle, yet we are informed that the Rev. Mr. P----n and Mr. Charles L-----b having joined their Interests, stand much the fairest; Jonathan, in regard to their superiour Merit, having resigned all his Pretensions."[50]

The fact that Wild unsuccessfully petitioned the Court of Aldermen for the Freedom of London in June 1724[51] suggests that the municipal government was not anxious to grant Wild any kind of official recognition. According to Howson, the repertories of the Court of Aldermen contain the following entry: "Upon reading the Humble Petition of Jonathan Wilde praying that in consideration of his Services done in apprehending and Convicting divers Felons for Returning from Transportacion he Might be admitted into the freedom of this City--the Consideration thereof is adjourned till another time" (p. 211). There is no evidence that Wild was ever given the Freedom of London, nor is there any record that the Court of Aldermen ever reconsidered Wild's original petition.

That the death of Jonathan Wild captured the public's imagination seems well borne out by the number of biographies, epitaphs, and satires that appeared in 1725.[52] Interest in Wild was not confined to the British Isles alone. The New England Courant, which was printed and sold by Benjamin Franklin in Boston, published on September 18, 1725 a dispatch from London detailing the informations that had been lodged against Wild. Succeeding numbers of the paper, from October 2-9 to December 18-25, reprinted in entirety "H.D."'s Life of Jonathan Wild, from his Birth to his Death.

Immediately after the execution, Wild's body was carried away in a coach hired by his wife. The aroused public was led to believe that the corpse would be dissected, but this does not seem to have happened. According to the London Journal and Applebee's Original Weekly Journal, Wild was interred in St. Pancras Church

Yard. Howson found the brief but cryptic entry, "27th.J.W.," in the Parish Register (p. 276). The June 5 number of Applebee's Journal notes, however, that "the Body of Jonathan Wild, that was buried in Pancras Church Yard, was dug up from the grave and carried off, three or four Days after Interment."[53]

The skeleton of Wild was reputedly kept by a surgeon named Brand and then passed on to several Windsor physicians until Dr. Frederick Fowler presented the remains to the Royal College of Surgeons in 1847.[54] In Jonathan Wild: Prince of Robbers, Lyons reproduces a report from Mr. Deville, a famous phrenologist to whom Fowler had sent the skeleton without disclosing the alleged identity. Deville opined that the unknown subject had been "an aged sinner" who possessed "some useful faculties for mechanical operations." He believed that this person would "without much hesitation, appropriate to his own uses the property of others; but, in so doing, show some ingenuity and cunning."[55]

The height of the skeleton, which now hangs in the Hunterian Museum at the Royal College of Surgeons, is 5'6½". The forehead is low, the face short and square, and the jaw wide with a broad chin (p. 282). Although old drawings of Wild are crude, he was frequently pictured as being stocky with an ample jaw and chin.

Despite some contradictory description, it seems evident that Wild possessed an abundance of energy, boldness, ingenuity, cunning, and ruthlessness. He was an active man who could defend himself physically in the many difficult situations his ventures occasioned. By the time he died at the age of forty-two, Wild was said to have

suffered two fractures of the skull, which caused him to cover his bald head with a silver plate. He survived Blueskin Blake's attempt to cut his throat, and was supposed to have had seventeen wounds from swords, daggers, and gunshots. According to the Purney account, Wild stated that as a result of his thief-taking activities he had "Wounds and Scars still remaining in his Head, Body and Legs."[56]

The eleven informations lodged against Wild at the time of his arrest attest to the extent and complexity of his criminal operations. Not only was Wild a notorious thief-taker, responsible for the apprehension of more than 120 criminals, he was also a well-known receiver of stolen goods and the director of a vast interlocking network of thieves. While pretending to serve the public as a thief-taker, Wild falsely impeached and brutally prosecuted rebellious gangs and individuals who did not submit to his control. Although he himself scrupulously avoided turning over stolen property to the rightful owner, he was the receiver, storer, alterer, and shipper of booty of all kinds. At the same time that he betrayed many a criminal, Wild trained, equipped, and regulated legions of thieves who pursued their activities in a variety of ways on the highway and in the city.

It is difficult to ascertain the precise number of criminals who were under Wild's control. In his study of London crime, Donald Rumbelow estimates that Wild had over 7,000 thieves trained to rob private houses.[57] As for Wild's earnings, Howson accepts as reasonable the statement that Wild purportedly made to "H.D." that he reaped a total of more than £10,000 from the Lost Property office alone. To this sum Howson adds £5,000 for goods disposed of in other ways,

£5,000 for goods smuggled abroad, and £5,000 for goods smuggled on return journeys. In addition, for the apprehension of a minimum of one hundred twenty criminals, Howson estimates that Wild received at least another £7,800 in state rewards. This makes a total of £32,800, but does not include special local rewards, payment from thieves in Newgate who were attempting to buy their way out, and money levied on bawdy-houses, coiners, and forgers for protection. After deducting Wild's expenses, which consisted of bribes to officials, shares to thieves, and hush money, Howson concludes that from his multiple criminal operations Wild netted about £25,000, or about £500,000 in modern currency (p. 282).

Perhaps Wild's most exceptional asset was his ability to attract and manipulate people, from persons of importance to the lowest thieves and prostitutes. Although his appeals to the Earl of Dartmouth and George I failed, as did his petition for the Freedom of London, the scope of Wild's illegal activities indicates that he was able to influence numerous aldermen, magistrates, attorneys, bailiffs, and lesser officials. With clients of all classes, Wild adroitly concocted delays, dodges, and complications until his victims were willing to pay the maximum reward for the return of their stolen property. Among the criminal element, Wild maintained a remarkable following despite his continuous record of extortion and betrayal. He was said to have lived with at least six wives or mistresses, and many criminals, like Blueskin Blake, were impeached and abused by Wild on several occasions before he sent them to their deaths.

While Wild's courage and his physical prowess were widely recognized, his flair for language undoubtedly contributed greatly to his success. He was a master at twisting the truth, at cajoling the reluctant, and at bullying the rebellious, often with mocking cruelty. A man of action as well as of words, Wild posed unabashedly as a law enforcer, businessman, and man of quality while he exploited rich and poor with extraordinary finesse. Ingenious, cunning, ruthless, brazen, and eminently successful until public opinion turned against him, Jonathan Wild merits a very special pedestal in the gallery of England's most notorious criminals.

Notes

[1] Relevant examples of our own time that come to mind include Dr. Bruce Gold, the protagonist of Joseph Heller's Good As Gold (1979), who is based unmistakably on former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, and the central character of Norman Mailer's The Executioner's Song (1979), the convicted murderer Gary Gilmore, who was executed two years before the publication of Mailer's work.

Well-known novels from other periods that have major characters who were based on real people include Aldous Huxley's Point Counter Point (1928); Samuel Butler's The Way of All Flesh (1903); Charles Dickens's Barnaby Rudge (1841); and Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719).

[2] Gerald Howson, Thief-Taker General: The Rise and Fall of Jonathan Wild (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970), p. 10. For much of the following information about Wild, I rely upon Howson's examination of sources unavailable in this country. Howson's biography, which cites Sessions records, gaol delivery rolls, repertories of the Court of Aldermen, and newspapers of the period, fills in many of the gaps left in previous accounts of Wild's life. Subsequent page references to Howson's study will be included in the text.

[3] For a sample of Wild's spelling, see below, p. 67.

[4] A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue, ed. Francis Grose, 3rd ed. (1796; rpt. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963), p. 304.

[5] The Statutes of The Realm, IX (London, 1822), 695.

[6] The London Gazette, No. 5066, November 4-8, 1712.

[7] In The Wild Gallant, a bawd informs Lady Constance that her lodgings are "in St. Luknors Lane at the Cat and Fiddle." Mr. Loveby rebukes the bawd and two whores: "I am ruin'd: for ever ruin'd: plague had you no places in the town to name but Sodom, and Luknors-Lane for Lodging" (IV.i. ll. 168-69, 183-85).

When Macheath desires women, one of the places where a porter is instructed to procure them is "about Lewkner's Lane" (The Beggar's Opera, II.iii. l. 23). Pope utilizes the name of the notorious street for more ambitious purposes in "A Further Account of the Most Deplorable Condition of Mr. Edmund Curll, Bookseller." Curll, the subject of Pope's satiric attack, demands, "'At Mr. Summer's, a thief-catcher's in Lewkner's-lane, the man that wrote against the impiety of Mr. Rowe's plays'" (Works of Alexander

Pope, ed. William J. Courthope [1886; rpt. New York: Gordian Press, 1967], X, 471).

[8] Statutes of The Realm, VIII, 628-29.

[9] A vivid though jaundiced description of Hitchen's activities is included in An Answer To A Late Insolent Libel (see above, p. 60 and n. 17), a pamphlet that Wild either wrote or had dictated to a hack writer in May 1718. Although Wild's pamphlet is a counter-attack against charges that Hitchen had made against him, it is full of incidental details that Howson has substantiated from records and provides a useful view of Hitchen's crude methods, from which Wild learned much.

[10] Jonathan Wild: A Very Large and Curious Collection of the Advertisements of This Notorious Character . . . (London, 1719-23), n.pag.

[11] "A True and Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of the Late Jonathan Wild," reprinted in Romances and Narratives of Daniel Defoe, ed. George A. Aitken (London: J.M. Dent, 1899), XVI, 263-64. See below, Chapter III, pp. 107-10.

[12] "The Life of Jonathan Wild . . . by 'H.D. late Clerk to Justice R----,'" in The New England Courant, No. 220, October 9-16, 1725. See below, Chapter III, pp. 102-105.

[13] Statutes of The Realm, VI, 390-91.

[14] William Irwin provides further documentation: "Apparently Jonathan Wild's name was automatically associated with the London underworld. The Universal Journal . . . during all of 1723 and 1724 labeled its paragraphs of criminal intelligence 'from Jonathan Wilde's in the Old-Bailey.' See particularly Nos. 13, 19, 21, 25, 26, 32, 35, 37" (The Making of Jonathan Wild [1941; rpt. Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966], p. 111, n. 14).

[15] The Regulator (London: T. Warner, 1718), reprinted in Frederick J. Lyons' Jonathan Wild, Prince of Robbers (London: M. Joseph, 1936), p. 224.

[16] Ibid., pp. 240-41.

[17] An Answer To A Late Insolent Libel (London: T. Warner, 1718), reprinted in Lyons, pp. 250, 248, 251.

[18] Howson does not identify the name and number of this journal. In The Making of Jonathan Wild, Irwin quotes briefly from An Authentick Narrative of the Life and Actions of Jonathan Wild (see below, Chapter III, pp. 99-102), stating: "To maintain his good name Wild, about 1718, 'caused himself to be proclaimed, in the Weekly Journal, Thief-Catcher General of Great Britain and Ireland'" (p. 5). I have not been able to locate any such notice in the Weekly Journal during 1718 or other years.

[19] Common Sense: or, the Englishman's Journal (London: G. Hawkins, 1739), II, 275-76. See below also, Chapter III, pp. 127-29.

[20] "Jonathan Wild," in Twelve Bad Men, ed. Thomas Seccombe (New York: Brentano's, 1912), p. 231.

[21] The official title of this law is "An Act for the further preventing Robbery, Burglary, and other Felonies, and for the more effectual Transportation of Felons (6 George I c. 23), The Statutes At Large, ed. Charles Runnington (London: Eyre and Strahan, etc., 1786), V, 219-21.

[22] Jonathan Wild, p. 153. I have not been able to verify this information from the original document.

[23] A History of English Criminal Law And Its Administration from 1750 (London: Stevens, 1948), I, 667.

[24] Statutes At Large, V, 114.

[25] Ibid., 220.

[26] Twelve Bad Men, p. 232.

[27] The British Journal, No. CIX, October 17, 1724, p. 5.

[28] Most biographers agree that in addition to the wife he abandoned in Wolverhampton, Wild either married or kept as mistresses five other women: Mary Milliner, Sarah Perrin, Judith Nunn, Elizabeth Mann, and Mary Dean. In 1725 Wild was living with Mary Dean, whom he purportedly married in an Anglican ceremony at St. Pancras on February 13, 1719. Howson was unable to substantiate this in the records of the St. Pancras Parish Register in the County Hall (p. 131).

[29] The Weekly Journal, or Saturday's-Post, No. 330, February 20, 1725, p. 2053.

[30] The Political State of Great Britain, ed. Abel Boyer, XXIX (London: Printed for the Author and Sold by T. Warner, 1725), 505-06.

[31] The Weekly Journal, No. 332, March 6, 1725, p. 2065.

[32] The actual amount that Wild had paid to Kelley and Morphew for the lace, as stated above (p. 68), was three guineas.

[33] Wild had already written at least two letters to the Earl in an unsuccessful attempt to return some of his "writing" that had been "lost" on the road. The steward of the Earl had stubbornly refused to pay Wild's price. For copies of Wild's letters, see Howson, pp. 212, 215-16.

[34] As quoted by Howson (pp. 244-45) from Staffordshire County Records Office, D 1778/IV/2.

[35] The Weekly Journal, No. 338, April 17, 1725, p. 3000.

[36] Select Trials at the Sessions-House in the Old Bailey (London: J. Applebee, 1742), II, 216. Howson states that this list is full of mistakes and inaccuracies. In Appendix II of his book he supplies, where possible, the date of arrest, name of impeacher, and disposition of the case; he also adds the names of twenty-six others whose arrest Wild was either directly or indirectly responsible for. Although Howson's list totals 101, he believes that Wild was more probably involved in the apprehension of 120 to 150 people (pp. 306-11).

[37] The official title of the law is "An Act for the better apprehending prosecuting and punishing of Felons, that Commit Burglary Housebreaking or Robbery in Shops Ware-houses Coach-houses or Stables or that steal Horses" (10 William III c. 12), Statutes of the Realm, VI, 511-13.

[38] Select Trials, II, 226.

[39] As quoted by Howson (pp. 269-70) from the original document in the British Museum, shelfmark 1851. c. 10 (39).

[40] Mist's Weekly Journal, No. 4, May 22, 1725 [p. 2].

[41] The Political State of Great Britain, XXIX, 508, 510. This account was extracted from a six-page pamphlet by Thomas Purney, The Ordinary of Newgate His Account of the Behaviour, Last Dying Speeches and Confessions of the Four Malefactors [Jonathan Wild and others] Who Were Executed at Tyburn . . . the 24th of May, 1725 (London: J. Appelbyee [sic], 1725). The British Museum Catalogue lists this title at shelfmark 6495. k.7, but according to Howson the pamphlet was destroyed during World War II. Howson has ascertained that Purney was away from London during Wild's last days (p. 271). The Ordinary's account was apparently written from notes that were either sent to Purney or to a hack whom Purney employed.

[42] Ibid., pp. 506-507.

[43] Mist's Weekly Journal, No. 5, May 20, 1725 [p. 2].

[44] Reprinted in Daniel Defoe: His Life, and Recently Discovered Writings, ed. William Lee (London: John Camden Hotten, 1869), III, 389.

[45] Reprinted in Romances and Narratives of Daniel Defoe, XVI, 278.

[46] Much of the same material appeared in the British Journal between February 27 and March 27, 1725 in four articles signed "Philanthropos." The articles were collected, expanded, and republished as a pamphlet in April under the author's real name.

[47] An Enquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Executions at Tyburn . . . (London: J. Roberts, 1725), Sig. A3.

[48] The OED defines theftbote as "the taking of some payment from a thief to secure him from legal prosecution; either the receiving back by the owner of the stolen goods or of some compensation, or the taking of a bribe by a person who ought to have brought the thief to justice."

[49] Mandeville, p. 3.

[50] The Weekly Journal, No. 49, November 7, 1719, p. 292.

[51] For a copy of Wild's petition to the Lord Mayor and Court of Aldermen, see Howson, p. 211.

[52] See Howson's bibliography, pp. 318-20, for a list and description of these titles. I discuss the more important of these works below in Chapter III.

[53] Reprinted in Daniel Defoe, III, 392.

[54] See Howson, p. 282, for a copy of Dr. Fowler's letter to the Royal College of Surgeons offering "the skeleton of the celebrated Jonathan Wilde."

[55] Lyons, p. 220, as quoted from an extract from The Weekly Dispatch, March 22, 1840.

[56] Political State, XXIX, 508.

[57] I Spy Blue: The Police and Crime in the City of London from Elizabeth I to Victoria (London: St. Martin's Press, 1971), p. 19. Rumbelow might well have based his estimate on a passage that Defoe had written in 1724: "I have been told, our famous Thief-taker (as they call him) has a List of seven thousand Newgate-Birds, now in Services in this City, and Parts adjacent, all with Intent to rob the Houses they are in" (The Great Law of Subordination Consider'd, quoted by Howson, p. 149).

Chapter III

LITERARY TREATMENTS OF WILD: POPULAR AND POLITICALLY MOTIVATED

The numerous literary treatments of Jonathan Wild that preceded Fielding's book may be divided into two general categories: the popular and the politically motivated. To the first category belongs, for the most part, the profusion of ballads, last speeches, epitaphs, dialogues, and biographies that appeared about the time of Wild's execution and which were primarily concerned with the life and death of the notorious thief-taker. Howson, who has examined many of these works, observes that at the time of his hanging Wild "was the subject of more 'Accounts,' 'Narratives' and Lives'--to say nothing of reams of bad verse of the Hail rev'rend Tripos, Triple Tree of State! kind--than any other criminal of the eighteenth century, including Jack Sheppard" (p. 280). A great deal of this material was hastily written for immediate public consumption and seems to have been forgotten almost as quickly. In general, the style was crude and exaggerated, reflecting both the limited talent of the author and his attempt to appeal to a wide audience.

The second category of literary treatments spans a much longer period and is part of a sustained attack upon Sir Robert Walpole that began about the time of Wild's death and lasted until the Prime Minister was forced to resign in 1742. While the products

of this politically motivated campaign took a variety of forms, one of its most effective devices was the use of Wild's name as a symbol for Walpole. Between 1725 and 1742, several Opposition newspapers included allusions to and satiric biographies of the late thief-taker that had little to do with Wild's actual career, but which emphasized the similarities between the infamous criminal and the most powerful political figure of the day.

Popular Literary Treatments

Fortunately a sufficient number of the many crude ballads, epitaphs, elegies, dialogues, and last farewells that entertained the public at the time of Wild's death have survived to enable the modern reader to obtain an idea of their style, tone, and theme. The literary value of most of this occasional work is minimal, but it is useful to examine the manner in which contemporary writers commented on the life and death of Jonathan Wild, not so much in search of direct sources but as a general index of popularly held opinions of Wild that could have played a part in shaping Fielding's book.

Most of this inferior verse was hurriedly produced by hack writers for sale on or shortly after the day of Wild's execution. One of the earliest extant ballads about Wild, however, is believed to have been written by one of the foremost literary figures of the century and appeared almost a half year before Wild's death. "Blue-Skin's Ballad," or "Newgate's Garland" as it was known in London, is attributed to Swift by both F. Elrington Ball[1] and Harold Williams.[2] The seven-

stanza ballad, which celebrates Joseph "Blueskin" Blake's stabbing of Wild, was first published as a broadside in Dublin and subsequently appeared in two additional broadside editions in London,[3] where in November and December 1724 it was also performed at the Drury Lane as an interlude in the pantomime Harlequin Shepard [sic].[4]

Two errors of fact in the ballad apparently did not affect its favor with the public. According to the British Journal of October 17, 1724, Blake attempted to murder Wild by slashing his throat with a small clasp knife "in a very dangerous Manner."[5] (Wild had been drinking a glass of wine with the condemned man in Newgate but had refused to put in a word for him with the authorities.) In "Newgate's Garland" the crime occurs at the Old Bailey--a change that Fielding also makes in Jonathan Wild (IV.i). More important is Swift's distortion in the first two stanzas concerning the success of Blueskin's attack:

> Ye Fellows of Newgate whose Fingers are nice
> In Diving in Pockets and Cogging of Dice;
> Ye Sharpers so rich who can buy off the Noose,
> Ye honester poor Rogues who Die in your Shoes,
> Attend and draw near,
> Good News you shall hear
> How Honest Wild's Throat was cut from Ear to Ear
> Now Blueskin's sharp Penknife has set you at Ease,
> And ev'ry Man round me may rob if he please.
>
> When to the Old Baily this Blueskin was led,
> He held up his Hand, his Indictment was Read,
> Loud rattled his Chains, near him honest Wild stood,
> For full Forty Pounds was the Price of his Blood.
> Then hopeless of Life
> He drew his Penknife
> And made a sad Widow of honest Wild's Wife.
> But forty Pounds paid her, her Grief shall appease
> And ev'ry Man around me may, &c.[6]

The change of location from Newgate to Old Bailey may perhaps

be attributed to the fact that the ballad was written in Dublin, away from the scene of the crime. Most probably the second alteration--the murder of Wild by Blueskin--was made for satirical emphasis. Two of Swift's satirical devices, the repetition of an ironic epithet and the translation of corrupt uses of language, are similar to Fielding's techniques in Jonathan Wild. Swift repeats the epithet "honest Wild" three times in the first two stanzas in the manner in which Fielding frequently refers to the "great Wild," and in the fourth stanza Swift explains how rogues of many professions refashion language, like Fielding's protagonist, as they plunder the public:

> Knaves of old to hide Guilt by their cunning Inventions
> Call Briberies Grants, and plain Robbery Pensions.
> Physicians and Lawyers who take their Degrees
> To be learned Rogues, call their pilferings Fees.
> Since this happy Day
> Now ev'ry one may
> Rob (as safe as in Office) upon the High-way,
> For, &c.[7]

Numerous verses that appeared during the following year celebrated the actual death of Wild by recounting details of his last moments and by vilifying his character. The poet and shorthand writer John Byrom recorded a vivid depiction of Wild's journey to Tyburn that resembles reports published in various newspapers. In addition Byrom's lines are interesting for their reference to the many verses that were occasioned by the event and his inclusion of a sample, which is probably typical of the quality of most of this work:

> Poor Jonathan Wild!--Clowes, Peer Williams, and I
> Have just been in waiting to see him pass by:
> Good law! how the Houses were crowded with Mobs,
> That look't like LEVIATHAN's Picture in HOBB'S;
> From the very gound Floor to the Top of the Leads,
> While Jonathan past thro' a Holborn of Heads.

From Newgate to Tyburn he made his Procession,
Supported by two of the nimble Profession;
Between the unheeded poor Wretches he sat:
In his Night-gown and Wig, but without e'er a Hat;
With a Book in his Hand he went weeping and praying,
The Mob all along, as they passed'em huzzaing;
While a Parcel of Verses the Hawkers were hollowing
Of which I can only remember these following.

"The cunning old Pug, ev'ry Body remembers,
"That when he saw Chestnuts roasting i' th' Embers,
"To save his own Bacon, took Puss's two Foots,
"And so out o' th' Embers he tickl'd his nuts,
"Thus many a poor Rogue has been burnt in the Hand,
"And 'twas all Nuts to Jonathan, you understand;
"But he was not so cunning as Aesop's old Ape,
"For the Monkey has brought himself into the Scrape."[8]

The satiric elegy "England's Ingratitude: or, J.W.'s complaint"[9] is notable for its mockingly ironic tone, its use of soliloquy, and its characterization of Wild as an egoist full of bombast, a pretense of righteousness, and specious argument. In these respects the content and style of this anonymous verse have affinities with Fielding's book.

Confined in a dark cell "where ominous visions wretched souls affright," the sad Wild vents the anguish of his heart and complains of his fate:

Ingrateful country! Zealous for thy good,
How often have I hazarded my blood?
. . . . . .
By me thrice thirty have in halter dy'd,
I siez'd them, and in vain to 'scape they try'd;
'T was I, who evidences did prepare,
And to the purpose taught them what to swear.
Ye Britons! curs'd with an unthankful mind,
For ever to exalted merit blind,
Is thus your constant Benefactor spurn'd?
Are thus his faithful services return'd?

Reminding the public that the time will come again when watches, snuff boxes, rings, and pocketbooks will "go astray," Wild warns those who exult at his overthrow: " . . . you then, in vain, / Will wish to have

your Jonathan again." The final words of the despairing leader to his "faithful servants everywhere" are appropriately self-condemning:

> 'T was I that rais'd ye.--You by me were made
> Successful artists in a thieving trade:
> I taught ye to lead comfortable lives,
> To keep a train of whores, and starve your wives:
> Go on and prosper, bravely play your parts,
> Nor leave unpractis'd any of your arts:
> Be rogues renown'd, and trample on the laws,
> And, like true bloods, revenge your partron's cause.[10]

Other anonymous verses of the day expressed satisfaction at Wild's dispatch in various ways and with varying degrees of skill. S.M. Ellis describes an invitation or "ticket" to Wild's execution that he says was embellished "with an elegant design of a pillory, stocks, and the Triple Tree itself guarded by Time with his hour-glass and Death with his dart, while below was a sarcophagus." Attached to the ticket was the epitaph:

> Here Jonathan, for want of breath,
> Lies in the folds of icy death;
> The Catcher's catched, we plainly see,
> In that same trap he kept to be
> His bank, which him and Moll supply'd
> With gold enough before he died;
> But if 'tis asked, why he's confin'd
> So close, who has to Death been kind?
> We only can reply but this,
> Being Wild, if loose, he'd do amiss.[11]

Another poet strove for a more elegaic tone before lapsing into verse more appropriate to his subject:

> What mournful muse must aid me in my verse
> To pin on Jonathan's dark sable herse?
> I know in Lethe I must dip my pen,
> To write against the very worst of men;
> For none (I think) can write of him so well
> But what is brought from the confines of Hell.
> Each jailer, strumpet, pirate, bully, thief,
> Gamester, old bawd, in tears display your grief;
> But ye that can't cry, yet would seem to weep,

Then snot and snivel throw about his grave,
And wish Old Nick may soul and body have.
. . . . . .
Oh! Jonathan, or thee I'll write no more,
No more Parnassus will exhaust its store;
But, Jonathan, art thou sincerely dead?
Yes, yes, I see, and to the Devil fled.[12]

A third writer hailed Tyburn as the hallowed place of Wild's demise:

Hail! rev'rend Tripos, Triple Tree of State,
Who arbitrates the grand decrees of Fate,
And is the chief defender of the laws,
Three kingdoms joyfully give thee applause,
And universal praises to thee sing,
Since Jonathan upon thy beams did swing.
. . . . . .
Thy fame is then at its meridian height,
On all records till then you will be bright;
For 'twas by you that Wild most justly fell,
And fell into his native Hell.[13]

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Perhaps more germane as possible influences and certainly more useful as a means of pointing out the similarities and differences between the biographical treatments of Wild and Fielding's fully realized fiction are the lengthier accounts, narratives, and lives of the notorious thief and thief-taker that were published in 1725 and 1726. In contrast to the shorter pieces of rhymed verse, copies of several contemporary prose biographies of Wild have survived. Eight appear in the British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books, two are in the library of Trinity College, Dublin, and individual works may be found in the Guildhall Library, the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, and the libraries of Harvard and Yale. Some of these manuscripts are pilfered versions of earlier works and some are mixtures of several accounts with minor additions.[14]

At least five, and perhaps six original biographies appear to have been written during the year of Wild's death. The first was An Authentick Narrative of the Parentage, Birth, Education and Practices of Jonathan Wild, Citizen and Thief Taker of London . . . , which was sold by A. Moore in April 1725, the month before Wild's execution. Unfortunately this work is no longer extant, but Howson believes that the undated manuscript at Trinity College titled An Authentick Narrative of the Life and Actions of Jonathan Wild, (Citizen and Thief-Taker of London) . . . , is probably the same as the first biography.

The Beinecke Library at Yale has a copy of the second edition of this pamphlet, a well-written account of thirty-two pages that presents an incomplete but quite accurate summary of Wild's professional and personal life. The author briefly relates the formative years of his "graceless Subject" with only one minor error of fact: he writes that soon after Wild arrived in London he was arrested for debt and "thrown into the Poultrey-Counter."[15] The description of Wild's criminal activities following his release from prison contains much information that has been verified by Howson and earlier scholars. The author summarizes Wild's pamphlet war with Hitchen, his circumvention of the Transportation Act of 1719, and his experiences with Isaac Rag, James Wright, Quilt Arnold, Abraham Mendez, John Allen, and Roger Johnson.

Details of Wild's criminal exploits are presented vividly and with a certain degree of relish. Wild is said to have greatly enhanced his reputation by expediting the return of a chair with a "Crimson Velvet Seat and Furniture of great Value" to the "Countess

of G - - - - -d-----n" (pp. 7-8) while she attended prayers at Lincoln's Inn Chapel. Wild's cunning is revealed in an account of how he had witnesses plied with liquor at an ale house in the Old Bailey so that they could not testify against one of his men; his courage is depicted in his arrests of the murderer Isaac Rag and of James Wright, a highwayman in a rival gang: "Wild resolutely, with Pistol in Hand, burst open the Door, receiv'd Ragg's Fire, return'd it, and then secured him" (pp. 8-9). Before Wright could cock his pistol, Wild "held him fast by the Chin, with his Teeth, till he dropp'd his Fire Arms, surrender'd, and was brought to Newgate" (p. 15).

The author refers to the many advertisements that "were daily cramm'd into the publick News Papers, calling loudly out for all Sorts of strayed Valuables to be brought in to Mr. Wild's in the Old Baily, upon Promise of great Rewards and no Questions" (p. 18). He also records that Wild became "very eminent in his Profession of Thief-catching, &c. and made a considerable Figure in the World, having a Silver mounted Sword, and a Footman at his Heels, and scarce an Assize or Sessions past but Jonathan slew his Man" (p. 7).

In addition to his depiction of Wild's criminal career, the author provides interesting glimpses of Wild's personal life. Wild is said to have had several children "(the eldest of whom is now about Twenty Years of Age)" (p. 5). When he separated from the woman with whom he had lived in Lewkoner's Lane (Mary Milliner), Wild himself took care of the children. Subsequently he married Mrs. Mary Read, and after she died, there was an elaborate celebration of his marriage

to Mary D---n, which was attended by the Ordinary of Newgate and after which Wild donated ankers of brandy to the prisoners of Newgate.

Although the author occasionally tends towards hyperbole, on the whole he maintains a stance of scrupulous objectivity not unlike the pose of Fielding's mock biographer. In one place the author writes that Wild was so successful at his profession "that it was become a Question and Matter of Dispute in the Town, whether the Lord High Chancellor or the Thief-Taker had the largest Levee" (p. 12); further on he notes, however: "It has been reported, that Wild had his Chaplain, Groom of the Chambers, Gentleman of Horse, Valets, and others to attend him, and lived after the Manner of the Nobility. We could never find there was any thing in these Reports; his Table indeed was very splendid, he seldom dining under five Dishes, the Reversions whereof were generally charitably bestow'd on the common side Felons" (pp. 19-20). One statement of the author, which has often been repeated in subsequent accounts of Wild, remains unverified: "He [Wild] insolently caused himself to be proclaimed, in the Weekly Journal, Thief-Catcher General of Great-Britain and Ireland, as acting by his Deputies in that Kingdom" (p. 7).[16]

The last portion of the pamphlet contains an astute, forcefully written passage of eight pages that although not unrelated to Wild's life is in fact (with the omission of one paragraph) a verbatim reproduction of the first chapter of Mandeville's An Enquiry into the Causes of the Frequent Executions at Tyburn, which had first been published in abridged form beginning in the February 27, 1725 number of the British Journal.[17] (In this work, it is to

be recalled, Mandeville deplored the "shameful Negociations with Thieves, or their Agents, for the Recovery of stolen Goods, by which in Reality, we become Aiders and Abettors to them"; he condemned Wild's practice of disposing thieves throughout the city, keeping "regular Books" of stolen goods, and betraying acquaintances; he also criticized the magistrates who knew and saw all of this but continued to use Wild for evidence.)

Following the apparently plagiarized material, this life of Wild ends abruptly with a brief account of his arrest (for having helped Roger Johnson to escape) and a reference or two to the legal proceedings setting forth reasons why Wild should be kept in custody. The author cites the "Warrant of Detainder" (p. 30)[18] that was brought against Wild and records that Thomas Butler made a long information against Wild, including the charge of "having seen in his Custody a Pocket-Book which had been stoln from a Corn-Chandler in the Gilt-Spur-Street, and that Wild did commit the same to the Flames. How these and other Matters laid to his Charge will be made out against him, a very short Time will discover" (pp. 31-32).

The second biography to appear was The Life of Jonathan Wild, from his Birth to his Death . . ., by H.D., Late Clerk to Justice R-----. In his Checklist of the Writings of Daniel Defoe, John Robert Moore attributes the work to Defoe and notes that T. Warner published two editions, on May 29 and on July 6, 1725.[19]

Howson classifies this life as the "best of the semi-satirical biographies" and states that "many of the anecdotes can be found to have been based on truth, even if not very accurate" (p. 318). The

16,000-word pamphlet is an entertaining, anecdotal account that is supposedly based on first-hand knowledge. Wild is said to have begun his illustrious career by arguing select points of law in depriving a neighbor of the full price of a horse that he had "bought" from him. Subsequently Wild develops the ability to throw his hipbone out of joint and feign serious injury. He and a quack doctoress use this trick for dishonest profit until the lady has Wild committed to prison for debt. After his release, Wild begins criminal operations on a grander scale. His bravery and treachery are revealed in an account of how he brutally shoots and stabs an erstwhile cheesemonger who abandons the gang. Wild's methods of operation, including the outfitting of "spruce prigs" and "lodging lay specialists,"[20] are described in general terms along with a specific summary of his activities with Roger Johnson. As an account of Wild's life from birth to death, H.D.'s chronicle is particularly sketchy at the end, and the most vivid and amusing descriptions do not refer to Wild so much as to the crimes committed by his underlings, such as the dismantling of all that is of value in a six-room house.

This pamphlet, which we will assume is by Defoe, contains several techniques that foreshadow Fielding's fictional treatment of Wild. Perhaps most noteworthy is the association of criminal and political systems that is introduced in the Preface, where Defoe writes that readers of his work "will meet with a System of Politicks unknown to Machiavel; they will see deeper Stratagems and Plots form'd by a Fellow without Learning or Education, then are to be met with in the Conduct of the greatest Statesmen, who have been at the Heads of

Governments." In point of fact, Defoe does not develop the thief-statesman parallel to any degree in the text, although he does refer once to Wild as a "Machiavel of Thieves"[21] and portrays him as an adept manipulator of both men and language in his circumvention of the law.

As Fielding was later to do far more extensively, Defoe occasionally treats the related subjects of "greatness" and honor with irony. For example, when discussing the rivalry between Hitchen and Wild, Defoe comments that the two thieves "wrote Pamphlets against each other, as it was the Custom then between great Men." Jonathan, who scrupulously required clients to leave money with him before he fulfilled his promise of returning their goods, was said to have possessed a demanding sense of honor, "for one of his common Sayings was, that Honesty was the best Policy."[22]

Defoe's pretext that "H.D.," the supposed author, was privy to confidential information also anticipates a device that Fielding uses in Jonathan Wild. As late clerk to Justice R-----, Lord Chief Justice Raymond, who sentenced Wild to execution, H.D. purportedly obtained details of his biography directly from the celebrated prisoner. In the Preface H.D. affirms that his pamphlet will relate "only such Facts as have not yet been made publick," and in his account he often refers to information that he claims he heard Wild give. Despite a certain intimacy with his subject, H.D. assumes the role of an objective recorder, who includes only such actions as have been corroborated by a third party. Of the events leading up to Wild's arrest, for example, H.D. writes: "There are some other Circumstances in this Story, but as we had it only from his own [Wild's] Mouth, that

he was malicious against the Persons concern'd, . . . we shall say no more of it."[23]

After expatiating on the relentless cunning of his subject, H.D. concludes with a maxim that ostensibly epitomizes Wild's career at the same time that it edifies the reader: "Virtue only can give true Tranquillity, and nothing can support a Man against the Terrors of Death, but a good Conscience."[24] In Jonathan Wild, Fielding makes more frequent use of maxims, interspersing them throughout the book in order to emphasize (and satirize) particular actions and ideas. To a lesser degree Fielding also utilizes putative sources of confidential information but, unlike Defoe, he employs these devices within a patently satirical context in order to comment on these techniques in much popular prose of the day.

A third biography of Wild, The Life and Glorious Actions of the Most Heroic and Magnanimous Jonathan Wild, Generalissimo of the Prig Forces in Great Britain and Ireland, was advertised in the Daily Post of May 31, 1725. The title suggests marked similarities with the strategy of Fielding's book, but an examination of the text reveals few parallels, despite Irwin's and Howson's opinions. Of the pamphlet's sixty-three pages, the first twenty-five are a fictionalized chronicle of the criminal pursuits of Wild's ancestors--a device which Fielding limits to one chapter in Jonathan Wild (I.ii). The next twenty pages of the pamphlet are an earnest exposé of illegal practices in contemporary sponging houses, while a mere nine pages are devoted to a patchy summary of Wild's life, to which is appended another six pages about Jonathan's exploitation of youngsters

and his final days in prison.

In The Making of Jonathan Wild, Irwin incorrectly assumes that a spirit of elaborate irony and undisguised hatred of Wild "undoubtedly"[25] characterizes this pamphlet, which he had been unable to consult. Howson goes further afield when he writes, without introducing any evidence to support his point, that The Life and Glorious Actions "obviously had a considerable influence on Henry Fielding in the composition of Jonathan Wild" (p. 319). If one accepts Fielding's word on the subject, he apparently never read this pamphlet.[26] Moreover, the ironic praise of an obviously unworthy subject was of course a common device used by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century satirists and one employed with great effect by many Opposition writers with whom Fielding was in sympathy.

Perhaps the most that can be claimed for this biography is that its title alone might have suggested to Fielding an ironic treatment of the life of the notorious thief-taker general of Great Britain. The difference between the realization of this concept in the pamphlet and in Fielding's book is substantial. With the exception of a number of passing references to "honest Jonathan," the pamphlet writer does not develop the ironic approach that is announced so promisingly in his title. For the most part, Jonathan Wild is neither depicted as being heroic and magnanimous or the opposite, nor is his life portrayed as being particularly glorious or inglorious. One of the outstanding accomplishments of Fielding's work, on the other hand, is his artful juxtaposition of patently damning actions with ironic praise that amplifies both the comic and serious

aspects of Wild's behavior.

An element that both the pamphlet and Jonathan Wild share to a greater degree is a concern about social injustice. The anonymous pamphlet writer condemned corrupt practices in sponging houses, which he wrote were "not only horrid, but also contrary to the Laws of the Land."[27] As proof, and most probably as a means of padding his work, the writer devoted three and a half pages to a reproduction of 22 and 23 Car. II c. 20, "An Act for the Relief and Release of Poor distressed Prisoners for Debt."[28] Fielding also expressed his concern about inhuman social and legal practices of the age, but for the most part he did so in an entertaining and ironic manner that made its point indirectly without attenuating his censure.[29]

By far the most thoughtful, coherent, and fully developed biography of Wild is Defoe's A True & Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of Jonathan Wild, which was published by John Applebee on June 8, 10, and 12, 1725.[30] Moral seriousness, an avowed concern for the "facts," and penetrating insights into the character of Wild and the society that enabled him to prosper distinguish Defoe's comprehensive study. In the Preface, Defoe dismisses other "absurd and ridiculous accounts which have been published," presumably including the "H.D." version, which T. Warner had placed on sale eleven days earlier. As opposed to the works of other authors who had scribbled "merely to get a penny, without regard to truth or fact, or even to probability," Defoe claims that his tract "does not indeed make a jest of his [Wild's] story as they do, or present his history, which indeed is a tragedy of itself, in a style of mockery and ridicule, but in a

method agreeable to the fact."[31]

How accurate this "factual" study of Wild's life may be remains debatable. What Defoe does do convincingly is provide a fairly detailed account of Wild's criminal operations, a vivid depiction of his ability to deceive others, and a thoroughgoing chronicle of the subject's personal history, including his family background, education, and sundry relationships with women. Defoe's recognition of the compliant roles that both the Government and the general public played in Wild's success is perceptive. He gives ample credit to Wild's cleverness in circumventing the law until he grew too bold, and he accurately describes Wild's trial and final days relying heavily on the Purney account and on material that had appeared in Select Trials. Most certainly it is to this biography of Defoe's that Fielding refers in the Preface to the Miscellanies when he writes that his "Design is not to enter the Lists with that excellent Historian, who from authentic Papers and Records, &c. hath already given so satisfactory an Account of the Life and Actions of this Great Man."[32]

Defoe offers several shrewd observations about the character of Wild, based on the facts of his life:

> Take him as a man only, he had a kind of brutal courage which fitted him to be an instrument in attacking some of the most desperate of the several gangs of rogues he had to do with. But as this courage also served to make him audacious in the other wicked things he undertook, he was rather bold than courageous, and might be called impudent; but we cannot say he was brave, as appeared in a more particular manner in his stupid and confused behaviour during his lying in Newgate, and at his execution (pp. 238-39)

Compulsive and insatiable greed was the most salient element of

Jonathan's character, according to Defoe. He writes of Wild that "had he contented himself with the same cautious, wary way of acting, which his first instructor introduced him by, he might have grown rich, and been safe too; but as he was of a pushing, enterprising nature, he could content himself with nothing but everything he could get, nor could he act moderately in any part of his conduct" (p. 257). Trying to give good advice to Wild was, Defoe says, "like talking gospel to a kettle-drum, bidding a dragoon not plunder, or talking of compassion to a hussar" (p. 270). After describing Wild's role in the theft of a box of lace from Mrs. Statham,[33] Defoe concludes: "In a word, Jonathan's avarice hanged him" (p. 263).

The tone of Defoe's biography combines matter-of-factness with invented dialogue and occasional eruptions of outrage and horror. An extended passage of straight dialogue, similar in format to Fielding's dialogues for Wild and Laetitia (III.viii) and for Wild and the Ordinary (IV.xiii), illustrates how Wild, through a succession of delays, dodges, and promises, masterfully induces a wealthy lady to pay a substantial "reward" for the return of her stolen watch. This amusing account, which is not without a touch of admiration for Wild's finesse, is followed by a statement of moral purpose and mounting indignation: "This may serve for a sketch of practice, as I call it, and to let the world see in what manner this secret service was carried on; how the thieving trade was managed, how the people were gulled out of their money, and how a crew of hell-born rogues and whores, which is much the same, have been bred up to the trade by their grand patron and master of art, Jonathan Wild" (p. 268).

Defoe reserves special condemnation for Wild's exploitation of poor youths whom he trained, apprehended, and had hanged for crimes that he had taught them to commit. "I am not, indeed, to make a jest of these things," Defoe writes:

> There is something shocking and dismal in the very relation, and therefore it is this account of the life of Jonathan Wild, which in its nature, is all a tragedy, is not related with an air of banter and ridicule as others are. . . . It is a solemn and terrible thing to look back on a life of such hardened, abominable practices, to see it carried on in defiance, either of God or devil, and that with such success too, passing for so many years unpunished; and though there are some things in the long series of his [Wild's] wicked life which may relish with the levity of a droll way of writing, yet to see a man turned into an incarnate devil, his life a scene of inimitable crimes, his very society a hell, and equally devouring both to soul and body--he that can read it without some horror must have very little of what we call Christianity about him. (p. 272)

Defoe's view of Wild is for the most part serious, yet before chronicling the end of "a life of horrid and inimitable wickedness," he remarks that Wild's career had been "a kind of comedy or a farce rather all along" (pp. 278, 268). Although there is actually little of this comic or farcical element in the text (particularly in contrast to the more entertaining "H.D." account), Defoe's passing observation deserves mention as a possible influence on Fielding. At the time when Defoe, a mature and prolific novelist and journalist, was in London observing firsthand some of the serious consequences of Wild's actions, Fielding was still in his teens completing his education at Eton. Most probably it was not until years later, when the details of Wild's crimes had been forgotten by most, that Fielding read Defoe's comment about the humorous aspects of the famous criminal's life.

Given Fielding's propensity for comedy and farce and the chronological and psychological distance separating him from Wild, it is possible that Defoe's brief remark suggested an approach that would not have occured to an older writer who had witnessed Wild's rise and fall. As will be seen in the final part of this study, Jonathan Wild fuses essentially serious material with elements of comedy and farce that required a certain amount of distance between Fielding and his subject. The nucleus of Jonathan Wild seems to have been animated by the kind of intense indignation that Defoe sometimes expresses, but Fielding also develops the comical and farcical aspects of Wild's career to which Defoe refers but which he does not illustrate.

In July 1725 J. Roberts published a fifth biography of Wild, "P.N."'s Weighley, alias Wild: A Poem In Imitation of Hudibras. To which is annex'd, a more genuine and particular Account in Prose than any yet publish'd.[34] Weighley is the only extant biography of Wild in verse. The 728 lines portray Wild's early criminal career, his marriage to a widow, and his operations with his gang, with whom he engages in frequent dialogues. Although the beginning of the poem erroneously recounts young Jonathan's arrest for housebreaking and his subsequent pardon, the end presents a fairly accurate summary of Wild's part in the Statham theft, his apprehension, and his hanging. There are no significant insights into the character of Wild, and the verse is crude in both scansion and subject matter, as may be seen in the opening and closing lines:

I Sing a Prig, read it who list,
He was as good as ever pist.
. . . . . .
The fatal Hour is come that must
Dwindle the Villain into Dust:
From Newgate was in Cart convey'd,
At Tyburn hang'd 'till he was dead.
No farther I his Actions trace;
And so I leave him at that Place.[35]

The twenty-six-page prose biography that follows the poem is by no means a "more genuine and particular Account . . . than any yet publish'd" as the title page claims. It is, rather, a sensationalized version that is grossly inaccurate in places. For example, the author states that Weighley was Wild's real paternal name and that after a normal birth the future thief-taker general's "Eyes sunk, his Body shrunk to an Anatomy, with other marks of Deformity." The assertion that "the particular Number of House-breakers and Highwaymen which he [Wild] Took, and Convicted, is not specified, because he left no Minutes behind him" ignores the fact that on the morning before his trial Wild had distributed just such a list to jurymen outside the Old Bailey. The circumstances of Wild's apprehension are reasonably accurate, but the dates of his sentencing and execution are grossly incorrect. According to the writer, Wild's Dead Warrant was signed on May 26, the day after Wild was actually executed, and his hanging took place on June 11, 1725 (by which time the four lives of Wild described above had already appeared). The pamphlet does incorporate the eleven informations against Wild that were published in The Political State of Great Britain[36] and a narrative summary of the many thieves whom Wild apprehended. On the whole this biography lacks vivid description, insight into Wild's character, and an authorial point of view. The

only trace of engagement or style occurs in the concluding sentence: "And this much may be said of him [Wild], that Cataline and Cethegus, in their several Conspiracies at Rome, and Massanello [sic] in his Devastations of Italy, in all their Rage and Fury, never did their Native Country so great and publick an Injury, as Jonathan Wild did to his, by a secret Confederacy with his Gang of Thieves for these 17 years last past."[37]

An additional biography, Life of Jonathan Wild by "Chronicon Newquissimus," is listed in the bibliography of Edward Cadogan's The Roots of Evil,[38] although Cadogan does not provide any date, publisher, or description of the work, which I have not been able to locate. Howson also includes the title in his annotated bibliography (p. 319), citing Cadogan but not furnishing any additional details or commentary. The treatment of Wild's life in Cadogan's study reveals no information that is not contained in the five pamphlets discussed above, and the biography by "Chronicon Newquissimus" might have been a pirated edition of one or more of these accounts.

In The Making of Jonathan Wild, Irwin describes two other works concerning Wild that were published in 1725. The first is an anonymous farce titled The Prison-Breaker; or, the Adventures of John Sheppard,[39] which was intended for production at the Theatre-Royal in Lincoln's Inn Fields. According to Irwin, "Jonathan Wile [sic], a Thief-Taker, has a prominent part in the action, being, as in life, the chief cause of Sheppard's death. In his first appearance on the stage Jonathan Wile is shown as being heartless, cunning, and cynically humorous" (p. 15). The final scene of the play, which

takes place after Sheppard has escaped from prison and been recaptured by Wile, suggests something of the thief-taker's general reputation shortly before his own apprehension. As Sheppard re-enters Newgate with his betrayer, he bids Wile farewell in the following manner: "But when it [hanging] happens, I am sure I shan't leave so great a Villain Upon Earth as myself, unless it be your Worship. So fare you well, and be damned."[40]

The second work dealing with Wild is News from the Dead; or, A Dialogue between Blueskin, Shepperd [sic], and Jonathan Wild,[41] an eight-page pamphlet that Irwin describes as a "feeble imitation of a Lucianic dialogue." In response to Blueskin and Sheppard's request for news of the world above, the recently arrived Wild informs them of his trial and final days, although he attempts to deny that he has been hanged. Requesting Sheppard's assistance in becoming a justice of the peace or a thief-taker general in the nether regions, Wild learns that he is to serve as a tub preacher among religious fanatics. "The irony in this squib," Irwin writes, "consists in emphasizing the similarity between the underworld and the world above and in making Jonathan Wild acknowledge with complete candor his own mendacity, villainy, and cowardice" (pp. 18, 19).

Although Irwin does not give the month of publication of these two works, The Prison-Breaker was most probably written shortly after Sheppard's arrest in November 1724,[42] when Wild was still a free man but his reputation was in decline. News from the Dead was obviously written after Wild's execution on May 24, 1725, and appears to have some similarity to a sixteen-line poem that appeared in the May 29,

1725 number of Mist's Weekly Journal.[43]

During the year following Wild's death, two collected biographies of famous thieves appeared, containing no new material about Wild, but apparently intended to capitalize on his recent notoriety. The History of the Lives & Actions of Jonathan Wild, Blake, Sheppard etc. includes a life of Wild that is a combination of the H.D. version and Defoe's True & Genuine Account. "Captain Alexander Smith"'s The Memoirs of the Life & Times of the famous Jonathan Wild, together with the History & Lives of Modern Rogues presents a biography that is pilfered from An Authentic Narrative of the Life & Actions of Jonathan Wild.[44]

After 1726, interest in Wild's life per se declined. Judging from the titles of pamphlets published between 1726 and 1740, booksellers believed that the public would rather read about the adventures of criminals such as Edward Burnworth, Tom Merryman, James Dalton, Martin Bellamy, John Dyer, John Everett, John Waller, and Roger Johnson. Until the appearance of Fielding's book in 1743, Wild's name was kept before the public primarily by writers of the Opposition.

Politically Motivated Treatments

The virtual prime minister of England from 1721, the year when Wild was approaching the height of his power, until 1742, the year before the appearance of Fielding's book, was Sir Robert Walpole.[45] A shrewd and industrious administrator who exploited the strengths and weaknesses of enemies and allies alike, Walpole gained increasing

control of Parliament, the Cabinet, the Court, and the day-to-day politics of the country. By 1732, in the opinion of his biographer J.H. Plumb, Walpole "had reached a height of political power unequalled in English history."[46]

Unquestionably, the loyal support of the King helped Walpole secure his position, but he was also the unparalleled financial expert of the period, a masterful executive, a skillful debater, and a formidable parliamentary leader.[47] Walpole's domestic and foreign policies were often challenged, yet under his ministry the nation vastly increased its trade while managing, until 1739, to avoid war with its European rivals. Summarizing Walpole's influence and achievements, Plumb writes:

> His interference in elections was as constant and as authoritative as his disposal of patronage. He dominated his cabinet with more ease than he dominated the Commons. . . . His control of the financial affairs of the nation was, apart from the methods of taxation, absolute, and he ruled his Treasury with an efficiency unmatched throughout the eighteenth century. . . . He had pursued power and found it; he had enriched the nation by fostering commerce, by efficiency of management, by low taxation; he had kept the King on the throne. These were the avowed objects of his political life and he had achieved them. (II, 325-26)

According to Plumb, during Walpole's early years "the party names, whig and tory, were still something more than labels" (I, 62). By the time that Walpole took office, however, party labels came to mean less and less in the shifting politics of the moment. Self-interest, rather than ideological agreement on even the broadest of issues, became the norm.

About the time of Wild's death, a loose coalition of Hanoverian Tories, secret Jacobites, and disaffected Whigs formed to solidify the

resistance against Walpole.[48] The chief theoretician and strategist of this was Viscount Bolingbroke (Henry St. John), an ingenious debater, satirist, and intriguer, who covertly directed the attack although he had been prohibited from reassuming his seat in the House of Lords. The Tory wing of the Opposition was somewhat ineffectually headed by William Wyndham, a disciple of Bolingbroke, while William Pulteney, a speaker and writer of perceptive wit, vigorously led the "Patriot" Whig faction, or the Country party, with which Fielding later became allied.

During 1725-26 the Opposition launched a literary campaign against Walpole that did not slacken until the Prime Minister was forced to resign in 1742. Ballads, pamphlets, and newspapers were all utilized in the virulent attack, which focused more on Walpole's character, habits, and alleged corruption than on a coherent criticism of his policies, some of which Opposition members supported. Plumb suggests that Walpole "was hated more for being himself than for his conduct of affairs. Not only was his power resented; and his royal favour loathed; his whole manner of life bred detestation wherever he went" (II, 331).

The literary campaign of the Opposition deliberately distorted almost everything that Walpole achieved or attempted. It seems to have had little effect on the Prime Minister's actual political strength, although he undoubtedly resented the vicious personal nature of the onslaught. Plumb describes Walpole as "the best-hated man in England," and states that ever since the South Sea Bubble "vulgar squibs, licentious satire, cruel libel and the pain of truth

exposed had been his daily lot . . . nothing was too private or too remote for Grub Street. Nothing was too gross for the public" (II, 248).

Most of these sallies are beyond the scope of this study, but an idea of their variety and occasional ingeniousness may be seen in ballads and pamphlets in which Walpole is satirically referred to as "Appius Unmasqu'd,"[49] "A Sly & crafty B[o]b tail'd,"[50] "The Knave of Clubs,"[51] "Badman,"[52] "The Norfolk Gamester,"[53] "Sir Blue-string,"[54] "a very great Bubble,"[55] and "A Norfolk Dumpling."[56]

One of the most effective devices of the Opposition writers was to draw an oversimplified parallel between a ruthless statesman who plundered the Government and a common thief who robbed the public. This comparison of a high public official and a low criminal was not originated by the Opposition, but had been employed in a less particularized fashion by a number of eighteenth-century writers. In the January 23, 1714 number of the Englishman, for example, Steele decried unbridled ambition in leaders who wreaked disaster on mankind, then turned his attention to criminals of the lower order, writing of "Capt. Alexander Smith"'s History of the Lives of the most noted Highway-men, Foot-pads, House-breakers, Shop-lifts . . . : "There is a Satisfaction to Curiosity in knowing the Adventures of the meanest of Mankind; and all that I can say in general of these great Men in their Way, recorded by Capt. Smith, is, that I have more Respect for them than for greater Criminals, who are described with Praise by more eminent Writers."[57]

A similar theme was expressed with more suggestive allusions in the London Journal of March 18, 1720, the True Briton of August 26, 1723, and the British Journal of December 4, 1725. In the first paper, "Jack Ketch," the cant name for the hangman, claimed:

> It really affects me with pity to be obliged to strangle so many Innocents every Sessions; poor harmless Offenders, that only commit Murders, and break-open Houses, and rob Men of Guineas and Half-Crowns: while Whole-sale Plunderers, and mighty Rogues of Prey, the avowed Enemies and Hangmen of Honesty, Trade, and Truth, the known Promoters of Villany, and the merciless Authors of Misery, Want and general Ruin, go on to ride in Coaches and Six, and to defy a People whom they have made poor and desperate; potent Parricides, who have plundered more from this Kingdom in Six Months, than all the private Thieves and Highwaymen ever did or could do since the creation.[58]

The writer of a letter in the True Briton observed that

> [I]n High and Low life, we appropriate very different Characters to Men, and treat them after a very different manner, who yet act upon the same vitious and dishonest Motives; why in some Parts of the World, one Man charged for a single Robbery on the Highway, committed, perhaps, for a Trifle, or the mere Relief of his Necessities, shall be executed; whilst another, who has inriched himself by continual Depredations, for a Course of some Years at the Expense of his Country, shall not only escape with Impunity, but, by a servile Herd of Flatterers and Sycophants, have all his Actions crowned with Applause.[59]

In a "Dialogue between Julius Caesar and Jack Sheppard," which was written in imitation of Lucian or Fontenelle and first published in the British Journal, the relative criminality of an ordinary thief and a great political leader was poignantly contrasted. The ghost of Sheppard attempts to prove that Caesar is the greater villain by arguing against his adversary: "Is it more dishonourable to slip through the hands of a gaoler, than break through the laws of one's country? . . . I only infringed the laws, not overturned them."[60]

As the Opposition writers organized their campaign against Walpole in 1725-26, they found an apposite symbol in the most infamous thief and thief-taker of the age. The name of Jonathan Wild was well known to contemporary readers and mention of it could be counted on to arouse almost universal detestation. In addition, there were genuine similarities between the two men that lent themselves to a comparison equating common criminality with that of the Prime Minister and his Government. Wild and Walpole were both adept administrators of extensive systems who possessed exceptional talents for organization and for details. While Wild's personality was said to have been impudent and bold, Walpole projected an ebullient coarseness that frequently offended. Furthermore, both leaders were persuasive in their use of language, adroit at manipulating individuals, and, when the occasion demanded, ruthless in eliminating those who challenged them. In developing these congruities, the Opposition writers blurred the details of Wild's and Walpole's lives and emphasized instead the simplified images of an avaricious, hypocritical master-thief and a corrupt, power-greedy Prime Minister.

Given the natural affinities between the two prominent figures, it is not surprising to discover that Wild and Walpole were linked overtly and implicitly in at least two satiric works that predate the Opposition's literary campaign. In "On Robbing the Exchequer" (c. 1720), Philip, Duke of Wharton's poem recalling an earlier scandal that he believed Walpole had never satisfactorily explained, Wild entertains the Prime Minister with the following proposal:

Quoth Wild unto Walpole, make me undertaker,
I'll soon find the rogues that robb'd the Exchequer,
I sh'n't look among those that are us'd to purloining,
But shall, the first, search in the chapel adjoining.[61]

Swift also anticipated the Opposition writers in parts of "Blue-Skin's Ballad," which was mentioned above. The attack upon "honest" Wild by Blueskin Blake was said to affect great rogues who "Rob in the Customs . . . [and] Cheat in the 'xcise." The third stanza of the ballad, which was omitted during its three performances at the Drury Lane in November and December 1724,[62] unmistakably alludes to Walpole, although he is not mentioned by name:

Some say there are Courtiers of highest Renown
Who steal the King's Gold and leave him but a Crown;
Some say there are Peers and some Parliament Men
Who meet once a Year to rob Courtiers again;
But let them have their Swing
To pillage the King,
And get a blue Ribbon instead of a string.[63]

Although the Opposition writers produced numerous ballads and pamphlets in their diversified attack upon Walpole, there do not appear to be any extant ballads or pamphlets that directly compare the convicted thief-taker and the Prime Minister. For some reason, Opposition writers preferred to develop the Wild-Walpole parallel in various newspapers, beginning with Mist's Weekly Journal in 1725, and afterwards in the Craftsman, Common Sense, and the Champion.[64]

Mist's Weekly Journal, which was founded by the Tory journalist Nathaniel Mist on May 1, 1725,[65] published satiric accounts of Wild along with straightforward reports of his final days. The May 17, 1725 number included a succinct notice that Wild's trial had been postponed for one day as well as a rhymed quatrain associating Wild and other

common criminals with Lord Chancellor Macclesfield, who at that time was being tried in the House of Lords for embezzlement and bribery. In the latter piece "Paul Steady" observed that the town was silent about Jonathan Wild but offered the following explanation:

> As in the Sea (Egypt's and India's Boast)
> The Nile and Ganges, rival Streams! are lost:
> So Blueskin, Sheppard, mighty Names! must yield,
> And W--ld be swallow'd up in Macc-------d.[66]

The May 22 number included a three-column report of Wild's trial, the informations lodged against him, and his condition in prison. The following number, of May 29, presented an account of Wild's execution together with a sixteen-line verse about his attempt, in Hell, to persuade Blueskin and two other executed highwaymen that he had not been wounded in the head by an angry mob or been hanged by the authorities.[67]

The most accomplished Wild-Walpole satire before the publication of Fielding's book appeared as the leading articles in the June 12 and 19, 1725 numbers of Mist's Weekly.[68] Like Fielding, the anonymous author ironically praises Wild as a "great man" while developing the thief-statesman analogy with devastating hits. Wild is introduced in the first paragraph as "that celebrated Statesman and Polititian." His "deep Fetch in Politicks" is said to have been recorded by the author of a recent pamphlet (most likely Defoe's True & Genuine Account) "when he describes that Form, or rather that System of Government which he [Wild] established over the Thieves." After referring to his subject as an "extraordinary Person" and a "great Genius," the anonymous author states his thesis: "Perhaps the Readers may smile

to hear me speak in such high Terms, of one who (to call Things by their proper Names) was no better than a Thief. . . . Yet I suppose it will be granted, that a Person may be a Rogue, and yet be a great Man."[69]

The term "great man" was of course the epithet by which Walpole was widely known. In discussing the private life and opinions of Wild with mock seriousness, the writer of the Mist articles both equates his subject with and distinguishes him from the Prime Minister. The similarities between the two men are emphasized in the following passage: "Mr. WILD (like other great men) had a Turn of Thought peculiar to himself; . . . it was his Opinion, that Men of Parts (in which Class he sometimes included---Thieves and idle Fellows) should be maintained by the Publick, and whether it was done by picking their Pockets, or boldly by taking their Money by Force, he thought it much the same Thing."[70]

In contrast to Walpole, however, Wild maintained certain policies and principles. "He intirely disclaim'd his having any Hand in the late South-Sea Scheme" or any other "ridiculous Projects" of the day. He scorned roguery that did not require wit and ingenuity, and held the utmost contempt for Pensioners, whom he considered spiritless men "on a Foot with Scavengers." In brief, Wild "would have no Fools in his Commonwealth." The final sentence of the satire leaves little doubt about the author's real target: "As to Party, he [Wild] was both in Principle and Practice a right Modern Whig, according to the Definition of those Gentlemen, which is express'd in this their Motto. --Keep what you get, and get what you can."[71]

Besides elaborating the Wild-Walpole analogy with an abundance of topical references, the Mist articles share several other characteristics with Fielding's book. Both authors skillfully sustain a mock-serious tone as they invert language and values. According to the Mist satire, one of Jonathan's favorite sentences occurs in Farquhar's play The Recruiting Officer, when the Constable states that he has nothing to say against a man whom he has brought before the Magistrate "but that he's an honest Man." Jonathan laments the fact that there are so many fools and bunglers who would "bring Roguery into Discredit, at last, with the World." It appears to him that in former ages "Men were apt to give in to some foolish Prejudices which hinder a Man's thriving and growing great in the World, such as Honour and Conscience."[72]

In addition, Fielding and the author of the Mist articles are both concerned with standards of literature and generously sprinkle their works with literary references that are for the most part satirical. As was Fielding's practice in Jonathan Wild, the anonymous article writer includes a number of sentences in Latin. He reports having explained to Wild the annals of Tacitus, and writes that Jonathan preferred to read men more than books, although he could "pass for a Man of some Erudition."[73] The authors and works that Wild studied the most included Machiavelli, The English Rogue, The Lives of the Highwaymen, and A Collection of Sessions Papers.

Curiously, Wild himself is said here to have had a project in mind that sounds almost like an outline of Fielding's book. The Mist author confides that Wild "communicated to me a Design he had of getting

a Treatise wrote de Legibus Naturae; under which Title, Theft, and all Kinds of Knavery should be recommended as vertuous and honourable Actions."[74] This work was to be written by the author of The Fable of the Bees, to whom Wild had suggested the idea that highway robbery was for the good of the public. In addition, Wild completed during his leisure hours a "History of his own Times," in which he exposed and accounted for a great many state intrigues.

Whether these brief descriptions of an ironic treatise in praise of knavery and a political exposé of Wild's time provided Fielding with the nucleus of his work is conjectural. It seems very likely, however, that Fielding was familiar with the Mist articles. Almost certainly it is to them that he refers in the Preface to the Miscellanies when he states that he had not to his knowledge "ever seen a single Paper relating to my Hero, save some short Memoirs, which about the Time of his Death were published in certain Chronicles called Newspapers, the Authority of which hath been sometimes questioned."[75]

Almost two hundred years after the publication of the Mist articles, a controversy arose about their author. In 1910, Alfred E. Robbins suggested that Fielding, who was eighteen at the time, might have written the satire in which he saw "the germ"[76] of Jonathan Wild. Six years later, J. Paul De Castro argued convincingly that considerations of style and substance "militate strongly against the Mist articles being Fielding's work."[77] Since that time it has not been ascertained whether Swift or Defoe, as De Castro proposed, or any other well-known literary figure was the author. Nevertheless, the Mist articles stand as a consummate work of satire with striking

parallels to the greatly expanded fictional history that Fielding was to write almost twenty years later.

In 1726 Lord Bolingbroke established the Craftsman; or the Country Journal, which for many years served as the leading organ of the Opposition. In Government and the Press, Laurence Hanson writes that during the Craftsman's first four years "eight numbers of it incurred the attention of the Secretaries of State, and warrants were issued for the arrest of those concerned in the printing and publishing of it."[78] Lord Hervey noted in his diary of 1734: "All the best writers against the Court were concerned in the Craftsman, which made it a much better written paper than any of that sort that were published on the side of the Court. The two best of these writers," Hervey added, "were Lord Bolingbroke and Mr. Pulteney."[79]

As it relentlessly attacked Walpole, the Craftsman utilized the thief-statesman parallel in various forms, but because of difficulties with the Government it avoided mentioning the Prime Minister by name or by office. Irwin observes that "the name of Jonathan Wild is not used in this anti-Walpole crusade as often as one might expect. It is probable, however, that the memory of Jonathan Wild's reputation recurred to the reader with each paper which insisted on the resemblance between a thief and a corrupt politician or courtier" (p. 28). One article in the February 17, 1728 number does mention Wild by name in conjunction with a work that was widely recognized as a satire on Walpole and his administration. In attempting to "prove" that The Beggar's Opera was a libel against the Government, "Philharmonicus" points out that in the first song of Gay's play "the Employment of a

Statesman is, by innuendo, made as bad or worse than that of Jonathan Wild, represented under the Character of Peachum."[80]

Only after Walpole had resigned and an investigation of his activities was being discussed in Parliament did the Craftsman, which itself was in decline, publish an article that explicitly linked Walpole and Wild. "Anti-Screen," the author of "Associations of Rogues faithful to one another," wrote in the April 24, 1742 number:

> To be true to the Gang, is a Maxim, which has obtain'd in other Offices besides Jonathan Wild's. . . . if the famous Jonathan was now living, and if a Grand Jury were busy in finding a Bill against him, whoever, when solemnly called upon to relate the Truth, the whole Truth, and, nothing but the Truth, should boggle in his Evidence . . . rather than impart his Knowledge, most assuredly has been privy to more than honest Things; and, instead of justifying honest Jonathan, only proves that he himself is one of his Gang.[81]

Lords Chesterfield and Lyttelton, two leaders of the Opposition group known as the Patriots, with which Fielding had strong sympathies,[82] founded Common Sense; or the Englishman's Journal in February 1737. In the Preface to the collected numbers of the first years, the editors explained that if their paper sometimes runs "into Raillery," it "diverts itself with the Follies of great Criminals, such Criminals as Laws cannot, or at least do not punish."[83] Between 1738 and 1742, Chesterfield and Lyttelton's journal made frequent reference to the thief-statesman parallel and to Wild and Walpole.

The December 23, 1738 number contains "some Memoirs of the Life of a certain great Man, deceas'd," which after the Mist's Weekly articles is the second most important Wild-Walpole satire to appear before Fielding's. Although the author claims that he "shall lay aside Politicks for this Week," his entertaining article cleverly

combines a summary of Wild's life, admittedly based on the account in Select Trials, with a number of palpable hits at Walpole. The famous subject "lasted so long, and impos'd so successfully on the Publick" that at one period of his life he "seem'd rather born to a Ribband about his Shoulders, than a Rope about his Neck." Having been imprisoned for debt, knavery, or both, he "was desir'd to take the Common-wealth of Thieving into his own Hands." When he later settled himself "at the Head of his Republick," he "grew insufferably arrogant," holding levees for "Personages of the first Rank" and "giving Laws to his Subjects." On the basis of these observations, the author comments: "Thus it appears, that Jonathan was, at once, the Screen and Bulwark of his Party: By which we may observe, of how great Use Honour and Punctuality are even among Thieves."[84]

Although two paragraphs about Wild's methods of operation are quoted from Select Trials in order to lend literalness and authenticity to the memoir, the conclusion of the essay effectively summarizes the political and symbolic uses that the Opposition writers made of Wild: "He was certainly a Man of Parts; and had he set out in the World in an honest, instead of a dishonest Road, we might have seen him reckon'd a Patriot, instead of a Pick-pocket. . . . One almost regrets that such a Man should be lost in such a Cause; and yet, as long as this Nation and Language subsists, Infamy and Reproach will be affix'd to the Name of Jonathan Wild."[85]

In November of the following year a more outspoken attack upon Walpole emphasized his control of Parliament by likening his methods to those of Wild:

> There is nothing so sacred in the walls of that house, as to make that just and equitable, which in its own principles is arbitrary and wicked. If Jonathan Wild and his gang had gone and taken possession of the house of Commons, had chosen a Speaker, and with the formalities usual made laws; had he an army to enforce them, it is possible they might be obeyed; but I am of opinion they would be no longer obey'd, than till the people should have strength and courage enough to seize upon Jonathan and the whole gang, and hang them all up.[86]

To the author of "On Some odd Preferments," which appeared in the March 20, 1742 number, Wild personified the worst possible kind of minister. In describing sycophantic place seekers who haunted the courts and overvalued officials because of their position, the writer observed: "It is the same Thing to these whether a Mecenas or a Jonathan Wild be in power, they know no Difference, with them a Minister is a Minister, and a Minister can give and take away Employment."[87]

After Walpole's resignation, the author of "Reflections on the late Administration" advocated in the July 10 and 17, 1742 numbers that the former Prime Minister be punished as Wild was:

> All the People upon Earth must have an Abhorrence for those Times, where one Criminal is hang'd for taking a Groat upon a Road, and another honour'd for stealing a Million in an Office; . . .
>
> When a Thief is to be brought to the Gallows, you will find, that whether he be a great, or small Criminal, whether he hath robb'd the Exchequer or stole a Handkerchief, the Reflections and Reasonings of his worthy Comrades are just the same: . . .
>
> I will agree with these candid Reasoners, that there never is a Felon executed but it is a Loss of his Family; the late Mr. Jonathan Wilde, whom we may call the Founder of a Commonwealth, who establish'd that Kind of Government commonly call'd Imperium in Imperio, is an Instance what a Misfortune it is to a Family to loose its Head.[88]

Fielding himself joined the newspaper war against Walpole when he became editor of the Champion, a new Opposition journal, on

November 15, 1739.[89] Although many of Fielding's contributions were moral disquisitions on such subjects as charity, good nature, and religion, he also attacked the Prime Minister and his administration in a variety of articles that effectively utilized allegory, irony, and ridicule.[90] Cross notes that Fielding "adopted the indirect method, suppressing names, he said, because of his fears of the pillory--because there was no part of his body for which he had greater respect than his ears."[91]

While Fielding did not exploit the Wild-Walpole parallel in his numerous attacks upon the Prime Minister in the Champion, he did refer to Wild there on at least one occasion. A portion of his essay about reputation, which appeared in the March 4, 1740 number, could almost serve as a précis of the theme of Jonathan Wild:

> Actions of the worst Nature have, by the Assistance of false Glosses, been accompanied with Honour, and Men have often arrived at the highest Fame by deserving the highest Infamy. . . . Reputation often courts those most who regard her the least. Actions have sometimes been attended with Fame, which were undertaken in Defiance of it. Jonathan Wyld [sic] himself had for many Years no small Share of it in this Kingdom.[92]

A second reference to Wild with unmistakable political connotations has not definitely been ascribed to Fielding but most probably is his. In the March 24, 1741 number, the name of Wild is invoked to ridicule the followers of Walpole for rejoicing in Parliament's failure to act against the Prime Minister: "But when we find all this stupid Subject of Triumph amounts to no more than what might full as well have befallen a Jonathan Wild, and the clamor made about

it, little different from what might have been expected from his Confederates, it makes one smile."[93]

◆ ◆ ◆

Was Fielding beginning to think about a political-satirical biography of Wild while he was attacking Walpole in the pages of the Champion? To date no concrete evidence for this has come to light, although some scholars believe that Fielding had already completed a short biography of Wild before he assumed the editorship of the Champion.[94] One point is clear, however. When Fielding was ready to begin his book, he had available to him a sizeable body of popular and politically motivated works about Wild, including Defoe's comprehensive biography and the two excellent short satires that had appeared in Mist's Weekly Journal and in Common Sense. As Fielding had certain literary models in mind when he wrote Shamela and Joseph Andrews, it seems most probable that in creating Jonathan Wild he contemplated some of the works discussed above, for these sundry verses, articles, and pamphlets provided models that Fielding could imitate, parody, and use as points of departure for the imaginative expression of his own ideas in his own manner.

Without question, Fielding combined in Jonathan Wild elements of the lives, accounts, and narratives of the real Wild along with aspects of various satirical treatments that made use of Wild's name primarily as a political symbol. To this Fielding of course added far-ranging considerations about ethical, social, and aesthetic matters that he realized through a variety of literary forms, traditions, and devices. The result, in contrast to the occasional

ephemeral works described in this chapter, is a full-blown work of art of enduring force and originality.

Notes

[1] "Replies. Gay's Works," Notes and Queries, 12th Ser., 12 (March 1923), 174.

[2] Williams, ed., The Poems of Jonathan Swift, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), III, 1111-13.

[3] According to Williams (pp. 1111-12), the first London broadside, published on the verso of a Postscript to the St. James's Post of Monday, November 28, 1715, was titled Newgate's Garland: Being a New Ballad, Shewing How Mr. Jonathan Wild's Throat was cut, from Ear to Ear, with a Penknife by Mr. Blake, alias Blueskin, the bold Highway man, as he stood at his Trial at the Old Bailey, To the Tune of, The Cut-purse. A second broadside edition was printed for J. Baker in Paternoster Row.

[4] The London Stage 1660-1800, Part 2: 1700-1729, ed. Emmett L. Avery (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1960), II, 797, 798, 801.

[5] The British Journal, No. CIX, October 17, 1724, p. 5.

[6] Williams, pp. 113-14.

[7] Williams, p. 1114.

[8] Byrom, Miscellaneous Poems (Manchester: J. Harrop, 1770), I, 20-21.

[9] I use here the full title of the poem, as listed in the British Museum Catalogue of Printed Books for an edition that was published in Dublin in 1725. The reprinted version of the poem quoted below is simply titled "Jonathan Wild's Complaint."

[10] Reprinted in Horace Bleackley and S.M. Ellis, Jack Sheppard (Edinburgh: William Hodge, 1933), pp. 239-40.

[11] Ibid., p. 203.

[12] Ibid., pp. 203-204.

[13] Ibid., pp. 204-206.

[14] Howson's annotated bibliography (pp. 318-20) provides a useful description of the various versions of Wild's life that were published in 1725-26.

[15] An Authentick Narrative of the Life and Actions of Jonathan Wild, (Citizen and Thief-Taker of London) With the Crimes he stands charg'd with, upon a Commitment sign'd by Twelve of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace. The Second Edition. (London: Printed by A. Moore, 1725), pp. 3, 4. For evidence that Howson found of Wild's imprisonment for debt in the Wood Street Compter, see above, Chapter II, pp. 51-53.

The inside back cover of the copy I examined at the Beinecke contains the following undated, handwritten entry: "Jonathan Wild's usual dress was a black coat, scarlet waistcoast with broad gold lace, velvet breeches, white silk rolled-up stockings gartered under the knees with black straps, square-toed shoes, white flowing wig, laced hat, silver hilted sword etc. He was the original of Peachum in Gay's Beggars Opera, and Hyppesley, who was the first actor in that character, adopted Wild's dress as above described, and Shuter followed his example. Wild was hanged in 1725. G. Furman." The effigy of Wild "drawn from the Life by an Eminent Master" that faces the title page reveals Wild in dress similar to the above description. (Subsequent page references to this edition appear in the text.)

[16] See above, Chapter II, pp. 60-61 and n. 18.

[17] See above, Chapter II, pp. 79-80 and nn. 46, 47, 48, and 49. The paragraph of Mandeville's that the pamphlet writer omits concerns the act of theftbote as described by an Act of Parliament, Lord Chief Justice Coke, and Sir Matthew Hale.

[18] See above, Chapter II, pp. 70-71.

[19] Checklist (Bloomington: Indiana Unvirsity Press, 1960), p. 196.

[20] See above, Chapter II, p. 62. In Jonathan Wild, Fielding offers a variation of these operations by having Wild install the Count La Ruse in a handsome house replete "with Servants and Equipage, and all the Insignia of a large Estate proper to impose on poor Heartfree" (II.i.69).

[21] The New England Courant, No. 219, October 2-9, 1725; No. 223, October 30-November 6, 1725. NEC is unpaginated; the "H.D." account is the lead article in each number.

[22] Ibid., No. 227, November 7-December 4, 1725.

[23] Ibid., No. 219, October 2-9, 1725, and No. 230, December 18-25, 1725.

[24] Ibid., No. 230, December 18-25, 1725.

[25] Irwin, p. 115, n. 89.

[26] See below, Chapter VI, pp. 266-67.

[27] Life and Glorious Actions (London: H. Whitridge, 1725), p. 40.

[28] The Statutes At Large, ed. Charles Runnington (London: Eyre and Strahan, etc., 1786), III, 344-45. Portions of the act are reproduced on pp. 42-45 of the anonymous pamphlet.

[29] Fielding's most direct commentary on the subject in Jonathan Wild begins with a touch of pretended incredulity and ends in a scathing ironic twist (I.iv.14-15). See below, Chapter VIII, p. 456.

[30] Moore, pp. 197-98. Unlike the "H.D." account, this life of Wild has been printed in various editions of Defoe's collected works.

[31] A True & Genuine Account, rpt. in Romances and Narratives of Daniel Defoe, ed. George A. Aitken (London: J.M. Dent, 1899), XVI, 235, 236. Subsequent references to A True & Genuine Account are to this edition and are included in my text.

As perhaps is inevitable in two works written by the same author on the same subject within a brief period, there are certain similarities of phrasing in the H.D. version and A True & Genuine Account. For example, in the latter work Defoe wrote of Wild's role as a middleman between the law and the offender: "As he steered among rocks and dangerous shoals, so he was a bold pilot" (p. 256). In the earlier pamphlet, "H.D." described Wild's difficult game in evading the law and maintaining control over the thieves in a more elaborate manner: "This was steering betwixt Scylla and Charybidis; and, if he had not been a very skilful Pilot, he must long since have split upon a Rock, either on one Side or the other" (NEL, No. 219, October 2 to October 9, 1725).

[32] Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq. Volume One, ed. Henry Knight Miller (Oxford: Wesleyan University Press, 1972), p. 8. See below, Chapter VI, pp. 266-67.

[33] See above, Chapter II, pp. 68-69, 72, 73, 74-75.

[34] The poem alone was also published in Mist's Weekly Journal, No. 14, July 31, 1725.

[35] Weighley (London: J. Roberts, 1725), sig. A2., p. 21.

[36] See above, Chapter II, pp. 70-71.

[37] Weighley, pp. 28, 40, 48.

[38] The Roots of Evil (London: John Murray, 1937), p. xi.

[39] The Prison-breaker; or, The Adventures of John Sheppard (London, 1725), in the British Museum, shelfmark 841.b.13.

[40] Act II, scene 2, p. 47, as quoted by Irwin, p. 15.

[41] News from the Dead; . . . and Jonathan Wild (London: J. Thompson, 1725), in the British Museum, shelfmark 12331.3e.31. (8).

[42] No performance of The Prison-Breaker is recorded in The English Stage. It seems likely that the failure of Harlequin Sheppard at the Drury Lane on December 26, 1724, not long after Sheppard's death, caused the Theatre-Royal to abandon plans for a rival production of The Prison-Breaker.

[43] No sooner had Jonathan leap'd from the Boat,
But Blueskin espy'd him, and flew at his Throat;
All Hell in an Uproar receiv'd this Alarm,
While Sandford and Skerry caught hold of his Arm.

Cease, Blueskin, untimely Revenge to pursue,
He hath suffer'd already that Death which was due:
See the Wound in his Forehead.--His Neck o' one Side.
The barbarous Crowd give him one e'er he dy'd:
Forgive him at length, forgive your old Friend,
Since the Thread of his Life was a Rope in the End.

Then Jonathan, blessing himself, did reply,
Ev'ry Word he hath spoke is a damnable Lye;
For this Wound in My Forehead, I'll make Affidavit,
(If Minos is sitting) that I my self gave it.
Then how came your Neck broke? the Devils cry'd all.
Saith he, For my Neck, that was broke by a Fall.

(Mist's Weekly Journal,
No. 5, May 29, 1725
[p. 2])

[44] I rely on Howson's annotated bibliography (pp. 319-20) for a description of such books as are at present unavailable.

[45] Walpole was not officially designated Prime Minister with all the powers that the holder of that office enjoys today. In The Whig Supremacy: 1714-1760, Basil Williams observes that during the eighteenth century the office of Prime Minister evolved slowly because the parties were not clearly defined, because each minister was responsible for his own office, and because the public was wary of investing too much power in a single subject. (From about 1702, however, the Lord Treasurer was generally taken by all to be the most important member of government.) According to Williams, the term Prime Minister was heard "more commonly as a term of opprobrium to Walpole, who in fact more nearly approached being a prime minister in the modern sense" (The Whig Supremacy, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962], p. 35).

[46] Plumb, Sir Robert Walpole (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), II, 250. Subsequent references to this edition are inclued in the text.

[47] Lord Chesterfield, an outspoken opponent of Walpole during most of his administration, wrote that "he [Walpole] was both the best parliament-man, and the ablest manager of parliament, that I believe ever lived" (Characters of Eminent Personages of His Own Time, 2nd ed. [London: William Flexney, 1777], p. 18). Johnson, who in 1739 wrote Marmor Norfolciense, an anti-Walpole satire, is said in later life to have considered Walpole "the best minister this country ever had" (Johnsonian Miscellanies, ed. George Birkbeck Hill [1897; rpt. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1966], II, 309).

[48] The precise date on which this movement began is difficult to fix. There had of course been opposition by both Whigs and Tories ever since Walpole took office, but this resistance was for the most part poorly organized. In "The Early Opposition to Sir Robert Walpole, 1720-1727" (Kansas University Humanistic Studies, 4, Nos. 2 and 3, Bulletin of the University of Kansas, 32 [April 15, 1931], No. 8), Charles Realey uses the term "new Opposition," which is perhaps a more accurate description of the revitalized attack upon Walpole. On April 8, 1725 Pulteney indicated publicly that he would no longer humbly follow Walpole. Bolingbroke had in the meantime resettled in England, although Walpole had made certain that he could never resume his seat in the House of Lords or hold public office. It seems highly probable that by May 1725, during Wild's final days, Pulteney and Bolingbroke were already at work charting the anti-Walpole campaign that was to gain force and visibility during the following years.

[49] Political Ballads Illustrating the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, ed. Milton Percival (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 193.

[50] In "The Fox in Mourning for the Loss of his Tail," cited by Percival, p. 199.

[51] In "Bob Booty's Lost Deal," ibid., pp. 178-79.

[52] Statesman's Progress: Or, a Pilgrimage to Greatness (London: C. Corbett, 1741).

[53] Political Ballads of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century ed. William W. Wilkins (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1860), II, 222.

[54] Ibid., p. 238.

[55] Percival, p. 165.

[56] The Life of a Norfolk Dumpling, Alias a Norfolk -------- (London, 1730).

[57] The Englishman, ed. Rae Blanchard (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955), p. 193. The motto of Steele's essay is taken from Samuel Garth's The Dispensary: "Where little Villains must submit to Fate, / That great ones may enjoy the World in State" (ll. 9-10).

[58] The London Journal, LXXXVI, March 18, 1720, p. 2. "Jack Ketch" is attacking the financial rogues who swindled the nation in the South Sea Bubble.

[59] The True Briton, XXV, August 26, 1723, p. 1. Walpole, who had long been accused of enriching himself while holding public office, is the subject of this attack, which may have been written by the Duke of Wharton, who founded the True Briton on June 3, 1723.

[60] "Dialogue between Julius Caesar and Jack Sheppard," rpt. in Tyburn Chronicle (London: J. Cooke, 1768), II, 106-107. The dialogue was originally published in the British Journal of December 24, 1725.

[61] Rpt. in The New Foundling Hospital for Wit (London: J. Debreet, 1784), I, 226. Wharton also used the thief-statesman parallel in "An Epistle from John Shepherd [sic] to the Earl of Macclesfield," in which Sheppard remarks to the Lord Chancellor, who has been found guilty of accepting bribes and embezzling public funds: "At the present disgrace, my Lord, never repine, / Since fame rings of nothing but thy tricks and mine, / And our names shall alike in history shine: / Which nobody can deny" (Ibid., p. 222).

[62] See above, p. 94 and 4.

[63] Williams, p. 1114. Swift's allusion to the blue Garter ribbon had particular political significance. Walpole was a member of the Order of the Garter and rewarded some of his followers with a blue ribbon (and later a red ribbon when the Order of the Bath was supposedly revived in 1725). See below, Chapter V, p. 252.

[64] In the Preface to Political Ballads Illustrating the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, Percival writes that the pamphlet was for a while the most significant and incisive organ of satire, but as newspapers increased in number, variety, freedom, and political influence, both the ballad (which appealed to all classes and had much the same function as the political cartoon) and the pamphlet declined in importance: "The newspaper came to have such advantages in reporting political news and discussing political principles, that it soon absorbed not only the ballad but the pamphlet" (p. xix). While Percival's observation may be true in the gross, it does not satisfactorily explain the absence of references to Wild in the numerous anti-Walpole ballads and pamphlets that were published during the years that Mist's Weekly Journal, the Craftsman, Common Sense, and the Champion flourished.

[65] The new paper superseded the Weekly Journal; or Saturday's Post, which Mist had established as an organ of the Jacobites on December 15, 1716. Nos. 330, 332, and 338 of the Weekly Journal published reports of Wild's apprehension and the disposition of his case. See above, Chapter II, pp. 69, 71, 73.

[66] Mist's Weekly Journal, No. 3, May 17, 1725 [p. 1].

[67] See above, n. 43.

[68] In The Making of Jonathan Wild (p. 23), Irwin incorrectly gives the dates of publication as May 12 and May 19, 1725.

[69] Mist's Weekly Journal, No. 7, June 12, 1725 [p. 1].

[70] Ibid.

[71] Mist's, No. 8, June 19, 1725 [p. 1].

[72] Mist's, No. 7, June 12, 1725 [p. 1].

[73] Ibid.

[74] Mist's, No 8, June 19, 1725 [p. 1].

[75] Miscellanies, ed. Miller, p. 8.

[76] "'Jonathan Wild the Great': Its Germ," Notes & Queries, 11th Ser., 2 (October 1910), 263.

[77] "Fieldingiana," Notes & Queries, 12th Ser., 2 (December 1916), 442-43.

[78] Government and the Press 1695-1753 (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), p. 67.

[79] Some Materials Towards Memoirs of the Reign of King George II, ed. Romney Sedgwick (London: 1931), I, 263.

[80] The Craftsman (London: R. Franklin, 1731), II, 313. Scholars have long acknowledged that the character of Peachum, a thief-taker, is based in part on Jonathan Wild. Unlike Fielding's more exclusive use of his protagonist as a symbol for great men like Walpole, Peachum is not the only character in The Beggar's Opera who represents Walpole. Macheath the thief, suggested by Jack Sheppard, also serves this function, as to a much lesser extent does Robin of Bagshot, alias Bob Booty. The political satire of The Beggar's Opera and its similarities with Jonathan Wild have been ably discussed by William E. Schultz (Gay's Beggar's Opera: Its Content, History and Influence [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923]); Edmon M. Gagey (Ballad Opera [New York: Columbia University Press, 1937]); C.F. Burgess ("Political Satire: John Gay's The Beggar's Opera," Midwest Quarterly, 6 [Spring 1965], 265-76); and John Preston ("The Ironic Mode: A Comparison of 'Jonathan Wild' and 'Beggar's Opera,'" EC, 16 [July 1966], 268-80).

[81] The Craftsman, No. 825, April 24, 1742, rpt. in The Gentleman's Magazine, XII (April 1742), 201. In the November 20, 1742 number of the Craftsman, Wild is mentioned along with Colonel Charteris and Cromwell as an example of a great hypocrite: "Lip Devotion, a Wild, a Charteris . . . may practise; and we know a Cromwell actually did" (No. 856, rpt. in The Gentleman's Magazine, XII [November 1742], 593).

[82] Cross believes that Chesterfield and Lyttelton established their paper in order to expand the social and political ridicule that Fielding had been staging so effectively at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket until it was closed by the Licensing Act of June 21, 1737 (The History of Henry Fielding [1918; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963], I, 219). In the first number of February 7, 1737, the editors wrote in a discussion of the paper's name: "An ingenious Dramatick Author has consider'd Common Sense as so extraordinary a Thing, that he has lately, with great Wit and Humour, not only personified it, but dignified it too with the Title of a Queen." The ingenious playwright is Fielding and the allusion is to "Pasquin: The Life and Death of Common-Sense," which was first performed on May 5, 1736 at the Haymarket. Fielding wrote an open letter signed "Pasquin" that appeared in May 21, 1737 number of Common Sense, responding to an attack that had been made upon him in the Daily Gazetteer. See also M[artin] C. with R.R. Battestin, "A Fielding Discovery, with Some Remarks on the Canon," SB, 33 (1980),

131-43, for evidence of another article written by Fielding (ridiculing Walpole) that appeared in the May 13, 1738 number of Common Sense.

[83] Common Sense; or, The Englishman's Journal (London: Purser and Hawkins, 1738), I, sig. A5.

[84] Ibid., 275-78.

[85] Ibid., 278-79.

[86] Common Sense, No. 125, rpt. in The Scots Magazine, I (November 1739), 559.

[87] Common Sense, No. 226, March 20, 1742, rpt. in The Gentleman's Magazine, XII (March 1742), 146.

[88] Common Sense, Nos. 282, 283, July 10 and 17, 1742, rpt. in The Gentleman's Magazine, XII (July 1742), 364.

[89] See below, Chapter IV, pp. 180-81. Fielding, of course, had ridiculed Walpole in many plays before the Licensing Act ended his career as a playwright. In addition to his articles in the Champion, Fielding attacked Walpole in two anonymous pamphlets that are described below, Chapter IV, pp. 182-84 and n. 65.

[90] For a summary of Fielding's articles attacking Walpole, see Dudden, Henry Fielding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952), I, 255-57.

[91] Cross, I, 263-64. A notable exception to this principle is Fielding's article in the June 7, 1740 number that ridicules "the superstition concerning names." Although Walpole is not mentioned by name there are numerous derogatory references to Robert, Robin, Round Robin, Bobtail, and the famous Robin Hood (The Complete Works of Henry Fielding, ed. W.E. Henley [1902; rpt. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967], XV, 327-29).

[92] The Champion: Containing A Series of Papers, Humourous, Moral, Political, and Critical, 2nd ed. (London: H. Chapelle, 1743), II, 329-30.

[93] As quoted in Irwin, p. 37. Dudden writes that the authorship of this paper "cannot with certainty be ascribed to Fielding" (I, 456).

[94] See below, Chapter IV, pp. 150, 156-59.

Part 2

CREATION AND REWORKING

Chapter IV

THE COMPOSITION AND PUBLICATION OF JONATHAN WILD (1743)

Jonathan Wild had been dead for almost eighteen years and Walpole had been out of office for fourteen months when The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great was first published at the beginning of April 1743, as the third volume of the subscription edition of Fielding's Miscellanies. Volume I contained Fielding's poetry, three formal prose essays, a translation of the First Olynthiac of Demosthenes, two Lucianic dialogues, and two prose satires. Volume II included A Journey From This World to the Next and two plays, Eurydice and The Wedding Day, to which Fielding referred in the Preface as "the Productions of my Youth, tho' the latter was not acted 'till this Season."[1]

Towards the end of March 1743, publication of the long-promised collection was announced in the March 22-24, 24-26, and 26-29 numbers of the St. James Evening Post: "On Thursday the 7th of April will be deliver'd to the SUBSCRIBERS, MISCELLANIES. IN THREE VOLUMES, Octavo, By HENRY FIELDING, Esq; . . . ."[2] The Miscellanies were entered in the Stationers' Register on April 6, 1743,[3] and the General Evening Post of April 5-7, 1743 informed the public that on "this Day, April 7, began to be delivered to the Subscribers, Miscellanies. In Three Volumes, Octavo, By Henry Fielding, Esq."

The April 7-9 number repeated the announcement in a slightly altered form: "This day was published, And ready to be delivered to the Subscribers, Miscellanies. . . ."[4] Additional notice about the publication and distribution of the Miscellanies appeared in the Daily Post and in the London Daily Post and General Advertiser of April 7, 1743, as well as in the Daily Advertiser of April 8.[5] It thus seems that the Miscellanies were most probably published on April 7, 1743 and not on April 12, as is stated by both Cross and Dudden.[6]

If the "LIST OF SUBSCREBERS" [sic] (M, Appendix V) that followed the title page of Volume I is accurate, at least 427 individuals purchased 556 sets of the collection. Two hundred and fourteen copies, printed on "fine" royal paper, were sold at two guineas a set; and 342 copies, printed on smaller sheets of "coarse" paper, were sold at one guinea.[7]

Among the subscribers were distinguished noblemen, political leaders, clergymen, doctors, theatrical personalities, and members of the bar. The Prince of Wales had ordered fifteen sets; Sir Robert Walpole, ten; the Duchess of Richmond, six; and Lord Chesterfield and the Duke of Marlborough, five each. Other notable subscribers included Lyttelton, Pitt, Dodington, Admiral Vernon, Bishop Hoadly, Dr. Edward Wilmot, Charles Fleetwood, David Garrick, and Kitty Clive. The members of Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn, the Inner Temple, and the Middle Temple comprised the largest number of subscribers. In the Preface, Fielding expressly acknowledged "the Friendship shown me by a Profession of which I am a late and unworthy Member, and from

whose Assistance I derive more than half the Names which appear to this Subscription" (M, p. 13).

Apparently there were other subscribers whose names did not appear on the alphabetized list in Volume I. Neither Pope nor Ralph Allen, Fielding's friend and benefactor, was recorded as a subscriber, yet on April 12, 1743 Pope wrote to Allen: "Fielding has sent the Books you subscribed for to the Hand I imployd in conveying the 20 11 to him. In one Chapter of the Second vol. he has payd you a pretty Compliment upon your House."[8]

The title page of this subscription edition bears the following information: "MISCELLANIES, / BY / Henry Fielding Esq; / In THREE VOLUMES. / ["vase" ornament] / LONDON: / Printed for the AUTHOR: / And sold by A. MILLAR, opposite to / Catharine-Street, in the Strand. / MDCCXLIII" (M, n.pag.). Andrew Millar was a well-established bookseller who had a good working relationship with Fielding. During the preceding thirteen months he had published the first three editions of Joseph Andrews, as well as the pamphlet A Full Vinidication of the Dutchess Dowager of Marlborough and the play Miss Lucy in Town. For the Miscellanies, Millar served as both publisher and distributor. He assigned the printing of the three volumes to separate shops that returned the sheets to him for delivery to the subscribers and for subsequent sale to the general public. Volume I of the Miscellanies was printed by William Strahan, Volume II is believed to have been printed by Henry Woodfall the elder, and Volume III, consisting entirely of Jonathan Wild, was printed by William Bowyer, the

younger, whose paper stock ledger contains the following entry:

Jonathan Wild for Mr. Millar	Coarse	Fine[9]
1743 27 sh.	1000	250

Although there is no record of the financial arrangement between Fielding and Millar, the fact that both Strahan and Bowyer charged the printing of Volumes I and III, respectively, to Millar[10] suggests that the bookseller played an active role in financing the project. It was the custom of the day for subscription money to go to the author after the deduction of printing costs, advertising, and incidental expenditures. Donald Eddy estimates the printing costs of the Miscellanies to have been about £90.[11] Henry Knight Miller suggests that the total cost of publication was approximately £150,[12] although he does not document any advertising or incidental expenses. If the 427 subscribers listed in Volume One paid 770 guineas for the 556 sets that they had ordered, the publication of the Miscellanies was a financial success that earned Fielding more money than he received from any of his published works except for Amelia.[13]

A little more than two weeks after the subscription publication of the Miscellanies, Millar offered a cheaper "second edition" under his own imprint. A notice in the General Evening Post of April 21-23, 1743, announced: "Next Week will be published, Price bound 15s. The Second Edition of Miscellanies. In Three Volumes, Octavo. By Henry Fielding, Esq. . . . " The April 23-26 number carried the same advertisement with the initial words changed to "This Day were published . . . "[14] In addition, the Daily Post of April 23 and of May 2 and the Daily Advertiser of April 27 advertised the edition,[15] which was also

announced in the April number of the Gentleman's Magazine.

The so-called second edition of the Miscellanies was in fact a barely altered version of the subscription edition that had been printed on coarse paper. The first two gatherings of Volume One had been removed so that there was no list of subscribers,[16] and the following title page was substituted for the original:

> MISCELLANIES, / BY / Henry Fielding Esq; / In THREE VOLUMES. / The SECOND EDITION. / ["vase" ornament] / LONDON: Printed for A. MILLAR, opposite to / Catherine-Street in the Strand. / MDCCXLII. (M, Appendix V)

The title page of the third volume, containing Jonathan Wild, included the same changes. The words "printed for A. MILLAR" were substituted for "printed for the AUTHOR, and sold by A. MILLAR," and above the ornament the words "The SECOND EDITION" were added.

According to Donald Eddy, "careful comparison of these two 'editions' indicates not only that they are in truth, one edition but also that they are merely varying states of the same impression."[17] What Millar did was simply to have printed (with the above-mentioned changes) additional copies of the original impression, and, as was the normal practice of the day, offer these extra copies to the general public for his own profit. An entry in the paper stock ledger of William Bowyer, the printer of Jonathan Wild, supports Eddy's theory that the original subscription edition and the copies of the second state were both delivered to Millar by March 30, 1743.[18]

Millar apparently retained these additional copies until most of the subscribers had received their more expensive volumes. When he advertised the "second edition" in the Daily Advertiser of April 27,

1743, less than three weeks after the publication by subscription, Millar made the following request: "Such Gentlemen and Ladies as were Subscribers for these Miscellanies, are desir'd to send for their Books to the said A. Millar's." Evidently, public interest in Fielding's collection was not as extensive as had been anticipated. As late as November 1748 Millar was still advertising the cheaper edition of the Miscellanies in the Jacobite's Journal.[19]

The only other edition of Jonathan Wild, until Fielding's revision in 1754, was included in a two-volume set of the Miscellanies that was printed in Dublin, beyond the copyright law, by John Smith in 1743.

The Date and Circumstances of Composition

Exactly when Fielding wrote Jonathan Wild has been the subject of considerable speculation by scholars for over a century. Arthur Murphy, the first editor of Fielding's Works and author of "An Essay on the Life and Genius of Henry Fielding Esqu." (1762), did not specifically discuss the composition of the book, although he treated it as a prelude to the great novels. "But though the merit of the Life of Jonathan Wild be very considerable," Murphy wrote, "it must be allowed to be very short of that higher order of composition which our author attained in his other pieces of invention." According to Murphy, Fielding's life was divided into three remarkable periods, in which his genius first broke forth, then achieved a fullness of perfection, and finally tended to decline. These eras corresponded

precisely to the creation of Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia. The implication was that Jonathan Wild belonged to an earlier period of Fielding's life in which he seemed to be "preluding, as it were, to some great work, in which all the component parts of his genius were to be seen in their full and vigorous exertion."[20]

Although Murphy was briefly acquainted with Fielding during the later years, he did not write his essay until eight years after Fielding's death. Regrettably, Murphy made no attempt to obtain pertinent biographical information from Fielding's family and friends who were still alive, and his life of Fielding contains numerous inaccuracies that have been exposed by subsequent scholars. Murphy's convenient division of Fielding's career into three periods that correspond to the three major novels tends to disregard important personal, economic, and political factors that helped shape Fielding's life and his works. Most importantly for the purposes of this study, Murphy's assumption that Fielding wrote Jonathan Wild before Joseph Andrews is not supported by a single piece of evidence.

It was not until 115 years after the publication of Jonathan Wild that another opinion about the genesis of Fielding's book was printed. In a postscript to his essay "On the Life and Writings of Henry Fielding," which had appeared in the January and February 1858 numbers of Fraser's Magazine, Thomas Keightley speculated that Fielding had written Jonathan Wild several years before 1742 and had revised and altered it for inclusion in the Miscellanies:

> If my hypothesis respecting Jonathan Wild be correct, I think the work may have been formed in the following manner. Fielding may have written the satire in the

> heat of his indignation at the Licensing Act, but he did not publish it. With time and the fall of Walpole in 1742, his anger probably expired, and the satire would never have seen the light, had he not been pressed for materials to make up his Miscellanies in the following year. He may then have gone over his Life of Jonathan Wild, have made additions to it, and altered it so that the satire might not easily have been discovered, or that he might be able to deny that it contained any individual satire.[21]

As had been the case with Murphy, Keightley's hypothesis was unsupported with earlier internal or external evidence. The first to identify the pervasive political allusions in Jonathan Wild,[22] Keightley made a significant contribution to Fielding scholarship. He was, however, perhaps too ready to seize upon the Licensing Act as the event that occasioned Fielding's book and not careful enough to examine other aspects of Fielding's life and works that indicate a later date of composition. At the very least, Keightley's suggestion that Fielding's opposition to Walpole might have subsided during the years following the Licensing Act fails to take into sufficient account the facts that in 1739 and 1740 Fielding wrote numerous articles in the Champion attacking Walpole and that as late as January and April 1741 he published two works, The Vernoniad and The Crisis, that also were critical of the Prime Minister.[23] If Fielding, who had presented a number of hastily written, vigorously anti-Walpole plays to the public between 1735 and 1737, had composed a draft of Jonathan Wild in the heat of indignation at the Licensing Act as Keightley hypothesized, it is odd that he did not publish the satire at that time, either with or without his name.

Keightley's observations prompted subsequent scholars to examine the works of Fielding more closely in an effort to determine

when Jonathan Wild was written. In his biography Fielding (1883), Austin Dobson cited a single reference to Wild that Fielding had made in the March 4, 1740 number of the Champion and surmised that it was "not unlikely that the first germ"[24] of Fielding's book was to be found in that paper. On the basis of this brief and commonplace invocation of Wild's name, Dobson suggested that Fielding began to write Jonathan Wild in 1740, sometime after March 4.

Dobson also pointed out that two passages in the text of Jonathan Wild indicate that at least portions of it were composed after the completion of Joseph Andrews early in 1742. The first reference is the letter from Peter Pounce, who refuses to settle his account with the beleaguered Heartfree: "YOURS received; but as to Sum mentioned therein, doth not suit at present."[25] In Joseph Andrews, Peter Pounce is of course Lady Booby's ambitious steward, whom Fielding describes as an "honest Man" who "from nothing, in a few Years amassed a small Sum of twenty thousand Pounds of thereabouts."[26] But the process by which an author names and develops a character is a complex one; conceivably, Fielding could have first used the name Peter Pounce in an early draft of Jonathan Wild and subsequently expanded his conception of the character type to create the enterprising steward in Joseph Andrews, who withholds wages from the servants while lending money to others, including his own master and mistress.[27]

Dobson's second reference is more convincing because it contains a statement by Fielding about where he composed a particular portion of Jonathan Wild. In an elaborate comparison likening the

the journey of a traveler crossing the Alps to the passage of great men on to greatness, Fielding qualifies the analogy with a less grandiose example that was more likely within the experience of some of his readers: " . . . or, if this be a too far fetched Simile, to one who travels Westward over the Hills near Bath, where the Simile was indeed made" (I.xiv.55).

Fielding is known to have been in Bath during 1742, when he composed the brief poem, "To Miss H-AND at Bath. Written Extempore in the PUmp-Room, 1742." Of the reference to "autumnal Skies" in line seven of this poem, Henry Knight Miller writes that the allusion "may (but need not) indicate that the poem was written in that season" (M, p. 118 n. 1). Since Fielding rode the Western Circuit twice a year after Hilary and Trinity terms, his stay at Bath in 1742 most probably began in early summer and ended some time in November before Michaelmas term, when he attended at Westminister Hall.

Although Dobson perused the text of Jonathan Wild for clues to when passages of it were composed, he was less exacting in his estimate as to when Fielding began work on the manuscript. Of the genesis of the book, Dobson wrote: "Whenever it [Jonathan Wild] was completed, we are inclined to think that it was planned and begun before Joseph Andrews was published, as it is in the highest degree improbable that Fielding, always carefully watching the public taste, would have followed up that fortunate adventure in a new direction by a work so entirely different from it as Jonathan Wild."[28]

While Fielding was no doubt well aware of the public taste, Dobson's view overlooks the evidence that on at least two occasions in

his career Fielding ignored the more popular mode of comedy in favor of presenting grimmer visions of man and society in works that were not well received. As a young dramatist, Fielding had enjoyed several modest successes with farces and burlesques when, in 1732, he wrote The Modern Husband, an exposé of the sordid aspects of marriage that eschewed the witty treatment of sex and love normally found in comedies of the period.[29] Many years later, after the widespread successes of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, Fielding once again turned away from the comic mode to write Amelia,[30] which failed to meet the expectations of the general public.

The difficulty with Dobson's theory is that it does not take into account the fact that a writer's emotional predispositions, his observations, and his convictions do not always coincide with the popular tastes of the day. Clearly a serious writer like Fielding, who by 1742 had expressed his wide-ranging views in farces, burlesques, essays, verse, parody, and a novel, was precisely the kind of artist who might well attempt a new kind of book rather than repeat the formula of an earlier success. The fact that Fielding described Joseph Andrews as a "Species of writing . . . hitherto unattempted in our Language" (JA, p. 10) and that in Tom Jones he referred to himself as "in reality, the Founder of a new Province of Writing"[31] indicates that Fielding viewed himself as something of an explorer and an experimenter in the relatively new genre of the novel. The frequency with which Fielding criticized works of romance, history, and comedy, and the care with which he defined his own theories about the novel suggest that he was not content merely to follow the public taste,

but that in composing his own fiction Fielding attempted, among other things, both to elevate and to shape it.

Thirty-five years after Dobson, Wilbur Cross reconsidered the question of when Fielding had composed Jonathan Wild in The History of Henry Fielding (1918). Cross had little patience with the argument that it was not logical for Fielding to experiment in another type of fiction after the success of Joseph Andrews. "Logically," he wrote, "one might add, Fielding should never have wasted his time on another newspaper after leaving 'The Champion.' . . . To this kind of logic the exigencies of life can never be safely adjusted." Cross fully recognized similarities in thought and expression between essays in the Champion and passages in Jonathan Wild, but he sensibly pointed out that marked parallels to Fielding's earlier prose and poetry could also be found in Tom Jones, which was not published until 1749. "The fact is," Cross observed, "resemblances in thought and style, if unsupported by other considerations, cannot be relied upon for fixing the dates of Fielding's works, for it was his custom to revamp his old ideas, presenting them from fresh points of view in the light of a free play of the imagination" (I, 409-10, 410).

The parallel between Wild and Walpole that had been developed with increasing frequency by Opposition writers between 1737 and 1742 was of course familiar to Cross. In his opinion, the literary analogy between the careers of the thief who was hanged and the Prime Minister who would meet his fate at the hands of an indignant people became complete only when Walpole fell from power in February 1742. "Beyond reasonable doubt," Cross stated, "it was at this time

that Fielding wrote his 'Jonathan Wild,' retaining the political undercurrent of the story but giving it a wider sweep. . . . Everybody had the analogy [Wild-Walpole] in mind, the newspapers were dilating upon it, and it was the best and easiest subject for Fielding, who had before him the task of filling up three volumes of miscellanies for which subscribers were paying him in advance" (I, 409, 410).

In addition to the two passages cited by Dobson, Cross found further textual evidence in favor of a 1742 date of composition. He pointed out that Heartfree's belief that "a sincere Turk would be saved" (IV.i.182) is reminiscent of Parson Adams' opinion in Joseph Andrews that "a virtuous and good Turk, or Heathen, are more acceptable in the sight of their Creator, than a vicious and wicked Christian" (JA, I.xvii.82). Fielding's remark about "many Occurrences of the Phaenomenous Kind which have lately appeared in this our Hemisphere" (JW [1743 ed.], II.xiii.180) was occasioned, according to Cross, by the comet of 1742, which was seen and discussed by many people during February and March of that year.[32]

A third reference appears only in the 1743 edition and in Cross's opinion "belongs definitely to the summer or autumn of 1742" (I, 411). In the chapter "Of PROVERBS," which pays facetious tribute to Joe Miller's Jests, a popular collection of jokes, repartees, and bons mots that had gone through at least five editions by 1742,[33] Fielding wrote: "Proverb XII. DEBAUCHING a Member of the House of Commons from his Principles, and creating him a Peer, is not much better than making a Woman a Whore, and afterwards marrying her" (1743, II.xiii.178). The member of the House of Commons is

unquestionably William Pulteney, the erstwhile Opposition leader, who refused George II's invitation to form a new government and accepted instead a peerage, becoming Earl of Bath on July 13, 1742.[34] "With these passages in view, woven into the text here and there," Cross concluded, "no one should greatly doubt when Fielding wrote 'Jonathan Wild.' It is the last production worthy of his genius before the advent of 'Tom Jones'" (I, 411, 412).

According to Cross's own line of argument, the similarity between Heartfree's and Parson Adams's opinions about the possible salvation of a sincere Turk is insufficient evidence for fixing the date of Fielding's works. The allusions to the comet of 1742 and to Pulteney's peerage provide more substantial clues because these passages comment upon events of historical record. The objection may be made that, in the last analysis, the internal evidence uncovered by Cross can only prove that several parts of Jonathan Wild were completed as late as July 1742. Nevertheless, Cross's well-documented biography, his comprehensive knowledge of the literature and politics of the period, and his insight into Fielding's personality and his methods of composition, lend considerable authority to his opinion about the dating of Jonathan Wild.

Five years after Cross, the French scholar Aurélien Digeon returned to Keightley's unsupported hypothesis about the genesis of Fielding's book. By breaking the text down into two components, those chapters dealing with Wild's destiny and those with the victimization of the Heartfrees, Digeon believed that he had found "decisive" proof

that Fielding began the book as a "picaresque biography" onto which he later grafted "a novel according to his own fashion." In The Novels of Fielding (1923), Digeon wrote:

> If one were to take out of the whole work the first book and the few chapters which I have enumerated in the others only a few links would be needed to make of them a complete and self-sufficient novel, a simple biography, mordant and restrained, of Jonathan Wild. I am convinced that we should then possess the primitive vein, the original form in which Fielding conceived his novel, and probably the form in which he first drafted it. In the absence of other proofs the internal evidence is decisive.[35]

As inventive as Digeon's exercise is, his proof is by no means as decisive as he claimed. One senses that Digeon might have accepted Keightley's hypothesis as his starting point and then selectively dissected Fielding's text in order to support the theory. Clearly there is merit to the objection that the extracted chapters about Wild do not form a "complete and self-sufficient novel" because they lack a sufficiently compelling narrative line that is sustained with conflict, complication, and even minimal character development. These basic elements, which were part of many widely read novels of the period, are present in Jonathan Wild only with the integration of the Heartfree story. Digeon himself seemed to acknowledge this when he wrote, "Directly the unfortunate Heartfree is introduced into the novel, it no longer seems possible to do without him" (p. 117).

According to Digeon's theory, it was after completing Joseph Andrews that "the new Fielding" added the Heartfree story to the biography of Wild, because he "feared to weary his readers by such continuous villainy, such unrelieved and inexorable irony" (p. 116). A close examination of the Wild chapters reveals, however, not merely

a simple biography of inexorable irony but wide-ranging social satire affecting a number of characters, often expressed in the gay or boisterous manner that is characteristic of Fielding's more celebrated novels. Although Digeon did recognize the consummate art with which the Heartfree story was "connected with the other and woven intimately into the very texture of the work" (p. 116), he overlooked the varying voices and styles of the Wild sections, in which Fielding employs not only mordant irony but playful and farcical humor in his treatment of traditional comic themes.[36]

Relying primarily on his structural analysis of the plot and to a lesser extent on two rather tenuous deductions made from passages in the text, Digeon maintained, "It is possible to state with something like certitude, that a considerable part of Jonathan Wild was written about 1737, the date of the Licensing Act. Whole sentences of the book in its present form clearly refer to this measure and defend the liberty of the Press, now threatened with the same fate as the liberty of the theatre" (p. 120).

Although Digeon doesn't specify to which "whole sentences" in Jonathan Wild he is referring, the text contains a passage of two sentences in which Fielding ironically proposes that under a well-regulated government all writers should be "inhibited from venting any other Instructions to the People than what should be first approved and licensed by the said great Men, or their proper Instruments or Tools" (III.v.138-39). That this criticism of government censorship refers essentially to the Licensing Act and was therefore written in 1737 is far from evident. Fielding's two sentences seem

less concerned with the suppression of plays at unlicensed theatres than with the freedom of the press, or as he puts it, with "Scriblers publishing without Restraint their Hints or Alarms to Society" (III.v. 138). As readers familiar with Opposition literature know, condemnation of censorship by the government was expressed by a number of writers both on the stage and on the printed page from 1737 until Walpole was turned out of office in 1742.[37] Fielding himself wrote quite frequently on the subject in the Champion during 1739 and the first half of 1740,[38] and the passage in Jonathan Wild under discussion could certainly have been written as late as February 1742.

A similar objection may be made to the second item of natural evidence that Digeon introduced in defense of 1737 as the initial date of composition. Digeon observed that "certain conversations written in dialogue form (in particular III, 8) could, with the names of the interlocutors detached, be put straight into a comedy," implying that these sections were written by Fielding at the time when he was "the dramatist of scandalous gossip" (p. 116). The chapter cited by Digeon describes Wild's conjugal difficulties with Laetitia a fortnight after their marriage and is written in the form of a playscript with a single stage direction and a concluding descriptive paragraph. Fielding also employs the dialogue form for a conversation between Wild and the Ordinary of Newgate that was purportedly taken down in shorthand by an observer (IV.xiii).

In both of these chapters there appear to be valid artistic reasons for Fielding's use of the dialogue form that may better explain his choice than Digeon's conjecture that Fielding wanted to

salvage old material. In the Newgate scene Fielding's use of dialogue, replete with asterisks where parts of the transcription were "so blotted that it was illegible" (IV.xiii.242), seems motivated by a desire to satirize authors' exaggerated claims about the authenticity of the material they present. In the matrimonial scene, the dialogue appears to have been prompted by an impulse to render as directly and vividly as possible the acrimonious exchange between the outspoken newlyweds. The result is a devastating satire upon society marriage that is unattenuated by the playful authorial intrusions that often characterize Fielding's treatment of sexual matters.

Even if it could be proved that the marriage dialogue was a fragment of an early play as Digeon suggested, this of course would not constitute compelling evidence that Fielding was in fact working on a biography of Wild in 1737. We do know that in 1742 and in the early part of 1743 Fielding reworked several old plays in an attempt to improve his financial situation. Miss Lucy in Town, first written in 1735 in collaboration with an unknown playwright, was revised by Fielding alone during the spring of 1742 and presented at the Drury Lane on May 6 of that year.[39] At the beginning of 1743, Fielding returned to another old play, The Good Natur'd Man, with the intention of providing his friend Garrick with a new role to act, but for reasons that he explains in the Preface he replaced this work with yet another dramatic piece of his youth, The Wedding Day, which ran for six consecutive nights at the Drury Lane, beginning on February 17, 1743.[40]

The fact that Fielding was revising several old plays during 1742-43 at the time when he was preparing the Miscellanies lends credence to the idea that it was during this period that Fielding either wrote the matrimonial dialogue for the first time or imaginatively adapted it from a work that had nothing to do with Wild. There are several similarities in style and content between the Laetitia-Wild exchange and other passages in the Miscellanies and in Joseph Andrews that were written in 1741 or 1742. A Dialogue Between Alexander the Great and Diogenes the Cynic, one of two Lucianic sketches in Volume One of the Miscellanies, was clearly intended to be read rather than performed in a theatre, as I believe was the case with the matrimonial debate. Two phrases in Laetitia's speeches bear striking resemblances to portions of a second dialogue in the Miscellanies and to a scene in Joseph Andrews. In the opening of An Interlude, the complaint by Juno to Jupiter, "I desire you will treat me with Good-Manners at least" (M, p. 236), recalls Laetitia's retort to Jonathan in their dispute: "I flattered myself that I should at least have been used with good Manners" (III.viii.153). Likewise, Laetitia's thrice-repeated protest, "why B--ch?" (III.viii.155-56) is redolent of the chambermaid Betty's persistent objections in Joseph Andrews to having been addressed by Mrs. Tow-wouse in "a monosyllable, beginning with a B--" (JA, I.xvii.84).[41]

In sum, the "decisive" internal evidence that Digeon introduced to prove that Fielding began Jonathan Wild in 1737 as a picaresque biography and then, during the winter of 1742-43, added "the story of Heartfree, so obviously written in his new manner" (p. 119) is highly

suspect. The Wild sections that Digeon extracted from the text contain considerable evidence of Fielding's "new manner" of writing, and the passages that Digeon claimed had been written in 1737 provide no clear-cut evidence of this fact. A final defect in Digeon's argument, which will be discussed in more detail below, in his erroneous statement that the Heartfree chapters were originally "fuller and less polished than the rest" and that "it is in these chapters that the second edition of 1754 makes most corrections of form" (p. 121 and n.).

In his lengthy study Henry Fielding (1952), F. Homes Dudden developed a slightly different hypothesis about the composition of Jonathan Wild that borrowed freely from Keightley, Dobson, Cross, and Digeon. Dudden agreed with Keightley that Fielding was "sore" at Walpole because of the Licensing Act, but along with Dobson he believed that the history of Wild was first sketched out "during the period when Walpole was still in power, and when Fielding . . . was fulminating against him in the pages of The Champion, i.e. about the year 1740" (I, 482).

Dudden accepted Digeon's bifurcation of the novel into the Wild section and the Wild-Heartfree section, although he added a few modifications of his own that in places called for the intricate rearrangement of paragraphs and sentences. Of portions of the text that did not conform to a chapter-by-chapter classification, Dudden commented:

> In addition, we may conjecture that the substance of Wild's soliloquy on the vanity of human greatness (ibid., ii.4), the paragraph on the desirability of curbing the freedom of

> the press, which seems to look back to the discussion on the Licensing Act (ibid., iii.5), and the digression on the theme of great men keeping themselves behind the curtain (ibid., 11), belonged originally to the 'Wild section' of the book, though the passages are now incorporated (with some modification, to suit the new context) in the 'Wild-Heartfree section.' Moreover, it seems possible that, whereas the account of Wild's relations with the Snap family belongs to the 'Wild section,' this section originally included an early version of Wild's interview with the two Miss Snaps (ibid., ii.3, and 5, first paragraph), which was later reshaped and adroitly fitted in the Heartfree story. (I, 471,n)[42]

According to Dudden, after Fielding finished the first draft of the Wild story he was much occupied and "may possibly have recognized that the satire was too good to be rushed into print, before it had received the utmost polish that his art could give it." Following the publication of Joseph Andrews, Fielding decided to expand his preliminary sketch by adding the whole of the Heartfree section with the exception of Mrs. Heartfree's travel narration. Because this burlesque of travel literature was "so injudiciously placed, and in itself so little in keeping with the rest of the contents of the book," Dudden assumed that it was an adaptation of an early independent satire that was written during Fielding's association with the Champion, when he was experimenting in literary modes. Dudden concluded: "The earliest version of the Wild section, and the earliest version of the travel narrative, were both composed about 1740. The Wild-Heartfree section was written in 1742. The revision and alteration of the old material, the composition and interpolation of the new material, and the finishing and polishing of the whole, must have been accomplished in the latter half of the 1742 and the early weeks of 1743" (I, 482, 479, 483).

Dudden's hypothesis, which he felt seemed "to solve most of the difficulties connected with the date" (I, 482) of Jonathan Wild, was an adroit exercise in accommodating the contributions of earlier scholars, whom he often did not acknowledge. Dudden was unable to discover any new external evidence in support of his theory that different strata of the book were composed at different times, and the internal evidence that he introduced leaves ample room for disagreement. That Dudden did not perceive a relationship between Mrs. Heartfree's tale and the contents of the rest of the book suggests that he was more interested in identifying apparent differences than in looking for thematic unities. Dudden's assertion that the irony in the Wild section is perfectly sustained from first to last--"There are no slips or lapses. The author never drops his mask" (I, 472)--reveals either a careless or an overly schematic reading of the text. Finally, Dudden's statement that Fielding, "when preparing the revised edition of 1754, made more corrections and alterations in the Wild-Heartfree chapters" (I, 476) is inaccurate, as my study will demonstrate.

Since the publication of Dudden's book there has been no significant study of the dating of Jonathan Wild. Henry Knight Miller seems to subscribe to the theory that Fielding wrote portions of Jonathan Wild at different times, but he declines to offer specific dates. In his "General Introduction" to Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq; Volume One (1972), Miller states: "One can only theorize about the stages in which Jonathan Wild was composed . . . but the most generally accepted hypothesis is that, as a satire of Sir Robert Walpole, it was substantially complete by the time

Fielding began to project the Miscellanies and that it was considerably revised in the month after Walpole's fall from power (February 1742)" (M, p. xliii).

In Occasional Form: Henry Fielding and Chains of Circumstance (1975), J. Paul Hunter excludes Jonathan Wild from his discussion of Fielding's rhetorical development "because of the lingering uncertainties about its [Jonathan Wild's] process of composition and because of the probability that its 1743 form, let alone its revised form of 1754, represents more than one stage of Fielding's thinking." It is Hunter's "guess" that Fielding wrote a draft of Jonathan Wild "before the occasion of Shamela came up,"[43] i.e., before the publication of Pamela in November 1740.

The most recent reference to the dating of Jonathan Wild occurs as part of a larger discussion of Fielding's political allegiance in Bertrand Goldgar's Walpole and the Wits (1976). Goldgar quotes an admission by Fielding in the Champion of October 4, 1740 that he had taken money from Walpole in order to suppress the publication of an untitled book. In the leader, which bears Fielding's signature code "L," he pretends to have received a letter from the quack doctor "Roberto" (Walpole), who purportedly offered him 100 pills to keep quiet, 200 to say a single favorable word, and 300 plus semiannual doses if he would declaim handsomely upon Walpole's nostrums:

> Whoever the Quack is, from whom this Epistle is arriv'd, I believe the Public will sufficiently conclude that he is a very impudent Fellow. If I mistake not the Hand, it is one whose Pills I formerly refused on the like Conditions now offer'd, tho' I own, being in an ill State of Health, I accepted a few to stop the Publication of a Book, which

> I had written against his Practice, and which he threaten'd to take the law of me, if I publish'd.

On the basis of Fielding's statement, Goldgar concludes: "Since The Grub-Street Opera was in fact published after being suppressed as a performance, the book in question is probably Jonathan Wild, which many believe was composed in 1740 and which if published in these years would have been Fielding's most devastating assault on the prime minister."[44]

This is the extent of Goldgar's discussion of the dating of Jonathan Wild, and his opinion is unencumbered by further examination of internal or external evidence. In many respects, Fielding's "confession" raises more questions than it answers. One wonders if there may yet be discovered the manuscript of, or evidence for a book that Fielding wrote but did not publish. If the suppressed book was in fact Jonathan Wild, how did Walpole learn about it before publication, and why did he threaten legal action against Fielding at a time when writers of published anti-Walpole works were not being prosecuted?

There seems little reason to doubt Fielding's indication, thinly disguised in the references to "pills" that would improve his "state of health," that he entered into some kind of agreement with the Prime Minister in return for perhaps a small monetary payment. What is indeed puzzling is that this arrangement would call for the suppression of an anti-Walpole book and yet leave Fielding free to fulminate against Walpole in the pages of the Champion. If the suppressed book was Jonathan Wild, and if Fielding

was candid enough to own up to such a bargain in 1740 when he was vigorously attacking Walpole, one must ask why, a year after Walpole's fall, Fielding did not describe the full history of Jonathan Wild in the Preface to the Miscellanies, in which he discussed the genesis of other works and commented on some of the financial and political difficulties that he had experienced during the preceding years.

Fielding's confession in the Champion of October 4, 1740 that he "formerly refused" pills from the quack doctor "Roberto" suggests that his bargain with Walpole[45] took place some time before 1740, quite possibly before Fielding began his association with the Champion in the fall of 1739. Although William Kenrick's paper Old England frequently vilified Fielding and can hardly be considered an unimpeachable source, it is interesting to note that the August 5, 1749 number of that paper refers to Fielding as a "Press-Renegade" who at an earlier time had suppressed a dramatic satire when paid to do so.[46] The matter of Fielding's accommodation with Walpole and his possible suppression of anti-Walpole writings merits further investigation that is beyond the scope of this study. To conclude on the basis of Fielding's incomplete admission in the Champion that he in fact suppressed Jonathan Wild some time before October 1740 is to assume too much on too little evidence.

Martin Battestin, who discovered Fielding's confession in the Champion and who suggested to Goldgar its possible relevance to Jonathan Wild, is currently working on a new biography of Fielding. In a recent letter, Battestin wrote:

> I'm sorry that I haven't unearthed any new facts that would have any bearing on this problem [when Fielding wrote Jonathan Wild]. . . . Until persuaded to the contrary, I take it that the book F[ielding] suppressed some time prior to October 1740 was probably JW. We do have much new evidence indicating that he was being harassed by numerous creditors from 1739 on and needed money from whatever source badly. But I have nothing amounting to proof that would help the cause.[47]

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Until such time as direct evidence can be discovered that will decide the matter definitively, scholars can only re-examine the details of Fielding's life and works for additional circumstantial evidence that will date more precisely the writing of Jonathan Wild. (My own study of the text reveals further indications about its date of composition as well as unequivocal evidence that contradicts the arguments set forth by Digeon and Dudden that the book was developed in different stages.)

In addition to the passages first commented on by Dobson, Cross, Digeon, and Dudden, other allusions in Jonathan Wild must have been written after certain dates. The reference with the earliest possible date of composition occurs in an explanation of why Wild's illiterate letter to Laetitia does not correspond exactly to the hero's eloquent speeches. Fielding admits to having made certain embellishments of diction just as ancient historians added flourishes of their own eloquence in recording the speeches of their contemporaries: "Nay, even amongst the Moderns, famous as they are for Elocution (it may be doubted whether those inimitable Harangues, published in the Monthly Magazines) came literally from the Mouths of the HURGOS, &c." (III.vi.144).

The reference here is clearly to the strategem employed by the London Magazine and the Gentleman's Magazine to circumvent the Resolution of 1738, which prohibited the publication of parliamentary debates. By disguising their accounts in rather transparent allegory, both of these magazines were able to publish reports of speeches made in Parliament, purportedly written from notes that had been taken down in the Houses by paid attendants. "Hurgos" was the name for the Lords that appeared in the Gentleman's Magazine's monthly report of "Proceedings and Debates in the Senate of Great Lilliput." The appellation "Urg" began to appear in the July 1738 number of the Gentleman's Magazine, and the first page of the following number refers to a "Debate in the House or Hurgoes."[48] Fielding's reference to "Hurgos" thus could not have been written before July or August 1738, but this fact of course does not preclude a later date of composition.[49]

While similarities in subject matter are not by themselves a reliable means of dating, it is interesting to observe that the beginning of a satiric footnote in the Jonathan Wild chapter "Of Hats" bears a striking parallel to two paragraphs that appeared in the Champion of April 24, 1740. When Wild assembles his gang in an alehouse in order to exhort them to stop quarreling about the different styles of their hats and to consider that hat as the best which contains the largest booty, Fielding comments: "There is something very mysterious in this Speech [Wild's], which probably that Chapter written by Aristotle on this Subject, which is mentioned by a French Author, might have given some Light into;

but that is unhappily among the lost Works of that Philosopher" (II.vi.91). In the Champion of April 24, 1740, "Index to the Times" begins with hits at the palace and pictures of a certain Dr. Midas King (Walpole) and at the government's military conduct, negotiations, and failing sources of revenue. Regarding the houses of parliament, the following report is made: "There was no Conference on Tuesday last between the two H---s as expected: the Managers on one Side, not being punctual to the Time appointed, those on the other withdrew; and, returning to their Principals with the News, the H--- soon after adjourned. About the same Instant, a very learned Comment was exhibited at a public House in the neighbourhood on Aristotle's Chapter of Hats."[50]

A third passage in Jonathan Wild may be dated with more specific assurance. During the course of Heartfree's soliloquy on death, when he is confined to Mr. Snap's sponging-house and believes that his wife has abandoned him, three lines are misquoted from Edward Young's Night Thoughts, "The Complaint, Night I, On Life, Death, and Immortality." The distraught Heartfree thus reflects on the certainty of being torn away from the pleasures of life: "Perhaps To-morrow, --Nay or even sooner: For as the excellent Poet says,

> Where is To-morrow?--In the other
> World.
> To thousands this is true, and the Re-
> verse
> Is sure to none.
>
> (III.ii.125)

Young's poem actually reads:

> Where is to-morrow? In another World.
> For Numbers this is certain; the reverse
> Is sure to none; . . . [51]

Although it is not clear whether Fielding deliberately misquoted the lines in order to dramatize Heartfree's somewhat troubled state of mind,[52] the date of publication of this portion of Young's long poem is known. The lines in question were first published on May 31, 1742 and were republished in at least four editions during 1742.[53] Obviously, Fielding must have written at least part of Heartfree's soliloquy some time after May 31, 1742. Moreover, similarities in the didactic and melodramatic tone of Young's blank verse and in Heartfree's extended soliloquy suggest that Fielding was quite familiar with Young's popular work.

The political allusions in Jonathan Wild that were first identified by Keightley and subsequently studied by Wells, Cross, Digeon, and Dudden provide additional indications about the date of composition that merit restating. Both Cross (I, 410) and Dudden (I, 481) make the point that the title above Book I, Chapter i. of the 1743 edition is "The History of the Life of the Late [italics mine] Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great." Since the real Jonathan Wild was hanged on May 24, 1725, the adjective "late" did not refer to the notorious thieftaker but to Walpole, who by April 1743 had been out of office for fourteen months.

Fielding's description of the ousting of Roger Johnson, "a very GREAT MAN" (IV.iii.191), as head of all the "prigs" (thieves) in Newgate and the depiction of Wild's betrayal of the ideas that he had espoused in order to gain Johnson's place is of course an

allegory of the fall of Walpole and the failure of the succeeding government to rectify longstanding abuses of power. Although scholars have disagreed upon whom Wild represents in this chapter,[54] Johnson, whose waistcoat is too big and his cap too heavy for his successor, clearly symbolizes Walpole, whose outstanding abilities were acknowledged even by his enemies.[55] Wild's continued exploitation of the prisoners of Newgate while strutting openly in the oranments that he had stripped from Johnson illustrates Fielding's deprecation of Opposition MPs like Pulteney and Carteret, who accepted positions in the new cabinet that consisted primarily of Walpole's men. In contrast to the selfish ambition of Johnson and Wild, the "very grave Man, and one of much Authority," who exhorts the debtors in Newgate to separate themselves from the prigs and to consider themselves "all as Members of one Community, to the public Good of which we are to sacrifice our private Views" (IV.iii.194,196), exemplifies the ideals of leaders like Chesterfield and Lyttelton, with whom Fielding identified. In sum, the chapter "Curious Anecdotes relating to the History of Newgate" must be an allegorical history of England after February 1742, and must have been written in that year or in early 1743.

Fielding's final commentary about the death of Wild contains, in my opinion, two hits at the immunity that Walpole enjoyed following his resignation from office. During 1742 several efforts were made to investigate the fallen prime minister for having exercised undue influence in elections, for having granted fraudulent contracts, and for having embezzled and squandered monies allocated for the secret service. Despite the public recommendation for a trial by some

former members of the Opposition, Walpole was never prosecuted. On February 9, 1742 he was created Earl of Orford; he received a promise of a pension of £4,000 a year; and until his death in 1745 he lived quietly but not without political influence.[56]

In describing Wild's execution "or Consummation, or Apotheosis (for it is called by different Names)," Fielding welcomes the opportunity for his hero to face death and damnation. He sees in the challenge

> a Completion of Greatness which is heartily to be wished to every great Man; nothing being more worthy of Lamentation than when Fortune, like a lazy Poet, winds up her Catastrophe aukwardly, and bestowing too little Care on her fifth Act, dismisses the Hero with a sneaking and private Exit, who had in the former Part of the Drama performed such notable Exploits, as must promise to every good Judge among the Spectators, a noble, public, and exalted End. (IV.xiv.250)

After Wild has swung out of this world to universal applause, Fielding adds his own approval, stating that it ought to be remembered on his hero's tomb or statue that "Jonathan Wild the Great was, what so few GREAT Men are, though in all propriety ought to be--hanged by the Neck 'till he was Dead" (1743, IV.xvi.417).

Although Fielding most probably would not have advocated such a violent end for Walpole, I believe that in the two passages quoted above he implies that Walpole, like other great men, deserved serious punishment for the offenses he had committed.[57] I suggest that like the anecdotes relating to the history of Newgate, the commentary concerning Wild's death alludes at least in part to the situation following Walpole's resignation and therefore had to be written in 1742 or early in the next year.

Of the various references and allusions discussed above, the following offer the most concrete indications of dates of composition: the Bath simile (I.xiv--1742); Aristotle's chapter on hats (II.vi--after 1740); "occurrences of the Phaenomenous Kind" (II.xii--1742); proverb about a House of Commons member (II.xii. [1743 edition only]--1742); misquotation of Night Thoughts (III.ii --1742); harangues of the Hurgos (III.vi--after 1738); and anecdotes relating to the history of Newgate (IV.iii--1742). It is important to point out that with the exception of the misquotation of Night Thoughts, all of these citations occur in chapters that Digeon and Dudden attribute to the Wild sections, which they believe Fielding first wrote in 1740.

In attempting to fix a date of composition for Jonathan Wild, Digeon and Dudden proposed that Fielding revised the Wild section in 1742 at the same time that he wrote the Heartfree section, which was said not to have been as polished as the first section. In support of this hypothesis, both Digeon (p. 121) and Dudden (I, 475) made the erroneous statement that Fielding's revisions of 1754 contain more corrections and alterations in the Wild-Heartfree section than in the Wild section. I have divided the texts of 1743 and 1754 into the sections designated by Digeon and Dudden[58] and have found, contrary to their assertions, that there are in fact more corrections and alterations in the Wild section than in the Wild-Heartfree section. My collation of the texts[59] indicates that there is a total 733 emendations (345 substantive and 388 accidental) in the chapters that Digeon ascribed to the Wild section, compared to 615 emendations (315

substantive and 300 accidental) in the chapters of the Wild section. According to Dudden's categories, the number of changes in the Wild section is even greater. There are 774 emendations (359 substantive and 415 accidental) in that section, compared to 574 emendations (301 substantive and 273 accidental) in the Wild-Heartfree section.

Since the compositor is likely to be responsible for accidentals, the number and distribution of substantive emendations are more important because they are more surely the work of Fielding. According to Digeon's classification, there are 345 substantive emendations in the Wild section, compared to 315 in the Wild-Heartfree section. In Dudden's subdivision, the total of substantive emendations in the Wild section is 359, compared to 301 in the Wild-Heartfree section. These emendations are distributed among chapters of the two sections, as designated by Dudden, in the following manner:

Wild section		Wild-Heartfree section	
I		II	
i	32	i	12
ii	11	ii	15
iii	7	iii	20
iv	14	iv	11
v	17	v	21
vi	17	vi	11
vii	0	vii	13
viii	11	viii	16
ix	24	ix	10
x	6	x	7
xi	12	xi	11
xii	20	xii	12
xiii	9	xiii	10
xiv	17	III	
II		i	17
vi	7	ii	16
III		iv	1
iii	10	v	12
vi	14	x	6

[continued]

Wild section		Wild-Heartfree section	
vii	13	xi	6
viii	5	xii	14
ix	7	IV	
xiii	5	i	10
xiv	12	iv	2
IV		v	2
i	5	vi	9
ii	8	vii	13
iii	20	viii	9
x	5	ix	15
xii	4	xi	11
xiii	17		301
xiv	5		
xv	25		
	359		

‡Since Digeon did not attribute the last two paragraphs of IV.i and x and xii of the same book to the Wild section, the substantive emendations in that section are reduced by fourteen to 345 and the total of substantive emendations in the Wild-Heartfree section is increased by fourteen to 315.

Perhaps more significant than the total number of emendations in the sections is the incidence of these emendations. The twenty-nine chapters that Dudden identified as belonging to the Wild section constitute 51.79% of the book's fifty-six chapters, while the 359 substantive emendations in this section represent 54.39% of the total of 660 emendations. There is an average of 12.37 substantive emendations per chapter in the Wild section, compared to an average of 11.14 per chapter in the Wild-Heartfree section. According to Digeon's division, there are twenty-seven chapters in the Wild section, representing 48.21% of the total chapters. The 345 emendations in this section constitute 52.27% of the total emendations. There is an average of 12.77 substantive emendations per chapter in the Wild section, compared to an average of 10.86 per chapter in the Wild-Heartfree section. In sum, whether one uses Digeon's or Dudden's

division of the text, the statements by both scholars that Fielding made more corrections in the Wild-Heartfree section than in the Wild section in the revisions of 1754 is grossly inaccurate. That Fielding in fact made more emendations in the "Wild section" than in the "Wild-Heartfree section" should cast further doubt on the supposition that the former was first written about 1740 and then reworked in 1742-43, hence not requiring as much revision in the second edition as did the "Wild-Heartfree section" that was composed for the first time during 1742-43.

Since it has never been suggested, to the best of my knowledge, that Joseph Andrews was written in several strata, it may be instructive to compare the incidence of substantive emendations in Jonathan Wild with similar alterations in the various editions of Joseph Andrews that appeared during Fielding's lifetime. Fielding made his most extensive revisions in the second edition of Joseph Andrews, which was published on June 10, 1742, but he also had a hand in the preparation of the third, fourth, and possibly the fifth editions that were issued on or about March 21-28, 1743, October 29, 1748, and December 19, 1751 respectively.

Using the classification of emendations followed by Martin Battestin, editor of the Wesleyan text of Joseph Andrews, I have counted in the second edition 296 verbal or accidental changes that influence meaning in a substantial manner. Battestin states that he found 185 new substantive readings in the third edition and 120 new substantive readings in the fourth edition. He does not believe that Fielding authorized the few revisions that were made in the fifth edition.[60] There are, then, roughly six hundred substantive

changes[61] in the editions of Joseph Andrews that Fielding was known to have worked on.

In comparison, I have found 660 similar substantive emendations in the revision of Jonathan Wild, which is considerably shorter than Joseph Andrews, having six fewer chapters and no preface. The multiple revisions of Joseph Andrews took place over a period of nine years and present an interesting record of an author's alteration of his work when in several states of mind. By far the most important emendations were made in the second edition, however, and it is these additions, deletions, and corrections that can be attributed to Fielding with the most assurance. The nature and extent of the redactions of 1742, compared with similar ones made in the revision of Jonathan Wild, provide the most authoritative evidence of Fielding's artistic judgments regarding the first editions of both works.

In the second edition of Joseph Andrews Fielding made, according to my count, 296 substantive emendations. He made more than twice that number (660) in the second edition of Jonathan Wild. Although the study of emendations provides only limited insight into the composition of a first edition, I suggest that the great number and fairly even distribution of changes in the revision of Jonathan Wild indicate that the first edition was composed during a single period without the reworking and polishing of previously written material, as Dudden and Digeon maintained. Moreover, the greater quantity and frequency of emendations in the revision of Jonathan Wild suggest that Fielding wrote the first version in considerable haste and

quite possibly with less forethought and less concentration than he had been able to devote to Joseph Andrews.

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Topical references and textual revisions are not of course the only factors that should be considered in attempting to fix a more precise date for the composition of Jonathan Wild. It is also necessary to examine the salient aspects of Fielding's life and works between 1737 and 1743, a period during which he produced a great variety of "hackney" and "literary" writings at the same time that he embarked upon a new career in law and endured the serious illnesses of his wife and child.

As result of the Licensing Act of June 21, 1737, which closed his Little Theatre in the Haymarket, Fielding abruptly found himself deprived of his principal means of earning a livelihood. He had a pregnant wife and an infant daughter to support and, lacking an independent income, was faced with the necessity of taking up a new profession almost at once. On November 1, 1737, at the age of thirty, Fielding entered the Middle Temple, where his grandfather Sir Henry Gould and his uncle Davidge Gould had been Masters of the Bench, and from which his cousin Henry Gould had been called to the bar three years earlier. The program of legal training normally required six or seven years to complete, but as the result of his ability and industry Fielding managed to qualify for admission to the bar by June 20, 1740.

While pursuing his legal studies at better than twice the pace of most of his peers, Fielding supported himself and his family first by selling his interest in the property at East Stour and then

by turning to journalism and translation. During the Trinity term of 1738, Fielding received £260 for his share of the family estate in Dorsetshire, a sum that in Cross's opinion represented, proportionally, only half of what the property had been purchased for (I, 240). The fact that Fielding was willing to accept this offer, while his sisters did not, suggests something of the urgency of his needs at that time. A letter to the bookseller John Nourse, written by Fielding on July 9, 1739, offers additional evidence of difficulties. In his letter Fielding referred to disappointments that had prevented him from paying a bill for law books and requested that the bookseller look for a house near the Middle Temple that he could rent for "not upwards of £40 p. an; and as much cheaper as may be" (Cross, I, 243). That Fielding subsequently took up residence with Mrs. Fielding and their two children in lodgings, and not in a house (Dudden, I, 243), most likely indicates further efforts on the part of the family to economize.

The £260 received for his share of the estate at East Stour did not permit Fielding to devote his full time to his studies at the Middle Temple for very much longer than one year. In the fall of 1739 Fielding became a partner, editorial director, and chief writer of the Champion, the first number of which appeared on November 15, 1739. During the first seven months of publication, Fielding is believed to have written, at the very least, sixty-two articles and eight or ten lengthy essays (Cross, I, 255-57; Dudden, I, 253). Although a detailed study of Fielding's contributions to the Champion is beyond the scope of this study, it should be stated

that in these papers Fielding experimented with a wide variety of forms, including the vision, imaginary voyage, character sketch, fictitious letter, humorous essay, and serious moral disquisition. Some of the techniques and styles that Fielding employed included allegory, irony, ridicule, impersonation, persiflage, and didactic or discursive exposition.

At the time when he was completing his legal training and writing a good portion of the Champion, Fielding was obliged to undertake an additional assignment. On March 10, 1740, he accepted £45 in partial payment for the translation from the French of The Military History of Charles XII by Gustave Adlerfield, an "official" chronicle of the king's exploits up until the battle of Pultowa that had been published in Amsterdam earlier in the year. Cross believed that Fielding translated only the first volume of the three-volume set that was issued on October 16, 1740 by J. and P. Knapton, Andrew Millar, and John Nourse (Cross, I, 284).

In the meantime Fielding had qualified for the bar and been granted permission to practice in court during term time. Beginning in July 1740, he became a regular attendant at Westminister Hall, and after Hilary and Trinity terms he rode the Western Circuit in search of briefs. Although the practice of law curtailed Fielding's participation in the day-to-day operations of the Champion, from June 1740 until some time in the first half of 1741[62] Fielding continued to be an active contributor, writing at least thirty papers (Dudden, I, 253). During this period he also wrote two poems, a political sermon, and Shamela, which marked the turning point of his career.

The first of these works to appear, on January 7, 1741, was Of True Greatness; An Epistle to the Right Honourable George Dodington, Esq. The 282-line essay in heroic couplets was a slightly revised version of an earlier poem. Unlike his other works that were published during the next two years, the verse essay bore Fielding's name, and it also included a preface in prose that provides a revealing glimpse into Fielding's difficulties with the ministerial press at that time.[63] The subject of the poem itself is the nature of true greatness, which Fielding envisions as the translation of goodness and wisdom into benevolent public action in various spheres of life. Neither the exalted ruler nor the critical hermit who flies from society possesses true greatness, which requires, among other qualities, rectitude, resoluteness, and candor:

> Where shall we say then that true Greatness dwells?
> In Palaces of Kings, or Hermits Cells?
> .....
> To no Profession, Party, Place confin'd,
> True Greatness lives but in the noble Mind;
>
> (ll. 245-46, 251-52
> [M, p. 28])

The unmasking of false greatness and the recognition of true greatness is of course a central theme that Fielding was to dramatize more fully in Jonathan Wild, a few years later.

On January 22, 1741 Fielding anonymously published The Vernoniad. Done into English from the Original Greek of Homer . . ., a mock-epic poem that celebrated the military hero Admiral Vernon and attacked Walpole, primarily for his reluctance to prosecute the war against Spain. In the elaborate burlesque, Mammon (Walpole)

bribes Aeolus to turn the winds against the ships of Admiral Vernon so that he cannot take Porto Bello.[64] The poem's broad satirical allegory foreshadows Fielding's novelistic transformation of the life of the real Wild for purposes of allegory and satire. The scathing portrait of Mammon as a master manipulator who acquired his riches by stealth has of course obvious parallels with the fictional portrait of Wild. Two lines that Aeolus speaks to Mammon neatly summarize Wild's behavior as well as Fielding's ironic stance in telling his story:

> All things in colours, as you bid them, glow,
> Virtue looks black, and vice resembles snow.
>
> (Works, XV, 56)[65]

Despite his partnership in the Champion, his efforts at translation and verse, and his attendance at Westminister Hall and on the Western Circuit, Fielding's financial plight was such that he was obliged to borrow £197 from one Joseph King in March 1741.[66] Apparently this sum enabled Fielding to continue writing, but it was too great for him to repay during the next fifteen months, for on July 7, 1742 King obtained a judgment against Fielding for full discharge of the debt (Cross, I, 376).

At the time of his loan from King, Fielding was probably preparing The Crisis, a political pamphlet by "A Lover of his Country" that appeared in April 1741,[67] and certainly he was working on Shamela, which was issued, as "by Conny Keyber," by A. Dodd on April 4, 1741. The Crisis; A Sermon on Revel. xiv. 9, 10, 11. Necessary to be preached in all the Churches in England, Wales, and Berwick upon Tweed, at or before the next General Election . . . is an exhortation

in the form of a sermon, entreating electors not to support a minister (Walpole) who is said to be an agent of Satan. The same interrelation of political and religious themes that Fielding explicitly linked for an occasional, partisan purpose in The Crisis is developed in a looser but more complex manner in Jonathan Wild. Instead of overtly condemning his subject as in The Crisis, Fielding ironically praises Wild at the same time that he roundly exposes his reprehensible "political" and religious views.

Shamela is of course the pivotal work that sparked Fielding's transformation from a proficient playwright and journalist into a novelist of the first order. Up until the Licensing Act of 1737, Fielding had been a prolific writer of topical farces, burlesques, and comedies, many of which won the public's favor although they lacked the substantial achievement of his later prose. Less than a year after the publication of Shamela, Fielding completed Joseph Andrews, his first full-scale work of fiction, in which he both defined and realized his singular vision of the comic novel.

In writing his devastating parody of Richardson's novel, Fielding improved upon a technique that he had employed in his most successful farces and burlesques, that of ridiculing characters whose actions he deplored by vulgarizing and debasing them. Richardson's inexperienced, allegedly virtuous servant girl thus became Shamela, the brazen hussy who had once thought of making a little fortune by her person but who plots instead to make a great fortune by her "vartue." From his experience in writing plays Fielding also adapted and expanded the important device of characterization through

dialogue. The brief spoken lines of the stage were transformed into privately written letters that tell a story at the same time as they reveal the characters' innermost sentiments. Just as he had enclosed the rehearsal plays in Pasquin and The Historical Register with the instructive or interpretative remarks of authors and spectators, so Fielding framed the indecent adventures of Shamela with the corrective commentary of Parson Oliver, who provides a norm for Parson Tickletext and for the reader. What Richardson had presented to the general public as virtuous behavior on the part of Pamela, Fielding exposed as sham by deftly altering the characters and situations in Pamela and by adding some straightforward moralizing not unlike his serious essays in the Champion.

The inversion and subversion of conventionally accepted values is of course the basic technique that gives Jonathan Wild its distinctive character. Perhaps the idea of a sardonic treatment of greatness (already explored seriously and tentatively in Of True Greatness), coupled with a scathing attack upon Walpole (a favorite target since the early plays), was beginning to form in Fielding's mind at the time when he was writing Shamela. Fielding's use of the word "Politician" in the lengthy subtitle of his parody is interesting, as is his stated intention to provide a corrective rewriting of events that have been misinterpreted by the public: "AN APOLOGY FOR THE LIFE OF MRS. SHAMELA ANDREWS. In which, the many notorious FALSHOODS and MIS-REPRESENTATIONS of a Book called PAMELA, Are exposed and refuted; and all the matchless ARTS of that young Politician, set in a true and just Light."[68]

Overlooked by scholars is an indication in Shamela that Fielding at that time might have been considering writing a book about Walpole. In the introductory pages that parody the commendatory letters prefixed to Pamela, "JOHN PUFF, Esq;" writes to the editor of Shamela: "Whoever the author be, he hath one of the worst and most fashionable hearts in the world, and I would recommend to him, in his next performance, to undertake the life of his Honour [Walpole]. For he who drew the character of Parson Williams, is equal to the task; nay, he seems to have little more to do than to pull off the parson's gown, and that which makes him so agreeable to Shamela, and the cap will fit" (Shamela, p. 303).[69] When Fielding did undertake his version of "his Honour's" life, he made his protagonist (quite unlike the real Wild) singularly unsuccessful with women at the same time that he endowed him with other qualities of Parsons Williams's character such as cunning, perseverance, lasciviousness, and hypocrisy.

But the life of Wild-Walpole was not Fielding's next performance. It is generally agreed that Fielding began writing Joseph Andrews during either the late summer or the early fall of 1741, most probably after completing a tour of the Western Circuit following Trinity term. Having terminated his association with the Champion no later than the end of June 1741, Fielding had more time to devote to the new book. The enormous popularity of Pamela[70] and the knowledge that Richardson was completing a Part II, which appeared in December 1741, might well have encouraged Fielding to finish as quickly as possible a full-length novel that bore at least some resemblance to Richardson's book. Certainly the hope that he might

earn substantially more from such a work than he had received for Shamela or for his poems and pamphlets would have been a reasonable one for Fielding to entertain.

Apparently Fielding worked with great speed on the new manuscript, interrupting his efforts only to revise briefly the second edition of Shamela, which was published on November 3, 1741, and to write The Opposition: A Vision, a political pamphlet that appeared in December 1741, when the new Parliament convened to initiate its final effort to depose Walpole. Written in the form of an allegory, The Opposition reveals Fielding's disgust at the self-interest and disaffection of many members of the Opposition who had begun scheming for places that they believed were to become vacant with the fall of Walpole. "The Opposition" is a wagon heavily laden with ineffectual drivers, disgruntled passengers, and an immense box, labeled "Public Spirit," that contains the private goods of the passengers. A fat gentleman (Walpole) in a coach and six blocks the wagon, orders the asses drawing it to be unharnessed, and rides on unobstructed. Martin Battestin sees in the pamphlet proof of Fielding's defection to Walpole for pay.[71] Although the main target of the satire is unquestionably the Opposition, it is not so clear from the brief references to Walpole and the moderate whitewashing of his policies and character that Fielding had in fact shifted his allegiance to the Prime Minister. Far clearer are glimpses of Fielding's disillusionment and his frustration on both political and personal levels. The scathing portrait of the contentious, disoriented members of the Opposition is rendered in vivid novelistic images similar to

Fielding's vision in Jonathan Wild of the place seekers in the allegorical chapter on the Newgate elections (IV.iii). In Jonathan Wild, Fielding demonstrates explicitly that those who achieve power, such as Wild, are in fact no less cynical and exploitative than those whom they succeed. In "The Opposition," the contrast between the fat gentleman in the coach and six and the shaggy asses, unavailing drivers, and self-seeking passengers in the wagon suggests a number of interpretations.

Apart from his disillusionment with the Opposition and his continuing financial difficulties, the second half of 1741 and the early part of 1742 was not an easy time for Fielding. In June 1741 his father, Edmund, died,[72] and during the winter of 1741-42 Fielding himself was assailed by the gout, his daughter Charlotte was dying, and his wife lay seriously ill. Despite these afflictions, Fielding managed to complete Joseph Andrews. The manuscript was delivered to the printer, Henry Woodfall, in the early part of January 1742,[73] and on February 22, 1742, two months after the appearance of Pamela II and twenty days after the resignation of Walpole, Andrew Millar published the novel. That Fielding was able to produce this comic masterpiece during a period of such tribulations suggests much about his dire financial situation, his extraordinary powers of concentration, and the clarity of his initial conception of the novel that seems to have taken place during or immediately after the writing of Shamela.

The relationships between Joseph Andrews, Shamela, and Pamela have been discussed by a number of scholars,[74] but the more important point has also been often made that in Joseph Andrews Fielding

developed a distinctive voice and vision of his own, moving far beyond parody to create a new form in English prose fiction. The "Species of writing . . . hitherto unattempted in our Language" (JA, p. 10) that Fielding realized in his self-described comic epic poem in prose involved the engraftment of dramatic plot and allegorical pattern upon the traditional picaresque structure. In Shamela, Fielding had exposed the pretense and pharisaism of Richardson's novel by creating travesties of the original characters. In Joseph Andrews Fielding added a new dimension to his art, presenting constructive ethical alternatives in the characters of Joseph and Parson Adams. These examples of good men, whose function it is to delight and instruct the reader, enter into humorous yet significant conflict with embodiments of vice and folly such as Lady Booby, Mrs. Slipslop, Parson Trulliber, the squire, and Mr. and Mrs. Tow-Wouse. A second important innovation in Joseph Andrews is Fielding's introduction of a complex authorial persona[75] --genial, learned, compassionate, wise, and witty--who both narrates and comments upon the action. The creation of a panoramic variety of incidents and characters as related by the amiable story-teller enabled Fielding to give fuller play to his comic imagination at the same time that he expressed serious moral, social, and literary concerns.

Although Joseph Andrews did not achieve the astounding popularity of Pamela, it was an immediate success with the public. On April 13, 1742 Millar paid Fielding £183.11s. for the copyright,[76] and on May 31, 1742 a second edition was published with extensive alterations and additions by the author. The payment that Fielding received was most liberal for the copyright of a first novel, yet the sum did not permit

him to settle his debt with King or to take the time to plan a subsequent novel of the scope of Tom Jones or Amelia.

It appears that Fielding planned to offer a subscription edition of his miscellaneous writings shortly after the success of Joseph Andrews. The advertisement in the Daily Post of June 5, 1742 announcing the printing of proposals for the Miscellanies includes an affecting explanation of Fielding's inability to complete the project at an earlier date: "Note, the Publication of these Volumes hath been hitherto retarded by the Author's Indisposition last Winter, and a Train of melancholy Accidents scarce to be parallell'd; but he takes this Opportunity to assure his Subscribers, that he will most certainly deliver them within the Time mentioned in his last Receipts, viz. by the 25th of December next."[77]

Unfortunately, there is no extant copy of the "last Receipts" to which Fielding referred, and it is not clear whether the contents of the collection that Fielding originally planned was the same as that of the three-volume set which was announced in the proposals of June 1742. No doubt Fielding was well aware of the potential benefits to be derived from publication by subscription.[78] Since it was the practice of the day for subscribers to pay half the purchase price at the time of subscription, Fielding could have reasonably expected to receive substantial remuneration before completing his collection.

Further insight into Fielding's financial needs during this period may be gained from the fact that between the revision of Joseph Andrews in April 1742 and the printing of the proposals for the Miscellanies two months later in June, Fielding wrote a hackney

pamphlet, tested the market for a series of translations, and reworked an old play. In April 1742 he published anonymously A Full Vindication of the Dutchess Dowager of Marlborough, a partisan tract defending the the controversial old lady. Fielding earned £5.5s. for writing the pamphlet, which most probably represented an effort to obtain patronage. On May 4, 1742, Fielding announced the projected translation of eleven comedies of Aristophanes "if the public show proper encouragement to the translators."[79] (Fielding and his partner, William Young, translated only one play, Plutus, the God or Riches, which was published by T. Waller on May 31, 1742. The public's lack of proper encouragement evidently put an end to the project.) In addition, Fielding revised Miss Lucy in Town, an early farce written in 1735 with an unknown collaborator. The play was presented in its revised form at the Drury Lane Theatre on May 6, 1742, the same day that Millar published the piece. From the nineteen performances of the play that were given in May and in the late fall,[80] Fielding earned a small share; from Millar he received £10.10s.

Although Fielding's plans for earlier publication of the Miscellanies went awry, there is evidence that, in addition to collecting past works, he was creating new material to fill the three volumes. Cross believes that Fielding began A Journey from This World to the Next on or about December 1, 1741, the date upon which the narrative opens, and that he wrote most of that lengthy satire following the completion of Joseph Andrews. Both Cross (I, 395-96) and Dudden (I, 444-45)[81] cite two passages in Journey that could not have been written before March 1742. The first contains a reference to the "last Lord Mayor"

(Works, II.245) and the second concerns the spiritual-author's meeting of his dead daughter in the Elysian fields (ibid.). Fielding's daughter Charlotte was buried on March 9, 1742, and Humphrey Parsons, the popular Lord Mayor of London, died in office on March 21, 1742.

In Cross's opinion (I, 410), Fielding lost interest in Journey during the spring of 1742 and began writing Jonathan Wild at about that time. Perhaps it was in April or early May, during his extensive revisions for the second edition of Joseph Andrews, that Fielding first realized that his satire in the manner of Lucian had lost its force and seriously began to consider a life of Wild-Walpole, a more timely subject, in executing which he might combine the novelistic achievements of Joseph Andrews with the satiric inventiveness of the better parts of Journey. The fact that the announcement in the Daily Post describes Volume Two of the Miscellanies as containing only Journey and makes no mention of the plays Eurydice and The Wedding Day, which eventually filled out the volume, suggests that as late as June 5, 1742 Fielding was still hoping to complete the rambling satire. That the two references which must have been written after March 21, 1742 occur in chapters vii and viii, or in the first third of Journey, further suggests that Fielding continued to work on the satire at least until the very late spring or perhaps the early summer.

A Journey from This World to the Next and Jonathan Wild resemble each other in the respect that they are both satirical-allegorical rewritings of biography and history. In the Preface to the Miscellanies, Fielding comments on his method in Journey: "I

have, in the Relation which I have put into the Mouth of Julian, whom they call the Apostate, done many Violences to History, and mixed Truth and Falshood with much Freedom. . . . I profess Fiction only; and tho' I have chosen some Facts out of History, to embellish my Work, and fix a Chronology to it, I have not, however, confined myself to nice Exactness" (M, p. 4). The same observation may be applied with equal validity to Fielding's treatment of Wild, as will be discussed later.[82]

Clearly the description of Volume Three of the Miscellanies in the Daily Post indicates that by June 5, 1742 Fielding had developed, at the very least, a working idea about his fictional history of Wild that was to "set in a just and true Light" not only the character of the infamous thief-taker, but "that of divers other great Personages of his Time."[83] A little more than a month after the printing of the subscription proposals, Fielding was aided in completing his book by the generosity of a benefactor. On July 7, 1742, Joseph King's judgment against Fielding for £197 plus 50 shillings damages was rendered in the Court of Common Pleas, and it is generally thought that Ralph Allen, the wealthy deputy postmaster at Bath who was praised twice in Joseph Andrews (III.i.190; vi.235), enabled Fielding to discharge his debt to King (Cross, I, 377; Dudden, I, 412).

Although Fielding continued to attend Westminister Hall and to seek briefs on the Western Circuit after the Hilary and Trinity terms, he did not undertake any other literary projects from which he might have earned additional income until February 1743. In

that month he wrote the topical satire Some Papers Proper to be Read before the R-----l Society, which was reprinted in Volume One of the Miscellanies, and started to revise his early play The Wedding Day, which was performed at Drury Lane on February 17, 19, 21, 22, 24, and 26.[84] Since Some Papers parodies an account of scientific experiments that had appeared in the Daily Advertiser of January 28, 1743 and was published as a pamphlet on February 16, 1743, its date of composition may be fixed with assurance. Fielding's comment in the Preface to the Miscellanies about "the short Time allowed me, which was about a Week" (M, p. 7) for the abortive reworking of The Wedding Day also suggests a February date.

Henry Knight Miller believes that only two other works in Volume One of the Miscellanies were written in 1742. The dating of "To Miss H-- AND at Bath. Written Extempore in the Pump-Room 1742" is self-explanatory. In Miller's opinion, the sober essay Of the Remedy of Affliction for the Loss of Our Friends was occasioned by the deaths of Fielding's father Edmund and his daughter Charlotte in June 1741 and March 1742 respectively (M, p. 212, no. 1). With the exception of these two short works and of Royal Society and The Wedding Day, it thus must appear that from the time when he abandoned Journey until the publication of the Miscellanies Fielding devoted most of his writing time to Jonathan Wild.

The best indication we have of the progress that Fielding was making on the manuscript is the Bath simile: " . . . or, if this be a too far fetched Simile, to one who travels Westward over the Hills near Bath, where the Simile was indeed made" (I.xiv.55). The

occurrence of this passage at the end of Book I, approximately a quarter of the way through the work, provides a helpful point of reference. Since Fielding is known to have stayed at Bath between the Trinity and Michaelmas terms of 1742, it would appear that he completed the first quarter of Jonathan Wild some time between June and October of that year. But June is perhaps too early a date for Fielding to have composed the Bath simile in view of his extensive revisions of Joseph Andrews in April and May, his continuing work on Journey, and his habit of touring the Western Circuit for several weeks after Trinity term. It seems most likely that Fielding did not arrive at Bath until the beginning of July 1742 and that he did not write the end of Book I of Jonathan Wild until the late summer or possibly the early fall.

Several passages in the Preface to the Miscellanies offer vivid clues about the pressure under which Fielding labored to complete Jonathan Wild after his return to London in the fall. In explaining why he allowed such a flawed play as The Wedding Day to appear in February 1743, Fielding wrote "honestly and freely" that rather than expecting the production to enhance his reputation he hoped that it "might answer a much more solid, and in my unhappy Situation, a much more urgent Motive" (M, p. 7).[85] In addition to financial pressures, Fielding was deeply concerned about the failing health of his wife Charlotte. He had been rendered incapable of altering and correcting The Wedding Day during the week allotted him because of "the extreme Danger of Life into which a Person, very dear to me was reduced" (M, p. 7).

Fielding referred a second time to the condition of his wife in apologizing for the tardy publication of the Miscellanies: "I make some Apology for the Delay in publishing these Volumes, the real Reason of which was, the dangerous Illness of one from whom I draw all the solid Comfort of my Life, during the great Part of this Winter" (M, p. 13). Although Fielding professed that he did not intend to entertain readers of the Preface with a personal history or to make himself the hero of a tragedy, he included at least one poignant reflection: "Indeed when I look a Year or two backwards, and survey the Accidents which have befallen me, and the Distresses I have waded through whilst I have been engaged in these Works, I could almost challenge some Philosophy to myself, for having been able to finish them as I have" (M, pp. 14-15).

For those who have wondered how Fielding could have written Jonathan Wild after the consistently gay and boisterous comedy of Joseph Andrews, perhaps a credible explanation may be found in the unfortunate events and circumstances that Fielding experienced during 1742-43. Undoubtedly Fielding's disillusionment with politics, his precarious financial situation despite having labored prodigiously, and his emotional reactions to the death of his daughter and the grave illness of his wife contributed significantly to the darker vision of man and of society that he presented in Jonathan Wild.

When one reviews Fielding's continuing struggle to earn a living between 1737 and 1742, the diversity of his writing during these years, and the demands made upon him by a career in law, a commitment to politics, and a series of family crises, it seems most unlikely that

Fielding first wrote a draft of the Wild story between 1737 and 1740 and then put it aside as Keightley, Dobson, Digeon, Dudden, and other scholars have believed. If Fielding had written an early draft, it is curious that he did not revise and publish it, with or without his name, in 1740, when he intensified his attack upon Walpole in the Champion. If, as Dudden suggested, Fielding decided to retain the original story of Wild until he could add the Heartfree plot, it is surprising that it took Fielding so long to write only half a book at a time when he badly needed the money that subscribers had already contracted to pay upon publication of the Miscellanies. Perhaps most puzzling of all, if the strata theory of composition is true, is Fielding's silence on the subject in the Preface to the Miscellanies, in which he recounts the history of other early works and comments frankly on his situation during the preceding few years.

The fact that the extensive alterations and additions of 1754 are almost equally distributed throughout the text suggests that, contrary to the generally accepted view, Jonathan Wild was written during a single period and quite hastily at that. The number of topical references that must have been written in 1742 or early 1743 is impressive, while there is not a single passage that had to have been written at an earlier date. In short, both external and internal evidence argues forcefully for 1742-43 as the date of composition for the entire book.

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In considering the genesis of Jonathan Wild, the question should be asked why Fielding, who had disengaged himself from politics for over

a year, would begin to write a work about Walpole in 1742, several months after the great man had been turned out of office. The explanation, I think, lies in a combination of pragmatic and artistic considerations. Without a doubt Fielding was hard-pressed to complete the Miscellanies just as quickly as possible; yet he also obviously wanted to conclude the collection with a substantial work that expressed his serious moral, political, social, and literary concerns in a manner that reflected his newly developed talents as a novelist.

One of Fielding's distinct achievements in Joseph Andrews was his shaping of vivid particulars into a larger design of universal relevance, or, to put it another way, his fusion of the realm of the literal with an intensifying element of the illustrative or symbolic. In the Wild-Walpole parallel, which had been a commonplace of Opposition literature for so many years, Fielding had a ready-made device for grounding his allegorical impulses in acknowledged reality. Although he might well have had some sort of life of Wild-Walpole in mind for a while, it was only after the fall of Walpole in February 1742 that the analogy became complete and that "the Book of Nature" (JA, p. 10) from which Fielding like to copy provided a conclusive design which satisfied the aesthetic and moral concerns that inform all of Fielding's novels.

While Jonathan Wild was not politically motivated in the sense that Fielding's ephemeral pamphlets were, there were strategic advantages in Fielding's decision to base his book at least in part on the dominant political figure of the age. The unmistakable allusions to Walpole no doubt entertained contemporary readers, whether they had been Walpole's adherents or enemies. More important, the allusions offered a credible

foundation and a concrete point of reference for Fielding's vision, which was intended to transcend the particular and the partisan. On a more mundane level, the teasing description of Jonathan Wild in the proposals for the Miscellanies suggests that Millar and Fielding were not blind to the commercial prospects of a book that purportedly "set in a just and true Light" the character of the ex-Prime Minister who had aroused the passions of a good part of the public for so many years.

In sum, I believe that a variety of artistic, moral, and practical motives prompted Fielding to begin writing Jonathan Wild in the very late spring or early summer of 1742, after he had completed the revisions for the second edition of Joseph Andrews and had abandoned A Journey from This World to the Next. Most probably the greater part of Book II and all of Books III and IV of Jonathan Wild were written in London between October 1742 and the first months of 1743, an intensely painful period in which Charlotte fell seriously ill and Fielding, in addition to struggling to complete the manuscript while often discomposed with "Heart-ach" (M, p. 15), attended sessions at Westminister Hall and attempted to earn additional income by writing a timely satire and by offering a barely revised old play to the public. If Joseph Andrews required a little more than five weeks from the time it was "In the Press" until it was ready for sale to the public, it is reasonable to assume that a similar interval was necessary for the preparation of Jonathan Wild. We may thus conclude that Fielding completed the book by the end of February or by the first week of March 1743, allowing sufficient time for William Bowyer to print the manu-

script and for Millar to be able to distribute the volumes to subscribers of the Miscellanies beginning on April 7, 1743.

Notes

[1] Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq; Volume One, ed. Henry Knight Miller (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1972), p. 4. Subsequent references are to this edition, hereafter cited in the text as M.

[2] Quoted by John Edwin Wells, "Fielding's Miscellanies," MLR, 13 (October 1918), 481.

[3] Miller, "General Introduction," M, p. xlvii.

[4] Quoted by Wells, p. 482.

[5] Miller, Essays on Fielding's Miscellanies: A Commentary on Volume One (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 12, n. 16.

[6] Cross apparently decided upon April 12, 1743 as the date of publication on the authority of an advertisement in the London Daily Post of that day. In his bibliography of Fielding's works, he repeats the date of publication of the Miscellanies as April 12, although he also cites the publication notices that appeared in the St. James Evening Post of March 26-29 and in the London Daily Post of April 7 (The History of Henry Fielding [1918; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1963], I, 381; III, 308-309). Dudden (Henry Fielding [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952], I, 413; II, 1120) follows Cross.

[7] Donald D. Eddy estimates that 250 copies were printed on the heavy royal paper that bore a watermark of a fleur-de-lis over a shield with Strasbourg bend and the initials "LVG." He estimates that 350 copies were printed on the coarser paper that had as a countermark a fleur-de-lis and the initials "IR" or "IV." The page size of the two sets differed. A page of the more expensive set measured 22.5 x 14 cm, while that of the cheaper set measured 20 x 12.5 cm ("The Printing of Fielding's Miscellanies (1743)," SB, 15 [1962], 250).

See below, Chapter V, n. 6 for the difference between Eddy's measurements and the page size of the copy of the Miscellanies used in this study.

[8] The Correspondence of Alexander Pope, ed. George Sherburn (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), IV, 452.

[9] Bodleian Library MS. Don b. 4., fol. 112 recto., quoted by Miller, Essays, p. 13. The ledger entry of 250 for fine paper is consistent with Eddy's estimate of 250 copies printed on royal paper,

but the figure of 1,000 exceeds Eddy's estimate of the number of copies printed on the coarser paper by 650.

[10] See J.P. de Castro, "The Printing of Fielding's Works," The Library, 4th Ser., I (March 1921), 259; and Miller, Essays, p. 12, n. 17.

[11] Eddy, p. 251. This estimate is based on Strahan's charge to Millar of £29:16:0 for the 26½ sheets of Volume I. Volume II also contained 26½ sheets and Volume III 27 sheets. If Millar assigned the printing of each volume of the Miscellanies at the same rate, Eddy's calculation of costs would appear to be valid. Cross believed that the bill for printing the Miscellanies must have been under £100 (I, 381, n.).

[12] "General Introduction," M, p. xlvii.

[13] Fielding received either £1000 (Cross, II, 305) or £800 (Dudden, II, 797) for Amelia; £600 for Tom Jones; and £183:11 for Joseph Andrews.

[14] Quoted by Wells, p. 482.

[15] Miller, Essays, p. 14, n. 22.

[16] Wells said that he owned one copy of this second issue that retained the list of subscribers (p. 482).

[17] Eddy, p. 249.

[18] K.I.D. Maslen, "Works from the Bowyer Press (1713-65): A Supplement to John Nichols," unpublished B.Litt. thesis (University of Oxford, 1952), p. 104, cited by Eddy, p. 253.

[19] Quoted by Miller, Essays, p. 14. Miller found advertisements for the Miscellanies in nos. 44, 46, 48, and 49 of the Jacobite's Journal. Cross discovered a similar advertisement in the True Patriot of February 18, 1746 (I, 381).

[20] Murphy, "An Essay," in The Lives of Henry Fielding and Samuel Johnson, ed. Matthew Grace (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints, 1968), p. 259.

[21] Fraser's Magazine, 57 (June 1858), 763.

[22] See above, Chapter I, pp. 15-16.

[23] Keightley briefly mentions Fielding's association with the Champion, but he does not describe the paper's political position or the nature of Fielding's frequent contributions. The Vernoniad and The Crisis were both published anonymously, which may explain Keightley's failure to consider them.

[24] Dobson, Henry Fielding (New York: Harper & Bros., 1883), pp. 97-98. See above, Chapter III, p. 130 for reference to Wild in the Champion.

[25] The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great (London: A. Millar, 1754), Book II, chapter VII, p. 97. Subsequent references are to this edition, hereafter cited in the text by book, chapter, and page.

[26] Joseph Andrews, ed. Martin Battestin (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1967), p. 47. Subsequent references to the novel are to this edition, hereafter cited in the text as JA.

[27] It is generally agreed that the character of Peter Pounce is based on Peter Walter (1664?-1746), the notorious attorney and usurer who amassed a fortune as steward to the Duke of Newcastle and other noblemen. At some time in the early 1740s, Walter is believed to have acquired the Fielding property at East Stour. W.B. Coley reproduces an anecdote from the unpublished papers of Horace Walpole that suggests Fielding was on terms of some familiarity with Walter ("Henry Fielding and the Two Walpoles," PQ, 45 [January 1966], 169-70). In An Essay on Conversation, Fielding alludes to Walter's stinginess (M, p. 130). Walter also appears as Mynheer Petrus Gualterus in Some Papers Proper to be Read before the R---l Society (M, p. 193).

[28] Dobson, p. 100.

[29] The Modern Husband was presented for fourteen performances at Drury Lane between February 14 and March 18, 1732 (The London Stage 1660-1800, Part 3: 1720-1747, ed. Arthur Scouten [Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1961], I, 190-94, 198). Fielding dedicated the published version of the play to Walpole in an unsuccessful effort to secure patronage.

[30] For an interesting discussion of resemblances between The Modern Husband and Amelia, see John Loftis, Comedy and Society from Congreve to Fielding (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1959), p. 119.

[31] The History of Tom Jones, ed. Martin Battestin (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1975), p. 77. Subsequent references to the novel are to this edition, hereafter cited in the text as TJ.

[32] The fact that Fielding changed the word "lately" to "formerly" when he revised the above passage in 1754 supports Cross's point.

[33] Before introducing his twelve proverbs, Fielding commends "the incomprable Publisher of Joe Miller's Jests; whether he be the lamentable Elijah Jenkins Esq; or the facetious Edmundus de Crull Esq; is not very material" (1743 ed., II.xii.173-74). The phrase "the lamentable Elijah Jenkins" actually appears on the title page of Joe Miller's Jests. The name Edmundus de Crull of course refers to the notorious publisher Edmund Curll (1675-1747). John Mottley (1692-1750), the author of two pseudo-classical tragedies and several comedies, compiled and published the popular collection, five editions of which are listed in the British Museum General Catalogue of Printed Books as having been published by 1742.

[34] The other targets of Fielding's proverb are Walpole and his former mistress, Maria Skerrett, whom Walpole married in March 1738. See below, Chapter V, pp. 253-54.

[35] Digeon, The Novels of Fielding (1923; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), pp. 115-16. Subsequent references to this edition are cited in the text.

The chapters that Digeon identified as forming the biography of Wild include all of Book I; Chapter vi of Book II; Chapters iii, vi, vii, viii, ix, xiii, and xiv of Book III; and Chapters ii, iii, xiii, xiv, and xv of Book IV.

[36] I discuss the constantly changing mixture of voices, styles, and modes throughout Jonathan Wild below in Chapters VII and VIII.

[37] See Bernard Goldgar, Walpole and the Wits: The Relation of Politics to Literature, 1722-1742 (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1976), pp. 179-83 et passim.

[38] A single example from Fielding's articles in the Champion suffices to suggest that at least as late as April 10, 1740, Fielding believed that Walpole would have silenced those who attacked him in print if he had had the resources to do so: "Alas! There is no Merit, I am afraid, in this unparallel'd Generosity of his [Walpole's]. . . . 'tis rather for want of Power, than Will, that the Offenders, so complained of at present, are not treated as rigorously, as any that, in past Times, dar'd to contest with a Minister, for the Liberties of

their Country" (The Champion [London: Printed for H. Chapelle, 1743], II, 88, 90.

[39] See below, p. 191 and n. 80.

[40] See below, p. 195 and n. 85.

[41] When Fielding first revised Joseph Andrews in April and May 1743, he elaborated on the use of the monosyllable under discussion, adding in the second edition: "both the Mistress and Maid uttered the above-mentioned B---, a Word extremely disgustful to Females of the lower sort" (JA, I.xvii.85 and Appendix I).

[42] In addition to the chapters cited by Digeon, Dudden ascribed to the Wild section the first three paragraphs and first sentence of the fourth paragraph of Book III, Chapter iv; and in Book IV, Chapters i (the last two paragraphs relating to Blueskin and the recent law), x (except for the last sentence), and xii.

[43] Occasional Form (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975), p. 235, n. 1.

[44] Goldgar, pp. 197-98.

[45] In the Preface of Of True Greatness (January 1741), Fielding alluded again to a bargain to suppress his work: "I have been obliged with Money to silence my Productions, professedly and by Way of Bargain given me for that Purpose" (M, p. 248). The word "Productions" in the above sentence is ambiguous. Fielding could have meant the productions of plays that he had presented at the Haymarket or the production of literary works since the Licensing Act.

[46] Old England, August 5, 1749, cited by Battestin, ed. Joseph Andrews, p. xxi n.

[47] Battestin, letter to the author, September 10, 1979.

[48] The Gentleman's Magazine, August 1738, p. 385.

[49] Samuel Johnson wrote the monthly "Proceedings and Debates" column from the beginning of the session that opened on November 19, 1740 until the debates on liquors that took place in the House of Lords in February 1743. Fielding's reference to the Hurgos most probably alludes to Johnson's accounts.

For an amusing description of Johnson's admission about how he wrote the parliamentary speeches that appeared in the

Gentleman's Magazine, see The Oxford Book of Literary Anecdotes, ed. James Sutherland (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 80-81.

[50] The Champion: Containing A Series of Papers, Humourous, Moral, Political, and Critical, 2nd ed. (London: H. Chapelle, 1743), II, 142.

[51] Edward Young, The Complete Works: Poetry and Prose, ed. James Nichols, I (1854; rpt. Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchandlung, 1968), 12.

[52] Fielding vividly portrays Heartfree's understandable agitation in the preceding chapter (III.i) when he learns of Mrs. Heartfree's flight to Holland with Wild and convinces himself of his wife's disloyalty. In contrast, the formal, highly controlled tone of Heartfree's soliloquy (III.ii) seems to satirize the good merchant's extreme self-possession, suggesting that Fielding's misquotation of Young was unintentional. See below, Chapter VIII, pp. 431-33.

[53] NCBEL, II (1971), 494.

[54] Cross suggested that Wild represents Charles Townshend (I, 409), while Wells believed that Wild stood for William Pulteney ("Fielding's Political Purpose in Jonathan Wild," PMLA, 28 [1913], 2). Digeon thought that Wild represented the Earl of Wilmington, First Lord of the Treausry (p. 108), and William Irwin proposed the name of John Carteret, a Secretary of State, who became virtual prime minister (The Making of Jonathan Wild, pp. 40-41).

[55] In the 1743 edition, Fielding emphasizes Walpole's superior talents with the statement that the nightgown stripped from Johnson did Wild little honor, since everybody knew it did not properly belong to him, "nor, indeed suited his Degree" (IV.iii.309). In the revision of 1754, Fielding omitted this last phrase. See below, Chapter V, p. 256.

[56] DNB.

[57] For a contemporary view that specifically recommended that the former Prime Minister be punished as Wild was, see "Reflections on the Late Administration" in the July 10 and 17, 1742 numbers of Common Sense, a portion of which is quoted above, Chapter III, p. 129.

[58] See above, nn. 35, 42.

[59] See below, Chapter V, n. 6 for a description of the copies of the two editions used in my study.

[60] "General Introduction," Joseph Andrews, pp. xxxii, xxiv, xxv.

[61] Difference in classification of some emendations may result in a slightly variant figure. In an earlier study, Battestin found 606 substantive changes in the editions that Fielding worked on; 311 in the second edition; 163 in the third; and 112 in the fourth ("Fielding's Revisions of Joseph Andrews," SB, 16 [1963], 81-117).

[62] The precise time when Fielding stopped writing for the Champion is open to question. In the Preface to the Miscellanies, Fielding stated: "I take this Opportunity to declare in the most solemn Manner, I have long since (as long as from June 1741) desisted from writing one Syllable in the Champion" (M, p. 14). According to minutes of a meeting of the partners in March 1742, Fielding had not written for the paper for a yet longer period, "having withdrawn himself from that Service for above Twelve Months past and refused his Assistance in that Capacity since which time Mr Ralph has solely Transacted the said Business" (quoted by G.M. Godden, Henry Fielding: A Memoir [New York: Barse & Hopkins, 1910], p. 139).

[63] " . . . I have fallen severely under their Lash for refusing to be of their Number. . . . I have drawn my Pen in Defence of my Country, having sacrificed to it the Interest of myself and Family, and have been the standing Mark of honourable Abuse for so doing . . . " Fielding refers specifically here to a particular attack upon him: in An Historical View of the . . . Political Writers in Great Britain (London: W. Webb, 1740), he had been cited as a "strong Instance of Ingratitude to the Ministry, as he lies under the strongest Obligations to Sir R--rt W----le" (p. 49). The preface to Of True Greatness was not reprinted with the poem in Volume One of the Miscellanies. It begins with the explanation, "This Poem was writ several Years ago, and comes forth now with a very few Additions or Alterations" (M, Appendix A, pp. 247, 248).

[64] Admiral Vernon captured Porto Bello on November 20, 1739, at the beginning of the war against Spain that Walpole had opposed. Lecky wrote: "Vernon being a personal enemy of Walpole, his triumph rather weakened than strengthened the Government" (History of England in the Eighteenth Century, 4th ed. rev. [London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1888], I, 387). Admiral Vernon subscribed to one set of the Miscellanies on royal paper.

[65] Another similarity between the two works concerns roguery. Mammon says: "Nor is it reckoned scandalous, to be / A Rogue. The scandal lies in the degree; a little robbery meets my disregard, / a

great one my embraces and reward" (Works, XV, 53). Cf. also the reference to Mammon's "heaps of ill-got pictures" (ibid., p. 41) and the allusions to Walpole's pictures and house in Jonathan Wild (I.v.23 and I.viii.33).

[66] There is some evidence that suggests Fielding might have attempted to improve his financial situation by combining his writing talent and knowledge of the law. According to Dudden (I, 245), a "Note" in the Annual Register of 1762 states that Fielding, after having unsuccessfully ridden the Western Circuit for two or three years, published proposals for a new law book, which presumably he hoped would increase his income and reputation.

[67] The Crisis, which was printed as a pamphlet for A. Dodd, E. Nutt, and H. Chapelle, also appeared in the April 1741 numbers of the Gentleman's Magazine and London Magazine.

[68] Joseph Andrews and Shamela, ed. Martin Battestin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 299. Cf. the description of Jonathan Wild in the proposals for the printing of the Miscellanies, announced in the Daily Post of June 5, 1742: "The third Volume will contain, the History of that truly renowned Person Jonathan Wyld, Esqu; in which not only his Character, but that of divers other great Personages of his Time, will be set in a just and true Light."

[69] In his biography Plumb writes: "Although Walpole had something of a reputation for gallantry and his illegitimate daughter, Catherine Daye, gives substance to the rumour, it is doubtful whether sexual passion was a strong driving force in his character" (I, 113). The sexual part of Fielding's hit could have been an allusion to Walpole's reported despondency following the untimely death of his beloved Maria Skerrett shortly after their marriage.

[70] According to Roger Sale, Pamela, which was first published on November 6, 1740, was "the most popular of Richardson's novels and the most popular novel of the century" ("Introduction," Pamela [New York: Norton & Co., 1958], p. lx). While Fielding was writing Joseph Andrews a fifth edition of Pamela appeared, on September 12, 1741.

[71] "Fielding's Changing Politics and Joseph Andrews," PQ, 34 (January 1960), 44-47. For another view, see W.B. Coley, "Henry Fielding and the Two Walpoles," PQ, 45 (January 1966), 161-65.

[72] Cross wrote of Fielding's father: "Throughout his later life, General Fielding continued his interest in the education and career of Henry, aiding him, however, rather by promises than by their substance" (I, 40).

[73] An advertisement in the Champion of January 12, 1742 advised readers that Joseph Andrews was "In the Press" on that date. Henry Woodfall the elder printed the first and second editions of Joseph Andrews as well as 700 proposals for the publication by subscription of the Miscellanies (P.T.P., "Woodfall's Ledger, 1734-1747," N&Q, 1st ser., xi [2 June 1855], 419).

[74] See Ronald Paulson, Satire and the Novel in Eighteenth-Century England (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), Chapter iii; Robert A. Donovan, The Shaping Vision (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), Chapter iv; and Maurice Johnson, "The Art of Parody: Shamela," in Fielding's Art of Fiction (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1961), pp. 19-45.

[75] The form of the play and the epistolary novel, in which the words of characters are presented directly to the playgoer and the reader, for the most part precludes the possibility of an authorial presence. As mentioned above, the comments of spectators and authors in Pasquin and The Historical Register and the framing letters of Parson Oliver in Shamela may be seen as rudimentary attempts by Fielding to inject a modicum of authorial consciousness into these earlier works. The impulse to develop an authorial persona in Joseph Andrews most probably grew out of Fielding's varied writings in the Champion. In Jonathan Wild Fielding carries the process one step further by creating two personae, the mock biographer and the narrator, whose distinct voices offer divergent perspectives on moral, social, and literary matters while enriching the overall style of the book. See below, Chapter VIII, pp. 499-516.

[76] The agreement, which was written in Fielding's own hand, is reprinted in Battestin's "General Introduction" to Joseph Andrews, pp. xxx-xxxi. On April 13, 1742, Fielding assigned the rights and titles of three works to Millar and received from him £199.6s. Fielding was paid £5.5s. for A Full Vindication of the Dutchess Dowager of Marlborough, £10.10s. for Miss Lucy in Town, and £183.11s. for Joseph Andrews.

[77] Quoted by Miller, "Introduction," M, p. xlvi.

[78] Cf. Mr. Wilson's comments on the large sums to be made by authors who publish their works by subscription, JA , III.iii.215-16.

[79] The Champion, May 4, 1742.

[80] The London Stage 1660-1800, Part 3: 1729-1747, II, 991-95, 1009-14, 1016-17.

[81] Dudden's theory about the genesis of *Journey* resembles his hypothesis about the composition of *Jonathan Wild*. Because *Journey* is markedly inferior to *Joseph Andrews*, Dudden believed that Fielding wrote a draft of the former before beginning the novel and then revised at least parts of *Journey* following the successful reception of *Joseph Andrews* (I, 445-46). The notion that a particular work is *a priori* of a higher quality than the work that preceded it is a curious one and ought not to be accepted as the primary evidence in attempting to fix a date of composition.

[82] See below, Chapter VI, pp. 268-80.

[83] Quoted by Miller, *M*, p. xlvi.

[84] *The London Stage, Part 3*, II, 1035-37. The final performance was the author's second benefit. Fielding was said not to have received more than £30 from each benefit (Winston MS. from Dyer MS).

[85] The production of *The Wedding Day* was not a financial success. In the Preface to the *Miscellanies* Fielding added: "If it will give my Enemies any Pleasure to know that they totally frustrated my Views, I will be kinder to them, and give them a Satisfaction which they denied me: for tho' it [*The Wedding Day*] was acted six Nights, I received not 50 l. from the House for it" (*M*, p. 7).

Chapter V

THE REVISION OF JONATHAN WILD (1754)

Nine years after the publication of the Miscellanies and less than eight months before his death, Fielding completed a thoroughly revised edition of Jonathan Wild, which was then published for the first time as a separate work.

Fielding of course had long had the habit of revising and reworking material. As far back as 1730 he demonstrated his inclination to emend and refocus his work even if it had been well received by the public in its original form. A few weeks after the initial production and publication of Tom Thumb on April 24, 1730, Fielding issued a revised edition of the play to which he added a preface, prologue, and epilogue. Less than a year later, on March 24, 1731, Fielding published a third version of the play, now titled The Tragedy of Tragedies; or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great, in which he made the political satire more explicit and expanded the literary satire with a preface and footnotes by the pedantic scholar H. Scriblerus Secundus.[1]

After Fielding turned to non-dramatic writing, he devoted considerable care to the revision of almost all of his fiction. Seven months after the appearance of Shamela, Fielding made brief revisions for a second edition that was published on November 3, 1741. As we have seen, he substantially reworked Joseph Andrews for the second

edition of June 1742 and also made corrections and alterations for the third and fourth editions that were issued in March 1743 and October 1748 respectively. Following the disappointing response to Amelia (1751), Fielding soon set to work revising the book in an attempt to deal with the many objections that had been made to it. He eliminated the famous ambiguity about the heroine's nose, tempered exaggerated passages, and polished his style and language. Unfortunately, the public's lack of interest in Amelia precluded a second edition and Fielding's extensive revisions did not appear in print until his collected works were edited by Arthur Murphy in 1762.

The revision of Jonathan Wild, undertaken nine years after its initial publication and several years after Fielding had completed his last two novels, offers an excellent example of a mature artist's reevaluation of an earlier work in the light of changing times and his own growth. When he returned to his history of Wild, Fielding was forty-seven years old. He had achieved enormous artistic and commercial success with Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones but had experienced keen disappointment following the publication of Amelia. As is evident from the mock trial of Amelia that he wrote in the January 25 and 28, 1752 numbers of the Covent-Garden Journal,[2] and from the revisions of the novel itself that he made later in the same year, Fielding was concerned about the reactions of critics and general readers, but he also remained faithful to his original conception of the work, even if it differed markedly from his great successes, Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones.

It was with similar sensitivity and integrity that Fielding undertook the revision of Jonathan Wild in late 1753 and early 1754. Over a year earlier, in the final number of the Covent-Garden Journal, Fielding had announced his decision to abandon any further comic writing: "I solemnly declare that unless in revising my former Works, I have at present no Intention to hold any further Correspondence with the gayer Muses."[3] Whether Fielding planned at that time to revise Jonathan Wild or whether his decision to do so was the result of subsequent experiences with hardened criminals of Wild's ilk is not clear. The next two works that Fielding published were serious pamphlets dealing with the harsh realities of London life. In A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor, for Amending their Morals, and for Rendering them useful Members of the Society (January 1753), Fielding proposed a comprehensive program for the employment and rehabilitation of the able-bodied poor in a huge country workhouse. In A Clear State of the Case of Elizabeth Canning (March 1753), he wrote of his role in that curious case, depicting what he perceived to be a miscarriage of justice.

While Fielding continued his demanding duties as justice of the peace of Westminister and of Middlesex, positions he had held since October 1748 and January 1749 respectively, his health deteriorated steadily. In A Proposal . . . for the Poor, he referred to himself as being "in the decline of my health and life," having no "farther design than to pass my short remainder of life in some degree of ease" (Works, XIII.144, 194). By August 1753, Fielding's condition was such that his physician recommended that he go

immediately to Bath for rest and a cure. However, at the request of the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State for the Northern Department, Fielding stayed in London to implement a plan to eliminate the rash of murders and robberies that was plaguing the city. From August until December 1753, Fielding labored tirelessly to annihilate the vicious gangs that had been tyrannizing over the public. In the introduction to The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon (1755), Fielding described the result of his efforts:

> Tho' my health was now reduced to the last extremity, I continued to act with the utmost vigour against these villains; in examining whom, and in taking the depositions against them, I have often spent whole days, nay sometimes whole nights, especially when there was any difficulty in procuring sufficient evidence to convict them. . . .. mean while, amidst all my fatigues and distresses, I had the satisfaction to find my endeavours had been attended with such success, that this hellish society were almost utterly extirpated, and that, instead of reading of murders and street-robberies in the news, almost every morning, there was, in the remaining part of the month of November, and in all December, not only no such thing as a murder, but not even a street-robbery committed. (Works, XVI.188-89)

Curiously, Fielding makes no mention of Jonathan Wild in the rather detailed account of his life at this time that fills the opening pages of the Voyage to Lisbon. He did express concern about provision for his family after his imminent death, and his decision to revise Jonathan Wild must have been motivated in part by the prospect of additional income. It would not have been unrealistic to hope that a book about a notorious thief (and an ex-Prime Minister), written by a prominent novelist and magistrate, would appeal to the public. But undoubtedly there also were less mundane considerations. Perhaps Fielding might have been prompted to return to Jonathan Wild in order

to give fresh expression to his detestation of criminals, against whom he had just waged an intense personal campaign. More likely, as a mature artist who was aware that the end of his life was near, Fielding desired to perfect his earlier book, enhancing the characterization, sharpening the style, and generalizing the satire in order to present a more universal and permanent statement of his vision.

When Fielding returned to London after "the terrible six weeks which succeeded last Christmas" (Works, XVI.192), he must have delivered the revised version of Jonathan Wild to Millar. By mid-March the book was through the press and being advertised in the Monthly Review and the Whitehall Evening Post: "The life of mr. Jonathan Wild the great. A new edition, with considerable corrections and additions. By Henry Fielding, esqu. 12 mo. 3s. Millar. This is one of the pieces formerly published in Mr. Fielding's miscellanies."[4]

The title page of the revised edition, which was published by Millar on March 19, 1754, reads: "THE / LIFE / OF / Mr. JONATHAN WILD / THE GREAT. / A NEW EDITION / With considerable Corrections and Additions. / ---BY / HENRY FIELDING, Esq; / ---LONDON: / Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand. / ---MDCCLIV." Between the title page and the contents is an "Advertisement From the PUBLISHER to the READER," which was most probably written by Fielding:

> THE following Pages are the corrected Edition of a Book which was first published in the Year 1743.
>
> THAT any personal Application could have ever been possibly drawn from them, will suprize all who are not deeply versed in the black Art (for so it seems most properly to be called) of deciphering Mens Meaning when couched in obscure, ambiguous, or allegorical Expressions: This Art hath been exercised more than once on the Author

> of our little Book, who hath contracted a considerable Degree of Odium from having had the Scurrility of others imputed to him. The Truth is, as a very corrupt State of Morals is here represented, the Scene seems very properly to have been laid in Newgate: Nor do I see any Reason for introducing any allegory at all; unless we will agree that there are, without those Walls, some other Bodies of Men of worse Morals than those within; and who have, consequently, a Right to change Places with its present Inhabitants.
>
> TO such Persons, if any such there be, I would particularly recommend the Perusal of the third Chapter of the fourth Book of the following History, and more particularly still the Speech of the Grave Man in Pages 195,196 of that Book [referring to the sacrifice of private aims for the public good]. (iii-ix)

The "considerable Corrections and Additions" that Fielding made in 1754 are copious in number and variety. They range from the simple rectification of printing errors in the original edition to the omission of entire chapters, from the systematic substitution of the term "Statesman" for "Prime Minister" in order to modify the political allegory, to the judicious insertion of phrases, sentences, and paragraphs that heighten humor, develop character, increase verisimilitude, and extend commentary. As was demonstrated in the discussion of the "Wild" and "Wild-Heartfree" sections, the emendations of 1754 are distributed fairly evenly throughout the text.[5] While some chapters (particularly I.i.ix, and IV.xv) have markedly more changes than others, only one chapter (I.vii) is without a single substantive alteration. In many cases a rigid classification of alterations is difficult to maintain, but sufficient examples can be given to provide a comprehensive summary of the scope and art of Fielding's revisions.[6]

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The printing of the original holograph of Jonathan Wild by William Bowyer the younger was apparently quite accurate. In his revisions, Fielding made only a handful of corrections that clearly are the result of printing errors. "Mill-hen" (1743), for example, becomes "Mill ken" (I.v.22), the cant word for a housebreaker. The "Mr. Smith" (1743) who is said to satisfy Laetitia's vanity is of course "Mr. Smirk" (II.iii.77), the gallant who was named and described several chapters earlier (I.x.38-40). Other changes of this sort that involve the alteration of only a letter or two may have been the fault of the compositor or may have existed in Fielding's original manuscript. For example, "at least punished with a Halter" (1743) becomes "at last punished with a Halter" (I.v.23) and "Go thy Ways, charming Molly" (1743) becomes "Go thy Way, charming Molly" (IV.viii,218).

Fielding corrected the spelling of two names in the interest of accuracy and consistency. Wild's remarkably eminent ancestor "LANGFENGER" (1743) thus becomes "LANGFANGER" (I.ii.7), as his name is spelled in the preceding paragraph, describing his talents as a purse snatcher. Likewise, "Sir John Falstaffe" (1743), under whom Langfanger's son served as a volunteer, becomes "Sir John Falstaff" (I.ii.7). In addition, Fielding made a few changes of spelling in Wild's letter to Laetitia (III.vi.143). "Dout" and "Maddam" are properly spelled in the revision, but "Afternoon" is altered to the more imaginative "Afternune." Another minute change that could have been prompted by word association occurs in the imperfect transcription of the Ordinary's conversation with Wild in Newgate (IV.xiii.243). In this passage the Ordinary's words, which are riddled with asterisks that

indicate illegible blotches, have to do with non-believers and eternal damnation in Hell. In his revision, Fielding saw fit to change "*roiled" (perhaps intended as a fragment of the word "broiled") to "*oiled."

Although it is not clear to what extent eighteenth-century authors and printers were responsible for accidentals such as capitalization,[7] the systematic alteration in Jonathan Wild of key words from block capitals to predominantly lower case seems to have been an integral part of Fielding's strategy to shift the satire away from Walpole to a more universal attack upon greatness and great men in general. Accordingly, various words and phrases involving greatness are often (but not always) changed: "GREAT" frequently becomes "great"; "GREATLY"/"greatly"; "GREATNESS"/"Greatness"; "GREAT MAN"/"great Man"; "GREAT MEN"/"great Men"; "GREAT MINDS"/"great Minds"; and "GREAT and NOBLE MINDS"/"Great and Noble Minds."

Curiously, this reversion to predominantly lower-case usage conforms to the printing of most of these words in the first twelve chapters of the first edition. It is essentially in Books II, III, and IV of the 1743 edition that block capitals appear as a sort of headline to direct the reader's attention to the close link between Fielding's fictional hero and the "Great Man," as Sir Robert Walpole was often called. While the upper-case phrase "GREAT MAN" had specific reference to Walpole, the combination "great Man," which appears quite regularly in the revision, is more ambiguous. Block capitals are at times retained, however, when referring to the abstract quality of "GREATNESS" (I.xiv.56; II.iv.80; III.ix.157; IV.xiv.250, 252) and

in specific references to Wild, as in "we have ventured to call him [Wild] THE GREAT" (I.i.5); "to this silly Woman did this silly Fellow introduce the GREAT WILD" (II.i.65); and, in the final sentence of the 1754 edition only, " . . . be obliged to own themselves Inferior to Mr. Jonathan Wild the GREAT" (IV.xv.263). In addition, other key words and phrases such as "THE WISE" (I.v.23); "FAIR" (I.x.40); "CONQUEROR," "TYRANT," "STATESMAN" and "PRIG" (II.iv.81); "LOVE" (II.viii.101); "B--CH" (III.viii.156); and "THE DEVIL AND HIS ANGELS" (IV.xiii.240) are printed in block capitals, as is Wild's maxim "NEVER TRUST THE MAN WHO HATH REASON TO SUSPECT THAT YOU KNOW HE HATH INJURED YOU" (III.iv.135) and Heartfree's rule "OF DOING NO OTHER PERSON AN INJURY FROM ANY MOTIVE OR ON ANY CONSIDERATION WHATEVER" (III.x.162).

That Fielding was responsible for the use of block capitals in order to emphasize critical ideas is suggested by the alteration of "Liberties of Newgate" (1743) to "LIBERTIES OF NEWGATE" (IV.iii.191) in the revision of the one chapter that is recommended for perusal in the "Advertisement From the PUBLISHER to the READER." The treatment of politics in this chapter obviously had special importance for Fielding, and it seems most probable that the use of block capitals was his work and not that of a compositor. The same may be said about the change to block capitals for Mrs. Heartfree's "surest Truth, THAT PROVIDENCE WILL, SOONER OR LATER, PROCURE THE FELICITY OF THE VIRTUOUS AND INNOCENT" (IV.xi,237), which is an important statement of Fielding's theme in the concluding action of the book.

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Many other emendations that Fielding made in 1754 involve a more precise rendering of tense, rectification of grammatical lapses, and the smoothing of syntax. Some of the alterations of tense are the result of his desire to balance sentences with parallelism or to enliven passages with a shift from indirect to direct discourse. Other changes of tense correct more obvious flaws. For example, "Such is the clemency of Alexander and Caesar" (1743) becomes "Such was the clemency of Alexander and Caesar" (IV.xv.260). Fielding originally wrote in a scene between Mr. and Mrs. Heartfree: "She found him sealing the last of several Letters, which he had dispatched to his Friends and Creditors" (1743). In the revision, the sentence more properly reads: "She found him sealing the last of several Letters, which he was dispatching to his Friends and Creditors" (II.vii.94). The earlier version of the matrimonial dialogue between Wild and Laetitia contains the parenthetical direction "(These Words to be spoken with a very great Air, and Toss of the Head)" which Fielding emended to "(These Words were spoken . . . " (III.viii.151).[8]

Several grammatical corrections concern the matter of agreement. Either Fielding had had difficulty remembering the number of offspring in the Snap and Heartfree families when writing the original manuscript, or he made (for the time) some rather pedantic corrections of agreement in the revision. In the original version, Mr. Snap has "two Daughters, who were now in the Bloom of their Youth and Beauty" (1743; I.iv.22), but Fielding refers to Theodosia two chapters later as the "eldest of the Miss Snaps" (1743; I.vi.37). Similarly, Heartfree has two daughters, "the youngest of whom sat on

his Knees, and the eldest was playing at a little Distance from him with Friendly" (1743; III.xii.265). When Heartfree is imprisoned, the loyal apprentice Friendly promises to provide for his master's "youngest" daughter and to marry his "eldest" (1743; IV.i.288). In his revision, Fielding corrected these error by substituting "elder" and "younger," but he let stand the following: "FRIENDLY being one Day present while Heartfree was, with Tears in his Eyes, embracing his eldest [sic] Daughter . . . " (IV.i.182).

Other errors of agreement that Fielding corrected in 1754 were more obvious. Wild's constant maxim "Never to put it into any one's Head to do you a Mischief, by acquainting him that it is in their Power" (1743) becomes "by acquainting him that it is in his Power" (II.ix.103), and " . . . is not the Honour and Fruit of the Victory the General's who laid the Scheme?" (1743) becomes " . . . are not the Honour and Fruits of the Victory" (I.viii.32). In one instance, however, Fielding sacrifices the correct grammatical agreement of the original version for an added touch of characterization in the revision. The chaste Laetitia, who has just repulsed Wild's advances with the not very lady-like use of her nails, cries out: "D--n your Eyes, if this be your Way of shewing your Love, I'll warrant I gives [italics mine] you enough on't" (I.ix.38)

Of the numerous revisions that may be classified as stylistic, the most systematic consist of the insertion of a preposition, adjective, adverb, or auxiliary in order to lend balance, clarity, and grace. Examples of this kind of emendation are:

1743: HE was a passionate Admirer of Heroes, particularly Alexander the Great. (I.iii.18)
1754: HE was a passionate Admirer of Heroes, particularly of Alexander the Great. (I.iii.13)

1743: not only over her whole Family, but the Neighbourhood. (III.i.192)
1754: not only over her whole Family, but over the whole Neighbourhood. (III.i.120)

1743: The Ordinary himself, a very sagacious as well as worthy Person, (IV.i.286)
1754: The Ordinary himself, a very sagacious as well as very worthy Person, (IV.i.181)

1743: Fireblood had indeed robbed the Coach, and wantonly discharged a Pistol into it, (III.vi.223)
1754: Fireblood had indeed robbed the Coach, and had wantonly discharged a Pistol into it, (III.vi.141)

Fielding also improved the order, emphasis, and rhythm of sentences:

1743: nor do we doubt but our Reader will, when he hath perused his Story, concur with us in allowing him that Title. (I.i.7)
1754: nor do we doubt but our Reader, when he hath perused his Story, will concur with us in allowing him that Title. (I.i.5)

1743: some Remains of that Art which Ladies improve Nature with, shone on her Cheeks. (I.ix.54)
1754: some Remains of that Art with which Ladies improve Nature, shone on her Cheeks. (I.ix.35)

Other sentences that in the original version were too long or too complex to be effective were divided into shorter, clearer constructions:

1743: These therefore, and many other such Instances of Ingenuity, operated so violently on the Count, that, notwithstanding the Disparity which Age, Title, and above all Dress, had set between them, he resolved to enter into an Acquaintance, which soon produced a perfect Intimacy, and that a Friendship, which had a longer Duration than is common to that Passion between Persons, who only propose to themselves the common

Advantage of eating, drinking, whoring, or borrowing Money; which Ends as they soon fail, so doth the Friendship founded upon them. (I.iv.25)

1754: . . . notwithstanding the Disparity which Age, Title, and above all Dress, had set between them, he resolved to enter into an Acquaintance with Wild. This soon produced a perfect Intimacy . . . (I.iv.17)

1743: THE Governor, or as the Law more honourably calls him, Keeper of this Castle, having been Mr. Wild's old Friend and Acquaintance, made the latter greatly satisfied with the Place of his Confinement, as he promised himself not only a kind Reception and handsome Accommodation there, but even to obtain his Liberty from him, if he thought it necessary to desire it: (IV.ii.295)

1754: THE Governor . . . was Mr. Wild's old Friend and Acquaintance. This made the latter greatly satisfied with the Place of his Confinement, as he promised himself . . . (IV.ii.188)

When the subject matter lent itself to such treatment, Fielding occasionally fused two sentences in order to give increased flow to his prose:

1743: For unluckily some Hints of former Miscarriages intervening, as particularly when she asked him, how he could have used her so barbarously once, as by calling her B----? Whether such Language became a Man, much less a Gentleman? Wild flew into a violent Passion . . . (IV.xv.402)

1754: . . . when she asked him, how he could have used her so barbarously once, as by calling her B----; and whether such Language became a Man, much less a Gentleman, Wild flew into a violent Passion . . . (IV.xiv.251)

Fielding also altered singulars and plurals, deleted individual words, and added or replaced others in order to enhance the economy, clarity, and poignancy of his sentences. In the following examples, the words in parentheses were omitted in the revision in order to prune the superfluous, to avoid clumsy repetition, to leave some deductions to the reader, and to smooth the rhythm of the prose:

she now began to mediate Mischief against Wild, who seems
to have come to that Period, at which all (the) Heroes
(and GREAT MEN of Antiquity) have arrived, (IV.i.185)
how valuable a Part of a (young) Lady's Education it would
be to be well instructed in these Things, in an Age when
young Ladies learn . . . (II.iii.79)
had not yet learnt the (vulgar) Art of well clenching her
Fist (I.ix.37)
It seems Mr. Bagshot, immediately after his Separation from
Mr. Wild, returned to the Gaming-Table, where, (he)
having trusted to Fortune that Treasure which he had
procured by his Industry (I.xi.43)

Conversely, Fielding also added individual words or brief phrases in order to specify and clarify. In the following examples the word or brief phrase in parentheses was added in the revision:

those that use their (own) Hands, and those who employ
(the) Hands of Others. (I.xiv.57)
to desire maliciously to rob those Subjects (of their
Liberties), (II.iv.82)
The Captain (with great Scorn) replied, (II.x.107)
we are frequently (, and indeed impertinently) reminded
of their Benevolence and Generosity, (I.i.3)

Often Fielding replaced the vaguely assigned pronoun "he" of the original with the proper name of the subject in order to avoid confusion. He also achieved a more immediate or personal effect by substituting "this" for "it"; "these" for "those"; "his" for "the"; "your" for "these"; and "our" for "their." In instances where lapses of concentration occurred in the original, Fielding made the necessary corrections. It is "Doshy" (II.iii.75), not "Tishy" (1743), whom Wild finds at Mr. Snap's, since the latter sister is busy entertaining Bagshot in the bedroom upstairs. Similarly, when the Count's note for £2,800 is returned to Heartfree, the unfortunate merchant learns that "the Drawer" (II.vii.93) of the draft, not "the Acceptor" (1743), has run away.

Fielding's fondness for the archaic forms of certain verbs is revealed in his arbitrary revision of "has" (1743) to "hath," and of "does" (1743) to "doth." The majority of word changes, however, represent Fielding's search for a more precise term with which to express his original idea or to expand or alter that idea. The following examples, in which the word after the slash is the revision, illustrate this type of emendation:

> and then turning/forcing Wild out of the Cabin, (II.x.107)
> tend to stifle and deaden all the Faculties, instead of elevating/rousing them, (III.i.120)
> The Prigs had indeed very different/incompatible Interests; (IV.iii.193)
> My Conqueror was one of those over whom Passion/Vice hath a limited Jurisdiction, (IV.vii.209)
> made use of so many Protestations of his Faithfulness, that he convinced Wild of the Injustice/Justice of his Suspicions. (III.xiii.172)

Other word changes involve matters of dating, credibility, and diction. As Cross first observed in his discussion of the comet of 1742 and the composition of Jonathan Wild, in the revision Fielding changed "many Occurrences of the Phaenomenous Kind which have lately appeared in this our Hemisphere" (1743) to "which have formerly appeared in this our Hemisphere" (II.xii.112). For reasons of clarity and emphasis, he also altered "two very GREAT MEN, whose Names will be both recorded in History, did, in former Times, come forth themselves on the Stage" (1743) to "two very great Men . . . did, in these latter Times . . . " (III.xi.167). In order not to strain the reader's credibility, Fielding reduced the amount of money involved in the Count's swindle of Heartfree. Accordingly, the Count first took a single jewel worth "about three hundred Pounds," not "five hundred" (1743), and ordered a necklace, earrings, and solitaire "of the Value of three

thousand more" (II.ii.72), not "four thousand" (1743). Subsequently, the note that Heartfree receives from the Count is for £2,800, not £4,500 as in the original edition (II.iii.73).

In his treatment of Laetitia, Fielding altered an occasional word to raise or lower the level of diction for humorous or ironical effect. For example, after purchasing a genteel snuff box as a token of respect for that woman of great merit, Wild finds Laetitia "in the most beautiful Undress" (I.ix.35) instead of "in the most beautiful Deshabille" (1743). Conversely, in likening the paste necklace that Wild offers Laetitia to those displayed at Bartholomew Fair, Fielding changed "whitened" (1743) to the more poetic "bewhitened" (II.iii.78). The references to "Sir John" (1743) in the matrimonial dialogue between Laetitia and Wild are not, in my opinion, the vestiges of an earlier play as Digeon suggested,[9] but a brief miscalculation on Fielding's part. The chapter satirizes society marriages, and the allusions to the personage who has engaged Laetitia to breakfast and who visits the Wild house so often were probably intended to underscore the social satire. In his revision, Fielding wisely changed "Sir John" to "Jack Strongbow" (III.viii.149), a name more in keeping with Laetitia and Wild's true rank and with the scene's basic technique of burlesque.

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The alteration of block capitals, the shifting of tense, and the deletion, insertion, and replacement of individual words are of course the smaller elements of Fielding's extensive revision of Jonathan Wild. More noticeable and more substantial is the addition

of new material in order to sharpen characterization, to increase verisimilitude, to enhance humor and irony, and to expand authorial commentary.

In sharpening the characterizations, Fielding paid attention to minor characters as well as to the principals. Even characters who do not appear properly in the action of the book are given fleeting but deft touches in the revision. The name of Wild's maternal grandfather is changed from the rather bland "Ralph Hollow" (1743) to the more evocative and more humorous "Scragg Hollow, of Hockley-in-the Hole, Esq." (I.ii.8). The falseness of Charles Easy, who declines to pay his debt to the imprisoned Heartfree, is further revealed in the postscript that Fielding appends to his letter: "P.S. I hope good Mrs. Heartfree and the dear little ones are well" (II.vii.97).

Fielding substantially increased characterization and comedy in a single scene between Wild and Molly Straddle, the nimble-fingered prostitute who had earlier relieved Wild of Heartfree's bank notes during an assignation. When Wild privately confronts Miss Straddle with her crime in an interview at Heartfree's shop, he promises to forgive her if she will testify that she received the stolen note from Thomas Fierce. The superiority of the revised version of the scene is obvious:

> 1743: The Lady [Miss Straddle] readily consented; and Mr. Wild and she embraced and kissed each other in a very tender and passionate Manner. WILD, having given the Lady a little further Instruction, desired her to stay a few Minutes behind him, then returned to his Friend. (II.v.134)
>
> 1754: The Lady readily consented; and advanced to embrace Mr. Wild, who stept a little back and cry'd: "Hold,

> Molly; there are two other Notes of 200£. each to be accounted for, where are they?" The Lady protested with the most solemn Asservations that she knew of no more; with which when Wild was not satisfied, she cry'd: "I will stand Search." "That you shall, answered Wild, and stand Strip too." He then proceeded to tumble and search her, but to no Purpose, till at last she burst into Tears and declared she would tell the Truth (as indeed she did;) she then confessed that she had disposed of the one to Jack Swagger, a great Favourite of the Ladies, being an Irish Gentleman, who had been bred Clerk to an Attorney, afterwards whipt out of a Regiment of Dragoons, and was then a Newgate-Sollicitor and Bawdy-House Bully; and as for the other, she had laid it all out that very Morning in Brocaded Silks, and Flanders-Lace. With this Account Wild, who indeed knew it to be a very probable one, was forced to be contented; and now abandoning all further thoughts of what he saw was irretrievably lost, he gave the Lady some further Instructions, and then desiring her to stay a few Minutes behind him. . . . (II.v.87)

Most of Fielding's attention in the revision was naturally devoted to the principal characters. With good reason, Fielding believed that in the original version the Heartfrees had been too easily duped by Wild. In order to rectify this, he added several passages that more fully explain the motivations and actions of Wild, Heartfree, and Mrs. Heartfree. When Wild and Heartfree meet by accident at the beginning of Book II, Fielding provides an amplified account of their former friendship that more vividly reveals the mettle of both men:

> 1743: when by Accident he [Wild] met a young Fellow, who had formerly been his School-Fellow. This Person had a Regard for our Hero, as he had more than once, for a small Reward, taken a Fault on himself, for which the other, who had more Regard for his Skin than Wild, was to have been whipp'd. He therefore accosted Wild in the most friendly Manner . . . (II.i.96)

1754: when by Accident he met a young Fellow who had formerly been his Companion, and indeed intimate Friend at School. It hath been thought that Friendship is usually nursed by Similitude of Manners; but the Contrary had been the Case between the Lads: for whereas Wild was rapacious and intrepid, the other had always more Regard for his Skin than his Money; Wild therefore had very generously compassionated this Defect in his School-Fellow, and had brought him off from many Scrapes, into most of which he had first drawn him, by taking the Fault and Whipping to himself. He had always indeed been well paid on such Occasions; but there are a Sort of People, who, together with the best of the Bargain, will be sure to have the Obligation too on their Side; so it had happened here: for this poor Lad considered himself in the highest Degree obliged to Mr. Wild, and had contracted very great Esteem and Friendship for him; the Traces of which, an Absence of many Years had not in the least effaced in his Mind. He sooner knew Wild therefore, then he accosted him in the most friendly Manner . . . (II.i.63)

As the plot develops, Fielding inserts small details that somewhat strengthen the essentially passive character of Heartfree. By reducing the sums of money involved in the swindle with the Count, Fielding does not make Heartfree appear to be quite so gullible a merchant as in the original version. When Wild returns to England and visits Heartfree in Newgate, lavishly professing his friendship and regrets, Heartfree does not accept all of Wild's tale without question. Fielding adds that Heartfree "was soon curious enough to enquire how Wild had escaped the Captivity which his Wife then suffered" (III.v.137). Similarly, Heartfree's growing suspicion of Wild is suggested at a second visit when Heartfree meets Wild, not with "less cold Reception" (1743), but with "a more cold Reception" (III.ix.158) than the latter had anticipated.

Although Mrs. Heartfree is also a passive character until she

relates her adventures in Book IV, Fielding slightly enhances her characterization by intensifying Wild's cunning appeal to her to escape at once to Holland, thus making her seem less gullible. With a few added sentences, Fielding portrays Mrs. Heartfree as a concerned and loyal wife who does not expect to be separated from her husband for very long:

> 1743: THE Mention of her Husband's Approbation left no Doubt in this poor Woman's Breast, she only desired a Moment's Time to pay him a Visit, in order to take her Leave. But Wild peremptorily refused; he said by every Moment's Delay she risqued the Ruin of her Family; that she would be absent only a few Days from him; adding, that if she had not Resolution enough to execute the Commands he brought her from her Husband, his Ruin would lie at her Door, and, for his own Part, he must give up any farther meddling in his Affairs. (II.ix.161)
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> 1754: But Wild peremptorily refused; he said by every Moment's Delay she risqued the Ruin of her Family; that she would be absent only a few Days from him, for that the Moment he had lodged her safe in Holland, he would return, procure her Husband his Liberty and bring him to her. I have been the unfortunate, the innocent Cause of all my dear Tom's Calamity, Madam, said he; and I will perish with him, or see him out of it. Mrs. Heartfree overflowed with Acknowledgments of his Goodness; but still begged for the shortest Interview with her Husband. Wild declared that a Minute's Delay might be fatal; and added, tho' with the Voice of Sorrow rather than of Anger, that if she had not Resolution enough to execute the Commands he brought her from her Husband. . . . (II.ix.104-105)

The alteration of a single pronoun in another scene suggests something of Mrs. Heartfree's vanity and exhibitionism, which is amply demonstrated in the subsequent narration of her adventures. When the good magistrate obtains the reprieve for Heartfree and visits the husband and wife at Newgate, he interrupts Mrs. Heartfree's tale. The magistrate begs Mrs. Heartfree to continue, explaining that he

will depart if his presence inhibits her. In the original version, Heartfree replies that the magistrate might be entertained by Mrs. Heartfree's story, which "he the rather desired he [the magistrate] would hear." In the revision this becomes, with an increase in humor and in characterization, "which she [Mrs. Heartfree] desired he would hear" (IV.vi.207). Mrs. Heartfree then goes on to tell of her adventures without the slightest inhibition.

Fielding also more fully develops the characterization of Wild by adding revealing little actions, by explaining Wild's varied responses, and by commenting upon his character and his philosophy. Towards the end of Wild's eager discussion with the Count about the honor of priggism, Wild notices that his acquaintance has fallen fast asleep. Wild gently wakes the Count in order to take his leave but not, according to Fielding's addition, before "having first picked his [the Count's] Pocket of three Shillings" (I.v.24). Wild's courage is more vividly dramatized by having him draw his sword against the rebellious Bagshot, who in the revision is armed with a pistol instead of a sword (I.viii.33). "Your Money or your Blood" (I.viii.34), Wild challenges Bagshot, instead of "Your Money or the Sword" (1743). A far more serious act that both furthers the plot and demonstrates Wild's utter ruthlessness is his added perjury to the effect that Mrs. Heartfree had hidden for several days at his house before departing for Holland (III.xii.170).[10] As the result of Wild's false evidence, and Fireblood's, Heartfree is committed to Newgate with hardly a chance to speak in his own defense.

By inserting additional observations and explanations, Fielding sheds more light on the singular behavior of his hero. Wild's skill in retreating from a tactical error while continuing to implement his nefarious schemes is amplified in a scene with Heartfree. After the righteous merchant has rejected Wild's suggestion that he attempt to escape from Newgate even if escape involves a murder or two, Wild, in the original version, is simply said to endeavor to back off from his proposal "as much as possible" (1743). In the revision Fielding explains that Wild did this

> with admirable Dexterity: This Method of getting tolerably well off, when you are repulsed in your Attack on a Mans Conscience may be styled the Art of Retreating in which the Politician as well as the General hath sometimes a wonderful Opportunity of displaying his great Abilities in his Profession. WILD having made this admirable Retreat, and argued away all Design of involving his Friend in the Guilt of Murther, concluded however that he thought him rather too scrupulous in not attempting his Escape. (III.v.140)

That the normally suspicious Wild does not suspect Fireblood's liaison with Laetitia is more carefully explained. Following the vows of the "faithful Achates" to Wild that he would sooner be torn into pieces by wild horses than to even think of injuring his friend, Fielding adds: "He [Fireblood] asserted indeed, and swore so heartily, that had not Wild been so thoroughly convinced of the impregnable Chastity of the Lady, he might have suspected his Success: how ever [sic], he was, by these means entirely satisfied of his Friend's Inclination towards his Mistress" (III.vii.146).

Fielding also comments trenchantly on Wild's traits and his philosophy. When Wild conceives of his scheme to procure a gang that

will rob for him, he goes straight to a gaming house in order either to win or to rob enough money to put his plan into operation. He promptly loses every farthing in his pocket but remains undaunted. "This Loss however he bore with great Constancy of Mind and with great Composure of Aspect," Fielding remarks. "To say truth, he considered the Money as lent for a short Time, or rather indeed as deposited with a Banker" (I.xiv.60). Perhaps Fielding's most succinct and poignant summation of Wild's exceptional qualities is contained in a comment added after Wild resolves to ravish Mrs. Heartfree during a violent storm at sea. Wild's worthy resolution, Fielding writes in the revision, "plainly proved him to have these two Qualifications so necessary to a Hero, to be superior to all the Energies of Fear or Pity" (II.x.106).

In addition to the characters who play an active part in Wild's history, the _personae_ of the mock biographer and the narrator are somewhat expanded in the revision, becoming more learned and witty presences who enjoy making literary allusions, explaining terms with footnotes, and offering philosophical observations of a universal nature. The fondness of these _personae_ for classical literature is demonstrated by the insertion of Latin quotations that are at the same time both comic and literary. Before introducing a dream that precedes Wild's illustrious birth, the mock biographer quotes from Persius' _Satires_ (I.iii.9),[11] and in describing the color of Laetitia's soiled undergarment the narrator quotes from Ovid's _Metamorphoses_ (I.ix.36).[12] At the other end of the language spectrum lies the use of cant terms in the original text to which the narrator provides explanatory

footnotes in the revision. In these additions, priggism is glossed as "Thievery" (I.iii.12) and prigs as "Thieves" (I.iv.17; xiv.59). A "Mill ken" is said to be a "Housebreaker"; a "Bridlecull," a "Highwayman"; and a "Buttock and File," a "Shoplifter" (I.v.22). "Sneaking-Budge" is "Shoplifting" (I.vi.28), and to be "seedy" is to be "poor" (I.xii.47).

A more philosophical side of the narrator is revealed in the addition of several epigrammatic observations. After the Count discovers that Wild has tried to pick his pocket, the narrator explains why the Count's detection of Wild, rather than causing a quarrel between the two thieves, in fact recommends them to each other: "For a wise Man, that is to say a Rogue, considers a Trick in Life, as a Gamester doth a Trick at Play. It sets him on his Guard; but he admires the Dexterity of him who plays it" (I.v.17). The young gentleman whom Wild meets in a stagecoach and plans to rob, according to the narrator, "did not, any more than some other Descendants of wise Men, inherit the Wisdom of his Ancestor" (III.iii.129). Marybone, whom Wild arranges to have executed because he would not commit a murder, falls "as many Rogues do, a Sacrifice, not to his Roguery, but to his Conscience" (III.iii.131-32). As for the final glories of Wild before he swings out of the world to universal applause, the mock biographer remarks: "NARROW Minds may possibly have some Reason to be ashamed of going this Way out of the World, if their Consciences can fly in their Faces, and assure them they have not merited such an Honour; but he must be a

Fool who is ashamed of being hanged who is not weak enough to be ashamed of having deserved it" (IV.xiv.255).

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Fielding's concern with the vitality, pacing, and structure of Jonathan Wild is manifest in many other changes that he made in the revision. These include the transposition of passages from indirect to direct discourse, the rearrangement of old material and the creation of new, and the elimination of two chapters that in the original edition diffused the central action of the book. The increase in dramatic immediacy that Fielding achieved by recasting passages from indirect to direct discourse is readily apparent:

1743: she begged him to carry the Letter back again, saying, had she known from whom it came, she would have been d---d before she had opened it. Moreover she said she was not angry with him, nay, she was sorry so pretty a young Man should be employed on such an Errand. (III.vii.230)

1754: she begged him to carry the Letter back again saying, had she known from whom it came, she would have been d---d before she had opened it. "But with you, young Gentleman, says she, I am not in the least angry. I am rather sorry that so pretty a young Man should be employed in such an Errand." (III.vii.145)

1743: AS soon as Mr. Bagshot had quitted the Room, the Count, taking Wild by the Hand, told him he had something to communicate to him of very great Importance: he then proceeded to inform him, he was very well convinced that Bagshot was the Person who robbed him. Wild started with great seeming Amazement at this Discovery, and told the Count with a most serious Countenance, he advised him to take Care how he cast any such Reflections on a Man of Mr. Bagshot's nice Honour; for he was certain he would not bear it. D--n his Honour, quoth the enraged Count, nor can I bear being robbed; I will apply to a Justice of Peace." Wild replied with great Indignation, "Since he durst entertain such a Suspicion against his Friend, he would henceforth disclaim all Acquaintance with him;

that he knew Mr. Bagshot was a Man of Honour, and his Friend, and consequently it was impossible he should be guilty of a bad Action. (I.xii.70-71)

1754: AS soon as Mr. Bagshot had quitted the Room, the Count taking Wild by the Hand, told him he had something to communicate to him of very great Importance: "I am very well convinced, said he, that Bagshot is the Person who robbed me." Wild started with great Amazement at this Discovery, and answered with a most serious Countenance, "I advise you to take Care how you cast any such Reflections on a Man of Mr. Bagshot's nice Honour; for I am certain he will not bear it. D--n his Honour, quoth the enraged Count, nor can I bear being robbed; I will apply to a Justice of Peace." Wild replied with great Indgination, "Since you dare entertain such a Suspicion against my Friend, I will henceforth disclaim all Acquaintance with you. Mr. Bagshot is a Man of Honour, and my Friend, and consequently it is impossible he should be guilty of a bad Action." (I.xii.46)

Through the skillful reordering of small details in the revision, Fielding improved the pacing, development, and effect of his story. For example, when Wild dispatches Fireblood to deliver his love letter to Laetitia, Fielding declares Fireblood's original promise that "he would be sure to discharge whatever he [Wild] entrusted to him with the utmost Fidelity" (1743; III.vi.226). The fact that Fireblood had made "many voluntary Asseverations to discharge his Embassy faithfully" (III.vii.145) is more aptly reintroduced at the beginning of the next chapter with an increase in humor and irony, since it is in this scene that the faithful Fireblood responds so warmly to Laetitia's advances. Similarly, in Mrs. Heartfree's account of her rescue by the hermit, Fielding withholds information about the Count's condition until a more opportune time. Following the hermit's bloodying of the Count, Fielding has Mrs. Heartfree convey the casket of jewels into her pocket without informing the reader, as he did in the original, that

she does so before the felled Count "recovered himself, which he now began to do" (1743; IV.x.359). In its revised form, the scene concludes more satisfactorily a little further on with a smoother transition and a parting glimpse of the Count: "WE left the Villain weltering in his Blood, tho' beginning to recover a little motion" (IV.ix.224).

The opposite method of advancing the revelation of certain information is also employed with enhanced effects in the revision. When Wild volunteers to examine the gentlewoman who has tried to exchange Heartfree's stolen bank note, Fielding more promptly identifies the woman as "Miss Straddle, for that was the young Lady" (II.vi. 86). Consequently, the reader can better savor the irony of Wild's lecture about the baseness of her crime and Straddle's explanation that she "had received the Note from a Friend" (II.v.86), who is of course Wild.

Fielding also slowed the development of the plot, smoothed transitions, and broadened the literary and social satire by introducing new material in the early part of the revised edition. At the beginning of the second chapter, he adds three paragraphs:

> IT is the Custom of all Biographers, at their Entrance into their Work, to step a little backwards (as far, indeed, generally as they are able) and to trace up their Hero, as the Antients did the River Nile, till an Incapacity of proceeding higher puts an End to their Search.
>
> WHAT first gave Rise to this Method, is somewhat difficult to determine. Sometimes I have thought that the Hero's Ancestors have been introduced as Foils to himself. Again, I have imagined it might be to obviate a Suspicion that such extraordinary Personages were not produced in the ordinary Course of Nature, and may have proceeded from the Author's Fear that if we were not told who their Fathers were,

> they might be in Danger, like Prince Prettyman, of being supposed to have had none. Lastly, and perhaps more truly, I have conjectured that the Design of the Biographer hath been no more than to shew his great Learning and Knowledge of Antiquity. A Design to which the World hath probably owed many notable Discoveries, and indeed most of the Labours of our Antiquarians.
>
> BUT whatever Original this Custom had, it is now too well established to be disputed. I shall therefore conform to it in the strictest Manner. (I.ii.5-6)

Coming between the leisurely, rather verbose observations about greatness and goodness in the lives of eminent men in the first chapter and the thumbnail sketches of Wild's far less illustrious ancestors in the remainder of the second chapter, the interpolated passage provides a graceful bridge between the world of Plutarch, Suetonius, Alexander, and Caesar, and the petty criminal world of Wild.

The addition of a paragraph at the beginning of Book I, Chapter vi fulfills a similar function of slightly retarding the action while expanding the satiric commentary:

> THE COUNT missed his Money the next Morning, and very well knew who had it; but, as he knew likewise how fruitless would be any Complaint, he chose to pass it by without mentioning it. Indeed it may appear strange to some Readers, that these Gentlemen, who knew each other to be Thieves, should never once give the least Hint of this Knowledge in all their Discourse together; but, on the contrary, should have the Words Honesty, Honour, and Friendship, as often in their Mouths as any other Men. This, I say, may appear strange to some; but those who have lived long in Cities, Courts, Gaols, or such Places, will perhaps be able to solve the seeming Absurdity. (I.vi.24-25)

As the action of the book develops, Fielding increases the pace by making small but judicious cuts. Having returned Wild safely to London at the conclusion of Book II, Chapter xiii, he speeds the transition to Heartfree, the subject of the opening of Book III, by eliminating superfluous commentary. In the first edition, Fielding

wrote: "we will a little look back on the Fortunes of Mr. Heartfree, whom we left in no very pleasant Situation, especially as the Behaviour of this poor Wretch will considerably serve to set off the GREAT and exemplary Conduct of our Hero; but of this we shall treat in the next Book" (1743; II.xiv.189). In the revision this is reduced to the sparser and more compelling: "we will a little look back on the Fortunes of Mr. Heartfree, whom we left in no very pleasant Situation; but of this we shall treat in the next Book" (II.xiii.118).

After the lengthy "Digression and Sub-digression" in Book III, Chapter xi, about the stage, puppet masters, and the ability of the great man to manipulate others, Fielding quickens the reader's interest by shortening the heading of the subsequent chapter, which in the original reads "Elogiums on Constables, &c. And new Instances of Friendly's Folly." (1743). The revised heading, "New Instances of Friendly's Folly, &c." (III.xii.168), is a more relevant and dramatic introduction to the thickening plot. Fielding made a second cut in a chapter title in order to lull the reader's expectations. The original heading of Book IV, Chapter v, "The Arrival of a Person little expected; with other Matters" (1743), is altered to the purposely vague "Containing various Matters" (IV.v.200). Here Fielding's intention clearly was to insure the maximum amount of surprise and drama from the unanticipated arrival of Mrs. Heartfree: "for now a Friend arrived, of whom he [Heartfree] was to take a harder and more tender Leave than he had yet gone through. This Friend, Reader, was no other than Mrs. Heartfree herself, who ran to him with a Look all wild . . ." (IV.v.201).

The most substantial deletions that Fielding made in the revision are the omission of two entire chapters from the first edition: Book II, Chapter xii and Book IV, Chapter ix. The first is "OF PROVERBS. A Chapter full of very cunning and curious Learning.," which immediately follows Wild's soliloquy on death and his impetuous plunge into the sea. The deleted chapter is a true satura, a mixture or medley of a dozen aphorisms to which Fielding appends intentionally irrelevant or erroneous interpretations. The result is a travesty of Bacon's method in The Advancement of Learning, fragments of which are quoted in the introduction to and the explication of the proverbs, as well as a facetious tribute to Joe Miller's Jests, the popular collection of repartees, bons mots, and short stories that was first published in 1739. Subjects of the proverbs include great men, the master of ceremonies at court, women, a proposition of the Deists, poetical tailors, self-serving physicians, and the public execution of rogues at Tyburn.

That Fielding suppressed the entire chapter is testimony to his artistic judgment, for not only is the humor rather labored, but the potpourri of subject matter detracts from the strong narrative line of Wild's adventures at sea and thus weakens the climactic pitch of the end of Book II. At the time when he composed the chapter Fielding seems to have been aware of its digressive nature, its potentially offensive material, and its lack of impact. He wrote in the original text: "THUS having (to use the Words of that noble Author[13] once more) staid somewhat longer on these Sentences than is agreeable to the Proportion of an Example, and perhaps offended some,

who will direct the Force of this Chapter (if it have any) where it was little meant; I now return to our Hero . . ." (1743; II.xii. 178-79).

The second chapter that Fielding deleted[14] describes the bizarre encounters of Mrs. Heartfree and the sailors with an animal the size of Windsor Castle, a quarter-mile long reptile, a lark weighing thirty stones, the Phoenix, and a bed of giant pumpkins. In the original edition, Mrs. Heartfree's tale comprises five chapters (V.vii, viii.ix, x, and xii), which is a lengthy digression, coming so close to the end of the book. Fielding wrote in the Preface to the Miscellanies that one chapter of Jonathan Wild was "visibly meant as a Burlesque on the extravagant Accounts of Travellers" (M, p. 11). This is Chapter ix of Book IV, "A very wonderful Chapter indeed; which, to those who have not read many Voyages, may seem incredible; and which the Reader may believe or not, as he pleases" (1743). Amusing as the burlesque is, it detracts from Mrs. Heartfree's serious struggle to preserve her virtue, which in itself is a considerable diversion from the main action of the Wild-Heartfree plot. Mrs. Heartfree plays no significant role in the travel burlesque. By omitting this chapter Fielding hastens the return to the main narrative at the same time that he strengthens the characterization of Mrs. Heartfree by emphasizing her cleverness and her resolve to remain faithful to Heartfree.

A final change that Fielding made in the revision provides a more satisfying ending to the book, consonant with its title, structure, and tone. The first edition of Jonathan Wild ends on

an angry, remonstrative note: "Nor is the World so unanimous as they ought to be in conferring this dear-bought Reward. For, while the Majority of Mankind, while Courts and Cities resound the Praises of the said GREAT MEN, there are still some in Cells and Cottages, who view their GREATNESS with a malignant Eye; and dare affirm, that these GREAT MEN, who are always the most pernicious, are generally the most wretched and truly contemptible of all the Workds of the Creation" (1743; IV.xvi.419-20).

In contrast, the revision concludes with an appropriately ironic and humorous touch, celebrating Wild and the exceptional qualities that he epitomizes: "To say the Truth the World have this Reason at least to Honour such Characters as that of Wyld [sic]; that while it in the Power of every Man to be perfectly Honest, not one in a Thousand is capable of being a Complete Rogue; and few indeed there are who if they were inspired with the Vanity of Imitating our Hero would not after much fruitless Pains be obliged to own themselves Inferior to Mr. Jonathan Wild the GREAT" (Iv.xv.263).

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Finally, the development of literary, legal, religious, and political themes in Jonathan Wild was affected in various ways by the numerous alterations and additions that Fielding made throughout the revision. The longest added passage, three paragraphs about biographies and biographers that Fielding inserted at the beginning of Book I, Chapter ii, develops ideas that were raised in the first chapter and more cogently introduces the wealth of literary allusions, criticisms,

and satire that follows. Fielding's most serious charge in this new passage is that in tracing their heroes' ancestors "the Design of the Biographer hath been no more than to shew his great Learning and Knowledge of Antiquity. A Design to which the World hath probably owed many notable Discoveries, and indeed most of the Labours of our Antiquarians" (I.ii.5). While Fielding's considerable learning is amply revealed throughout the fictional life of Wild, unlike the biographers whom he criticizes Fielding employs his knowledge of antiquity and of his own age to comment germanely on the subject at hand.

A good example of how Fielding subordinates incidental literary satire to the action of his story, yet uses allusions to reflect character and to express his own literary standards, may be seen in his brief additions to the scene describing a game of hazard at the Snaps'. The grave gentleman who claims he has served his country in two honorable capacities frequently dives into the pocket of Bagshot, although he is cunning enough to leave many coins untouched. In the revision, Fielding appeals to the reader's desire to authenticity at the same time that he links moral and literary values by disclosing the source of this information and commenting on a popular subgenre of contemporary writing: " . . . (as he [the grave gentleman] tells us in the Apology for his Life afterwards published*)." In a footnote Fielding further explains, "Not in a Book by itself, in Imitation of some other such Persons, but in the Ordinary's Account, &c. where all the Apologies for the Lives of Rogues and Whores which have been published within these twenty Years should have been inserted"

(I.xiii.50).

Fielding's general reference to the published lives of rogues and whores leaves little question as to his opinion about the moral and literary value of these works. More specifically, Fielding was probably alluding at least in part to the anonymous An Apology for the Life of Mr. T.....C (1740),[15] which had erroneously been ascribed to him. Most certainly Fielding's footnote is a hit at one of his favorite targets, Colley Cibber, whose self-indulgent, egregiously written autobiography An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber was first published in April 1740 and reissued in a third edition in 1750.[16]

By 1750 Fielding had been a practicing member of the bar for fourteen years and a magistrate of Westminister for five years. In the revision of Jonathan Wild, Fielding amplified the satire on the law, directing a specific attack against attorneys' clerks, but presenting a favorable portrait of a chief magistrate. In his introduction of Blueskin, the butcher-thief who challenges Wild, Fielding inserted a brief but devastating hit at the law. Fielding wrote in the first edition, "This Gentleman [Blueskin] had two Qualities of a GREAT Man, viz. undaunted Courage, and an absolute Contempt of those ridiculous Distinctions of Meum and Tuum" (1743). In the revision Fielding expanded the passage to: "an absolute Contempt of those ridiculous Distinctions of Meum and Tuum which would cause endless Disputes, did not the Law happily decide them by converting both into Suum" (III.xiv.175).

After years of legal experience, Fielding's opinion of attorneys' clerks was apparently not very high. In the revision he changed the profession of Tom Smirk, the quintessential beau, from that of "Apprentice to a Tallow-Chandler" (1743) to "Clerk to an Attorney" (I.x.38). While attorneys' clerks like Smirk are ridiculed for their vanity and their pretentiousness, Fielding implies that other members of the profession are of worse character. In the expanded scene between Wild and Molly Straddle, Fielding has Molly confess that she had disposed of a note of £200 to "Jack Swagger, a great Favourite of the Ladies, being an Irish Gentleman, who had been bred Clerk to an Attorney, afterwards whipt out of a Regiment of Dragoons, and was then a Newgate-Sollicitor and Bawdy-House Bully" (II.v.87). Fielding also added to Wild's considerable gang of undone gamesters, ruined bailiffs, broken tradesmen, and idle and disorderly youths, another group who are willing to live luxuriously without labor, namely, "Attorneys Clerks" (II.vi.90).

Evidently Fielding developed a more favorable view of magistrates as a result of his years on the bench. In his revision of Mrs. Heartfree's tale, he more clearly identified the courteous, wise, and sympathetic official who bestows a jewel on Mrs. Heartfree as a justice rather than as a municipal leader. Deleting the title of "Mayor" (1743), he designated as "chief Magistrate of this Country" that honest man who was obliged "to hear the Complaint of every Person in his Dominions, and to render him Justice" (IV.xi.234).

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Fielding's acceptance of conservative Latitudinarian beliefs is amply documented both in his essays, in which he supports his religious and moral philosophy with references to the theologians Isaac Barrow, John Tillotson, and Samuel Clarke, and in his fiction, in which he savages religious hypocrites and dramatizes the primacy of good actions as opposed to religious ceremony of divine grace.[17] Without altering his staunch belief in God and his faith that man's salvation lay in Christianity, Fielding made two kinds of alterations regarding religious matters in the revision of Jonathan Wild. The first type eliminated the slightest possibility of blasphemy while the second subtly modified the Deity's responsibility in the affairs of men.

Fielding deleted almost all mention of the word "God," which was usually printed in block capitals in the first edition, substituting the circumlocutions "Heaven" and "Almighty" in an apparent attempt to avoid an unintended interpretation of blasphemy. Heartfree's ejaculation "GOD be praised!" (1743), for example, is changed to "Heaven be praised!" (III.i.121) when he learns that his wife has foresaken their children, and Mrs. Heartfree's exclamation "Good GOD!" (1743) is altered to "Good Heavens!" (IV.ix.222) when she is confronted by the Count in the African wilderness. (In one instance Fielding lets stand a direct naming of God because the intention is to portray the blasphemy of a reprehensible character. "D--n me, I am a Man of Honour, and tho' I can't talk as well as you, by G-- you shall not make a Fool of me" (I.viii.33), Bagshot swears at Wild before reaching for his pistol.[18])

The deletion of the word "God" occurs in the revision of speeches by almost all of the good characters. It is to "Heaven" (IV.ix.223), not to "GOD" (1743), that the hermit suggests Mrs. Heartfree offer her thanks for their meeting, and the African chief magistrate, after presenting Mrs. Heartfree with a jewel, recommends her to "the Care of Heaven" (IV.xi.235) instead of "the Care of GOD" (1743).[19] The same substitution is made in several remarks made by Friendly and by Mrs. Heartfree. Upon her dramatic return to London Mrs. Heartfree hopes that her meeting with Heartfree will end in perfect happiness through the offices of the best of men, "whom Heaven for ever bless" (IV.xi.236). In response to Heartfree's anguished cry that his wife has deserted him, Friendly interjects, "Heaven forbid, Sir" (III.i.121), and later the loyal apprentice promises Heartfree that he will provide for his children should there be any misfortune, "which I pray Heaven avert" (IV.i.183). In all of these examples, the benevolent power of God is neither questioned nor denied. Fielding's substitution of circumlocutions for God should probably be interpreted as evidence of his desire to exhibit a profound respect for the Supreme Being.

More revealing alterations are made in the speeches of Heartfree, who is the most pious character in the book. Like the other good characters, Heartfree in the revision prefers the word "Heaven" to "God": "Heaven forbid Liberty should have such Charms, to tempt me to the Perpetration of so horrid a Crime as Murther" (III.v.139), he lectures Wild after the great man has proposed his escape from prison at all costs. When Wild subsequently proposes robbery to Heartfree,

the good man spurns Wild's plan with an affirmation of the comfort he derives from his resolution not to do injury to any person for any motive. In the first edition, Fielding has Heartfree exclaim: "For what a ravishing Thought! how replete with Extasy must the Consideration be, that the Goodness of God is engaged to reward me!" (1743). In the revision the role of God in providing a reward is diminished and more emphasis is placed on the quality of goodness itself: "how replete with Extasy must the Consideration be, that Almighty Goodness is by its own Nature engaged to reward me!" (III.x.162).

Although the existence of God is clearly accepted in Heartfree's lengthy soliloquy about the afterlife, Fielding indicates that it is Christianity in its totality, not solely a supreme Being, that provides the troubled man with solace and sustenance. In the revision Fielding changed the original "Proofs of a supreme Being" (which could raise the possibility of atheism) to "Proofs of Christianity." Heartfree thus reflects: "If the Proofs of Christianity be as strong as I imagine them, surely enough may be deduced from that Ground only to comfort and support the most miserable Man in his Afflictions" (III.ii.127). While God is ultimately responsible for the salvation of the good man, Fielding seems to de-emphasize the responsibility that God may have for the actions of bad men. In the original text Heartfree tells Friendly, "I know not . . . how far GOD may permit the Malice of my Enemies to prevail" (1743). This is changed in the revision to "I know not . . . how far the Malice of my Enemy may prevail" (III.xii.170). Fielding did not usually engage in theological speculations about the causes of good and evil, but

in the above passage he appears to absolve the Deity from having an active hand in Wild's nefarious schemes. Matters of theology apart, Fielding may have had a practical reason for making this emendation. If he had written that it was God who permitted Wild's malice to prevail, this emphasis might tend to detract from Wild's force as a dramatic character and undercut the searing criticism that characterizes the ironic treatment of Wild's history.

As he did in Shamela, Joseph Andrews, and Tom Jones, Fielding roundly censures the corrupt or incompetent clergy. Unlike the other books, however, Jonathan Wild contains only one clergyman, the foolish and narrow-minded Ordinary of Newgate. In the revision Fielding did not alter a single detail of his satiric portrait of the Ordinary, but he did delete a brief phrase about bishops that might have offended some readers. In a humorous discussion about man's inability to distinguish between the means and the ends of Nature, Fielding initially wrote: "Thus how a handsome Wife or Daughter should contribute to execute her original Designation of a General; or how Flattery, or half a dozen Houses in a Borough-Town, should denote a Judge, or Impiety and Atheism, a Bishop" (1743). In 1754 Fielding attenuated his attack on the bishops by making the passage read, "how Flattery, or half a dozen Houses in a Borough-town, should denote a Judge, or a Bishop" (II.xii.114).

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By far the most significant changes that Fielding made in the revised edition affect the political and social character of Jonathan Wild. As we have seen, Fielding virulently attacked Walpole

in numerous plays, essays, and pamphlets between 1731 and 1742. During this period many members of the Opposition, including Fielding, commonly used the name of Jonathan Wild, the detested thief-taker who had been hanged several years earlier, as a widely recognized symbol of Walpole's corruption, greed, and ruthlessness. When Fielding decided to write his life of Wild, in which not only the character of the hero but that "of divers other great Personages of his Time"[20] was to be set in a just and true light, he clearly intended to continue his attack upon the powerful Prime Minister, who had dominated English politics from the early 1730s until the beginning of 1742.

The situation was quite different in 1754, when Fielding undertook the revision of his book. It was twelve years since the fall of Walpole and nine years since his death. Fielding was no longer a member of the Opposition. His own party was in power, he was a respected magistrate of Westminister, and he was a loyal supporter of Henry Pelham,[21] who had served as Prime Minister since 1746.

In the "Advertisement from the PUBLISHER to the READER" that followed the title page of the second edition, Fielding teased the reader with a playful but serious paragraph. He wrote, tongue in cheek, of the pages of the first edition: "That any personal Application could have ever been possibly drawn from them, will surprize all who are not deeply versed in the black Art (for so it seems most properly called) of deciphering Mens Meaning when couched in obscure, ambiguous, or allegorical Expressions." There was of course very little that was obscure or ambiguous in the first edition.

The allegory of the Wild-Walpole story could easily be understood by readers who were untrained in the subtleties of literature, and the transparent epithets and blunt personal references most probably would have been appreciated even by those who could not read if they heard them.

By systematically altering certain capitalizations and replacing a few key words, Fielding to a great extent removed Walpole from the revised edition. "GREAT MAN" (1743), the epithet by which Walpole was known both to his enemies and adherents when he was at the height of his power, became the less specified "great Man," and "GREATNESS" (1743), a quality that readers in Walpole's day would have automatically identified with the Prime Minister, lost some of its immediacy in the more generalized "Greatness." More specifically, Fielding suppressed most references to the office that Walpole had held,[22] substituting a more generic designation that could be applied to the influential members of any government. Thus "prime Minister" (1743) frequently becomes "Statesman"[23] in the revision, and "Ministerial Tools" (1743) becomes "Tools of State." The result of these lexical changes is a broadening of Fielding's political theme, as may be seen in the following examples:

1743: Can any Man doubt, it is better to be a prime Minister, or a common Thief? (I.v.30)
1754: . . . better to be a great Statesman, or a common Thief? (I.v.20)

1743: Doth it not ask as good a Memory, as nimble an Invention, as steady a Countenance, to foreswear yourself in Westminister-Hall, as would furnish out a complete Ministerial Tool, or perhaps a prime Minister himself? (I.v.52)

1754: . . . as would furnish out a Tool of State, or perhaps a Statesman himself? (I.v.21)

1743: And this is that noble and GREAT Part who are generally distinguished into Conquerors, absolute Princes, Prime Ministers, and Prigs. (I.xiv.90)
1754: And this is that noble and Great Part who are generally distinguished into Conquerors, absolute Princes, Statesmen, and Prigs. (I.xiv.58-59).

With the omission of the entire chapter "Of PROVERBS," Fielding eliminated the most personal hit at Walpole: "Proverb XII. DEBAUCHING a Member of the House of Commons from his Principles, and creating him a Peer, is not much better than making a Woman a Whore, and afterwards marrying her" (1743; II.xii.178). The second part of the proverb referred unmistakably to Walpole's notorious liaison with Maria Skerrett, by whom he had an illegitimate daughter in 1725 and whom he could not marry until after the death of his first wife in 1737.[24]

Another emendation affected a passage that while not referring directly to Walpole, did suggest a debased image of the orders of knighthood and Walpole's political use of them. In describing the slovenly and immoral Laetitia, Fielding first wrote that under her petticoat "appeared a red Stuff" and that her pretty feet were adorned with lace, "the right with a handsome Piece of blue Ribband; the left, as more unworthy, with a piece of red Stuff" (1743). The blue ribbon refers to the Order of the Garter, and the "more unworthy" red to the Order of the Bath, which was supposedly revived in 1725. Walpole was a knight of both orders, and for many years the blue and red ribbons were a popular target for satire.[25] In the revision Fielding omitted the color red, apparently in order to avoid a political interpretation. Laetitia's undergarment is described as once having been white ("Qui

Color albus erat nunc est contrarius albo") and one of the pretty feet is tied "with a piece of yellow Stuff" (I.ix.36) instead of red.

While Fielding altered the capitalization of "GREAT MAN," emended most references to the office of Prime Minister, and eliminated the most personal hit at Walpole, the specter of the erstwhile political leader was not removed entirely from the revision. In the March 11, 1740 number of the Champion Fielding had accused Walpole of having spent £250,000 on paintings for his estate at Houghton. The revision of Jonathan Wild retains two related allusions. In a speech comparing the booty of a bridle-cull and that of a statesman, Wild asks the Count, "doth not the former lay out his Acquisitions in Whores and Fiddles, with much greater Joy and Mirth, than the latter in Palaces and Pictures?" (I.v.23). Later, in support of his philosophy that the lower class is born to produce the fruits of the earth for the higher order of mortals, Wild lectures Bagshot: "Cast your Eye abroad, and see who is it lives in the most magnificent Buildings, feasts his Palate with the most luxurious Dainties, his Eyes with the most beautiful Sculptures and delicate Paintings . . . " (I.viii.33).

In addition Fielding retained references to Wild as "Treasurer of the Booty" (I.iii.11) and as "the great Bubble-boy himself" (III.vi.142).[26] Somewhat less explicit but most probably alluding to Walpole's first marriage with Catherine Shorter are the narrator's commentary about husbands and gallants, and the dialogue between Wild and Laetitia two weeks after their nuptials. In explaining the extraprofessional bond between Fireblood and Wild,

the narrator refers to "those strict Intercourses of Love and Acquaintance, which so commonly subsist in modern History between the Husband and Gallant . . . which is thought to be at present one of the strongest Bonds of Amity between great Men, and the most reputable as well as easy Way to their Favour" (III.x.164). The entire matrimonial dialogue (III.viii) may be read as a travesty of the arrangement that Walpole was said to have agreed to with his first wife, whereby she became the mistress of Carr, Lord Hervey, and Walpole maintained his liaison with Maria Skerrett (Cross, I, 423).

The changed political situation in 1754 and Fielding's more dispassionate or realistic view of politics at large occasioned the addition of important sentences in several passages. In the chapter "Of Hats," the dissension in Wild's gang between "two Parties, viz. those who wore Hats fiercely cocked, and those who preferr'd the Nab or Trencher Hat, with the Brim flapping over their Eyes" originally alluded to the differences between the Court party, led by Walpole, and the Country party, which was led by Pulteney. Fielding brought the allegory up to date in the revision by adding two sentences that facetiously identify the dissenting groups as the Tories and the Whigs: "The former were called Cavaliers and Tory Rory Ranter Boys, &c. The latter went by the several Names of Wags, Round-Heads, Shake-Bags, Old Nolls, and several others" (II.vi.90). That Fielding did not believe that there was any substantial difference between the two parties is evidenced by his insertion of the corrective observation: ". . . they [the two parties] grew in time to think

there was something incompatible with each other, whereas, in Truth, the Difference lay only in the Fashion of their Hats" (II.vi.90).

Fielding also introduced brief but incisive comments in two other chapters that reveal a cynical attitude towards party politics. After mentioning Wild's credo of never doing a single injury to a man or woman unless he expected to reap some advantage, Fielding added, "He would often indeed say, that by the contrary party Men often made a bad Bargain with the Devil, and did his Work for nothing" (I.xi.41). The irony of Wild's argument that a prig is a man of honour, not because of his actions, but "because Men call him a Man of Honour" (1743), is embellished in the revision, becoming "because Men, I mean those of his own Party, or Gang, call him a Man of Honour" (I.xiii. 52-53).

In the latter part of the "Advertisement From the PUBLISHER to the READER," Fielding commented upon the allegorical and political character of Jonathan Wild and directed the reader's attention to what he considered to be one of the critical chapters of the book:

> The Truth is, as a very corrupt State of Morals is here represented, the Scene seems very properly to have been laid in Newgate: Nor do I see any Reason for introducing any allegory at all; unless we will agree that there are, without those Walls, some other Bodies of Men of worse Morals than those within; and who have, consequently, a Right to change Places with its present Inhabitants. To such Persons, if any such there be, I would particularly recommend the Perusal of the third Chapter of the fourth Book of the following History, and more particularly still the Speech of the Grave Man. (pp. [iii-ix])

It is in "Curious Anecdotes relating to the History of Newgate" (IV.iii) that Fielding most fully develops his political theme. In the first edition, this chapter was obviously intended to

be an allegory of the state of affairs in England in 1743, following Walpole's fall from office. Roger Johnson represented Walpole, and Wild less specifically represented one of a number of less able leaders who assumed important positions in the post-Walpolian cabinet.[27] Through the deletion of a few words and the addition of several sentences, the revised chapter becomes a more universal allegory of the political process in general.

When Wild succeeds in gaining Johnson's place and parades about Newgate in his predecessor's ornaments, Fielding originally wrote that Johnson's finery did not do Wild much honor, "since every one knew it did not properly belong to him, nor indeed suited his Degree" (1743; IV.iii.309). In the revision Fielding omitted this last belittling reference to the inferior degree of Johnson's successor, perhaps because it bestowed some virtue upon the deposed leader, and perhaps also in order to avoid any possible application to Henry Pelham, who was in effect the real heir of Walpole's power.[28]

Of more significance is Fielding's sharper delineation of the roles played by self-interested place seekers and the gullible public that permits itself to be exploited by unscrupulous leaders. Fielding wrote in the first edition: "for both Parties were permitted by their Leader to have their Share in the Plunder, which the Friends of Johnson had already enjoyed, and which those of Wild expected on his Exaltation" (1743). In the revision Fielding more clearly explains the intense conflict among the followers of each leader: "for whereas the Supporters of Johnson, who was in Possession of

the Plunder of Newgate, were admitted to some Share under their Leader; so the Abettors of Wild had, on his Promotion, the same Views of dividing some Part of the Spoil among themselves. It is no Wonder therefore they were both so warm on each Side." More surprising is the response of the debtors of Newgate, who avidly take sides in the dispute despite the fact that they are the destined plunder of both parties. Punning on various meanings of the word "liberty," Fielding inserts an ironic observation about the behavior of these naive victims: "And the poor Debtors re-echoed the Liberties of Newgate, which in the Cant Language signifies Plunder, as loudly as the Thieves themselves" (IV.iii.193-94, 194).

The speech of "a very grave Man, and one of much Authority" represents the most poignant summary of Fielding's political views in Jonathan Wild. The grave man alerts the indignant debtors of Newgate to the dangers of priggism, and he advocates honest labor, a closer alliance, and the sacrificing of private views to the public good. In the first edition, the grave man states that "Liberty is consistent with no Degree of Honesty inferiour to this, and the Community where this abounds, no Prig will have the Impudence or Audaciousness to endeavour to enslave." In the revision the grave man's remark is expanded to include what appears to be a stronger statement of Fielding's own conviction and a stern warning to those unprincipled leaders who attempt to usurp power: "No Prig will have the Impudence or Audaciousness to endeavour to enslave; or if he should, his own Destruction would be the only Consequence of his Attempt" (IV.iii.194-95, 196).

The result of these alterations and additions regarding politics is a striking shift in emphasis away from the original partisan attack upon Walpole to a more universal depiction of any political leader's insatiable quest for power and his unscrupulous abuse of that privilege once he has successfully deceived the public. To be sure, a good portion of the satire that Fielding originally directed against Walpole remains in Jonathan Wild, but in its revised form it is not restricted only to that man and to his age. So effectively did Fielding accomplish this transformation that it was not until Keightley's article appeared in 1858 that it was suggested that Jonathan Wild contained scathing allusions to the public and private life of Walpole.

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In conclusion, the revisions that Fielding made in Jonathan Wild in 1754 are the most extensive that he made for a single edition of any of his books. These changes include matters of spelling and capitalization, the deletion, addition, and more precise selection of individual words, the correction of grammatical errors, the modulation of tense and voice, and a comprehensive refinement of style. Primarily through the skillful addition of material, Fielding sharpened characterization, heightened humor, increased verisimilitude, and expanded authorial commentary. He also enhanced the pacing and structure of the book by transposing passages, writing supplementary transitions, and omitting two chapters. Finally, Fielding more fully developed literary, legal, religious, and political themes by replacing a few

key words and by inserting numerous new passages. In sum, the edition of 1754, which appeared less than eight months before its author's death, is the version of Jonathan Wild that Fielding wanted to bequeath his public. It is this edition that has come down to the modern reader and which will be used as the text for the remainder of this study.

Notes

[1] See L.J. Morrissey, "Critical Introduction," Tom Thumb and The Tragedy of Tragedies (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), pp. 3-7. During 1731 Fielding also published three versions of The Grub-Street Opera: The Welsh Opera (June 1731); The Genuine Grub-Street Opera (August 18, 1731); and The Grub-Street Opera. As it is acted at the Theatre in the Haymarket (summer or autumn 1731).

[2] The Covent-Garden Journal, ed. Gerard Edwin Jensen (1915; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), I, 178-80, 186-87.

[3] Ibid., II, 142.

[4] The Monthly Review, 10 (March 1754), 238; The Whitehall Evening Post, March 16-19, 1754.

[5] See above, Chapter IV, pp. 175-77.

[6] The following study of Fielding's revisions was made from copies of the first and second editions of Jonathan Wild in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library. The 1743 copy is part of a three-volume subscription edition of the Miscellanies that was printed on heavy royal paper and bears the bookplates of George Home Drummond, whose name appears in the list of subscribers at the front of Volume One. Pages of this copy measure 25 x 16 cm and are untrimmed.

The second edition of Jonathan Wild is printed on coarser paper whose trimmed pages measure 17 x 11 cm.

[7] Most probably the matter depended upon the textual interest of the individual author. Pope seems to have been the most fastidious eighteenth-century author in this regard. He hired his own bookseller and printer and issued both a "clean-text" subscription edition of his Homer translations and an "English style" popular edition, apparently convinced that there was a different audience for each system of accidentals (Nicholas Barker, "Pope and his Publishers," TLS, September 3, 1976, p. 1085). On the other hand, writers like Sarah Fielding simply assumed that it was the compositor's responsibility to smooth out their texts.

[8] While Digeon has argued that this parenthetical stage direction indicates the matrimonial dialogue was part of an earlier play that Fielding had attempted (see above, Chapter IV, p. 159), it should be pointed out that Fielding also includes a parenthetical

stage direction in the Ordinary's dialogue with Wild (IV.xiii.247) and in the straight narrative description of the French Captain's encounter with Wild (II.xi.108). In addition, Fielding interrupts Mrs. Heartfree's narration to insert two parenthetical sentences that serve as a sort of stage direction indicating Heartfree's smile and Mrs. Heartfree's laugh (IV.vii.209-10).

[9] See above, Chapter IV, p. 159.

[10] One action that Wild was purportedly responsible for in the first edition was changed by Fielding in order to correct a lapse in character consistency. Wild's illiteracy is well documented in his letter to Laetitia (III.vi), yet in introducing the dialogue between the Ordinary of Newgate and Wild, Fieldirg originally wrote that "unhappily we could procure only the Substance of a single Conference, which Mr. Wild committed to Paper the Moment after it had past" (1743; IV.xiii.385). It is unlikely that Wild could have recorded without a single misspelling the Ordinary's lengthy sermon, which incidentally put Wild to sleep. In the revision Fielding more credibly explains that the conference "was taken down in Short-hand by one who overheard it" (IV.xii.240).

[11] "Venienti occurite morbo" ("Oppose the disease as it first approaches."), Satires, iii.64. In Joseph Andrews, the surgeon at the Tow-wouses' inn misquotes this as "Veniente accurrite morbo" (JA, 2nd-5th ed., I.xiv).

[12] "Qui Color albus erat nunc est contrarius albo" ("The color which was white is now the reverse of white."), Metamorphoses, ii.541.

[13] The "author" is Sir Francis Bacon, the words are from The Advancement of Learning, II.xxiii.5.

[14] Except for a portion of the last paragraph, which in the revision is attached to the end of the preceding chapter (Iv.viii).

[15] An Apology for the Life of Mr. T[heophilus] C[ibber], Comedian. Being a Proper Sequel to the Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian. With an Historical View of the Stage to the Present Year. Supposed to be written by Himself. In the Stile and Manner of the Poet Laureat. (London: Printed for J. Mechell, 1740).

Dudden describes this pamphlet as an "anonymous skit on the ugly, flashy, loose-moralled hero of the stage, whose vanities and extravagances afforded constant entertainment to the coffee-house gossips." Fielding had ridiculed Theophilus Cibber (son of Colley) as Marplay Junior in The Author's Farce; as "Pistol" in

The Historical Register; and in several numbers of the Champion. Although it may be tempting to ascribe the life of "T.C." to Fielding, Dudden writes: "the pamphlet does not exhibit the technical peculiarities of Fielding's style; nor is there a shred of positive evidence which would justify us in holding him responsible for its composition" (I, 288, 289).

See below, Chapter VI, p. 307 and n. 21 for indications of another allusion to Theophilus Cibber that Fielding most probably makes in Jonathan Wild.

[16] Fielding first criticized Cibber's book in the Champion during April and May 1740.

The danger of attempting to date a work solely by hypothesizing that it was composed shortly after the time of a specific reference or allusion (cf. Digeon and the Licensing Act) may be seen in this example. It would have been logical for Fielding to have included the hit at Cibber when he wrote the original version of Jonathan Wild in 1742-43. The indisputable fact that Fielding did not insert the footnote alluding to Cibber until 1754 is proof, if any is needed, that an author's recall of recent events is not total and that his inclusion of certain material depends both on subjective associations and the conscious decision to develop a particular theme.

[17] For a discussion of Latitudinarian beliefs that inform much of Fielding's writing, see James A. Work, "Henry Fielding, Christian Censor," in The Age of Johnson: Essays Presented to Chauncey Brewster Tinker (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949) and Martin Battestin, The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1959).

[18] Fielding also let stand the following passage about Marybone: "He did not therefore pretend to the Reputation of being so much honester than other People; but could by no Means satisfy himself in the Commission of Murther, which was a Sin of the most heinous Nature, and so immediately prosecuted by God's Judgment . . . " (III.iii.130).

[19] Since Mrs. Heartfree is telling the story of her adventures, perhaps the change in terminology should be attributed to Fielding's characterization of Mrs. Heartfree and not that of the hermit and the chief magistrate.

[20] Proposals for printing the Miscellanies, Daily Post, June 5, 1742, quoted by Miller, "Introduction," M, p. xlvi.

[21] Fielding dedicated A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor (January 1753) to Pelham, who died on March 6, 1754, less than two weeks before publication of the second edition of Jonathan Wild.

[22] Fielding let stand his original comparison of Wild's manner when visiting Heartfree in prison to "that noble, bold, great Confidence with which a Prime Minister assures his Dependent, that the Place he promised him was disposed of before" (II.viii.98). He also retained the question "Now, suppose a Prig had as many Tools as any Prime Minister ever had, would he not be as Great as any Prime Minister whatsoever?" (I.xiv.59) and the assertion that whether Fortune "hath determined you shall be hanged or be a Prime Minister, it is in either Case lost Labour to resist" (IV.xiv.252).

[23] The word "Statesman" appears several times in the first edition. Although Walpole's flatterers used the word to describe the powerful Prime Minister, Fielding's occasional use of the term in the first edition suggests that in addition to his topical attack upon Walpole, he also was concerned from the start with political abuses in general.

[24] For the political connotations of the first part of the proverb, see above, Chapter IV, pp. 155-56.

[25] Cf. "Sir _____ [Robert], his merit or interest to shew, / Laid down the red ribbon to take up the blue: / By two strings already the knight hath been try'd, / But when twisted at _____ [Tyburn], the third / will decide" (The Champion, February 16, 1742, as quoted by Thomas Wright, Caricature History of the Georges [London: John Camden Hotten, 1868], p. 139). (Fielding had terminated his association with the Champion by the time this verse was published.)

For other satiric references to ribbons, see above, Chapter III, pp. 118, 121, and 128.

[26] Walpole's extrication of the government from responsibility for the South Sea Bubble in 1720 was the turning point of his career. In the subsequent reconstruction of the ministry, Walpole served as Chancellor of the Exchequer and First Lord of the Treasury.

Cf. "On Robbing the Exchequer" and reference to Walpole as "a very great Bubble," cited above, Chapter III, pp. 120-21, 118.

[27] See above, Chapter IV, n. 54.

[28] The desire to avoid any possible affront to Pelham may have also been a factor in Fielding's decision to delete most references to the offices of Prime Minister in the revision.

Part 3

CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Chapter VI

FIELDING'S AIM AND DESIGN

While an author's remarks about his work should not be taken as the ultimate word on the subject, any critical study of Jonathan Wild must take into account the ideas that Fielding expressed about the book at the time of its publication. Fielding devoted eighteen paragraphs or almost half of the Preface to the Miscellanies to Jonathan Wild, which he obviously considered to be the major work of the collection. In these paragraphs Fielding made several explicit statements about his intentions and methods as well as about his ethical and social views. Before examining the text of Jonathan Wild for direct evidence of Fielding's aim and design, it is helpful to consider his prefatory remarks, which suggest something of the strategies that were at work in the composition of the book.

The Preface to the Miscellanies

Unlike the Author's Preface, which immediately precedes Joseph Andrews in the first and all subsequent editions, Fielding's comments about Jonathan Wild were published apart from the text as a portion of the general preface in Volume One of the Miscellanies. When the second edition of Jonathan Wild was issued in a single volume in 1754, the original prefatory material was replaced by the brief "Advertisement"

From the PUBLISHER to the READER,"[1] which was most probably written by Fielding. Most reprints of Jonathan Wild during the past two hundred years have omitted both of these introductions.

Compared to the Author's Preface to Joseph Andrews and to the prologomenous chapters in Tom Jones, Fielding's prefatory comments about Jonathan Wild contain neither a comprehensive summary of the fundamental principles of his art nor a taxonomic or analytical description of his book. What Fielding does present in the Preface are some useful remarks about his intentions, a discussion of ethical and social views that inform the book, and an indication or two about methods that he employs. Following an account of the contents of Volumes One and Two of the Miscellanies, Fielding introduces Jonathan Wild with this statement about his aim and design:

> I come now to the Third and last Volume, which contains the History of Jonathan Wild. And here it will not, I apprehend, be necessary to acquaint my Reader, that my Design is not to enter the Lists with that excellent Historian, who from authentic Papers and Records, &c. hath already given so satisfactory an Account of the Life and Actions of this Great Man. I have not indeed the least Intention to depreciate the Veracity and Impartiality of that History; nor do I pretend to any of those Lights, not having, to my Knowledge, ever seen a single Paper relating to my Hero, save some short Memoirs, which about the Time of his Death were published in certain Chronicles called News-Papers, the Authority of which hath been sometimes questioned, and in the Ordinary of Newgate his Account, which generally contains a more particular Relation of what the Heroes are to suffer in the next World, than of what they did in this. (M, pp. 8-9)

The satisfactory biography to which Fielding refers is undoubtedly Defoe's A True & Genuine Account of the Life and Actions of Jonathan Wild, Not made up of Fiction and Fable, but taken from his Own Mouth, and collected from PAPERS of his own Writing. Of the six biographies

of Wild that appeared in 1725 this is by far the most objective, accurate, and complete. The "short Memoirs" that appeared in a newspaper about the time of Wild's death most probably are the accomplished Wild-Walpole satires that comprised the lead articles in the June 12 and June 19, 1725 numbers of Mist's Weekly Journal. Most certainly the Ordinary of Newgate's account is the pamphlet attributed to Thomas Purney, although it seems likely that Purney was away from London during Wild's last days.[2]

In order to avoid any possible confusion about the matter, Fielding draws an important distinction between these other accounts of Wild's life, which claimed to be based on fact, and his own fictional portrait: "To confess the Truth, my Narrative is rather of such Actions which he [Wild] might have performed, or would, or should have performed, than what he really did; and may, in Reality, as well suit any other such great Man, as the Person himself whose Name it bears" (M, p. 9). In focusing his narrative on what Wild might have, would have, or should have done, Fielding eschews the role of the historian and considers himself to be more on the side of the poet, whose business, according to Aristotle, is not to tell what has happened (as the historian does), but to relate "the kind of things that would happen --what is possible according to probability or necessity."[3] In claiming that his portrait of Wild may suit any other such great man as well, Fielding seems to echo his statement in Joseph Andrews: "I describe not Men, but Manners; not an Individual, but a Species" (III.i.189).

While Fielding explicitly distinguishes Jonathan Wild from the earlier "factual" pamphlets about the life of the real Wild, he nevertheless bases a good part of his book on the career and character of the notorious criminal, whose name alone had powerful ethical and political connotations for most knowledgeable readers of the period. Since one of the purposes of this study is to demonstrate how Fielding skillfully fused historical fact and disparate literary traditions in order to create an artful work of fiction, it is important to observe the ways in which Fielding's hero resembles and differs from the real Wild and to understand how Fielding's omissions, distortions, and additions helped to realize his artistic aims.

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Eighteenth-century accounts contain little information about Wild's family except that his father was a joiner and his mother a fruit and herb vendor. Fielding, on the other hand, invents a rather extensive genealogy for his hero, devoting an introductory chapter to as many of Wild's ancestors "as can be gathered out of the Rubbish of Antiquity" (I.ii.5). In a series of fictional thumbnail sketches, Fielding wittily reveals that Wild's forebears, from the fifth century through the reigns of Henry III, "Harry the Fifth," and Charles I, were all petty criminals, a good number of whom paid for their crimes with their lives.[4]

The distortion of Wild himself commences with his birthdate, which Fielding alters from 1683 to 1665, "the very Day when the Plague first broke out." Since Wild's mother could not resist

clandestinely retaining everything that she touched during pregnancy, Fielding's hero is said by some to have been born in London in a roundhouse or parish lockup--"an House of an orbicular or round Form in Covent-Garden" (I.iii.10). Instead of having been baptized in St. Peter's, Wolverhampton when a few days old, the fictional Wild has the dubious distinction of being christened some years later by Titus Oates, the fabricator of the Popish Plot, who was subsequently tried for sodomy and expelled from the Baptist sect for being a disorderly person and a hypocrite.[5] From the inception of his fictional biography Fielding thus gives a rather grim but comic tilt to his protagonist's story, replacing prosaic facts with imaginative exaggerations, employing humorously embellished language, and suggesting character with historical and ethical allusions.

When the real Wild arrived in London he spent two years and eight months in the Wood Street Compter as a debtor. Following his release he embarked upon his extensive criminal activities at the age of twenty-nine, but was not convicted of a single crime until the one for which he was hanged in his forty-second year. In contrast, when Fielding's young hero comes to town at seventeen he frequents assemblies, auctions, and playhouses, passing "for a Gentleman of great Fortune in the Funds" (I.vi.28) until an "Accident" (I.vii.28) obliges him to spend seven years abroad (that is, he is transported to the colonies for having committed an unspecified felony). This portrait of Wild as more of a beau than a hardened criminal is continued after his return to London, where he spends a good deal of his time playing cards, making pretentious speeches, courting

Laetitia, and losing his ill-gotten money at the gaming table.

As the story develops, Fielding glosses over particulars of the real Wild's extraordinary criminal career, including only a few details when it serves his purpose. To be sure, Wild becomes the leader of a "very considerable Gang" (II.vi.90), but he is hardly depicted as the efficient trainer, equipper, and regulator of countless thieves, nor as the prosperous receiver, storer, alterer, and shipper of booty that his gang had stolen for him. The real Wild operated vessels for the disposal of stolen goods abroad and the smuggling of contraband into British ports but there is no evidence that he left England at any time. Fielding's protagonist, after plotting the swindle and robbery of Heartfree and after fleeing from the country with Mrs. Heartfree, takes to the sea in drastically reduced circumstances. After Wild is prevented from ravishing Mrs. Heartfree on shipboard, the captain of a French privateer sets him adrift in an oarless boat with only half a dozen biscuits to prolong his misery. The climax of the first half of the book is Wild's "strange and yet natural Escape" (II.xii.112) from drowning after he has flung himself into the sea. Unlike the real Wild, who seems to have profited from all of his endeavors and who successfully projected a public image of semiofficial authority, the fictional Wild has to pose as a plundered merchant and borrow money from fishermen in order to make his way back to London.

Once again in his habitual surroundings, Wild attempts to destroy Heartfree at the same time that he dabbles in robbery, struggles to control his gang, wins the hand of Laetitia, and becomes

an irate cuckold. In these chapters Fielding touches lightly upon the better-known aspects of the real Wild's career, but does this primarily in passages that are incidental to the plot and in a manner that for the most part deflates or diminishes the actions and character of his hero. As we have seen, the real Wild developed the efficacious practice of advertising the loss of stolen goods in order to portray himself as a public benefactor at the same time that he alerted thieves and victims alike that a deal could be made.[6] Fielding, however, alludes to the advertising of stolen goods not in order to demonstrate the shrewdness of his hero, but in order to dramatize his lack of control over his underlings. After Fireblood robs a coach and informs Wild only of part of the booty, Fielding writes: "When an Advertisement of the Robbery was published, with a Reward promised for the Ring and the Watches, Fireblood was obliged to confess the whole, and to acquaint our Hero where he had pawned the Watches" (III.vi.141). Obviously the fictional Wild was not responsible for the placing of this advertisement, nor the one announcing the theft of a gold watch that Blueskin had taken (III.xiv.175) and insisted upon keeping.

Following Fireblood's attempt to cheat Wild by withholding booty, Fielding makes the rather unconvincing statement that his hero "brought his Gang to great Regularity: He was obeyed and feared by them all. He had likewise established an Office where all Men, who were robbed, paying the Value only (or a little more) of their Goods, might have them again" (III.vi.142). These few sentences are more a slightly embellished recitation of historical fact than a persuasive effort to depict Wild's authority and shrewdness.[7] The main purpose

of the assertion seems to be to qualify Wild as a suitable husband for Laetitia, for once Wild and Laetitia are married Fielding does not adequately develop the view of Wild as a feared leader of a gang or as the prosperous exploiter of the innocent public. One can easily imagine a scene in which Heartfree applies to Wild's "Lost Property Office" for the return of his stolen jewels and banknotes and is once again bilked by Wild, but Fielding is less interested in depicting the intricacies of Wild's criminal modus operandi than in pitting his hero's malevolence against Heartfree's goodness.

The assertion that the fictional Wild "brought his Gang to great Regularity" and was "obeyed and feared by them all" is contradicted by direct statement as well as by Fielding's significant alteration of the roles of two prominent members of the real Wild's gang. Even before Blueskin's effort to turn the gang against Wild, Fielding writes that his protagonist "was thoroughly convinced there was not a single Man amongst them [the gang], who would not, for the Value of five Shillings, bring him to the Gallows. These Apprehensions so constantly broke his Rest, and kept him so assiduously on his Guard, to frustrate and circumvent any Designs which might be forming against him; that his Condition, to any other than the glorious Eye of Ambition, might seem rather deplorable" (III.xiii.174).

Fielding transforms Blueskin Blake, who for most of his life was a passive recidivist depending upon the real Wild for his survival,[8] into a bold and ambitious rebel who ably rebuts the hero's grandiose philosophy. After Blueskin is impeached by Wild because he has refused to surrender the watch that he has stolen, Fielding has

Blueskin stab Wild, not in the throat as contemporary pamphlets record, but in the stomach, causing no other damage than effusive bleeding. With a few deft strokes Blueskin is made at once a serious challenge to Wild's authority and a quasi-comic device for literally deflating Wild by perforating "the Hollow of his Belly" (IV.i.186).

Roger Johnson, who served as the captain of the real Wild's ship and whom Wild twice helped to escape from the authorities, is more radically transformed. Although there is no evidence that the real Johnson ever rebelled against Wild or was in Newgate during Wild's imprisonment there, Fielding portrays Johnson as a formidable rival of Wild in the struggle for control of the prigs (thieves) of Newgate. Whatever loyalty the real Wild might have had for his longtime confederate is forgotten, and although Fielding's hero wrests the leadership of the prigs from Johnson, even in victory he is made to appear inferior to his predecessor.[9]

Fielding renders the denouement of his protagonist's intrigues with other distortions and shifts in emphasis. The arrest of the fictional Wild is recorded with a fleeting allusion to the section of the Transportation Act of 1717, known as "the Jonathan Wild Act," which made it a felony to receive a reward for returning stolen property without arresting and prosecuting the thief. This law and a section of the Transportation Act of 1719 that offered a special reward for the successful prosecution of an offender under the Jonathan Wild Act were not rigorously applied for several years before the real Wild's downfall.[10] Fielding, however, compresses time and credits a conscientious justice with bringing about the law that promptly puts

an end to his hero's crimes: "A learned Judge . . . procured a Clause in an Act of Parliament as a Trap for Wild, which he soon after fell into" (IV.i.186). Wild receives from some members of his gang a valuable piece of goods, which he returns to the owner for somewhat less than the original price. The owner of the property informs the authorities, who arrest Wild and remand him to Newgate.

The crime that proves to be Wild's undoing does not result from a generous impulse on his part or from a possible conspiracy by discontented thieves, as seems to have been the case with the real Wild.[11] Instead, the arrest of Fielding's hero is occasioned by his greed and by the alert response of officials. The real Wild was first arrested for having aided Roger Johnson in escaping from a constable. When Wild requested a delay for his trial on another charge (having accepted £50 for the return of a stolen banknote without prosecuting the thief), he made the fatal slip of the tongue that eventually furnished prosecutors with sufficient evidence to hang him. Fielding's hero makes no such error, for such a lapse would have demonstrated a serious deficiency in "greatness." "Not withstanding his utmost Caution and Prudence" and "a good Number of false Witnesses" (IV.xii.238), Wild is convicted by the diligent and efficient judicial system.

Once he is confined in Newgate Wild is not tormented by religious terrors as the Purney account reported that the real Wild had been. Fielding's hero does not request the sacrament, inquire what happens to the soul when it is separated from the body, or seriously question the impiety of suicide. To the contrary, he

treats the Ordinary to a bowl of punch and falls asleep during the chaplain's tedious sermon. The principal agony that Wild experiences in prison is the discovery that Laetitia, whom he had previously given the liberty to do as she pleased, has deceived him with Fireblood and consequently injured his honor as well as her own. The emphasis here is not on grief or repentance, but on comedy and satire. Only briefly but wittily does Fielding allude to Wild's unsuccessful attempt at suicide: "Laudanum, therefore, being unable to stop the Breath of our Hero, which the Fruit of Hemp-Seed, and not the Spirit of Poppy-Seed, was to overcome" (IV.xiv.252).

When Wild prepares for his last and noblest act, Fielding faithfully records some of the details of the real Wild's trip to Tyburn, which he had undoubtedly read in Defoe's True & Genuine Account. The rendering of the fictional Wild's final moment is crowned with an inventive comic touch that is consonant with the character of the protagonist and the habits of the Ordinary: "Wild, in the Midst of the Shower of Stones, &c. which played upon him, applied his Hands to the Parson's Pocket, and emptied it of his Bottle-Screw, which he carried out of the World in his Hand" (IV.xiv.254).

Although no mention is made of Wild's hands in Defoe's pamphlet, could Fielding possibly have gotten the idea for his hero's last act in the account of the real Wild's execution that appeared in Applebee's Journal of May 29, 1725? According to that report, which was most probably written by Defoe, the only indulgence that Wild received was "not having his Hands tied all the Way. . . . As the Cart drew away, his Arms being loose, he happened to catch hold of the

Coiner [Harpham, a fellow convict], but was immediately parted from him."[12]

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While Fielding took numerous liberties for artistic or satirical effect with details of the real Wild's life, he also shrewdly incorporated into his character many of his model's prominent traits and actions. The rhetorical skills of the real Wild were widely recognized by writers of the period, although nothing was mentioned about his skill as a writer. Perhaps it is to intuition, as well as to the desire to satirize the stylistic embellishments of historians, that we may attribute the sharp distinction that Fielding makes between his hero's effective speechifying and his illiterate private correspondence. Howson found that the real Wild had "acquired a fair skill at handwriting (though not, to judge by some letters that have survived, at grammar or spelling)."[13] Fielding humorously demonstrated his hero's writing style in the billet-doux to Laetitia, in which not a single line is free from errors of spelling or vocabulary.

Of more importance than private communications was the real Wild's talent for presenting himself to the public and to men of influence under a guise of respectability and righteousness. Relatively early in his career the real Wild hired a hack to refute the vigorous charges made against him by his former partner, Under-Marshall Hitchen, who had twice denounced him in pamphlets as a receiver, suborner, and protector of thieves. Later, when Wild

realized that the authorities were making a concerted effort to convict him, he wrote to the Earl of Dartmouth for protection, posing as a wronged citizen who was being ruined by the mistaken zeal of others. On the day before his trial Wild distributed to jurymen a pamphlet that recalled the service he had performed for his country and listed all of the criminals he had apprehended.[14]

Fielding astutely transforms the hypocritical, self-justifying pose that the real Wild had affected in his pamphlets, advertisements, and requests for reprieve into the more dramatic medium of speeches. Fielding's hero is not so much concerned with deceiving the authorities or the public at large as his model had been, but he does devote considerable attention to haranguing his fellow criminals, particularly on the subject of honor. "A Man of Honour is he that is called a Man of Honour; and while he is so called, he so remains, and no longer" (I.xiii.52), Wild lectures the thieving card players at Mr. Snap's. In chastising Fireblood for having withheld two silver watches and nine guineas from him, Wild warns his young confederate that "without Honour Priggery was at an End; that if a Prig had but Honour, he would overlook every Vice in the World" (III.vi.141). In these and numerous other passages Fielding cleverly builds upon the real Wild's genius for twisting the truth in a lively, persuasive manner. That Fielding has his hero deliver most of his spurious arguments and appeals to other thieves is an integral part of the book's satire, for in Fielding's view it is corrupt men who employ corrupt language.

Fielding's hero also manifests his model's talent for cajoling the reluctant and for verbally intimidating the recalcitrant and the rebellious. Fielding poignantly represents this first quality by having Wild persuade the steadfast Mrs. Heartfree to leave her husband and children and flee with him to Holland at the very time when her family needs her the most (II.ix). Wild is far less subtle in compelling Moll Straddle to impeach Tom Fierce (II.x), and in twice extorting money from Bagshot (I.viii; II.ii).

The real Wild's readiness to do battle with the countless thieves whom he subdued was attested by the multiple wounds that he suffered on his head, body, and legs. In contrast to the number of fights in Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, Fielding (briefly) depicts his hero only in a single serious battle[15] with the brutish captain who comes to the rescue of Mrs. Heartfree. In this scene there should be no question of Wild's abilities as a fighter, since it is plainly stated that "our Hero, had he not been overpowered with Numbers, who came down on their Captain's Side, would have been victorious" (II.x.107). Throughout the rest of the book Fielding seems to deemphasize Wild's physical prowess as part of a larger strategy to contrast the potent rhetoric of the hero with his repeated failures to realize almost all of his plans.

While the incorporation of some of the real Wild's traits and the broad outline of his career undoubtedly lent familiarity and a semblance of authenticity to the narrative, the many compressions, omissions, and distortions of fact that Fielding made profoundly shape the pacing, tone, and point of view of the book. The real Wild pursued his criminal career from the age of twenty-nine until

forty-two. Fielding's hero is twenty-five when he accidentally meets Heartfree a number of years after their friendship as schoolboys. Although the text contains only a few specific references to the passage of time after Wild resumes his acquaintance with Heartfree,[16] we may conclude from the details of Mrs. Heartfree's adventures that Wild accomplishes his final act of greatness in about one year. By condensing time and by simplifying Wild's criminal operations, Fielding creates a compact plot that has focus and swift narrative pacing as well as dramatizing with escalating intensity Wild's unrelenting quest for "greatness."

In portraying his hero's hypocrisy, cruelty, avarice, lust, and treachery, Fielding eschews any attempt to depict the remissness of the authorities and the complicity of the general public that enabled the real Wild to acquire considerable wealth and influence. To have included such material would have complicated the views that Fielding wanted to present by endowing his hero with a relative eminence and by detracting from the sharply delineated plot that pits goodness and innocence, as personified by Heartfree, against the almost total evil of Wild.

That the real Wild lived with six wives or mistresses and apparently was attractive to women is also conveniently overlooked by Fielding, who makes his hero consistently unsuccessful as a lover. Moll Straddle squanders the £200 that she stole from Wild on "Jack Swagger, a great Favourite of the Ladies" (II.v.87), but her relationship with the protagonist is strictly professional. The only interest that Mrs. Heartfree reveals in Wild is prompted by

her mistaken belief that he is helping her husband, and with Laetitia Wild quickly becomes a conventional comic cuckold. Wild's attempts to possess Mrs. Heartfree add complication and drama to the story while also providing a crucial test of Heartfree's faith. Wild's ill-fated adventures with Laetitia introduce an important element of comedy, furnishing Fielding with an effective device for making his monstrous hero appear not totally unsympathetic at the same time that he is continually deflated.

In short, while the real Wild enjoyed extraordinary success for many years, masterminding a vast network of thieves as he victimized innocent and guilty alike, Fielding's hero is part ruthless victimizer and part comic victim. When he torments the Heartfrees and betrays his fellow thieves, Wild exemplifies the efficient and cunning cruelty of his model. When he overreaches himself, as he does constantly, he is reduced to a ludicrous maladroit who would be quite at home in one of Fielding's farces.

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"A Second Caution I would give my Reader," Fielding continues in the Preface to the Miscellanies, is that the narration "is not a very faithful Portrait of Jonathan Wild himself, so neither is it intended to represent the Features of any other Person. Roguery, and not a Rogue, is my Subject; and as I have been so far from endeavouring to particularize any Individual, that I have with my utmost Art avoided it; so will any such Application be unfair in my Reader" (M, p. 9). That Fielding's intention, especially in the second edition, was to

unmask the evils of roguery in general cannot be denied, yet his assertion that in writing the original version of the book he did his utmost to avoid particularizing any individual must be said to be disingenuous.

Perhaps Fielding's disclaimer was prompted by a genuine desire not to offend anyone, or perhaps, remembering that his blatantly anti-Walpole plays had helped to bring about the Licensing Act, he feared (as unlikely as it may seem) the possibility of legal retaliation by those adherents of Walpole who still retained power. In any case, as was demonstrated in the preceding chapter, Fielding's original portrait of Wild contained numerous allusions to the reputation, proclivities, and former government positions of the "great man." That Fielding wrote a life of the "late" Wild eighteen years after the death of the thief-taker (but only a little over a year after Walpole's fall from office) and that he included in his fictional treatment a good number of unequivocal hits at Walpole strongly suggests that, notwithstanding his disavowal, Fielding fully intended his readers to explore all of the political-satirical implications of his work.

But Fielding's ultimate aim in Jonathan Wild was to transcend the particular and the partisan, and to reveal the true character of the "greatness" that was mistakenly esteemed by society. Fielding is most specific in the Preface about the nature of this greatness, which he declares is "totally devoid of Goodness" (M, p. 12). His name for the spurious quality is "Bombast Greatness," and Fielding says that its essential characteristics are "Parts" (by which he

primarily means intellect and shrewdness) and "Courage" (or will), as distinct from benevolence, honor, honesty, and charity, which characterize goodness. The distinction that Fielding draws between greatness and goodness and his description of both of these qualities is neither original nor profound. As Irwin ably demonstrates in The Making of Jonathan Wild (pp. 43-47), Fielding's use of these concepts is solidly grounded in the works of ethical theorists and popular moralists of the age.

Fielding goes on to liken "Bombast Greatness" to the false sublime in poetry, suggesting that the ignorant and ill-judging often misconceive the reprehensible for the admirable: "Thus Pride, Ostentation, Insolence, Cruelty, and every Kind of Villainy are often construed into True Greatness of Mind" (M, p. 12). These pernicious aspects of greatness, abetted by the corruption of language, form the crux of Fielding's concern in Jonathan Wild. He states the subject and principal aim of his book in the following manner: "This Bombast Greatness then is the Character I intend to expose; and the more this prevails in and deceives the World, taking to itself not only Riches and Power, but often Honour, or at least the Shadow of it, the more necessary is it to strip the Monster of these false Colours, and shew it in its native Deformity" (M, p. 12). The aim that Fielding announces here is the traditional, highly moral one of the satirist, whether he be writing short verse or lengthy prose. The animating passion is the desire to lay bare the truth and to criticize, either by direct statement or by implication, the evils and foibles of society. Implied in Fielding's stern warning

about the danger of allowing vice to reign is the urgent need for reform, since he believes that "by suffering Vice to possess the Reward of Virtue, we do a double Injury to Society, by encouraging the former, and taking away the chief Incentive to the latter" (M, p. 13).

In other passages of the Preface, Fielding sheds additional light on the assumptions, design, and techniques that shape Jonathan Wild. While disassociating himself from "some very shameless Writers"[17] who consider Newgate as no other than human nature with its mask off, Fielding writes:

> I think we may be excused for suspecting, that the splendid Palaces of the Great are often no other than Newgate with the Mask on. . . . Let any impartial Man in his Senses be asked, for which of these two Places a Composition of Cruelty, Lust, Avarice, Rapine, Insolence, Hypocrisy, Fraud and Treachery, was best fitted, surely his Answer must be certain and immediate; and yet I am afraid all these Ingredients glossed over with Wealth and a Title, have been treated with the highest Respect and Veneration in the one, while one or two of them have been condemned to the Gallows in the other. (M, p. 10)

Fielding's perception of the contrasting response to criminal behavior by the great and to criminal behavior by the inconsequential is central to his depiction of the efforts and pretenses of his hero. The fictional Wild cuts a far less formidable figure than his real-life model. By making his protagonist engage in a series of patently shoddy actions at the same time that he strives to imitate men of position, Fielding's purpose is to call attention to the similarities rather than the differences between criminality in the two strata of society. Fielding wants his petty thief to be seen in part as a man of influence, and more importantly he wants the man of influence to

be perceived in essence as not much more than a common criminal.

That most men could not, or would not, recognize the similarity between criminality among the great and criminality among the insignificant seems to have distressed Fielding acutely, even though he often diffused his sentiments in comic representation and commentary. One senses the depth of feeling that motivated Fielding's history of Wild from his statement in the Preface: "Nor do I know any thing which can raise an honest Man's Indignation higher than that the same Morals should be in one Place [Newgate] attended with all imaginable Misery and Infamy, and in the other [palaces of the great] with the highest Luxury and Honour" (M, p. 10). The moral outrage that lies at the heart of Jonathan Wild is, in a way, not unlike the passionate reaction to the public in 1725, when after many years of prosperity at their expense the real Wild was at last carted off to Tyburn.

Despite the memorable portrait of his hero as an utterly depraved villain, Fielding apparently intended to present in Jonathan Wild a balanced view of human nature in general. "I solemnly protest," he writes in the Preface, "I do by no means intend in the Character of my Hero to represent Human Nature in general" (M, p. 9). The distinction that Fielding draws between "greatness," which requires only intellect and will, and goodness, which consists of such virtues as benevolence, honesty, and honor, allows for the full range of man's nature. Accordingly, a man may be "Great without being Good, or Good without being Great." While goodness bears no necessary dependence on greatness, or vice versa, Fielding makes the significant point that "neither is there any absolute Repugnancy among them which may

totally prevent their Union." To the category of the great and the category of the good, Fielding adds a third category: "the Great and Good," which he describes as "the true Sublime in Human Nature . . . a perfect Work! the Iliad of Nature!" (M, p. 12).

It is essential to bear in mind all three of Fielding's categories because each informs the dynamics of Jonathan Wild, even though there is no character in the book who embodies the third category of the great and good. The greatness of Wild is diametrically set against the goodness of Heartfree, but to accept the latter as the genuine hero of the book is to misinterpret the lesson that Fielding intends to teach. The character of Heartfree has often been criticized unfairly by scholars who have failed to recognize the full scope of Fielding's aim and design. In the Preface Fielding provides a helpful perspective on the problem when he states that goodness alone "falls greatly short" of the perfection of greatness and goodness, and yet it has its merit. "On this Head I think proper to observe, that I do not conceive my Good Man to be absolutely a Fool or a Coward; but that he often partakes too little of Parts or Courage, to have any Pretensions to Greatness" (M, p. 12).

While Fielding acknowledges the shortcomings of his good man, as measured against the ideal great and good man, his main concern rests with the nature and fate of the great man, who eschews the sure and pleasurable rewards of goodness for the dangerous and painful deserts of greatness. Fielding writes in the Preface: "Nothing seems to me more preposterous than that, while the Way to true Honour lies so open and plain, Men should seek false by such Perverse and rugged Paths:

that while it is so easy and safe, and truly honourable, to be good, Men should wade through Difficulty and Danger, and real Infamy, to be Great, or, to use a synonimous Word, Villains" (M, p. 10). The happiness of the good man, in Fielding's view, can never be molested by fear, although fear in some degree always attends the great man. While the good man enjoys the double sweetness of innocence and virtue, the great man suffers frustration and anxiety. Occasionally the great man may acquire some transitory imperfect honor or pleasure, though more often he suffers the punishment without obtaining the reward. "This is the Doctrine which I have endeavoured to inculcate in this History," Fielding declares, "confining myself at the same Time within the Rules of Probability" (M, p. 11).

Although the design of Jonathan Wild encompasses allegorical elements resembling those of the morality play, the fable, and the romance, in constructing most of his narrative according to the rules of probability Fielding allies himself with Aristotle as well as with other novelists of the period, such as Defoe and Richardson, who strove to present credible, lifelike accounts of the experiences of their characters. The motivating passion of Fielding's book is the satirist's impulse to expose and to criticize, but even when he employs burlesque for these purposes Fielding, for the most part, tells his story in a realistic manner that will not challenge his reader's credulity.

A final brief remark in the Preface indicates that Fielding sought to temper his contemptuous attack upon greatness by heeding Horace's precept that the poet should both instruct and entertain his

audience. Horace observed in Ars Poetica that "the aim of the poet is to inform or delight, or to combine together, in what he says, both pleasure and applicability to life."[18] After elucidating the nature and perils of greatness, Fielding writes in the Preface: "As I believe it is not easy to teach a more useful Lesson than this, if I have been able to add the pleasant to it, I might flatter myself with having carried every Point" (M, p. 11).

How well Fielding carries every point must of course be considered in our study of Jonathan Wild itself. That Fielding attempted to blend the pleasing with the useful may be seen in the partial comic tilt that he gives Wild, in the pervasive maxims with which he embellishes the narration, in his humorous but wise observations about human nature and society, and in his implied vision of the truly admirable man.

In sum, the Preface to the Miscellanies includes many helpful statements about Fielding's aim and design in Jonathan Wild. He writes that his purpose is not to reconstruct an authentic account of historical fact, but rather to represent such actions as the real Wild might have, would have, or should have performed. The basic plan of the book develops the dramatic conflict between a diabolical embodiment of greatness and a decent but passive representation of goodness. Although Fielding intentionally depicts his good man as lacking certain admirable qualities, his principal target is the eponymous hero, whose false colors have to be stripped away so that his deformity and the dangers that he poses can be recognized by all. But Fielding's aim and design is also to temper the lash of the satirist with generous

examples of genial comedy and wise reflections. In this manner Fielding hoped to delight the reader at the same time that he instructed him in the evils of greatness.

The Text

Instructive as Fielding's prefatory statements about his intentions and methods are, it is of course to Jonathan Wild itself that we must turn for a full examination of his aim and design. In a work as rich in irony and satire as Jonathan Wild it is particularly risky to accept at face value any commentary by the author's personae about the purpose of the book. Yet by sorting out the ironic, the facetious, and the straightforward, by analyzing the dramatic structure of the action, and by recognizing the literary forms and devices that Fielding imitates and burlesques, we may gain additional insight into his true goals and the strategies that he developed in order to realize them.

Fielding begins his life of Wild with a rather inflated observation about the quintessence of history and the most appropriate method for the writer of such histories to use in affecting the reader:

> AS it is necessary that all great and surprizing Events, the Designs of which are laid, conducted, and brought to Perfection by the utmost Force of human Invention and Art, should be produced by great and eminent Men, so the Lives of such may be justly and properly styled the Quintessence of History. In these, when delivered to us by sensible Writers, we are not only most agreeably entertained, but most usefully instructed; for besides the attaining hence

> a consumable Knowledge of human Nature in general; of its secret Springs, various Windings, and perplexed Mazes; we have here before our Eyes lively Examples of whatever is amiable or detestable, worthy of Admiration or Abhorrence, and are consequently taught, in a Manner infinitely more effectual than by Precept, what we are eagerly to imitate or carefully to avoid. (I.i.1)

Fielding's recognition of the superiority of example over precept is a convention of his age and others and recalls the more direct opening of Joseph Andrews: "It is a trite but true Observation, that Examples work more forcibly on the Mind than Precepts: And if this be just in what is odious and blameable, it is more strongly so in what is amiable and praise-worthy" (I.i.17). While the emphasis in Joseph Andrews is on the amiable and praiseworthy examples of Joseph and Parson Adams, Fielding's main concern in Jonathan Wild is with the odious and blameable eponymous hero. Unlike his aim and method in Joseph Andrews, in which the generally admirable behavior of Joseph and Adams is presented in a straightforward manner, Fielding depicts Wild in a series of unmistakably cruel, hypocritical, and treacherous actions that are lavishly praised by a mock biographer.

Clearly Fielding associates himself with those "sensible Writers" mentioned in the book's opening paragraph, who not only most agreeably entertain, but who most usefully instruct the reader in the complexities of human nature and in the various types of behavior to imitate or to avoid. Fielding's intention is for the reader to compare the base and unsuccessful actions of Wild with the extravagant encomiums of the mock biographer and thus come to a fuller understanding of the nature of greatness and the spurious praise that has been bestowed upon great men throughout history. In inculcating his

lesson Fielding offers a good deal of agreeable entertainment in the form of witty commentary, humorous characterization, and the ironic juxtaposition of inflated pronouncements with the consistently hapless adventures of the hero.

The importance in Fielding's overall design of the continually shifting tones of the text, in contrast to the more clearly delineated action of the narrative, may be seen best in the opening and closing chapters of the book. The facetious first chapter, "Shewing the wholesome Uses drawn from recording the Atchievements of those wonderful Productions of Nature called GREAT MEN," establishes the persona of the mock biographer, who combines irony with playfulness and direct commentary. After acknowledging the advantage of example over precept, the biographer sets forth a mock purpose for the work. Following Plutarch, Nepos, and Suetonius, he asserts that the majority of men are neither totally good nor bad, "their greatest Virtues being obscured and allayed by their Vices, and those again softened and coloured over by their Virtues." Of this kind, the mock biographer claims, is the subject of the following history:

> WE would not therefore be understood to affect giving the Reader a perfect or consummate Pattern of human Excellence; but rather, by faithfully recording some little Imperfections, which shadowed over the Lustre of those great Qualities which we shall here record, to teach the Lesson we have above mentioned; to induce our Reader with us to lament the Frailty of human Nature, and to convince him that no Mortal, after a thorough Scrutiny, can be a proper Object of our Adoration. (I.i.2, 3)

While the lament about the frailty of human nature is a joke when applied to Wild, it does prepare the reader for a proper interpretation of Heartfree, whom Fielding does not intend to be taken as

an altogether worthy object of adoration. The mock biographer of course does far more than record some little imperfections of Wild. By laboring diligently to "discover all, as, to preserve the Fidelity of our History, we must" (I.x.40), the biographer introduces abundant material that demonstrates Wild's almost total baseness, and in so doing serves Fielding's real aim of disclosing the abhorrent nature of greatness.

Although the extensive use of irony in Jonathan Wild has long been a favorite subject of critics and scholars, it is important to note that the irony is at times qualified by straightforward statement and an unequivocal definition of terms. As Fielding does in the Preface, the biographer draws a sharp distinction between the ideas of greatness and of goodness, which he says have often been confounded by mankind. "No two Things can possibly be more distinct from each other," the biographer makes clear at the beginning of his history. "For Greatness consists in bringing all Manner of Mischief on Mankind, and Goodness in removing it from them" (I.i.3).

In the final paragraphs of the opening chapter the mock biographer explains the philosophy and rhetorical method that inform his life of Wild. "Sneaking" qualities such as benevolence, generosity, clemency, and kindness, which other writers have disingenuously attributed to heroes like Alexander and Caesar are to be considered as imperfections, rather than as admirable ornaments, because they obscure the glory of great men by preventing them from perpetuating vast and mighty mischief on mankind. Unlike those writers who confound greatness and goodness by paying their heroes an additional

unearned compliment of goodness, the mock biographer aspires to a more scrupulous portrayal of fact and character. In his faithful recording of the actions of Wild the biographer declares that he has "no where mentioned any Spark of Goodness, which had discovered itself either faintly in him [Wild], or more glaringly in any other Person, but as a Meanness and Imperfection, disqualifying them for Undertakings which lead to Honour and Esteem among Men." Because Wild possesses only enough goodness to make him a "Partaker of the Imperfection of Humanity, instead of the Perfection of Diabolism," the biographer explains that "we have ventured to call him THE GREAT; nor do we doubt but our Reader, when he hath perused his Story, will concur with us in allowing him that Title" (I.i.4, 4-5).

After depicting Wild's various activities and his final apotheosis, the biographer concludes Book IV with a fulsome appreciation of Wild's traits and achievements, which when taken together "present our Readers with a perfect Picture of Greatness." Wild's ambition, ingenuity, resoluteness, boldness, lust, avarice, and hypocrisy are all extolled, the maxims by which he lived are recorded for posterity, and his accomplishments as a criminal summarized with admiration. Although the mock biographer concedes that there have been a few heroes who have done greater mischief to mankind than Wild, he affirms that Wild achieved "that Degree of Greatness, which few have equalled; none, we may say, have exceeded. . . . Indeed while Greatness consists in Power, Pride, Insolence, and doing Mischief to Mankind;--to speak out,--while a great Man and a great Rogue are synonymous Terms, so long shall Wild stand unrivalled on the

Pinnacle of GREATNESS" (IV.xv.255, 259, 261).

Fielding thus frames his history of Wild with an introductory chapter in which the mock biographer defines and explains his view of greatness and a concluding chapter in which the biographer offers his fulsome estimation of the character and actions of the hero. The commentary in these passages is an artful blend of irony, playful comedy, and straightforward statement that expresses Fielding's aim and design by demonstrating the improper use of the term greatness, by amusing the reader with wit and humor, and by imparting plain-spoken observations about reprehensible behavior that the public wrongly esteems as true greatness.

While these two chapters are both entertaining and edifying, they are essentially brief essays, not unlike some of Fielding's writing in the Champion, rather than passages of prose narrative that one normally associates with the novel. It remained for Fielding to design a unifying action for the book through which he could determine his ideas and appeal to the emotional, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic interests of the reader.

In contrast to Fielding's complex intermingling of genres, modes, and voices, the basic action of Jonathan Wild is starkly simple. On a scale from Joseph Andrews to Tom Jones to Amelia, Jonathan Wild is the simplest of Fielding's novels in the respect that it contains almost no moral ambiguities. As in a medieval morality play, the action dramatizes a moral argument with the major characters personifying conflicting abstract ideas. In his development of the obvious analogies between personalities and moral concepts, Fielding scarcely

gives his characters a moment of hesitation, doubt, or weakness.

The modern reader may become impatient with Fielding's simplistic designation of characters as almost totally "good" or totally "bad," and it is perhaps tempting also to dismiss on similar grounds the eighteenth-century ethical theories in which Fielding seems to have genuinely believed and which he used as the organizing principle of his book. It should be noted, however, that these ethical commonplaces were powerful forces in Fielding's age, that much of the fiction of the period dealt in simplifications (often accompanied with considerable didacticism), and that such literary treatments held a strong emotional and ethical appeal for readers of the time.

While Fielding may in fact have been incapable of living with moral ambiguities, it is also important to recognize the degree to which one of the central literary strategies of Jonathan Wild imposes limitations on Fielding's approach to morals. The dominant satiric tone that Fielding achieves principally (but not exclusively) through the mock biographer's praise of Wild's baseness informs the book with much of its force. Inventive and effective as this technique is, it also diminishes the possibilities of moral ambiguity compared to the opportunities that exist in novels like Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia, which belong more properly to the modes of the comic and the tragic. To put the matter another way, an author's ability to represent moral ambiguity may be determined by his temperament, by his convictions, and by the accepted values of his society; the absence or presence of moral ambiguity is also

determined, however, by the dominant modes in which an author writes and the specific literary strategies that he employs.

The clear and consistent design of the plot of Jonathan Wild merits further examination, not because of any surprises or hidden meanings that it holds for even the most elementary reader, but because of the thorough and harmonious manner in which Fielding works out the various configurations of ideas and characters. The aesthetic appeal that such an arrangement held for the Augustan sensibility, which valued formal planning, order, clarity, and balance, should not be overlooked.

Nowhere in the organization of Fielding's novels or dramatic works is his propensity for creating contrasting paired characters more evident than in Jonathan Wild.[19] The eponymous hero--active, bold, and cunning--is diametrically opposed to Heartfree, the passive, modest, rather gullible merchant. Whereas the character of Wild is rooted in historical fact, Heartfree seems to owe what life he has primarily to Fielding's conception of him as the schematic obverse of Wild.[20] While Wild has almost no concern for people except to the extent that they can satisfy his greed or lust, Heartfree is totally devoted to his wife and two children. Wild craves all the booty that he can reap from the labor of others, but Heartfree makes a modest living from his own labor, never taking the least advantage of his customers and at times being too liberal in extending credit. Wild's regard for religion is such that he prefers to spend his last hours with the Ordinary drinking a bowl of punch. Heartfree, on the other hand, is a paragon of Latitudinarian beliefs, incurring

the wrath of the Ordinary for his conviction that even a sincere Turk can be saved. Wild is, in short, dishonest, unbridled, and rapacious; Heartfree, in contrast, is honest, restrained, and generous in both a material and spiritual sense. The mock biographer aptly summarizes the symbiotic relationship between Wild and Heartfree when he states that the character of the latter "will serve as a Kind of Foil to the noble and Great Disposition of our Hero, . . . as the one seems sent into this World as a proper Object on which the Talents of the other were to be displayed with a proper and just Success" (II.i.64).

The contrasting parallel between Wild and his foil is mirrored in the relationships that these two principal characters have with their respective spouses and associates. Wild enters into a marriage of sorts with Laetitia, who soon berates and betrays him, while Mrs. Heartfree remains faithful to Heartfree in the face of nearly overwhelming odds. When Heartfree first learns of his losses Mrs. Heartfree attempts to relieve his pain by "assuring him that no State of Life could appear unhappy to her with him, unless his own Sorrow or Discontent made it so" (II.vii.94). Laetitia responds to Wild's imprisonment by maintaining that she is "the only Person to be pitied" (IV.ii.189) for his failure, and on the eve of Wild's execution she proceeds to recapitulate his faults "in an exacter Order and with more perfect Memory than one would have imagined her capable of" (IV.xiv.252). Most probably Laetitia would have given up her pretense of chastity with Wild had his gift of a necklace been real instead of paste. Mrs. Heartfree, in contrast, refuses

the "immense Present" (IV.xi.235) offered to her by the African magistrate in return for her favors. By the end of Mrs. Heartfree's adventures the number of unsuccessful assaults on her virtue made by Wild, two sea captains, the Count, and the hermit almost complements equally the number of Laetitia's reported intrigues with Smirk, Bagshot, Jack Strongbow, and Fireblood.

Wild's principal confederate is Fireblood, who has "every Qualification to make a Second-Rate GREAT MAN" (III.iv.132), since he has not a single grain of humanity, modesty, or fear. Fireblood withholds booty from Wild, nearly ravishes Laetitia when delivering Wild's love letter to her, and informs Wild about rebellious members of the gang (with whom he had sided) only after realizing that their cause is doomed. When he encounters Wild by chance in Newgate (having come there to visit the recently imprisoned Laetitia), Fireblood refuses Wild's request for a few guineas, claiming that he does not have a farthing in his pocket, although he does have a banknote. Fireblood's final act of betrayal occurs when he knows that he will be convicted for robbery. In order to save himself he offers evidence against his accomplices and reveals the false testimony that he and Wild had given against Heartfree, claiming that he had been seduced to do so by Wild.

Heartfree is assisted throughout his tribulations by Jack Friendly, the "good Apprentice," who offers his unwavering material and emotional support. When Heartfree questions the loyalty of his wife and asks Friendly if he too intends to forsake him, the young apprentice replies that "he would die sooner than entertain such a

Thought" (III.i.122). Unlike Fireblood's hypocritical oaths of loyalty, Friendly's words are sincere. He encourages Heartfree's suspicions of Wild, obtains a warrant for Wild's arrest, and searches for him with a constable for several days. When Heartfree is remanded to Newgate, Friendly advances every shilling in his pocket to procure a room in the Press Yard for his master. Despite the "utmost Efforts" (IV.i.184) of the faithful apprentice, Heartfree is convicted by a jury at the Old Bailey. Friendly's most moving display of loyalty is his promise to Heartfree that should any misfortune happen to him he will employ his own fortune in order to care for Heartfree's family: "Your younger Daughter I will provide for, and as for my little Prattler, your elder, as I never yet thought of any Woman for a Wife, I will receive her as such at your Hands; nor will I ever relinquish her for another" (IV.i.183).

The consistent pairing of all good and bad characters would of course eliminate the elements of surprise and variety that add much to a narrative of the length of Jonathan Wild. Without destroying the basic antithesis of greatness and goodness and of evil nature and good nature that is delineated in the foil relationships of the principal characters, Fielding also creates a cast of interesting minor characters who are not contrastingly paired, such as Count La Ruse, Bagshot, Moll Straddle, Blueskin, the hermit, and the good magistrate. The function of these minor characters is to develop and complicate the action while articulating the full range of the book's themes. With skill and imagination Fielding integrates both the paired and

unpaired characters in a well-constructed plot that allows actions to progress in kind and in degree with a deepening of motivation and conflict that builds to a satisfying climax.

Although the mode, tone, and pacing of individual passages vary greatly, the overall structure of Jonathan Wild is remarkably regular, consisting of four books of an almost equal number of chapters. Book I introduces Wild's initial groupings towards greatness by depicting actions that are essentially comic. With the introduction of the Heartfrees in Book II, the plot thickens. The swindling and robbery of Heartfree that Wild masterminds and his deception and attempted rape of Mrs. Heartfree are repetitions of his petty thievery and unsuccessful courtship of Laetitia in Book I, only magnified considerably in baseness and in their effects upon the victims. In Book III, Wild pursues his vengeful destruction of Heartfree with increased determination that Fielding counterpoints with the hero's comical wooing of Laetitia and the ludicrous aftermath of their marriage.

Within the larger formal units of these first three books Fielding repeats certain patterns of behavior that enhance characterization and the development of plot. In Book I, for example, Wild pays an amiable visit to the Count after having plotted his robbery and received most of the booty that was actually taken by Bagshot. In Book II, after his plan for the swindling and robbing of Heartfree has been carried out, Wild visits the victim, feigning great sorrow and indignation at his loss but borrowing without any real need thirty guineas form the still trusting Heartfree. In Book III, Wild

visits Heartfree twice more, pretending to help his victim while in fact he attempts to entice Heartfree into criminal acts that would result in his execution.

More importantly, Wild's practice of impeaching those who could do him injury because of their knowledge of crimes that he had either planned or committed lends substance and tension to his plot against Heartfree. In Book II, Wild blackmails Moll Straddle into impeaching Tom Fierce for his part in the robbery of Heartfree. In Book III, Wild has Marybone impeached for agreeing to rob but not to commit murder. Wild succeeds in bringing about the execution of both Fierce and Marybone, and after he and Fireblood make false depositions against Heartfree, the expectation is developed that Wild may also succeed in having Heartfree executed.

Counterpointing these serious developments are Laetitia's repeated rejections of Wild in scenes of mounting comedy and satire. In Book I, Laetitia physically repels Wild's advances after he has presented her with a snuffbox, which he had bought in a toy store. In Book II, Laetitia rejects Wild's offer of what he believes to be a valuable necklace taken from Heartfree. In Book III, after two weeks of marriage, Laetitia rejects Wild altogether, vowing never to enter his bed again. Their matrimonial dialogue is a searing satire on society marriages as well as inventive comic preparation for Laetitia's and Fireblood's betrayal of Wild in Book IV.

Fielding sets the scene for the final book in Newgate and in the tradition of the last act of plays brings all of the principal characters on stage to resolve the various strands of the plot.

Heartfree is found guilty by the jury and sentenced to death; Wild is arrested for the capital offense of having returned stolen goods to the rightful owner without arresting the thieves. While both men await their fates they are reunited with their respective spouses. Laetitia has been arrested for picking pockets and Mrs. Heartfree suddenly reappears just as Heartfree is about to be conveyed to Tyburn. With the arrest and confession of Fireblood the stage is set for Fielding's final distribution of rewards to each character. Wild is granted the opportunity to consummate his greatness and achieves what few great men have been able to accomplish, being hanged by the neck until dead. Heartfree is pardoned and both his reputation and his stolen jewels are restored. Mrs. Heartfree is allowed to keep the diamond of prodigious value that the African magistrate had given her, and she and Heartfree are promised a long life of prosperity, love, and friendship. Although the action of the book ends at this point, Fielding's complete fidelity to his ethical beliefs is revealed in the brief references that he provides concerning the fates of the other lesser characters.

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Intertwined with the simplistic opposition of goodness and greatness in both paired and unpaired characters are more complex patterns that also form an integral part of Fielding's aim and design. In the Preface to the Miscellanies Fielding is somewhat ambiguous about the possibility of great men's reaping some kind of reward. He writes: "And though perhaps it sometimes happens, contrary to the

Instances I have given, that the Villain succeeds in his Pursuit, and acquires some transitory imperfect Honour or Pleasure to himself for his Iniquity; yet I believe he oftener shares the Fate of my Hero, and suffers the Punishment, without obtaining the Reward" (M, p. 11). In Jonathan Wild Fielding is far more specific about the rewards awaiting his great man. In depicting Wild's relentless striving for greatness Fielding's design is that his hero never attain riches or honor, and only the most transient of carnal pleasure.

Much of the entertainment in Jonathan Wild, as well as edification derived from the frustration and punishment in store for those who aspire to greatness, is provided by the comic undercutting of Wild. Fielding achieves this effect by dramatizing Wild's lack of material success with numerous examples and by juxtaposing Wild's grandiose aspirations and rhetoric with his lowly circumstances. Both of these techniques are firmly established in Book I, in which Wild demonstrates his talent as a pickpocket, as the contriver of robberies, and as an intimidating manipulator of other criminals. His actions do not improve his circumstances for very long, however. From the pocket of the sleeping Count Wild extricates only three shillings (I.v). He receives three-fourths of the booty for plotting Bagshot's robbery of the Count (I.viii), and he takes the greatest part of the booty that the grave gentleman filches from Bagshot (I.xiii) to amass sixty-five guineas, every farthing of which he promptly loses at dice. Undaunted, Wild plots the robbery of the biggest winner at the gaming house, but he nets only eighteen pence, half of the two-shilling booty for himself and one-half of

his accomplice's share (I.xiv).

Fielding's more subtle use of situational irony capitalizes on Wild's flair for inflated, persuasive-sounding rhetoric, or what Fielding refers to in the Preface as "Bombast Greatness" (M, p. 13). The technique first appears in Wild's debate with the Count about the relative merits of great men and common thieves (I.v). The statesmanlike discourse at Mr. Snap's sponging house (where the Count has been confined for failure to pay his tailor) is occasioned by the Count's offer to introduce Wild to superior company who would enable him to reap greater rewards for his criminal talents. Wild's rejoinders, which would better become a member of Parliament or the Bar than a burgeoning petty thief, are expressed in formal language that makes use of complex syntax and closely reasoned analyses, definitions, qualifications, and comparisons. As he does in subsequent scenes Fielding resolves Wild's display of rather rarefied rhetoric by having him commit a base act. In this case, just as Wild is about to win his point on the advantages of being a prig instead of a statesman, he notices that the Count has fallen asleep. Cutting short his argument, Wild picks the Count's pocket before waking him to take his leave.

A similar pattern of lofty rhetoric delivered under ignoble conditions and concluded by a base action occurs when Wild expatiates upon the proper division and reward of labor (I.viii) and on the true nature of honor (I.xiii). The first scene takes place in a tavern where Wild and Bagshot have repaired to divide the booty that Bagshot

has stolen from the Count. Wild alludes to the Book of Genesis and refers to the first book of Aristotle's Politics in arguing that the higher order of mortals are born only to devour the fruits of the earth and that Bagshot, who was only the executor of his plan to rob the Count, should therefore not expect a share of the profits. Although Bagshot cannot speak as eloquently as Wild, he temporarily refutes the hero by laying a hand on his pistol. Wild draws his own weapon and threatens Bagshot in such a manner that the latter agrees to "lend" (I.viii.34) Wild half of his own share of the booty. In the second scene Wild defends as a "Man of Honour" (I.xiii.53) the grave gentleman who is accused of picking Bagshot's pocket during a game of hazard at Mr. Snap's. Wild's vigorous argument is sustained by a series of questions and answers, tautological explanations, and pompous pronouncements that are embellished with formal diction and couched in impeccable syntax. Despite the impressiveness of Wild's address, he finally resolves the dispute by rapping out a hearty oath and challenging anyone who dares to contradict him. Only after Wild's speech does the reader learn that Wild had set the grave gentleman to work picking Bagshot's pocket and that Wild will receive the greater part of the booty.

In Books II, III, and IV, Fielding continues to dramatize through the use of concrete example and situational irony his hero's failure to attain rewards of wealth, pleasure, power, or honor. Although Wild's primary motivation progresses from avarice to lust to revenge, he remains consistently unsuccessful. The most striking example of Wild's lack of material success occurs when he learns in a

single scene that the Count had cheated him of £3,000 in jewels and that Moll Straddle has picked his pocket of £900 in banknotes (II.iii). Wild's attempted ravishing of Mrs. Heartfree at sea (II.x) is a fiasco and his happiness with Laetitia lasts but two weeks (III.viii). His repeated efforts to persuade Heartfree to commit a capital crime help to arouse the good man's suspicions and culminate in the arrival of a constable with a writ for his own arrest (III.v, x). In addition, Wild's quest for power and honor as leader of a gang is constantly thwarted. Marybone refuses Wild's order to commit murder (III.iii), Fireblood and Blueskin withhold booty (III.vi, xiv), and Blueskin stabs Wild in the stomach for having impeached him (IV.i). Even the felony for which Wild gives his life reveals a certain diminishment of his talents and rewards. Wild is remanded to Newgate for having returned to the owner a valuable piece of stolen goods "for a Consideration somewhat short of its original Price" (IV.ii.187) [italics mine]. In an earlier passage noting Wild's progress as a criminal and referring to the promising light in which he was regarded by all, the mock biographer has written that Wild had "established an Office where all men, who were robbed, paying the Value only (or a little more) of their Goods, might have them again" (III.vi.142).

As Wild's fortunes decline Fielding's use of situational irony becomes more telling. After Wild learns that he has been duped by the Count, who is well on his way to Dover with Heartfree's jewels, he delivers an inspiring soliloquy on the hardships, hazards, and heroics of aspiring to greatness (II.iv). The setting is a common wine cellar to which Wild has retired without a farthing in his pocket,

but his exalted reflections are an uncommon example of the rhetorician's art and the great man's willingness to accept his fate. Having finished his soliloquy and his punch, Wild attempts to borrow a guinea from a confederate before marching off without paying.

The climax of the first half of Jonathan Wild occurs when the protagonist is cast adrift in an oarless boat to face starvation or drowning. Wild responds to the challenge by thundering a round of blasphemies, proclaiming his superiority to fear, and then defying the devil and death itself by leaping headlong into the sea--only to regain his place safely in the boat after a brief swim (II.xii, xiii).

In Book IV, Wild's talent for bombast, casuistry, and hypocrisy is subjected to further ironic treatment following his imprisonment. In a florid but persuasive address Wild informs his fellow inmates that the Liberty of Newgate is at stake and that Roger Johnson has exploited them by taking their money and by flaunting the gaudy trappings of power (a gown, waistcoat, and cap) without helping them. True to form, soon after supplanting Johnson, Wild debases himself by donning Johnson's ill-fitting clothes and earning the envy and hatred of all the prisoners, including those who originally had supported him (IV.iii).

The arrival of Heartfree's death warrant causes Wild to deliberate whether or not to save the life of the good merchant and thus irrevocably sully the reputation that he has acquired with difficulty. Before condemning Heartfree to his fate, Wild struggles heroically to set his actions in perspective. He weighs the life of a single innocent man against the many who died for the honor of

first-rate and second-rate great men, and identifying himself with Alexander, he concludes that like that great hero he should weep with joy that he has ruined no more people than he has (IV.iv).

Wild's final rhetorical outburst is in defense of his honor and that of Laetitia, whom he discovers in Fireblood's arms (IV.x). Wild remonstrates at length about the irreparable injury that has been done to him, he invokes the purity of the Wilds' blood for many generations, and he threatens to take legal action against his wife and trusted friend.[21] Despite the elegance and passion of Wild's words and the stunning hypocrisy of his arguments, he is unable to intimidate Fireblood and the two fall to boxing even though they are encumbered with leg irons.

In all of the above scenes Fielding effectively juxtaposes Wild's pretentious ideas and grand rhetoric with his lowly circumstances, often capping the situational irony with an additional base action by Wild. The result of these techniques is a systematic undercutting of Wild's relentless quest for greatness. The aspirations and ideals by which Wild lives are roundly ridiculed at the same time that Wild's failure to profit from his philosophy is plainly revealed.

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A final important element of Fielding's aim and design is his linking, in the Augustan tradition, of aesthetics and morals through the allusion to and the imitation and burlesque of numerous literary forms and devices.[22] While the reader may tire of Fielding's simplistic and rather repetitious portrayal of good and evil behavior,

the range, discernment, and inventiveness of the interconnections between ethics and literature are a constantly enriching source of delight.

On the simplest level Fielding merely mentions authors and literary works as a shorthand method of assessing character. Fireblood is accordingly introduced as "the Achates of our Aeneas, or rather the Haephaestion of our Alexander" (II.iv.132), and Tom Smirk, along with beaus of greater rank, is dismissed with the prolix but absolute judgment: "Let any Man chuse to himself two Beaus, let them be Captains or Colonels, as well dressed Men as ever lived, I would venture to oppose a single Sir Isaac Newton, a Shakespaer, a Milton . . . and I very much doubt, whether it had not been better for the World in general, that neither of these Beaus had ever been born, than that it should have wanted the Benefit arising to it from the Labour of any one of those Persons" (I.x.39-40).

To a certain extent the character of Wild himself may be said to have been shaped by inferior literature or by his selective knowledge of superior literature. When Wild was a schoolboy his favorite book was The Spanish Rogue and his favorite play was The Cheats of Scapin.[23] Although Wild did not read Greek or Latin, from translations provided by classmates he learned about and greatly admired acts of extortion, exaction, and robbery as depicted in Books XI of the Iliad and in Book VIII of the Aeneid (I.iii).

At times the mock biographer comments on the character of Wild and reveals his skills and thoughts with allusions to well-known books of the period. For example, the biographer records that while

Wild was still at school the future great man stole "a Book, called Gradus ad Parnassum,[24] i.e. A Step toward Parnassus; on which Account his Master, who was a Man of most wonderful Wit and Sagacity, is said to have told him, he wished it might not prove in the Event, Gradus ad Patibulum, i.e. A Step towards the Gallows" (I.iii.12). When Wild writes his illiterate billet-doux to the "adwhorable" Laetitia, the biographer praises Wild's letter as "a much better Pattern for that Epistolary kind of Writing, which is generally called LOVE-LETTERS, than any to be found in the Academy of Compliments"[25] (III.vi.143). Another popular work of the period plays a part in Wild's misreading of Heartfree's decision not to break legal and moral laws. Wild erroneously attributes Heartfree's refusal to consider murder in order to save himself "either to a Fear of bloodying his Hands, or the Apprehension of a Ghost, or lest he should make an additional Example in that excellent Book called, God's Revenge against Murther"[26] (III.x.161).

More fully integrated in the plot organization is Fielding's imitation and burlesque of literary forms and devices, which help to express and evaluate the action. As we have seen, Fielding frames his history of Wild with an opening chapter in which the mock biographer aspires to the scrupulous portrayal of fact, and a closing chapter in which the biographer offers a fulsome appreciation of Wild's qualities and accomplishments. The literary form that Fielding most consistently imitates and burlesques in Jonathan Wild is the exemplary biography. It is the outward form that provides overall shape to the narrative, and it is the vehicle by which Fielding links the actions of Wild with

greater historical figures, criticizes the methodology of historians, and reveals corrective truths about the nature of greatness and its perception by writers and ordinary people.

William Farrell has pointed out that Fielding begins his narrative with the style and sentiment of high biography.[27] In the second paragraph of the opening chapter the mock biographer mentions Plutarch, Nepos, and Suetonius as worthy biographers, and three paragraphs further he first refers to the histories of such great men as Alexander and Caesar.[28] In the remainder of Book I, Fielding includes many of the topoi of classical biography, such as the subject's ancestry, parentage, birthplace, alleged prodigies at nativity, formative education, teachers, and reading.

A number of scholars have examined various biographies in attempts to find a specific model for Fielding's book. John Edwin Wells was the first to call attention to the similarities between the genealogy that Fielding invents for Wild and that of Walpole that appeared in William Musgrave's The Brief and True History of Robert Walpole and his Family (1738).[29] In addition to finding parallels between the beginnings of Jonathan Wild and Plutarch's life of Alexander, Farrell has compared the opening chapter of Jonathan Wild with Conyers Middleton's Life of Cicero (1741), the period's most famous biography, which Fielding had parodied in both Shamela and Joseph Andrews. Farrell concludes: "So great is the similarity, in fact, that it is quite possible Fielding had Middleton's preface in mind when he wrote these paragraphs, especially since he knew The Life of Cicero well."[30]

While it is tempting to think of Fielding's use of the biographical form as parody, that is, the imitation and burlesque of a specific biography or two, to do so would be reductive and miss the greater scope of Fielding's aim and design. Fielding may well have included individual hits at the biographies written by Middleton and Musgrave, but his overall strategy is to burlesque the entire genre of biography, from classical times to the eighteenth century, in order to comment on great men of all ages. By depicting the life of a petty thief with the topoi usually employed for recording the lives of illustrious men, Fielding's aim is not so much to debase Wild or Walpole or Alexander as to attack the esteem in which great men of many societies have been held by historians and the general public.

Fielding's satirical life of Wild cleverly incorporates the traditional twofold view of biography as a memorial to the dead and an example to the living. By treating his subject with sustained irony Fielding vividly memorializes his hero's character and actions, which are of course not to be imitated by the sensible reader. By mocking certain practices of the biographer, Fielding calls attention to some of the absurdities of historiography that have helped to perpetuate an erroneous view of the great man.

Particular devices and characteristics of the exemplary biography that Fielding burlesques are the illustrative note, embellished diction, the use of original letters and documents, detailed circumstantiality, prodigious explanations, and excessive moralizing commentary. The chapter "Of Hats" contains the book's most lengthy and inane illustrative footnote. In this "learned Note" (II.vi.91)

of some 262 words, Fielding refers to a lost work by Aristotle, discusses the meanings of two related words in Latin and Greek, alludes to works of Sophocles and Homer, and presents a nonsensical exegesis and commentary on social custom before concluding with a lewd jest. Other brief notes, which for the most part are glosses of canting terms, appear in I.iii, iv, vi, xii, xiii, and III.iii, x, and xiii.

In addition Fielding includes Wild's "extremely curious" letter to Laetitia along with the following hit at a common practice of biographers, historians, and lesser contemporary writers:

> If it should be observed that the Style of this Letter doth not exactly correspond with that of our Hero's Speeches, which we have here recorded, we answer, it is sufficient if in these the Historian adheres faithfully to the Matter, though he embellishes the Diction with some Flourishes of his own Eloquence, without which the excellent Speeches recorded in ancient Historians (particularly in Sallust) would have scarce been found in their Writings. Nay, even amongst the Moderns, famous as they are for Elocution (it may be doubted whether those inimitable Haranges, published in the Monthly Magazines) came literally from the Mouths of the HURGOS [members of the House of Lords] &c. as they are there inserted, of whether we may not rather suppose some Historian of great Eloquence hath borrowed the Matter only, and adorned it with those Rhetorical Flowers for which many of the said HURGOS are not so extremely eminent. (III.vi.144)[31]

Other letters from "ROGER MORECRAFT," "CHA. COURTLY," "CATH. RUBBERS," "PETER POUNCE," and "CHA. EASY" (II.vii.95-97) are introduced to document Heartfree's serious financial difficulties, as well as to satirize the reluctance of members of fashionable society to pay their debts to honest tradesmen. The most important use of "original documents," however, burlesques the biographer's attempt to present the most accurate record possible of the words and actions of

his subject (and also parodies the use of manuscripts of "classical" authors as in Tale of a Tub). Accordingly, the mock biographer includes transcripts of two of Wild's dialogues, and he scrupulously reproduces only those parts of other speeches made by Wild that are said to have survived. An intimate friend of the Wild family purportedly "had overheard, and taken down verbatim" (III.vii.148) the entire matrimonial dialogue that took place between Wild and Laetitia a fortnight after their marriage, but the dialogue between Wild and the Ordinary of Newgate is reproduced with asterisks where the original is said to have been "so blotted that it was illegible" (IV.xiii.242). The mock biographer explains in a footnote that the beginning of Wild's oration on honor to Fireblood has been lost (IV.x.229), and Wild's address to the inmates of Newgate ends in mid-sentence, followed by the biographer's comment, "Here the only Copy which we could produce of this Speech breaks off abruptly; however, we can assure the Reader from very authentic Information, that he [Wild] concluded with advising the Prigs to put their Affairs into other Hands" (IV.iii.193).

In striving to preserve the fidelity of his history the mock biographer pretends to eschew superstition, the unverifiable, and the prodigious. Having described the preposterous dream that Wild's mother was said to have had before his birth, the biographer prefers to "omit other Stories, some of which may be perhaps the Growth of Superstition" (I.iii.10). Following the revelation of the "Accident" (I.vi.28) or unspecified crime that caused Wild to be transported for seven years, Fielding thus satirizes the methodology of historians: "WE are sorry we cannot indulge our Reader's Curiosity with a full

and perfect Account of this Accident; but as there are such various Accounts, one of which only can be true, and possibly, and indeed probably, none; instead of following the general Method of Historians, who in such Cases set down the various Reports, and leave to your own Conjecture which you will chuse, we shall pass them all over" (I.vii. 28).

One of the most amusing passages in Jonathan Wild is the description of Wild's strange yet natural escape from the sea "without the Assistance of a Dolphin or a Sea-Horse, or any other Fish or Animal, who are always as ready at Hand when a Poet or Historian pleases to call for them to carry a Hero through a Sea." Fielding chooses not to have "any Recourse to Miracles, from the strict Observance we pay to that Rule of Horace, Nec Deus intersit nisi dignus vindice nodus. The Meaning of which is, Do not bring in a supernatural Agent when you can do without him." In the remainder of the chapter Wild's rescue is accounted for according to natural causes. "The Prodigious," Fielding writes in the final paragraph, "tho' it often occurs in Biography, is not to be encouraged nor much commended on any Occasion, unless when absolutely necessary to prevent the History's being at an End" (II.xii.112, 114-15).

Concluding most exemplary biographies is a recapitaulation of the subject's life and final reflections on his character and achievements. Fielding burlesques this practice, as well as the utilitarian purpose of biography and the biographer's penchant for excessive moralizing, by having the mock biographer end his history of Wild "with a perfect Picture of Greatness" in which the hero's accomplishments are

summarized, his qualities of character clearly drawn, and fifteen of his maxims for achieving greatness reproduced. In the book's concluding paragraph Fielding combines the exemplary biography's traditional tribute to the dead subject with practical instruction to the reader, who is advised "that a Man may go to Heaven with half the Pains which it costs him to purchase Hell" (IV.xv.255, 263).

While Fielding burlesques all of the above described devices and characteristics of biography, it is important to note that he also makes serious use of the biographical form. Unlike his most celebrated novels, The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and The History of Tom Jones, Jonathan Wild is a full history of the life of its hero. In the other two novels Fielding sketches the childhoods of Joseph and Tom, but for purposes of the plot he withholds information about their true origins until the final chapters. The revelation of this information in fact provides the climax and resolution of both plots. In the last chapters of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, the eponymous protagonists marry their respective sweethearts and settle down to what one hopes will be long and happy lives.

The History of Amelia also describes a relatively brief portion of the lives of its heroine and of Booth, whose misadventures form the crux of the book. At the end of Amelia Booth has learned to control his weakness for gambling and women, and after the recovery of Amelia's fortune the happy couple looks forward to a quiet and prosperous life. In contrast to Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia, the form of Jonathan Wild is significantly shaped by the traditional biographical pattern that delineates the birth, life,

and death of the subject. These essential elements of biography have a partial correspondence to the Aristotelian requisite that a well-constructed plot have a beginning, middle, and end, although Aristotle also holds that unity of plot is achieved not by having one man as subject but by representing an action that is organically unified (Poetics, vii, viii). In Jonathan Wild Fielding effectively integrates the outline of biography with other motifs of the prose narrative and the drama in order to achieve a unifying design that consists of introductory exposition followed by dramatic conflict, suspenseful complication, and an appropriate resolution.

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In addition to the imitation and burlesque of exemplary biography, Fielding satirizes to a lesser degree the genres and sub-genres of the criminal pamphlet, romance, and travel literature. During the first third of the eighteenth century, brief sensationalized biographies of notorious criminals were extremely popular. As Donald Stauffer writes in The Art of Biography in Eighteenth Century England, "A good life did not insure a memorial for posterity; but a violent and public death usually produced a pamphlet."[32] These pamphlets, which appealed primarily to the lower classes, were usually simplistic accounts of the upbringing of the subject, his principal crimes and apprehension, and his last days and execution. Factual detail was often subordinate to the portrayal of the subject as an exaggerated incarnation of vice, and homiletic commentary was clumsily appended in an attempt to disguise predominantly lurid subject matter.

Particularly popular were the "dying speeches" said to have been made by criminals, and brief accounts, attributed to the Ordinary of Newgate, that purportedly described the chaplain's last conversations with the subject.[33]

Although Fielding's fictional treatment of Wild is a far more ample and sophisticated "life" than those depicted in the catchpenny pamphlets, Fielding burlesques the contradictory character of those crude biographies according to which the subject is portrayed as a sensationalized embodiment of vice at the same time that he is admired as somewhat of a hero. Jean Bernard Le Blanc, a French abbé who was traveling in England about 1738, wrote of the Londoner's custom of regarding criminals as heroes, especially as they approached the gallows: "Les Voleurs célèbres font ici des espèces de Héros, dont au fond la populace fait cas. Si le peuple, qui est le même dans tous les Pays, c'est-a-dire, facile à s'émouvoir, voit à regret des Criminels aller à la potence, celui de Londres aime à les y voir marcher avec constance. Il applaudit ceux qui sont assez insensés pour mourir aussi scélérats qu'ils ont vécu, bravant la Justice de Dieu & des hommes."[34]

Fielding satirizes the tendency of hack writers and the public to glorify the criminal by telling Wild's history in the words of the mock biographer, who continuously praises Wild for his heroic efforts to realize his fate under circumstances that at times would defeat most ordinary men. Wild is of course depicted as vice incarnate, an almost perfect example of greatness who epitomizes avarice, lust, cruelty, hypocrisy, impudence, fraud, and treachery.

At the same time Fielding burlesques the moral pretentiousness of criminal pamphlets, which was often expressed in a pompous homiletic style, by larding his history with the ubiquitous maxims of the hero. To be sure, there are other sententiae in Jonathan Wild that Fielding intends for the reader to accept more or less at face value, but Wild's maxims are the most engaging and they provide memorable mini-sermons on the techniques and rewards of vice.

While many writers of exemplary biography made serious efforts to include original documents and authentic sources in order to portray their subjects as accurately as possible, the writers of catchpenny criminal pamphlets were not so exacting despite the fact that their works were routinely represented as "full and impartial accounts," "authentic memoirs," and "genuine narratives."[35] Fielding's burlesque of the use of original documents and authentic sources, which has been discussed above in connection with the exemplary biography, should also be read as a satire on the more exaggerated claims of authenticity made for the criminal pamphlet.

A subgenre of the criminal biography that Fielding specifically burlesques is the Ordinary's account of the behavior, confessions, and last dying words of malefactors. These two-penny pamphlets, which were published upon or shortly after the execution of the subject, were said to have been written by the Ordinary of Newgate, but were in fact often the work of hacks.[36] They were presented as first-hand accounts of the Chaplain's efforts to console the condemned, to elicit a confession from him, and to save his soul. Frequently portions of the Ordinary's sermon were reproduced along with lurid details of the subject's

final hours.

In "A Dialogue between the Ordinary of Newgate and Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great," Fielding offers a travesty of the subgenre. The Ordinary's warning that Wild will end up in hell, where he will give more for a drop of water than he ever gave for a bottle of wine, occasions Wild's invitation to partake of the latter drink, which the Ordinary declines in favor of a bowl of punch. In order to while away the time before the liquor arrives, the Ordinary delivers an inane sermon in which he grossly misinterprets a portion of Corinthians I: "My Text is the latter Part of a Verse only.----To the Greeks FOOLISHNESS." Paul's letter to the Corinthians explains that the preaching of the crucifixion of Christ is a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Greeks, who seek after wisdom. The Ordinary displays his ignorance by inverting Paul's message, describing Plato and Aristotle as "both Fools, mere Quibblers and Sophists," and concluding that "the Philosophy of the Greeks was FOOLISHNESS" (IV. xiii.240, 248, 249, 250). Instead of consoling Wild or eliciting a confession from him, the Ordinary's sermon puts Wild to sleep.

In addition a brief clause and footnote that Fielding inserted in the revision also derides this subgenre (as well as An Apology for the Life of Colley Cibber). The mock biographer explains that the grave gentleman who had picked Bagshot's pocket afterwards confessed to his crime "not in a Book by itself, in Imitation of some other such Persons, but in the Ordinary's Account, &c. where all the Apologies for the Lives of Rogues and Whores which have been published within these twenty Years should have been inserted" (I.xiii.50). Fireblood

also may have contributed a work to the genre. Although it is not clear whether Wild's confederate made his admission to the Ordinary or not, he is said to have "afterwards confessed on his Death-Bed at Tyburn" (III.xiv.179) his true role in Blueskin's unsuccessful rebellion against Wild.

Counterpointing the imitation and burlesque of the exemplary biography and the criminal biography is Fielding's satire on the broadest conventions of the romance, from the chivalric to the heroic to its most vulgarized contemporary variation as the amatory novella. Both the narrator and the mock biographer seem to express Fielding's criticism of the genre in a number of remarks about the verisimilitude of history as opposed to that of the romance. Those who are imposed upon by puppets during a theatrical performance or by great men in the grander drama of real life are said by the narrator to be "in the same Situation with the Readers of Romances; who, though they know the whole to be one entire Fiction, nevertheless agree to be deceived" (III.xi.167). The biographer reveals an uncharacteristic spark of humanity in Wild with the following introduction: "Here the Reader must excuse us, who profess to draw natural, not perfect Characters, and to record the Truths of History, not the Extravagancies of Romance" (IV.iv.198). The final apotheosis of Wild at Tyburn conforms to historical fact, but had his hero not been hanged Fielding writes: "Indeed we could almost wish, that whenever Fortune seems wantonly to deviate from her Purpose, and leaves her Work Imperfect in this Particular, the Historian would indulge himself in the License of Poetry and Romance, and even do a Violence to Truth" (IV.xiv.255).

The primary device by which Fielding burlesques the artificiality, affectation, and overidealization of the romance is the subplot of Wild's relationship with Laetitia. The general plot motifs of the romance--courtship, the heroine's choice between suitors, the duel between rivals--are roundly satirized as well as the extravagant elevation of character, action, and sentiment that is characteristic of the genre. Laetitia and her sister Theodosia are the only characters in Jonathan Wild who are given distinctively elaborate names. They are introduced as ladies in the bloom of youth and beauty who compassionate the captive Count "like Damsels in Romance" (I.iv.15). But the sexual codes of Laetitia and her sister do not conform to those of the damsels of romance. Theodosia's single slip with the Count bears proof of less than idealized love, and Laetitia's intrigues are frequently and frankly reported. The explanation that the mock biographer includes of Laetitia's dissatisfaction with marriage clearly marks her distance from the chaste and faithful heroines of romance. A friend of the biographer's speculated that one reason for the falling out of Wild and Laetitia "arose from the Number of Gallants, to whom she had before Marriage granted Favours; for, says he, and indeed very probable it is too, the Lady might expect from her Husband, what she had before received from several, and being angry not to find one Man as good as ten, she had, from that Indignation, taken those Steps which we cannot perfectly justify" (III.vii.148).

The behavior of both Wild and Laetitia during their courtship and marriage is abominable. Wild attempts to ravish Laetitia at their first interview and subsequently tries to possess her by offering what

he believes to be valuable jewels taken from Heartfree. Laetitia agrees to marry Wild only because his prospects of procuring a fortune are said to be great, but a fortnight after their wedding she vows never to enter his bed again. While the actions of both characters speak for themselves, Fielding also burlesques the excessive verbal expressions of love typical of many romances by having the mock biographer reproduce Wild's effusive but illiterate letter to Laetitia as well as the verbatim account of their matrimonial dialogue, which demonstrates how quickly "love" turns into civil or not-so-civil contempt. In Fielding's travesty of the romance, his heroine makes her choice of suitors after her marriage.

A complementary mode of Fielding's satire includes Mrs. Heartfree's extended account of her adventures (IV.vii, viii, ix, xi), which in part burlesques certain novels of the period that combine elements of the romance with the pious affirmation of Christian values.[37] The literary satire in these chapters is not achieved by an inversion of admirable values, as Fielding does with Wild and Laetitia, but rather by the excessive repetition of essentially serious actions--the sundry attempts by five lustful men to possess Mrs. Heartfree. The reward of an immense jewel that Mrs. Heartfree receives from the African magistrate for remaining chaste undercuts somewhat the idealistic moral code of the romance in general. In a more humorous vein, the contrast between Mrs. Heartfree's lifelike peccadilloes of garrulity and vanity in relating her adventures and her almost too-good-to-be-true role in the adventures themselves

lightly spoofs the overidealized characterizations of the romance.[38]

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A final element of literary burlesque that gives Jonathan Wild much of its distinctive character is the extensive use of the mock heroic. At the beginning of his career Fielding had employed the mock heroic in The Tragedy of Tragedies (1731) to burlesque the plots, characters, and bombast diction of heroic drama, and two years before the publication of the Miscellanies he had used a similar technique in The Vernoniad (1741) to burlesque the form, machinery, and language of the epic. The mock heroic in Jonathan Wild is more a matter of imitation of manner than of form, although it subsumes the distinction that Fielding had drawn in the Preface to Joseph Andrews between burlesque of diction, which he permitted in the comic prose epic, and burlesque of character and sentiments, which he did not.

In Jonathan Wild Fielding burlesques rhetorical devices of the epic such as the epithet, animal imagery, and extended simile. In some places the burlesque is quite brief, as in the use of the compound epithet and the genitive construction in such phrases as "the nimble-footed Hounds" (I.xiv.55), "the Hedge of his [Wild's] Teeth, or rather the Ditch of his Gums" (IV.x.228), and "the Fruit of Hemp-Seed, and not the Spirit of Poppy-Seed" (IV.xiv.252). Fireblood is first introduced as "the Achates of our Aeneas" (III. iv.132) and referred to in subsequent passages as "the faithful Achates" (III.x.164), "THE Achates" (III.xiv.179), and "the young

Achates" (IV.vi.206). Occasionally Fielding employs animal imagery in references to the "voracious Pike" (I.xi.43), the "Tongue of a Viper" and "gilded Scales of a Rattlesnake" (III.iii.131), the "Lamb in the Wolf's Way" (IV.iii.195), and the "generous Bull" (IV.x.228).

The burlesque becomes more playful in longer narrative embellishments that allude to specific epics. Theodosia is described as

> being employed alone, in Imitation of Penelope, with her *Thread or Worsted; only with this Difference*, that whereas Penelope unravelled by Night what she had knit, or wove, or spun by Day, so what our young Heroine unravelled by Day, she knit again by Night. In short, she was mending a Pair of blue Stockings with red Clocks; a Circumstance which, perhaps, we might have omitted, had it not served to shew that there are still some Ladies of this Age, who imitate the Simplicity of the Antients. (II.iii.75)

When the amorous inclinations of Laetitia are first revealed, Fielding sports with the appropriate epithet with which to describe his subject. Reluctantly but verbosely he observes that "the FAIR Laetitia (for we must, in this single Instance, imitate Virgil, where he drops the pius and the pater, and drop our favourite Epithet of chaste) the FAIR Laetitia had, I say, made Smirk as happy as Wild desired to be" (I.x.40). In a later passage, after Theodosia has given birth to the Count's son and Laetitia is about to revile her sister for her sluttishness, Fielding restores his original epithet with an increment in irony: "But the chaste Laetitia, we repeat the chaste, for well did she now desire that Epithet; received it [news of the illegitimate baby] in another Manner" (III.xiii.173).[39]

Perhaps the broadest spoof of epic rhetoric occurs in extended similes. Fielding prepares the reader for his first example with a statement that calls attention to his method: "Here, Reader, if thou pleasest, as we are in no great Haste, we will stop and make a Simile." The passage that follows, likening the huntsman, hound, and kennel to Snap's apprehension and imprisonment of the Count and Bagshot, burlesques the construction, length, and tone of epic comparisons:

> As when their Lap is finished, the cautious Huntsman to their Kennel gathers the nimble-footed Hounds; they with lank Ears and Tails slouch sullenly on, whilst he with his Whippers-in, follows close at their Heels, regardless of their dogged Humour, till having seem them safe within the Door, he turns the Key, and then retires to whatever Business or Pleasure calls him thence; So with lowring Countenance, and reluctant Steps mounted the Count and Bagshot to their Chamber, or rather Kennel, whither they were attended by Snap, and those who followed him, and where Snap having seen them deposited, very contentedly locked the Door and departed. (I.xiv.55)

When Fielding attempts to describe Wild's uproar upon discovering Laetitia in Fireblood's arms, he first alludes to a line in the Aeneid: "It is impossible for me to give the Reader a better Idea of the Noise which now arose, than by desiring him to imagine I had the hundred Tongues the Poet once wished for" (IV.ix.227).[40] The following chapter begins with another elaborate simile, likening Wild's reaction to that of a bull who "roars aloud, and threatens instant Vengeance with his Horns" and to the sound produced by "fifteen or sixteen, or perhaps twice as many Females of delicate but shrill Pipes" (IV.x.228) who ejaculate all at once on different subjects.

In Henry Fielding: The Augustan Idea Under Stress, Claude Rawson writes that some of the specific epic reminders in Jonathan Wild "are joking or sarcastic parallels which emphasize the shabbiness of this novel's world, without conferring upon it any of the usual playful grandeur of mock-heroic" (p. 153). Rawson sees a tendency throughout the book "away from the 'fictional' energies of mock-heroic narrative to a more starkly conceptual moralizing" (p. 154), and concludes that Jonathan Wild "seems only a series of mock-epic fragments bound together by a moral theme" (p. 161).

While there is merit in Rawson's view of how some epic reminders emphasize the shabbiness of Wild's world, it would be a mistake to underestimate the playful grandeur of Fielding's use of the mock heroic as well as the extent to which Fielding integrates other characteristics of the epic in his narrative design. Jonathan Wild is not a protracted parody of the epic, yet in at least some respects Fielding imitates and burlesques methods employed by writers of epics. Like the epic hero, Fielding's protagonist is represented as a figure of impressive stature, and if not of worldwide historical importance, at least of near-legendary significance. Accordingly the mock biographer pretends to be objective, and like the writer of epics, he frequently strives for an elevated style to describe various deeds of the hero that are said to require almost superhuman courage. Both Wild and other principal characters are given extended formal speeches in which they express their deeper thoughts and feelings. As is the case with epics and their creators, Fielding's general subject is serious, reflecting his concern with eternal human problems.

The more imitative action and playful grandeur of the mock heroic that Rawson finds lacking in Fielding's history of Wild were traditionally used in depicting the trivial or ridiculous. Fielding's theme in Jonathan Wild, the contrast and conflict between greatness and goodness, is obviously not a trivial or ridiculous matter such as the court intrigues of a midget or the efforts of Mammon to bride Aeolus, which lent themselves to direct parody of heroic drama in The Tragedy of Tragedies or of the epic in The Vernoniad. In spite of this essential difference, the mock heroic in Jonathan Wild quite often achieves the playful grandeur of the mock epic, especially in Book I and in the subsequent subplot involving Laetitia. In these passages Fielding's conception of greatness has strong social connotations and his primary target is the behavior of the rich and fashionable. In other sections of the book that depict Wild's serious crimes against the Heartfrees, the mock heroic becomes appropriately scathing.

It is important to note that both uses of the mock heroic are not merely fragmentary narrative flourishes that resemble what Fielding in the Preface to Joseph Andrews had identified as burlesque of diction, which was calculated chiefly for the entertainment of the classical reader. Fielding's incorporation of the mock heroic throughout Jonathan Wild goes beyond incidental stylistic embellishment to inform the very character and sentiments of Wild as well as the entire action and point of view of the book. The systematic mock heroic rhetoric creates the values by which Wild lives and dies, and the mock biographer's ironic celebration of the qualities and achievements of the hero are Fielding's major device for expressing

his moral, social, and political opinions.

As part of the mock heroic aggrandizement of Wild, Fielding burlesques at least one convention of the epic,[41] the tendency of supernatural forces to take an interest in characters and to intervene in the action from time to time. Although all of Wild's acts can be satisfactorily explained by real causes, Fielding records the intimate interest of Nature and Fortune in the fate of the hero. Each force intervenes once in a potentially serious situation that is resolved humorously. When Wild hurls himself headlong into the sea, Nature "no sooner spied him in the Water than she softly whispered in his Ear to attempt the Recovery of his Boat" (II.xii.114). Similarly when Blueskin stabs Wild, "Fortune, not so much out of Love to our Hero, as from a fixed Resolution to accomplish a certain Purpose . . . carefully placed his [Wild's] Guts out of the Way" (IV.i.185). At another point the province of Nature and Fortune is mischievously suggested and then put aside. In considering the effect of Wild's marriage on his criminal endeavors, Fielding comments: "Whether it was that Nature and Fortune had great Designs for him [Wild] to execute, and would not suffer his vast Abilities to be lost and sunk in the Arms of a Wife, or whether neither Nature nor Fortune had any Hand in the Matter, is a Point I will not determine" (III.vii.147-48).

When Wild's crimes against Heartfree reach a climax and the innocent merchant is found guilty by a jury, Fortune is said to take a more active role:

> THE Catastrophe, to which our Hero had reduced this Wretch [Heartfree], was so wonderful an Effort of Greatness, that it probably made Fortune envious of her own Darling; but whether it was from this Envy, or only from that known Inconstancy and Weakness so often and judiciously remarked in that Lady's Temper . . . she now began to meditate Mischief against Wild who seems to have come to that Period, at which all Heroes have arrived, and which she was resolved they never should transcend. In short, there seems to be a certain Measure of Mischief and Iniquity, which every great Man is to fill up, and then Fortune looks on him of no more Use than a Silk-Worm whose Bottom is spun, and deserts him. (IV.i.185)

It is not much longer before Wild is arrested for robbery, reviled by Laetitia, doubly betrayed by Fireblood, and sentenced to be executed at Tyburn. Wild is too much and too deservedly the favorite of Fortune "to be neglected by her in his last Moments" and soon the morning arrives "which Fortune at his Birth had resolutely ordained for the Consummation of our Hero's GREATNESS" (IV.xiv.250-51, 252).

Fielding does not burlesque other prominent conventions of the epic such as beginning the narrative in medias res (a device that he was later to use in Amelia), invoking the muse for instruction and inspiration, or depicting the action in a consistently elevated yet simple style. For Fielding to have parodied more elements of the epic might have diminished the seriousness of his subject or have linked Wild too pointedly with the mythic heroes of the genre rather than with the ruthless conquerors and politicians of all ages who are the true subject of the book. Further parody of the epic might also have vigorously mocked the genre for which Fielding had the highest respect.

While the criticism that Fielding makes in Jonathan Wild of exemplary biography, criminal biography, and the romance is serious, even if it is humorously achieved, Fielding's allusions to

and his burlesque of certain aspects of the epic are essentially devices for criticizing the reprehensible behavior of specific characters rather than a criticism of any significant shortcomings of the epic itself. By playfully referring to the epic but not earnestly parodying it, Fielding evokes that genre as a dignified standard by which to judge Wild and his world. Together with the imitation and burlesque of exemplary biography, criminal biography, and the romance, Fielding's incorporation of the epic in Jonathan Wild is part of an overall plan to link aesthetics and morals in an amusing and meaningful manner.

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To sum up, much of the aim and design of Jonathan Wild is accurately stated in the Preface to the Miscellanies. In the eighteen paragraphs that he devotes to the book, Fielding writes that his purpose is to delight and instruct the reader at the same time that he exposes the true nature and dangers of greatness. While he confines himself to the rules of probability, Fielding does not claim to present an accurate historical account of the real Wild, but rather a narrative of such actions as Wild might have, would have, or should have performed.

In Jonathan Wild itself Fielding constructs a clear-cut plot that pits a diabolical embodiment of almost total greatness against a decent but passive representation of almost total goodness. The foil relationship between Wild and Heartfree is mirrored in the contrasting pairings of Laetitia and Mrs. Heartfree, and of Fireblood and Friendly,

but Fielding also creates interesting unpaired characters who provide variety and surprise. As he entertains the reader at the same time that he instructs him in the punishment that awaits those who aspire to greatness, Fielding systematically undercuts Wild, both by repeatedly dramatizing his lack of success and by ironically juxtaposing his grandiose ideas and rhetoric with his lowly circumstances. Complementing the moral simplicities of the plot and the consistent undermining of Wild's character is a final important element of Fielding's aim and design, his imaginative linking of aesthetics and morals through the allusion to and the imitation and burlesque of a number of literary forms and devices. The result of these various intentions, patterns, and techniques is a complex mixture of ironic moral formulations, dramatic plotting, genial comedy, and far-ranging literary, political, and social satire that has confounded scholarly attempts to find a satisfactory generic classification for Fielding's achievement.

Notes

[1] See above, Chapter V, pp. 215-16.

[2] For a discussion of these three works, see above, Chapter III, pp. 107-11, 122-25, and Chapter II, pp. 76-77 and n. 41. Fielding was eighteen when Defoe's pamphlet and the Mist's Weekly Journal numbers were published. He could have read a slightly edited reprint of the Purney account in Select Trials (1742 ed.), II, 284-86.

[3] Poetics, IX, trans. L.J. Potts, Aristotle on the Art of Fiction (Cambridge: University Press, 1968), p. 29.

[4] Fielding hedges somewhat about the criminal activities of Wild's father, who is also named Jonathan. In explaining how the senior Wild was able to maintain Jonathan at the reputable school where he met Heartfree, Fielding writes: "Mr. Wild himself was then a Tradesman in good Business; but, by Misfortunes in the World, to wit, Extravagance and Gaming, he had reduced himself to that honourable Occupation which we have formerly mentioned" (II.i.66). In the earlier chapter that describes the hero's forebears (I.ii), Fielding does not mention the senior Wild's profession, although his three brothers were criminals and two of his sisters were married to criminals. Apparently the senior Wild became an associate of Mr. Snap, a bailiff who operated a sponging house.

[5] Crosby, History of the Baptists, 1738, iii.166, 182, cited in DNB.

[6] See above, Chapter II, pp. 54-56.

[7] If Fielding were being ironic about Wild's ability to inculate fear and obedience among members of his gang, the satire is uncharacteristically feeble. The following sentence about the establishment of an office for the return of stolen goods seems to suggest that Fielding was not aiming for satire in this passage.

[8] See Howson, pp. 190-91; also pp. 217-18 for a description of the real Blake's arrest and his stabbing of Wild.

[9] See Howson, pp. 144, 227-29, and 232-33 for a documented account of Johnson's life. Fielding's reason for depicting Johnson as "a very GREAT MAN" (IV.iii.191) whose talents seem to exceed those of Wild is discussed above in Chapter IV, pp. 171-72 and n. 54.

[10] See above, Chapter II, pp. 63-65.

[11] See above, Chapter II, p. 68.

[12] As quoted in Daniel Defoe: His Life, and Recently Discovered Writings, ed. William Lee (London: John Camden Hotten, 1869), III, 389-90. According to John Robert Moore, Defoe wrote for Applebee's Original Weekly Journal at least until May 14, 1726 (A Checklist of the Writings of Daniel Defoe, p. 234).

[13] Howson, p. 11. See above, Chapter II, p. 72 for a sample of the real Wild's writing.

[14] See above, Chapter II, pp. 60, 72, 74 and n. 36.

[15] The other fight that Wild engages in is too comic and too inconclusive to be taken as a serious gauge of his valor. When Wild fails to convince Fireblood of the injury to his honor that the latter has caused, the two fall to boxing, "tho' with some Difficulty, both being incumbered with the Chains which they wore between their Legs: A few Blows passed on both Sides, before the Gentlemen, who stood by, stept in and parted the Combatants" (IV.x.230).

[16] Most of these references are to the passing of a day or two. The longest period of elapsed time that is mentioned occurs after Heartfree's unsuccessful effort to bring charges against Wild: "FOUR Months had now passed since Heartfree's first Confinement, and his Affairs had begun to wear a more benign Aspect; but they were a good Deal injured by this Attempt on Wild" (III.x.164-65). In an earlier passage that vaguely describes Wild's travels in America, the mock biographer acknowledges "the ridiculous Figure this Chapter must make, being the History of no less than eight years" (I.vii.29).

For a discussion of Fielding's treatment of time in Jonathan Wild, see below, Chapter VIII, pp. 467-73.

[17] Most probably Hobbes and Mandeville, whose views on human nature Fielding often criticized.

[18] Ars Poetica, ll. 333-36, trans. Walter Jackson Bate, in Criticism: The Major Texts (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1952), p. 56. A parallel observation of Horace's could serve as a description of Fielding's career as a novelist: "He who combines the useful and the pleasing wins out by both instructing and delighting the reader. That is the sort of book that will make money for the publisher, cross the seas, and extend the fame of the author" (ll. 344-47).

[19] In Tom Jones Fielding comments on the aesthetic value of contrast: "And here we shall of Necessity be led to open a new Vein of Knowledge, which, if it hath been discovered, hath not, to our Remembrance, been wrought on by any antient or modern Writer. This Vein is no other than that of Contrast, which runs through all the Works of the Creation, and may probably have a large Share in constituting in us the Idea of all Beauty, as well natural as artificial. . . . Most Artists have this Secret in Practice, tho' some, perhaps, have not much studied the Theory" (V.i.212-13).

[20] In The Making of Jonathan Wild (pp. 73-74), Irwin suggests that one of the sources of the character of Heartfree may have been the dramatist and jeweller George Lillo (1693-1739). Fielding presented Lillo's domestic tragedy The Fatal Curiosity at the Haymarket for seven performances during May and June of 1736. In the Champion of February 26, 1740, Fielding eulogized Lillo as having "the Spirit of an old Roman, joined to the Innocence of a primitive Christian; he was content with his little State in Life, in which his excellent Temper of Mind, gave him an Happiness beyond the Power of Riches."

[21] This scene is most probably a hit at Theophilus Cibber (see above, Chapter V, p. 244 and n. 15), who in 1738 brought legal action against one Mr. Sloper, a friend of the family, for having engaged in "criminal conversation" with Cibber's wife Susannah. A jury awarded Cibber £10 in damages, but the following year he received £500 as the result of a second suit against Sloper for having detained Mrs. Cibber.

[22] In the Preface to the Miscellanies, Fielding associates morals and rhetoric by likening greatness in nature with "the False Sublime in Poetry; whose Bombast is, by the ignorant and ill-judging Vulgar, often mistaken for Solid Wit and Eloquence, whilst it is in Effect the very Reverse" (M, p. 12).

[23] Guzmán de Alfarache (1599), by Mateo Alemán, was first translated into English in 1622 as The Rogue: or The Life of Guzman de Alfarache. A subsequent translation from a French version bears the subtitle: The Spanish Rogue (1708). In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there were many editions of this popular work, which describes the adventures of a thief who lives by his wits.

Moliere's Fourberies de Scapin (1671), which depicts a servant's ability to survive by his lies, was adapted from the French by Thomas Otway as The Cheats of Scapin (1677). New editions of the play were published in 1730 and 1733. The play was presented at Covent Garden on May 7, 1741 and at Southwark Fair on September 16, 1742 (The London Stage, Part 3, II, 915, 1002).

[24] Gradus ad Parnassum (1680) was a Latin work consisting of principal synonyms, epithets, and phrases faithfully collected from works of the best poets. A sixth edition was published in London in 1729.

[25] Originally published in 1640, The Academy of Compliments was one of the most popular guides to conduct and letter writing during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Numerous editions are listed in the British Museum Catalogue.

[26] John Reynolds' Triumphs of Gods Revenege [sic], against the crying, and execrable Sinne of Murther (1621) is a collection of sensational histories that purports to warn readers of the disastrous effects of committing murder. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the work appeared in various editions bearing somewhat altered titles.

Wild also refers to this book when Marybone agrees to rob the young gentleman from Kent but not to kill him. With disdain Wild asks: "Dost thou cant of God's Revenge against Murther" (III.iii.130).

[27] "The Mock-Heroic Form of Jonathan Wild," MP, 63 (February 1966), 216-26.

[28] Alexander is also mentioned in I.i.3; iii.12; v.19; xiv.59; III.iv.132; IV.xii.239; and xv.260. Caesar is cited in I.i.3; IV.xiii. 243; and xv.260. A great man of the early eighteenth century, "the late King of Sweden" (Charles XII), is alluded to in I.iii.13. Fielding is known to have translated from the French at least the first volume of The Military History of Charles XII by Gustave Adlerfield (see above, Chapter IV, p. 181).

[29] "Fielding's Political Purpose in Jonathan Wild," PMLA, 28 (1913), 19-20.

[30] Farrell, p. 222. Fielding's dedication of Shamela "To Miss Fanny, &c." parodies Middleton's fulsome dedication of The Life of Cicero to Lord Hervey. In Joseph Andrews Fielding criticizes Middleton's dedication, preface, and translations (III.vi.239), and in describing Beau Didapper he condenses and inverts two paragraphs of Middleton's dedication, in which he had extolled the patriotism of Hervey.

[31] For reference to Dr. Johnson's part in embellishing history in the pages of the Gentleman's Magazine, see above, Chapter IV, p. 169 and n. 49.

[32] Stauffer (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941), p. 199.

[33] For useful discussions of the criminal pamphlet, see F.W. Chandler, The Literature of Roguery (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1907), Chapters II, III and IV, and the first chapter of John J. Richetti's Popular Fiction Before Richardson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

[34] Le Blanc, Lettres de Monsieur L'Abbé Le Blanc, 5th ed. Lyons, 1758), III.326.

[35] As in A Full and Impartial Account of . . . Robberies by Hawkins and Simpson by Ralph Wilson (London: J. Peele, 1722); Authentick Memoirs . . . of John Sheppard (London: Joseph Marshall, 1724); and A Genuine Narrative of the Memorable Life & Actions of John Dyer (London: John Applebee, 1728).

For an example of a hack writer's use of documents not so much in order to shed light on his subject as to pad his work, see the life of Wild discussed above, Chapter III, p. 107.

[36] See above, Chapter II, n. 41 regarding the authorship of the Ordinary of Newgate's account of Wild.

[37] See below, Chapter VIII, n. 29 for specific novels that Fielding may have been satirizing.

[38] I discuss the content, style, and function of Mrs. Heartfree's tale in more detail below, Chapter VIII, pp. 440-52.

[39] Fielding employs the same technique somewhat less effectively in the following description of Theodosia: "To detain my Reader no longer: Miss Theodosia Snap was now safely delivered of a Male-Infant, the Product of an Amour which that beautiful (O that I could say, virtuous) Creature had with the Count" (III.xiii.172).

[40] Virgil wrote: "Nor had I an hundred tongues, an hundred mouths, and a voice of iron, could I sum up all the shapes of crime or name over all their punishments" (Aeneid, Book VI, ll. 625-26, trans. C. Day Lewis [New York: Doubleday & Co., 1953], p. 148).

[41] A second convention of the epic that may be the subject of burlesque by Fielding is the catalog of arms and warriors. Although this convention is not properly consonant with the action of Jonathan Wild, it may not be inappropriate to read the elaborate set-piece

introduction of Laetitia (I.ix)--a sort of cataloguing of her attire as she is about to enter the amourous wars with Wild--as a domesticated, humorous reduction of one of the common practices of epic writers.

Chapter VII

"Shewing what Kind of a History this is; what it is like, and what it is not like"

With these words Fielding entitles the second prolegomenous chapter of Tom Jones, in which he announces his right as an artist to define and shape his work, not according to certain literary conventions, but according to his own creative vision. After explaining how his method differs from that employed by other writers, Fielding declares: "I shall not look on myself as accountable to any Court of Critical Jurisdiction whatever: For as I am, in reality, the Founder of a new Province of Writing, so I am at liberty to make what Laws I please therein" (II.i.77).

Fielding's proclamation refers specifically to his manipulation of narrative time in Tom Jones,[1] but in a broader sense it may serve as an accurate description of the principle that guided Fielding in creating all of his prose fiction. While the claim that he was the founder of a new province of writing may be inflated, it stands as an important expression of Fielding's view of himself as breaking new ground in the burgeoning genre of the novel. All writers, whether they realize it or not, are of course shaped by the work of their predecessors, yet each novelist in a sense has to invent his own form for each novel that he writes. Often the author's realization of an innovative form or his imaginative combination of existing forms

appears to have little form at all because it is judged according to established norms or fixed preconceptions.

It is curious that more than two centuries after the publication of Jonathan Wild, and during an age when the frontiers of the novel have been extended and explored by a host of imaginative artists and scholars, there is still considerable disagreement about what "kind" of book Jonathan Wild is. Alan McKillop writes that Jonathan Wild "is to be judged as a satire rather than a novel," while George Sherburn believes that Fielding's book "is primarily a moral apologue." In the opinion of William Irwin, although Jonathan Wild "follows a prose narrative pattern, it is plainly not a novel." F. Homes Dudden opines that the book "is a satire, cast in the form of an allegorical tale, and cannot with strict propriety be classified as a novel." Michael Irwin considers Jonathan Wild "apart from the novels" because he believes that Fielding is not concerned "in the sense he was later to be, with telling a story." Robert Alter associates Jonathan Wild with the strategy of "formal satire," and Andrew Wright asserts that "Jonathan Wild is neither a novel nor a philosophical work: it is an entirely simple handling of one idea--or at most two."[2]

In effect most of these scholars have attempted to tell, rather than to show, what Fielding's book is or is not. Although there are differing opinions about the genre to which Jonathan Wild belongs the consensus seems to be that Jonathan Wild is not a novel. As a result of this assessment a good number of scholars, many of whom have written at length about Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and

Amelia, have tended to dismiss Jonathan Wild with a cursory summary of the action and an observation or two about its sustained irony. Ironically, a few scholars who have maintained that Jonathan Wild is not a novel have nevertheless criticized the book for failing to conform to their conceptions of that genre.

Practically speaking, it is the artist rather than the scholar or critic who gives definition to any art form. The writer writes and then theorists contemplate the work, attempting to describe, explain, and classify it. The difficulty with this second process is that reductive external categories are often imposed upon a literary work with the result that the reader's approach to it may become overly restricted and his view of the work impoverished. While generic studies can be useful in discovering affinities and differences among works, it is essential to consider a book on its own terms, viewing the work for itself and not primarily as a representative of a set form. Only by examining Jonathan Wild in this manner can we recognize its special qualities and arrive at an informed evaluation of Fielding's accomplishment.

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With this goal in mind, it is useful to consider Jonathan Wild in the light of various genre classifications that have been suggested as well as in relation to less formalized modes that have not been fully brought to bear on the book. Because of a superficial resemblance the criminal biography is perhaps the most appropriate starting point. While there does not appear to be any evidence of a

scholar's strictly classifying Jonathan Wild as a criminal biography, there has been a tendency through the years to overemphasize the affinities of Fielding's book with that genre. In The Making of Jonathan Wild William Irwin examines the literary forms and traditions that were available to Fielding, observing that "Fielding labels Jonathan Wild the history of the life of a great rogue, thereby placing it in the tradition of English criminal biography" (p. 80). In Irwin's opinion, the fictitious but straightforward detail of Wild's early life "resembles the common practice in the catch-penny rogue lives and probably represents Fielding's caricature of criminal biography as written by the denizens of Grub Street" (p. 90). While he believes that Fielding's imitation is "close and just enough exaggerated to be thoroughly ironic," Irwin recognizes that "criminal biography is not the chief object of attack in Jonathan Wild, however, or even its provocation" (pp. 90, 91).

An overly strong identification of Jonathan Wild with the criminal biography might have fueled the antipathy towards the "low" subject matter of Fielding's book that prevailed until the middle of the nineteenth century.[3] Although Old England was hardly the publication for serious literary discussion, it is noteworthy to recall that as part of its continuing attack upon Fielding the March 5 and November 26, 1748 numbers refer disparagingly to his presentation of thief-catchers as "Heroes" and to his "Lives of Rogues and Thieves," while the January 7, 1749 number derides Fielding for having "a knack of Old Baily Biography."[4]

During the past century and a quarter, as responsible critics and scholars began to concentrate on closer readings of the text, generic considerations may well have contributed to the confusion about when and how Fielding wrote Jonathan Wild. One can only speculate to what degree this factor played a part in Keightley's unsupported hypothesis that Fielding may have "gone over his Life of Jonathan Wild" (which he presumably had written in the heat of indignation at the Licensing Act) and in 1742 "made additions to it"[5] when pressed for material to fill the Miscellanies. Apart from the first few chapters of Book I and the final chapters of Book IV, it is difficult to recognize in Fielding's narration a so-called "life" of Wild to which he added material of another kind. Keightley's preconceptions about what a life of a criminal (or a satirized political leader) should and should not have included could have been a formative influence on his hypothesis. Digeon expressed a more specific conception of genre in setting forth his theory that Fielding "conceived and drafted his book originally as picaresque biography" on to which he later drafted "a novel according to his own fashion."[6]

As was discussed in the preceding chapter, Fielding's incorporation of elements of the criminal biography in Jonathan Wild involves burlesque rather than imitation. Fielding spoofs the tendency of hack pamphlet writers to glorify their subjects and burlesques the pretentious homiletic style that was often a poorly integrated attempt to disguise the predominantly lurid subject matter. Notwithstanding these satiric intentions, Fielding's treatment of narrative, character, and theme in Jonathan Wild differs in a number

of ways from that in the criminal biography. While the Newgate lives were commonly as short as ten or twenty pages, Jonathan Wild is of book length. Criminal biographies were usually simple in design and, above all, sensational. Jonathan Wild, in contrast, has a fairly intricate plot and despite its preoccupations with Wild's myriad vices, nevertheless avoids the truly lurid. As will be seen shortly, whenever the narrative approaches the potentially tragic or sensational, Fielding breaks off his description, often defusing the tension with humorous phrasing or a comic resolution.

For the most part the subjects of criminal biography were rather faceless stereotypes whose behavior was explained not in terms of personal needs and traits, but in the sermonizing generalizations of pulpit declamation. Fielding portrays his protagonist as a compelling personality of awesome and comic dimensions, who is driven by highly individualized needs. The writers of criminal biography routinely exploited the drama of sin, repentance, and judgment by having their subjects make last-minute confessions and sometimes express their repentance quite eloquently. Fielding provides no such resolution for his hero, nor does he present a great deal of information about his apprehension, trial, and execution. While the criminal biography reported such events in detail, particularly the gory endings of its subjects, Fielding is less interested in recording the milestones of a criminal career than in depicting the consequences of Wild's insatiable passions and his grandiose philosophy.

In Popular Fiction Before Richardson, John Richetti offers an excellent analysis of the ideological significance of the criminal

biography. According to Richetti, "the criminal's cardinal sin, as he himself can come to see in his moment of repentance, is to ignore Providence (his desperate acts are aggressive challenges to the natural order represented by the social and economic order of society)."[7] In essence the subjects of criminal biographies revolt against the entire range of eighteenth-century hierarchical orders that attempt to account for everything from the nature of the cosmos and morality to the distribution of wealth and privilege among social classes. On one level Fielding has his hero defy the consecrated order of Christian values, but on another level Fielding makes Wild conform to a "natural" order of his own artistic fabrication, i.e., the design of nature and fate, to guarantee that Wild achieves "greatness" through his immoral behavior. Despite the extensive antisocial nature of Wild's criminal actions, he does not, in the last analysis, revolt against society, for unlike the subjects of criminal biography Wild strives to emulate rather than to challenge the wealthy and the influential. The reason for this of course lies in Fielding's complex satirical intention of emphasizing the similarities, rather than the differences, between the lowly criminal and the exalted members of society.

Another obvious difference between Jonathan Wild and the criminal biography concerns historicity. The hack writers of criminal biographies were opportunists who worked quickly to produce their pamphlets either on or shortly after the day when their subjects were executed. Fielding's carefully conceived book purports (but not very seriously) to be about a thief-taker who had been executed almost twenty years earlier. As Fielding plainly states in the

Preface to the Miscellanies, his narrative does not relate what Wild really did, but in accordance with Aristotle's description of the poet's task (vs. that of the historian), depicts what Wild might have, would have, or should have done. Furthermore, the comical exaggerations with which Fielding burlesques the hack writer's claim of authenticity for his "full and impartial account," etc., tend to detract from the circumstantial realism of Jonathan Wild. This of course is part of Fielding's strategy and it produces an effect opposite to what the writers of criminal biography hoped to achieve.

Ultimately crime never pays for the subjects of criminal biography, but Fielding does make crime pay for Wild in a certain sense: it enables Wild to achieve the greatness to which he so fervently aspires. While the moral underpinning of the criminal biography was often at odds with the lurid story and awkwardly appended to it, Fielding consistently expresses his moral theme through the criminal activities of Wild. Instead of being a timely, slapdash exploitation of sensational subject matter, Fielding's book exhibits the high sense of purpose, invention, cohesiveness, and style that one expects in a work of art that transcends its time. In short, it is necessary to read only a few pages of one of the many biographies of Wild (including Defoe's superior account that Fielding praises in the Preface to the Miscellanies) in order to realize the numerous and significant ways in which Jonathan Wild differs from the criminal biography.

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The picaresque novel is an older, more respectable literary form than the criminal biography, and it is most probably to this genre that Digeon referred when he wrote that Fielding began Jonathan Wild as a "picaresque biography." Strictly speaking the picaresque novel, which was known to eighteenth-century English readers primarily in translation from the Spanish and the French,[8] is not biography, since it neither records the entire life of its subject nor concentrates on his character, ideas, or personality. The majority of picaresque novels are rather haphazard accounts describing the adventures of a fairly youthful subject from the time he leaves home until he marries. The focus is not so much on the picaro himself as on the variety of people whom he encounters.

Jonathan Wild shares with the picaresque novel a number of broad similarities that merit notice. Originally created as a reaction to overidealized chivalric and pastoral fiction, the picaresque novel is satiric, anti-romantic, and anti-heroic. Fielding's account of the life of Wild, despite the insistent efforts and aspirations of his hero, is also anti-romantic, anti-heroic, and above all satiric, but of the protagonist, who is paradoxically not out of society, but "with" it.

The central action of the picaresque novel, like that of Jonathan Wild, depicts the attempts of the protagonist to survive, principally by taking advantage of others. Many of the picaro's adventures conform to one of two patterns: the trickster being tricked, or the knave triumphing over an innocent or a fool. Both of these patterns are reflected repeatedly in Wild's dealings with

fellow criminals and with the Heartfrees. In addition, the picaro is by nature and circumstance an opportunist, a realist, and often a man of wit. He is notable for his lack of scruples, his vitality, and his resourcefulness--all of which attributes are integral elements of Wild's character.

The portion of Jonathan Wild that most resembles the picaresque novel begins with Wild's "first Entrance into the World" (I.iv.14) and concludes with the end of Book I, before the introduction of the Heartfrees. In these chapters Wild forms a friendship of mutual interest with the Count (iv, v); he engineers the latter's escape from Mr. Snap's (vi); and he experiences undescribed adventures in America (vii). Upon returning to London, Wild plots the robbery of the Count (viii); persuades him not to prosecute Bagshot for the return of his money (xii); defends the honor of the gentleman who steals from Bagshot (xiii); and loses all of his ill-gotten money at dice (xiv).

Even in those early chapters, however, several differences distinguish Jonathan Wild from the picaresque novel. Unlike the picaro, Wild does not take advantage of those who have either mistreated him or who represent the influential or wealthy segments of society. Wild's first victim is the Count La Ruse, who although he affects the dress and manner of the upper class, is of course neither titled nor wealthy, but a sharper who attempts to make his way by packing cards and loading dice. Wild's second victim is Bob Bagshot, an ordinary thug. While Wild shares the picaro's talent for surviving by his wit, unlike the picaro he strives to get ahead by reaping rewards from the labor of

others. He persuades Bagshot to rob the Count while he himself stands nearby "as a Corps de Reserve" (I.viii.30), and afterwards he sets the grave gentleman to work emptying the pocket of Bagshot during the card game at Mr. Snap's. Moreover, as is manifest in his dialogue with the Count on greatness and in his ruminations on the most advantageous employment of hands, Wild is a far more cerebral and ambitious character than the picaro.

A more complete examination of Jonathan Wild reveals the substantial degree to which the setting, characterization, structure, and style of Fielding's book differ from those of the picaresque novel. The original picaresque novels were set in sixteenth-century Spain, a setting that subsequent picaresque novelists tended to maintain even if they were not familiar with it.[9] As the picaro roamed about the Spanish countryside, drifting from small villages to large cities, he encountered people of all classes, professions, and circumstances. The setting of Jonathan Wild--with the exception of Mrs. Heartfree's adventures which take her to Africa and the brief chapter alluding to but not depicting Wild's experiences in America--is confined to a particular milieu of eighteenth-century London, namely, Mr. Snap's sponging house, Newgate, and a few common alehouses and wine cellars. Compared to the picaro, Wild becomes involved with relatively few people, most of whom represent a special segment of society. Except for the respectable Heartfrees and the not-so-respectable Ordinary of Newgate, almost all of the other characters are petty criminals like Wild.

The traditional picaro may best be summarized as an amoral or unprincipled rogue who nevertheless is capable of loyalty, compassion, and generosity. Although he often deceives others and commits small crimes, he can hardly be said to be a villain or even truly malicious. He is an outlaw, or more properly an outcast, by virtue of his precarious position at the lowest reaches of society. While the parents of the picaro are commonly said to have engaged in marginal criminal activities in addition to their ordinary work, they are not usually inveterate criminals, and to a greater extent this is true of the picaro himself.

In contrast, Fielding's hero is the quintessential immoral man who respects neither the laws of state nor of God. Wild's full-time commitment to criminality is foreshadowed in the chapter describing his illustrious forebears, most of whom paid for their felonies with their lives. During the action of the book Wild commits an impressive array of crimes including picking pockets; aiding and abetting armed robbery; attempted murder; grand larceny; abduction; attempted rape; subornation; and perjury. The picaro may deceitfully woo a woman, but he does not use force as Wild attempts to do with Mrs. Heartfree. While the picaro may steal from a cruel master or from the wealthy, he does not exploit old friends, as Wild does Heartfree, nor does the picaro crave revenge with the persistent and intense malevolence of Wild.

Usually the picaro is in the service of a master, for whom he performs menial tasks, and generally he is content with his lot so long as he is well fed and well treated. Wild, on the other hand,

will serve no master. As he tells the Count in a manner evoking the haughty ambition of Milton's Satan, his position in society is not important to him so long as he commands other men: "I had rather stand on the Summit of a Dunghill, than at the bottom of a Hill in Paradise; I have always thought is signifies little into what Rank of Life I am thrown, provided I make a great Figure therein" (I.v.19). While the picaro is hard-pressed to survive with a modicum of security in a society that offers him few prospects, Wild is driven to satisfy his ambitions in a world that seems to abound in unlimited possibilities.

Perhaps as the result of the hand-to-mouth existence that he is forced to live, the picaro is not a reflective character. He exhibits an admirable vitality and resourcefulness, but rarely is more than a facet or two of his personality portrayed. Wild, however, is much more complex and compelling than the picaro. He is, among other things, ambitious, dangerous, ludicrous, bold, ruthless, pretentious, compulsive, contradictory, and vulnerable. He possesses the vitality and resourcefulness of the picaro, but he is also a reflective character who frequently expresses his thoughts in overblown speeches and soliloquies. Whereas the picaro is unconcerned with ideologies, Wild becomes a slave to the idea of greatness. His inflated ambition, his unrelenting allegiance to a vision of greatness as countenanced by historians, and the evil acts that he is only too willing to commit in the name of that ideal all set him apart from the picaro.

Other important differences between Wild and the picaro concern their respective functions as reflected in the structure, style, and theme of the works in which they appear. While the picaresque novel is usually longer than the criminal biography, its length is not important since it consists of a series of open-ended episodes that are connected primarily by virtue of the fact that the picaro has experienced them. There is, properly speaking, very little structure or plot. The picaro drifts from episode to episode in haphazard fashion, falling into predicaments, playing out his pranks, and being victimized by others. Ordinarily the picaro's story begins with a brief reference to his social origins, but there is little about his life as a mature man and less about his last days. The picaro seems capable of experiencing an unlimited number of adventures without undergoing much change in character, and usually there is no meaningful conclusion to his story, which could just as well end at one point as at another.

Jonathan Wild, in contrast, has a well-constructed plot and subplot with a beginning, middle, and end, and a mounting tension that is skillfully sustained for the length of the book. Without making excessive claims for Fielding's psychological exploration of character, it is possible to state that because of the plot action Wild undergoes a certain degree of development and experiences a limited kind of fulfillment. His ambitious aspirations and his unanticipated setbacks propel him into increasingly desperate attempts to satisfy his drives and to achieve his goals. In the end he receives an appropriate reward for his exploits and in a sense fulfills himself by facing

death and damnation as a "great" man. The pattern that emerges from the meandering adventures of the picaro--on a limited scale to be sure--is one of triumph of the lowly over the proud and the mighty. The more focused, tightly constructed story of Wild dramatizes, ultimately, the defeat of an absurdly proud man who strives mightily to dominate everybody.

With the notable exception of Smollett's The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom (1753), picaresque novels were told in the first person. The events narrated are consequently restricted to the experiences of the picaro, and the language employed to describe the action is vivid, direct, and plain, in keeping with the picaro's involvement and his social position. By telling Wild's story from the points of view of two personae, the mock biographer and the narrator, Fielding creates far greater possibilities of action, style, and outlook. Both the biographer and the narrator have access to sources of information other than Wild and include scenes in which he does not appear, such as Heartfree's soliloquies, Mrs. Heartfree's adventures, and Laetitia's intrigues, which develop characters in contrast to Wild and directly influence the reader's view of the hero. In addition the relative distance of the biographer and the narrator from the events portrayed enable them to place Wild's life in certain perspectives and to offer judgments (both fallacious and astute) about the principles and behavior of the protagonist.

The cultural backgrounds and the disparate intentions of Fielding's two personae make possible the inclusion of literary, historical, and social allusions as well as sophisticated stylistic

devices that would not be credible in a tale told by a picaro. In contrast to the plain and direct language of the picaro, Fielding's personae elaborate the action with allusions, similes, digressions, understatement, circumlocution, hyperbole, and irony. The presentation of scenes in which Wild does not appear combined with the richly textured prose that juxtaposes ironic praise, comic deflation, and plain-spoken truths provide the reader with opportunities to form opinions about the actions and character of the protagonist that generally do not exist in the picaresque novel.

These numerous differences in characterization, structure, and style all articulate the divergent themes and purposes of the picaresque novel and Jonathan Wild. The strategy of the picaresque novelist is to place his protagonist in a potpourri of adventures through which he exposes the ills of society. It is not the picaro, who remains a relatively characterless agent, but those with whom the picaro contends as representatives of society, who provide the primary interest. In contrast, Wild is unquestionably the central character of Fielding's book. His reprehensible nature exemplifies the many vices that Fielding condemns and the actions that Wild perpetrates express Fielding's moral, social, and political concerns. While the picaro is left buoyant and formless enough to survive a great variety of adventures, Wild unmistakably carries the shape and weight of a more fully developed symbol. Wild is, in short, an archetypal villain whose malevolence makes the transgressions of the picaro appear as innocent pranks. Whereas the picaro embodies an indomitable, life-encouraging spirit as he overcomes the odds against him, Wild's

experiences dramatize the tribulations and punishments caused by insatiable self-seeking. The haphazard adventures of the insignificant picaro are intended to reveal the cruelty and self-interest of the nobility and the powerful. Fielding's vivid portrait of Wild is designed to demonstrate the self-interest, hypocrisy, and cruelty of anyone who aspires to a sort of nobility through power.

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Of the less formalized literary modes that have been applied to Jonathan Wild the most frequent is satire. In his seminal "Essay on the Life and Genius of Henry Fielding, Esq." (1762), Arthur Murphy specifically referred to Jonathan Wild as a satire, esteeming it to be an admirable work although falling very short of the higher order of composition of Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia. "A satire like this," Murphy wrote of Jonathan Wild, "will be always worthy of the attention of the reader, who desires to rise wiser or better from the book he peruses."[10] In 1838 Bulwer-Lytton asserted that Jonathan Wild was "the finest prose satire in the English language,"[11] and almost a century later H.K. Banerji praised Fielding's book as "the greatest and sternest of all his satires."[12] In recent years Robert Alter excluded Jonathan Wild from his study Fielding and the Nature of the Novel (1969) because Fielding's strategy of attack "was that of formal satire, through a generalized rhetorical design and highly schematized narrative pattern."[13]

Although satire first flowered into a formalized genre with the verse of Horace, Persius, and Juvenal, it had existed centuries

earlier as an important mode in the poetry of Archilochus, the fables of Aesop, the character studies of Theophrastus, and the comedies of Aristophanes. In sixteenth-century England verse satire evolved into a rigid poetic form while prose satire was amorphous. By Fielding's age satire had burgeoned into numerous varieties of verse and prose that defy classification as a single conventional form. For this reason it is difficult to assess the satiric aspects of Jonathan Wild with as firm a conception of shape, scope, and expectation as informed the preceding comparisons of Fielding's book with the criminal biography and the picaresque novel. It is nevertheless possible to identify several general characteristics of prose or fictional satire as a mode and to discuss the extent to which Fielding did or did not incorporate these characteristics in Jonathan Wild.

The form, structure, and style of satire may vary greatly, but the purpose of the satirist, whether writing brief verse or lengthy prose, remains constant: it is to expose the evils and foibles of man, and to ridicule or condemn attitudes and behavior that the satirist believes lead to an immoral or misguided life. The satirist strives to make men see more clearly by recognizing the monstrous aspects of reality, by looking beneath the surface of things, and by perceiving the accepted or conventional in an enlightened new perspective. Implied in the satirist's purpose is the urgent need for reform.

It is not easy to find prefatory remarks about a novel that announce the author's satiric intentions more clearly than Fielding's statement in the Preface to the Miscellanies:

> This Bombast Greatness then is the Character I intend to expose; and the more this prevails in and deceives the World, taking to itself not only Riches and Power, but often Honour, or at least the Shadow of it, the more necessary is it to strip the Monster of these false Colours, and shew it in its native Deformity: for by suffering Vice to possess the Reward of Virtue, we do a double Injury to Society, by encouraging the former, and taking away the chief Incentive to the latter. (M, p. 13)

In most instances the satirist grounds his attack in the concrete particulars of his society. He may or may not name names, but his strategy is to ridicule or to condemn subjects that exist outside of his created work. As we have seen, the use of Jonathan Wild's name as a vehicle for attacking Walpole was a commonplace of Opposition literature long before the publication of Fielding's book. Although Fielding does not explicitly name Walpole in Jonathan Wild, the ubiquitous epithet "great man" and the allusions to government positions that Walpole had formerly held, to his association with the South Sea Bubble, to his penchant for spending vast sums of money on his home and art collection, to his marital arrangement with his first wife, and to the immunity that he enjoyed from prosecution after his fall from power all clearly refer to the most powerful political leader of the first half of the eighteenth century. In addition Fielding also alludes to the political parties of the period--"Cavaliers and Tory Rory Ranter Boys" (II.vi.90)--to the Licensing Act and general censorship of writers by the government (III.v.138-39), and to Walpole's successor (IV.iii).[14]

Other topical references in Jonathan Wild concern literature and journalism as well as celebrated personalities and events of the

period. These references include allusions to Young's popular poem Night Thoughts (III.ii.126); to Colley Cibber's controversial autobiography (I.xiii.50); to the reprieve in The Beggar's Opera (IV.vi. 205); and to accounts published in the Gentleman's Magazine of the harangues of the "HURGOS" (III.vi.144). Although Fielding omitted the facetious tribute to Joe Miller's Jests (1740) in the revised edition, he let stand the reference to the ever-popular Academy of Compliments (III.vi.143). The allusion to "Occurrences of the Phaenomenous Kind" (II.xii.112) refers to the comet that appeared in the spring of 1742; the "Derdaeus Magnus, an ingenious Toyman" (II.iii.78), who dispensed paste necklaces to second-rate beaus, is William Deard, the well-known London jeweler and toymaker who died in 1761; "the Conv-----n (whose not Sitting of late is much lamented)" (I.xiii.50) refers to the Church's two Houses of Convocation, which the King prorogued in 1717 because of the unflattering controversy surrounding its sessions. All of these references alluding to political, literary, and social matters solidly ground Fielding's satire in the actualities of his age, but do not limit the satire to that period.

In creating a work that is essentially critical in intention, the satirist may judge his subject according to either an explicit or implicit moral standard. When he omits the positive norm from his work the satirist throws the other standard or standards into starker relief. Martin Price has written that "what satire needs is the bold confrontation of two orders, one professed and the other ignored, each so closely parallel with the other that the transposition can be

achieved at any point and carry all the rest with it."[15]

In Jonathan Wild Fielding employs a more complex variation of the confrontation of orders than Price describes. The major thrust of Fielding's satire is against Wild, whose embodiment of greatness provides the professed norm. Wild's foil, the good merchant Heartfree, approaches Fielding's intended moral standard, but he does not meet it entirely. The close parallel between Wild's greatness and Heartfree's goodness creates a consistent transposition between contrasting orders without the direct representation of Fielding's ultimate moral standard. It is not so much that the desired standard is ignored, as Price's paradigm suggests, but that it arises from the dynamics of two unequally satirized orders represented by Wild and Heartfree. The implied standard against which all of the actions in Jonathan Wild should be judged is an amalgam of goodness and greatness that combines the faith, compassion, and honesty of Heartfree with the intellect and will of Wild.

One of the satirist's principal means of achieving his purpose is the patent manipulation of language. Satire is probably the most self-consciously rhetorical of literary modes, and invective, hyperbole, burlesque, parody, and irony are among the most obvious and formidable weapons in the satirist's arsenal. Often the satirist flaunts artifice for highly moral aims, and in complex works he creates one or more personae in order to disguise his true intentions.

The affinities that Jonathan Wild has with these rhetorical characteristics of the satiric mode ought to be apparent. The most noticeable persona whom Fielding creates is of course the mock

biographer, who is unstinting in his adulation of the protagonist. The mock biographer's esteem for greatness and his denigration of goodness are expressed in excessive, grossly inappropriate language that calls attention to itself at the same time that it unsettles the reader, at least until the insistent repetition takes its toll. According to the mock biographer, the swindling and robbery of Heartfree that Wild masterminds is a "great and glorious Action" (II.iii.74). Wild's decision to ravish Mrs. Heartfree before their ship goes down in a storm displays "a Contempt of Danger truly great" and "a Resolution as worthy to be admired perhaps as any recorded of the bravest Hero, ancient or modern" ((i.xi.106). Wild's effort to persuade Heartfree to commit a crime for which he would be hanged is a "great and noble Scheme" contrived by "the vast Genius" (III.v. 35) of the hero. The art of treachery, dissembling, promising, lying, and falsehood, of which Wild is a most eminent master, reveals "the highest Excellence of Human Nature" (II.v.90); Wild's abilities to manipulate the inmates of Newgate offer "the most exalted proofs of Greatness" (IV.xii.270); and his death sentence cannot be called "otherwise than honourable" (IV.xii.238).

Conversely, the mock biographer maintains that generosity, benevolence, clemency, and kindness are "sneaking Qualities" (I.i.4); any spark of goodness is "a Meanness and Imperfection" (I.i.4); being good-natured, friendly, and generous reveals "great Weaknesses of Mind" (II.i.64); constancy is a "mean, base, low Vice" (II.iii.74); and honesty is a "pitiful low Quality" (III.x.161). The Heartfrees are of an entirely different stamp from most of the other characters,

since they are "of that pitiful Order of Mortals, who are in Contempt called Good-natured" (II.i.62). That Heartfree believes that anyone, no less Wild, would offer to do him a service without view to his own interest argues "such Weakness of Mind, such Ignorance of the World, and such an artless, simple, undesigning Heart, as must render the Person possessed of it the lowest Creature, and the properest Object of Contempt imaginable" (II.ii.70). Mrs. Heartfree is a "weak, poor-spirited Woman" (II.vii.145) for attempting to comfort her husband after his loss, and because Heartfree cries when he sees his children after Mrs. Heartfree's flight with Wild, he is a "weak, silly Man, who had not Greatness sufficient to conquer these low Efforts of Tenderness and Humanity" (III.i.122). Friendly's uncommon example of loyalty and kindness to Heartfree causes others to consider him "as odd and silly a Fellow as his Master" (IV.i.184), while Wild's passing realization that he may prevent Heartfree's death is a "base Thought" (IV.iv.199) that is soon checked.

This obvious manipulation of language in order to subvert values for satiric purposes is not restricted to the mock biographer. In many ways Wild is his own best spokesman. As the epitome of the great man, he in a sense invents or at least becomes the consummate practitioner of the distorted language that the mock biographer uses to describe his character and actions. Accordingly, Wild argues during his dialogue on greatness with the Count that "THE WISE," as distinguished from prigs and statesmen, belong to the "weak Part of the World" (I.v.23). Although he knows that Bagshot is guilty of robbery (according to his own plan), Wild advises the suspicious

Count "to take Care how you cast any such Reflections on a Man of Mr. Bagshot's nice Honour" (I.xii.46). Wild aanounces to the dissenting factions of his gang that robbing the public is "so great and glorious an Undertaking" (II.vi.91), and he refers to his plan for the robbery and murder of the young gentleman from Kent as "this glorious Undertaking" before evoking the specter of "those glorious Heroes, who, to their immortal Honour, have massacred whole Nations" (III.iii.130).

More striking than the simple use of irony (because it makes Wild satirize society as a whole) is the hero's talent for a kind of casuistry that reduces words to their opposite meanings or to no meaning at all. In defending the grave man whom he has ordered to pick Bagshot's pocket, Wild argues: "In what then doth the Word Honour consist? Why in itself alone. A Man of Honour is he that is called a Man of Honour; and while he is so called, he so remains, and no longer" (I.xiii.52). With Marybone, Wild conjures up a special vision of private torment according to which the very souls of men may be torn from their bodies. This enables him to argue: "Is is not more generous, nay, more good-natured, to send a Man to his Rest; than after having plundered him of all he hath, or from Malice or Malevolence deprived him of his Character, to punish him with a languishing Death, or what is worse, a languishing Life?" (III.iii. 130-31). When Bluskin asserts that the ribbon and the designation of captain that Wild has bestowed upon him are mere shadows, Wild counters: "But all great and wise Men think themselves sufficiently repaid by what procures them Honour and Precedence in the Gang, without enquiring into Substance; nay, if a Title, or a Feather be

equal to this Purpose, they are Substance, and not mere Shadows" (III.xiv.178).[16]

Another important aspect of Wild's rhetoric that is essential to Fielding's satirical strategy of equating the common criminal with eminent members of society is the hero's stilted grandiloquence. Wild responds to the Count's offer to further his burgeoning criminal career in language that a churchwarden or an alderman might use to address a peer or an M.P.: "Sir, I am not insensible of my Obligations to you, as well for the Over-value you have set on my small Abilities, as for the Kindness you express in offering to introduce me among my Superiors" (I.v.18-19).

Wild rebuts Bagshot's argument for equally dividing the money that he has robbed from the Count by assuming the combined authority of an exegete and an expert in economics:

> . . . your Hire I shall not refuse you, which is all that the Labourer is entituled to, or ever enjoys. I remember when I was at School to have heard some Verses, which for the Excellence of their Doctrine made an impression on me, purporting that the Birds of the Air, and the Beats of the Field, work not for themselves. It is true, the Farmer allows Fodder to his Oxen, and Pasture to his Sheep; but it is for his own Service, nor theirs. In the same manner the Ploughman, the Shepherd, the Weaver, the Builder, and the Soldier, work not for themselves but others. (I.viii. 32)

Wild's final bid for power among the prigs and debtors of Newgate begins with an impressive exordium: "Friends and Fellow-Citizens. The Cause which I am to mention to you this Day, is of such mighty Importance, that when I consider my own small Abilities, I tremble with an Apprehension, lest your Safety may be rendered precarious by the Weakness of him who hath undertaken to represent to you your

Danger. Gentleman, the Liberty of Newgate is at Stake" (IV.iii.192).

Although most of Wild's dialogue is either ironic, sophistic, or grandiloquent, on occasion he drops his pose and resorts to invective, which is another of the satirist's favcrite rhetorical devices for denouncing his subject. Wild's most potent outburst is pointedly directed against himself. After being set adrift in the oarless boat and having falsely blamed the passion of love for his suffering, Wild in effect reproaches himself for his cowardice and his failure to live up to his standard of greatness: "D--n it, a Man can die but once, what signifies it! Every man must die, and when it is over it is over. I never was afraid of any thing yet, nor I won't begin now; no, d--n me, won't I. What signifies Fear? I shall die whether I am afraid or no; Who's afraid then, d--n me?" (II.xi.110-11).

Because Wild's use of invective tends to distract from his grander manipulations of language, Fielding summarizes most of Wild's less decorous outbursts, as in the account of his behavior in Newgate: "He, therefore, betook himself to that true Support of Greatness in Affliction, a Bottle; by Means of which he was enabled to curse, and swear, and bully, and brave his Fate" (IV.xii.239).

A good deal of the invective in Jonathan Wild is expressed by the minor characters who act as agents for the author by condemning Wild in cruder terms than do the mock biographer and the narrator. When Laetitia discovers the worthlessness of the necklace offered to her by Wild it is indirectly reported that she "be-knaved, be-rascalled, be-rogued the unhappy Hero" (II.iii.79); later Laetitia vilifies Wild in her own inimitable voice during the matrimonial

dialogue and her first interview with Wild in Newgate. Although Bob Bagshot is repeatedly undone by Wild, he is not altogether cowed: "By G-- you shall not make a Fool of me; and if you take me for one, I must tell you, you are a Rascal. . . . D--n me, I don't like such Jests; I see you are a pitiful Rascal, and a Scoundrel" (I.viii.33-34), he tells Wild during their first showdown.

Blueskin and Fireblood also denounce Wild in no uncertain terms. "I tell you once for all, by G-- I never will give you the Watch. . . . Take your Pistols yourself, and go out on the Highway, and don't lazily think to fatten yourself with the Dangers and Pains of other People" (III.xiv.178), Blueskin rails at Wild in a fatal miscalculation. Fireblood thus responds to Wild's harangue about the injury done to his honor: "My---in a Bandbox. . . . Here is Noise about your Honour. . . . I fear you not, nor do I believe a Word you say" (IV.x.229, 230). Even the usually passive Heartfree verbally assaults his tormentor. "Dost thou think then, thou little, paltry, mean Animal" (III.x.163), he begins his rejection of Wild's plan to escape from Newgate.

All of these rhetorical devices--irony, casuistry, grandiloquence, and invective--markedly affect the outer form of Jonathan Wild. As is often the case in works of the satiric mode, the self-conscious display of language results in a number of set speeches and in the rhetorical control of character. The chapters "Of Hats" and "Curious Anecdotes relating to the History of Newgate," as well as some of Wild's other speeches to the Count, Bagshot, and Blueskin on the merits of priggery (I.v), the rewards of labor (I.viii), and the

prerogatives of the gang leader (III.xiv), are pretty much set pieces. Although these scenes are appropriately placed in the overall action of the book, they are more or less self-contained units that with a few judicious emendations might be excellent satiric essays. Each episode has an oratorical or theatrical tone and seems to be "staged" as much for the reader as for the interaction of characters. Ostensibly Wild harangues his fellow thieves, but Fielding's interest in these scenes seems to be more directly focused on the reader than is the case in the narrative passages, which are concerned with the relation of setting, character, and action. Through the speeches of Wild Fielding, in effect, addresses the reader in a variation of the strategy of traditional verse satire according to which the satirist speaks directly to his audience.

Consonant with the satirist's emphasis on language is the rhetorical control of character that Fielding establishes primarily through the persona of the mock biographer. The ironic praise that the mock biographer heaps upon his subject "sets" Wild's character so that on one plane at least it remains constant from his birth to his enshrinement at the pinnacle of greatness. In contrast to Fielding's specific dramatizations of Wild's ups and downs, the mock biographer depicts the hero in static, generalized terms such as "great," "glorious," "wondrous," etc., which are rarely modulated. The result of the mock biographer's consistent use of these verbal formulae is to formalize Wild and to place him somewhat at a distance from the reader. The rhetorical screen that the biographer places in front of his subject represents both a manipulation of Wild's character and a

manipulation of the reader's response to Wild. To a lesser degree the rhetorical control of character is also at work with the "weak, silly" Heartfree, his "weak, poor-spirited" wife, the "Count," the "faithful" Fireblood, the "fair" Laetitia, and the Ordinary of Newgate, "a very sagacious as well as very worthy Person" (IV.i.181).

Wild's fraudulent use of language lies at the heart of the book's action and theme, but this transgression is not limited to the hero alone. The mock biographer narrates the life of his subject with the same corrupt language that Wild employs, and both the narrator and the biographer satirize the rhetoric of various literary genres. In addition lesser characters affect hypocritical or sham styles. For the most part the language of the Count and Laetitia (except when she berates Wild) is that of the fashionable members of society, as in The Beggar's Opera.[17] The language of the Ordinary is a curious combination of pietistic commonplaces and abysmal ignorance that is unrelieved by lapses in diction or a moment of honest recognition. Even the admirable Heartfrees, as will be seen, on occasion become targets of satire as they express themselves in stilted or flowery language. When Fielding has his personae or his characters speak or write in a patently counterfeit manner it is to satirize a wide range of subjects including politics, marriage, the law, religion, and literature, all of which are traditional concerns of the satirist.

A final aspect of Jonathan Wild that has strong affinities with the satiric mode is Fielding's use of the techniques of simplification, exaggeration, magnification, and diminution. As was demonstrated in the preceding chapter, Fielding's fictional portrait of Wild is

both less and more than his model. While the complex criminal activities of the real Wild are simplified, the vices of Fielding's hero are highlighted and set in starker relief through the compression of time and the fabrication of the Heartfrees. The vices of Wild are indeed prodigious, but by having Wild commit the majority of his transgressions against the innocent Heartfrees, Fielding makes Wild's malevolence appear more fiendish than if he had performed the same acts against a variety of victims both criminal and honest. The magnification of Wild's character and position is also accomplished through the revelation of his grandiose ambitions, the difficulty of some of the tasks that he sets for himself, and the inflated language that he uses in order to express views of himself and of society.

However, at the same time that Fielding aggrandizes Wild he also diminishes him. Wild's notable lack of success in his criminal and amatory endeavors has already been pointed out, as has Fielding's frequent use of situational irony, which underscores the discrepancy between Wild's lofty aspirations and his lowly circumstances. Another device that Fielding employs to belittle Wild is the reduction of his grandiose conceptions to insubstantial material objects. In the chapter "Of Hats," for example, Wild convinces the warring factions of his gang that the contrasting styles of their hats do not mean that thier interests are incompatible. In calling for unity Wild claims that that hat is best which will contain the largest booty. The scene is neatly resolved with the prigs following Wild's command to toss their hats into the air. The hats of Wild's gang are of course empty.

In another scene Fielding has Blueskin expose Wild's attempt to control him by explicitly stating that Wild's award of a ribbon and a bogus title is insubstantial: "D--n your cajoling," Blueskin tells Wild. "Do you think I value myself on this Bit of Ribbon, which I could have bought myself for six-pence, and have worn without your Leave? Do you imagine I think myself a Captain, because you, whom I know not empowered to make one, call me so? The Name of Captain is but a Shadow: The Men and the Salary are the Substance: And I am not to be bubbled with a Shadow" (III.xiv.177).

Wild is able to succeed Johnson as leader of the prigs of Newgate partly because of the force and eloquence of his speech, in which he claims that Johnson's exorbitant plundering of the inmates manifests itself in the silk nightgown, silk embroidered waistcoat, and velvet cap that he wears to his public dishonor. When Wild inherits these gaudy trappings of power they are revealed to be either insubstantial or useless: "As for the Night-Gown, its Outside indeed made a glittering tinsel Appearance, but it kept him [Wild] not warm. . . . As to the Wastecoat, it fitted him very ill, being infinitely too big for him; and the Cap was so heavy, that it made his Head ake" (IV.iii.197).[18]

A further diminishment of Wild occurs in Fielding's depiction of the hero's hapless pursuit of love, which is to be judged according to a scale of values ranging from the spiritual to the physical to the nonexistent. The desirable spiritual and physical union of marriage is represented by Mr. and Mrs. Heartfree and their "little Family" (III.i.119). Wild violates this standard by separating Mrs. Heartfree

from her husband and children, and by attempting to possess the ever-faithful wife and mother. Wild's regard for women and marriage may be inferred from the observation early in the action that the hero never offered any violence to a young lady without first making the most earnest promises of marriage, which he said "cost so little and were so easily pronounced" (I.ix.37). The marriage of Wild and Laetitia is a travesty of the ideal spiritual-physical union. Wild marries Laetitia because of his ungovernable lust for her; Laetitia marries Wild because she hopes to acquire a fortune. After two weeks Wild's passion for Laetitia vanishes and for the remainder of the book he is without a woman, while Laetitia is not timid about satisfying her physical desires. In his last speech to Fireblood Wild mocks the spiritual and physical union of marriage, lamenting "the Loss of an agreeable Companion, of the Affection of a Wife, dearer to my Soul than Life itself," and twice complaining of the injury done to him "in the tenderest Part" (IV.x.261).

While the topicality of Jonathan Wild, its extensive use of irony, casuistry, grandiloquence, and invective, and the simplification, magnification, and diminution of its principal character are typical of many works in the satiric mode, it is important also to point out some of the ways in which Fielding's book differs from the norms of satire. Many satiric works share a tendency towards formlessness that evokes the Latin word satura (whose original meaning was a mixture or medley). In addition the emphasis in many satires is on discourse, argument, and invective rather than on action and character. Although chapters such as "Of Hats" and "Curious

Anecdotes Relating to the History of Newgate" emphasize discourse and argument, most of the other chapters in Jonathan Wild demonstrate Fielding's interest in telling a dramatic story with a well-structured plot and vivid characters whose personalities are as interesting as the ideas that they express. Notwithstanding the importance of diction and discourse in Jonathan Wild, Fielding, like many other novelists of the period, strives to write a credible story of conflict, complication, and resolution, depicting characters whose actions and feelings are as important as their rhetoric.

Because of the basically critical nature of the genre, many satirists arouse strong antipathetic feelings towards the principal characters of their works. The satirist's traditional condemnation and ridicule of his subject are unequivocally present in Fielding's portrait of Wild, but as will be discussed below, in rendering the misadventures and defeats of Wild Fielding also manages to create some sympathy for his protagonist. Fielding's treatment of character does not of course approach anything like Richardson's psychological orientation, and should not, yet it should be noted that at times Fielding cuts beneath the satirist's hard, glittery surface of words to penetrate to a certain degree the head and heart of his hero, particularly in such scenes as Wild's potential drowning (II.xi) and his reactions when the death warrant for Heartfree arrives (IV.iv).

In most satiric works the world that is revealed is one in which evil has defeated good or is just about to do so. In such a context the death of the protagonist in a satire is normally not an

important factor. The climactic action in Jonathan Wild, however, is the death of the protagonist, which Fielding imbues with manifold significance. Wild's apotheosis at Tyburn crowns the illustrious career of the petty thief at the same time that it dramatically suggests the possible punishment in store for those who seek false greatness. On a more metamorphic level the execution of Wild signals the defeat of evil and the restoration or celebration of providential order that is an essential element of Fielding's vision.

In the last analysis most satiric writing must be said to present a pessimistic view of life. In depicting a world that has become so degenerate that it is about to destroy itself, the satirist implies that unless order, reason, and moderation can be established soon the prospect of survival in the present, not to mention the future, is bleak. Fielding's vision in Jonathan Wild differs from that of most satirists of the period in that it is not anti-progressivist. While he condemns much of the present he is also equally critical of the past. The depiction of Wild's numerous vices is solidly rooted in Fielding's age, but through the frequent allusions of Wild and the mock biographer to Alexander the Great and Caesar, and to the works of classical historians, Fielding also makes it clear that these vices have existed for as long as man's actions have been recorded. For all of Fielding's respect for classical learning he does not, as many satirists have done, look back to an idealized earlier age that purportedly enjoyed superior ethical, social, and political values. To the contrary, by having Heartfree not only survive but prosper after the conflict with Wild, Fielding seems to

suggest that for the enterprising man of integrity who has acquired faith, experience, and prudence, the future may be promising.

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Perhaps because of the intensity and verve of Fielding's satire that obliges the reader to recognize the monstrous aspects of reality, to look beneath the surface of things, and to view conventional values with a fresh enlightenment, most critics have failed to recognize the reassuring, more genial comic aspects of Jonathan Wild. A good example of the tendency of scholars to stress the book's satire at the expense of other values occurs in Banerji's otherwise cogent study. After describing Jonathan Wild as "the greatest and sternest" of all of Fielding's satires, Banerji asserts that "what humour there is in the book is almost invariably grim."[19] A generation later, William Lane made a similar pronouncement, writing that "the satire is grim and intensified in Jonathan Wild to such a point that Fielding's laughter is pretty well stifled."[20] Only recently has a more balanced approach been suggested by Claude Rawson, who believes that because Fielding did not take his villain as seriously as the mock-heroic commentary purports, "Wild comes alive less as a diabolical Machiavel, than as a not unengaging comic figure" (p. 103). While Banerji's and Lane's descriptions of the grim humor or the lack of humor in Jonathan Wild may perhaps be explained by differences in tastes and sensibilities, it is important to recognize the numerous affinities in structure, characterization, and effect that Fielding's book has with the comic mode.

Just as satire proliferated in many varieties during its long history, so comedy manifested itself in numerous forms and styles from its inception as a dramatic genre in ancient Greece to its emergence in Augustan England not only as sentimental comedy, but as an important element in the evolving genre of the novel. Fielding's designation of Joseph Andrews as a "comic Epic-Poem in Prose" (Preface, p. 4), expresses his conception of a new combination of existing genres, which he believed would arouse certain expectations in the reader. In discussing the comic aspects of Jonathan Wild it is best not to compare Fielding's book with any specific comic form, but to examine it in relation to the comic mode in general, which most often describes works that are designed to entertain, that have happy endings, and that reveal a dominating, providential authorial presence. All works that belong to the comic mode do not require a happy ending,[21] although in most cases these works prevent a vision of life that makes a happy ending likely or at least possible. While all actions in works of the comic mode do not have to be trivial, nor do the characters have to be of inferior social rank or capacity, the majority of works in this mode seem to depict fairly common characters in actions that are not overly serious.

This at least appears to be the normative view of the comic mode that descended from Aristotle to English writers in the mid-eighteenth century. The extent to which Fielding adhered to this norm in theory may be seen in the Preface to Joseph Andrews, which was written a little over a year before the publication of Jonathan Wild. In describing his new species of writing Fielding states that its

fable and action are "light and ridiculous; it differs in its Characters by introducing Persons of inferiour Rank, and consequently of inferiour Manners." The sentiments and diction of such works preserve "the Ludicrous instead of the Sublime." The province of the comic writer is "the Ridiculous," which Fielding says arises from affectation, which in turn proceeds "from one of these two Causes, Vanity, or Hypocrisy" (Preface, pp. 4, 8). While there is a self-serving ad hoc quality about the Preface to Joseph Andrews, as there is about any preface, Fielding's comments provide a useful touchstone for assessing his incorporation in Jonathan Wild of what he considered to be traditional comic elements.

The hero of Jonathan Wild, notwithstanding the effusive efforts of the mock biographer to elevate him to an exalted rank, is of course of low station. The son of a merchant who gravitated to the criminal milieu, Wild is a common thief who makes his way primarily by plotting the robbery and swindling of others. The source of comedy in Wild's characterization has a close correspondence to Fielding's observations about the ridiculous in the Preface to Joseph Andrews. Wild's overriding affectation is his absurd aspiration to become a great man of only slightly lower status than a conqueror or prime minister. In pretending to far more than he is capable of achieving Wild affects a pose that reveals a striking combination of vanity and hypocrisy. Wild's pompous pronouncements and a good number of his actions with the Count, Bagshot, Blueskin, and Fireblood are motivated as much by vanity as by greed: For most of the action Wild is more successful in nurturing his vanity than in acquiring material gain,

and the degree to which he is able to realize his objectives depends to a great extent upon the art of his hypocrisy, which remains comic so long as it is directed against his fellow criminals.

In addition to vanity and hypocrisy, Fielding's hero also manifests other qualities that have often been associated with characters of the comic mode. He is at times inefficient, compulsive, bungling, dupable, witty, and cowardly. As Wild is an amalgam of the vices that Fielding wishes to expose, so he is a composite of many types distilled from the Old Comedy, commedia dell'arte, and the Restoration stage. Wild is in part the boaster or braggart, the bully, the trickster, the beau, the cuckold, a younger pantalone, and something of a pedant. The cumulative effect of these characteristics is to reveal, despite the vigorous assertions of the mock biographer, how unheroic Wild actually is.

While Fielding does not discuss the matter in the Preface to Joseph Andrews, the endings of most works in the comic mode involve some sort of happy reconciliation. Often the hero, after being brought to the brink of disaster, is united with his love in marriage, as is the case in Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones. In Jonathan Wild Fielding seems to mock this view, observing after Wild and Laetitia's marriage: "MOST private Histories, as well as Comedies, end at this Period; the Historian and the Poet both concluding they have done enough for their Hero when they have married him; or intimating rather, that the rest of his Life must be a dull Calm of Happiness, very delightful indeed to pass through, but somewhat insipid to relate" (III.vii.147). Wild and Laetitia, however, enjoy anything but a dull calm of happiness

after their marriage. The very next chapter, the matrimonial dialogue, dramatizes the thinly veiled contempt that they feel for each other, and in the remaining third of the book Fielding relates the far from insipid adventures of Wild and Laetitia as well as of the Heartfrees.

But reconciliation in works of the comic mode can also exist on a symbolic scale that transcends the individual fate of the hero. That is, the protagonist himself may not come to a happy end, but the action of the work can be resolved with the establishment of harmony and order, which provides redemption or reconciliation. This is the kind of conclusion that Fielding achieves in Jonathan Wild. Unlike the exalted heroes of tragedy who get more than they deserve for their actions and aspirations, Wild gets precisely what he deserves: a celebrated execution at which the public vents its animosity towards him. Although Wild dies without having attained power, wealth, or love, in one sense he can be said to be happily reconciled because he achieves at the gallows what few great men have achieved--being hanged by the neck until dead.

With the execution of Wild, Fielding establishes harmony and order, literally and metaphorically. We also learn in the concluding chapter that almost all of the other characters receive what they deserve: the noose for Laetitia, Fireblood, Blueskin, and Johnson, and the wheel (the most painful death of all) for the Count, who wronged both of the Heartfrees as well as Theodosia and the hero. Theodosia, whose only transgression was sexual, is transported to America, where she becomes a good wife. Friendly marries Heartfree's

older daughter and goes into partnership with his former master. The Heartfrees of course are reunited so that they may enjoy a long, happy, and prosperous life together. In its broadest outline and its resolution of tensions the fiction of Jonathan Wild thus seems to conform more to the mode of comedy than to that of satire or tragedy.

Like most writers of comedy, Fielding portrays the imperfections and failures of his characters and achieves many of his comic effects by highlighting incongruities, dramatizing excesses, juxtaposing appearance and reality, and making humorous and witty commentary. Often several of these techniques are combined at once. Accordingly Wild invokes the language of parliamentary debate and of philosophical disquisition in staking his claim to booty that in one instance at least is as small as eighteen pence. When he first woos Laetitia, Wild purchases a genteel snuffbox and makes polite conversation at the tea table before making such violent advances that Laetitia has to repel him physically. After being cast adrift and believing that he is going to die, Wild unleashes a round of blasphemies and looks extremely fierce until he remembers that "no one was present to see him" (II. xi.111).

A number of Wild's excesses that twentieth-century readers may describe as compulsive, conform to the Bergsonian view of the comic as the impingement of the mechanical upon the organic. When Wild and the penniless Count play a friendly game of cards, Wild cannot keep his hands out of the Count's pockets even though he knows there is nothing in them (I.vi). Although Wild has such an ungovernable passion for Laetitia that "he would go any Lengths

to satisfy it" (II.iii.75), upon accidentally meeting Moll Straddle he delays at once his visit to Laetitia in order to dally with Moll in a private room at the Rummer and Horseshoe. Perhaps Wild's most comic and consummate excess occurs during the last moments of his life. While the Ordinary pronounces a final prayer for Wild, the hero "applied his Hands to the Parson's Pocket, and emptied it of his Bottle-Screw, which he carried out of the World in his Hand" (IV.xiv.254).

The juxtaposition of appearance and reality repeatedly deflates Wild's pretense while underscoring his dupability and vulnerability. Laetitia's discovery that the necklace which Wild has given her is paste causes the hero to stand "silent, confounded with Astonishment, but more with Shame and Indignation, at being thus out-witted and over-reached" (II.iii.79). The rebellious activities of Bagshot and Blueskin, the refusals of Marybone and Heartfree to commit certain crimes, the betrayals of Fireblood, and the ill-fitting garments that Wild inherits from Johnson are other reminders of varying prominence and tone that demonstrate that all is not exactly as Wild perceives it.

Lastly the comic portrayal of Wild is enhanced by witty commentary in the form of maxims that are attributed to the hero. In his summation of Wild's character and accomplishments the biographer presents fifteen of these maxims on methods of achieving greatness, and other maxims or pithy observations variously embellish the action.[22] For example, Wild promptly pockets the largest share of booty that Bagshot has taken "according to an excellent Maxim of his: 'First secure what Share you can, before you wrangle for the rest'" (I.viii.31).

Wild carried good nature "to that wonderful and uncommon Height, that he never did a single Injury to Man or Woman, by which he himself did not expect to reap some Advantage. He would often indeed say, that by the contrary party Men often made a bad Bargain with the Devil, and did his Work for nothing" (I.xi.41).

Fielding often introduces these maxims or observations in order to bolster Wild's deteriorating status or to provide a humorous resolution of a serious action. The first maxim in the preceding paragraph appears in the course of Wild's initial showdown with Bagshot, at the end of which he draws his sword and demands Bagshot's money or his blood (Wild "often declared that he looked upon borrowing to be as good a Way of taking as any" [I.viii.34-35]). The maxim about not doing injury to man or woman without expecting to reap some advantage occurs in the first scene in which Wild appears after he has been vigorously rejected by Laetitia in favor of Tom Smirk. Maxims thus interrupt and comment humorously on the action, preventing the reader from becoming overly involved in the proceedings.

While Wild, or at least a certain aspect of Wild, is the book's principal comic character, Fielding also depicts the pretenses, excesses, and incongruities of other colorful figures, especially Laetitia, the Count, and the Ordinary. Laetitia assumes the airs of a Lady Booby or Lady Bellaston, although she is the daughter of a corrupt bailiff and is given to Wild with a dowry of seventeen pounds and nine shillings in money and goods (III.vii). The precious virtue that Laetitia battles to preserve with Wild (I.x) is in the next chapter revealed to be nonexistent when Tom Smirk emerges from the closet where she has hidden him.[23] Despite her amorous adventures as a maiden and a married woman, Laetitia's love of virtue is so great that she vows

never again to enter the same house with her sister Theodosia, whose sole intrigue with the Count has resulted in the birth of a child. Laetitia, like Wild, is motivated by lust and greed; and like the hero, she is unsuccessful in her quest for wealth. Near the end of the book Laetitia is arrested for picking pockets. Her pretense and vanity are such that, still smarting from a remark that Wild had made at the beginning of their marriage, she asks him on the eve of his execution, "how he could have used her so barbarously once, as by calling her B----; and whether such Language became a Man, much less a Gentleman" (IV.xiv.251).

The Count La Ruse, who is imprisoned at Mr. Snap's for failing to pay his tailor for some suits of clothes, affects the dress and speech of a man of title. The "gold" button that the Count leaves with the chambermaid in order to gain his freedom turns out to be brass (I.vi). Like Wild, the Count cannot help cheating others even when there is no immediate possibility of gain. When he plays a social game with Wild, the Count packs the cards even though he knew "if he won ever so much of Mr. Wild, he should not receive a Shilling" (I.vi.26). After he has been singlehandedly robbed by Bagshot, the Count boasts to Wild about how bravely he had defended his money and how dangerously he had wounded two of the three men who had attacked him. Wild of course "not only knew the extreme Readiness with which the Booty had been delivered, but also the constant Frigidity of the Count's Courage" (I.xi.42).

Cowardice, as well as hypocrisy, ignorance, and an un-Christianlike lack of generosity, characterizes the Ordinary of Newgate, who first reveals his many imperfections by declaring

Heartfree to be a "cursed Rogue" (IV.i.181) and pronouncing it impossible for Heartfree to be saved because of his belief in the possible salvation of a sincere Turk. The Ordinary prefers liquor to wine because he says it is nowhere spoken against in the Scriptures. He wishes that he had "the Eloquence of Cicero, or of Tully" (IV.xiii.241) before beginning his travesty of a sermon, which is occasioned not by any desire to save Wild's soul, but by the need to pass time before the punch arrives.

Other minor characters, including Wild's illustrious forebears, are given brief comic strokes of varying shades. In an interview with Wild, Fireblood swears that "there was no better Pastime than blowing a Man's Brains out" (III.iv.134). The mercenary Moll Straddle, who sells herself for the opportunity of picking the pockets of her clients, tearfully confesses to Wild that she squandered two notes of £200, one on the bawdyhouse bully Jack Swagger, and the other on brocaded silk and Flanders lace. Before Wild marries Laetitia, Mr. Snap tries to cheat his daughter out of gifts given to her by her relations, and the senior Mr. Wild fails to attend sufficiently to all of the latter's designs because "his Faculties were busily employed in Designs of his own, to over-reach . . . the said Mr. Snap" (III.vii.146).

Much of the action in Jonathan Wild, including the entire Wild-Laetitia subplot, the duping of Wild by the Count and Moll Straddle, the efforts of Wild and the other criminals to rob and overreach each other, Wild's attempts to overcome lowly circumstances with lofty speechifying, and the Ordinary's final conference with the condemned hero, may be described as light or ridiculous. But a second

important element of the action lends substance and force to the ironic portrayal of Wild as a great man, namely, the hero's nefarious plot against the Heartfrees: There is nothing light or ridiculous about cheating and robbing an honest tradesman, about abducting and attempting to rape his wife, about trying to entice the victim to commit a capital crime, and about falsely testifying against him in order to avoid prosecution.

Lying somewhere between these two extremes of the ridiculous and the heinous are such scenes as Wild's possible drowning, Blueskin's attempt to murder Wild, and the hero's abortive suicide and climactic execution. Although these events in themselves are neither light nor ridiculous, they nevertheless are comic, suggesting that it may not be the nature of the subject matter so much as the manner in which the writer renders it that produces a comic effect. As Fielding wrote in Tom Jones: "The Excellence of the mental Entertainment consists less in the Subject, than in the Author's Skill in well dressing it up" (I.i.33).

In Jonathan Wild, Fielding dresses up the possible drowning of the hero with the humorous business about Nature's choosing to execute her purposes by second causes and with the playful suggestion of Wild's cowardice (II.xii). In a similar manner, when Blueskin's knife perforates the hollow of Wild's belly, Fielding has Fortune carefully place the hero's guts out of the way (IV.i). Wild's attempted suicide is gracefully glossed over with the brief explanation that laudanum was "unable to stop the Breath of our Hero, which the Fruit of Hemp-Seed, and not the Spirit of Poppy-Seed, was to overcome"

(IV.xiv.252). The account of Wild's hanging, shortly following the enraged crowd's attack upon him with stones, brickbats, and dirt, is modulated by the description of the hero's theft of a corkscrew from the Ordinary's pocket. In all of these scenes Fielding attenuates normally painful experiences with humorous phrasing, mitigating details, and a speedy transition or resolution. Wild avoids drowning by swimming with great facility through the perfectly calm sea. The thrust of Blueskin's knife causes "no other Harm than an immoderate Effusion of Blood" (IV.i.186) from which Wild soon recovers. The report of Wild's abortive suicide is quickly followed by a description of his courage and conviviality as he drinks a bumper of brandy to the health of his friends. The swinging of Wild out of this world while holding on to the Ordinary's corkscrew immediately precedes two paragraphs of humorous commentary and the concluding chapter of panegyric.

Fielding uses a similar technique in depicting Wild's attempted rape of Mrs. Heartfree. The act in itself is serious, but after its shocking aspect has been recorded, Fielding quickly diverts the reader's attention to the efforts of the captain and crew to subdue Wild. Once it is clear that Mrs. Heartfree is out of danger (for the moment), Fielding caps the episode with a comic remark by having the captain rap out a hearty oath and ask Wild "_If he had no more Christianity in him than to ravish a Woman in a Storm_?" (II.x.107). The strategy, as in the scenes discussed above, is to render a dangerous or base action as humorous or absurd through the manipulation of diction, phrasing, and imagery. By not dwelling on

distressful material, Fielding relaxes the reader's concern and skillfully maintains an essentially comic line despite the gravity of the action.

The effect of the comic techniques and characterizations discussed above is a partial portrait of Wild as a rather ludicrous victim of others as well as a buffoonish victim of his own lust, avarice, and pretense. The Count, Laetitia, Moll Straddle, and Fireblood all get the better of Wild, and in a number of instances Wild's uncontrollable vices and foibles lead him to outrageous actions. Wild is not of course the grandiose hero that he aspires to be. He is, like most characters in comedy, an ordinary man, if not a paltry one, whose many imperfections and failures are transfixed by Fielding's keen eye for the absurd and the ridiculous.

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For all of the similarities that Jonathan Wild shares with works in the comic and satiric modes, it should be pointed out that to a lesser degree Fielding's book also has some affinities with the tragic mode. If one compares Jonathan Wild to the Aristotelian concept of tragedy, Wild's depravity and his lowly status, both of which are essential to Fielding's satiric and comic purposes, seem to exclude him from the tragic. A character like Wild, who doesn't have very far to fall and who is a ludicrous victim as well as a victimizer, is not likely to arouse strong emotions of pity and fear in the reader, especially if his story is related by an author who employs extensive irony and who maintains a stance of comic distance from his subject.

It is nevertheless instructive to consider the ways in which Jonathan Wild approaches the tragic mode, which we may broadly describe as relating the downfall of a person of some capacity, either as the result of a flaw in character or of forces that are beyond his control. In works of the tragic mode the events that lead to catastrophe are usually causally connected, and the entire action is presented with dignity, seriousness, and immediacy.

While Fielding's manner of presentation in Jonathan Wild does not have the dignity, immediacy, and seriousness that is normally associated with writing in the tragic mode, part of the outer form of Wild's story and several aspects of Wild's character are more than faintly suggestive of tragedy. When stripped of the mock biographer's introductory and concluding chapters, the action of Jonathan Wild depicts the fall of Wild from his status as a "considerable Figure" (I.vi.28), who passed for a gentleman of great fortune in the funds and was treated with great familiarity by women, to a "very seedy" (IV.ii.190) and loveless felon, who is executed for his crime. The defeat of Wild is achieved by a combination of implacable forces that include justice, the self-interest of other criminals, and Wild's own overriding ambition, pride, lust, and desire for revenge.

The supremacy of justice is represented by the learned judge who procedures a clause in an act of parliament as a trap for Wild, which he soon falls into (IV.i), as well as by the alert and diligent magistrate who upon noting the arrest of both Wild and Fireblood elicits Fireblood's confession of his false testimony against Heartfree (IV.vi). Bagshot, Blueskin, Johnson, the Count, and

Fireblood depict the self-interest of others who pit themselves against Wild with varied success. While the elements of justice and of self-interest are not articulated with the intense seriousness with which opposing forces are usually rendered in works of the tragic mode, as we will see in a moment Fielding does imbue Wild with some qualities of the tragic hero.

As it exists in all tragic literature, there is in Wild's story a sense of inevitablity that is expressed both in the connection of past to present and in the causal interrelation of character and events. Fielding humorously introduces these motifs by gathering "out of the Rubbish of Antiquity" (I.ii.5) an account of Wild's criminal forebears and by recording Wild's mother's dream mingling sexual and criminal connotations, her compulsion to steal during pregnancy, and her giving birth to Wild in a detention house. As the plot develops, in contrast to the more chaotic structure of comedy and satire, a well-ordered sequence of events leads naturally and logically to Wild's downfall.

First, Wild's previously demonstrated ambition to profit from the labor of others motivates him to cheat his old friend Heartfree, whom he had formerly exploited when they were schoolmates. During his reunion with Heartfree, Wild's lust (which was previously demonstrated in a scene with Laetitia) is aroused when he misinterprets Mrs. Heartfree's benevolent attitude towards him. Having failed to satisfy his desire for easy profit from the swindling and robbery of Heartfree, Wild resolves to satisfy his carnal desire with Mrs. Heartfree. Wild's lecherous attack on her nearly results in his

drowning, but his cowardice and his drive to achieve further acts of greatness enable him to survive. Upon returning to London he seeks revenge for his failures at thievery and lechery and at the same time hopes to avoid prosecution by entrapping Heartfree. In the end Wild's ambition and avarice, the same drives that launched him on the path to crime, lead him to the gallows. He is sentenced to death for breaking the law which was "so plainly calculated for the Destruction of all Priggish Greatness, that it was indeed impossible for our Hero to avoid it" (IV.i.187).

Incorporated in the causally connected narrative are three devices that Aristotle believed were essential to the most artistic form of tragedy: peripeteia or reversal of fortune, anagnorisis or discovery, and the tragic incident or destructive action. The sudden reversal of fortune occurs after the swindling and robbery of Heartfree has been successfully completed and Wild, believing that he possesses most of the money and jewels taken from Heartfree, confidently sets out to amuse himself with Laetitia. While waiting for her downstairs at Mr. Snap's, Wild first discovers that Moll Straddle has picked his pocket of £900 in notes; moments later he learns that he has also been duped by the Count (II.iii). Penniless but undaunted, Wild withdraws to a wine cellar where he experiences a limited but truthful discovery, recognizing the inward glory of greatness and understanding that he is wise and unsuccessful--"a GREAT, though an unhappy Man" (II.iv.83). Wild undergoes other misfortunes at sea, in the bedroom, and with various members of his gang before the final potentially tragic incidents of his imprisonment and execution. Although

Fielding's tone in depicting these events is both ironic and comic, the organization of plot has striking similarities with that of the tragic mode.

The inner structure of tragedy, according to Aristotle, should effect a proper purgation of pity and fear. While Jonathan Wild cannot be said to inspire these responses in the reader to any significant degree, in places Fielding does effect a somewhat attenuated approximation of these emotions.[24] Despite Wild's utter depravity one feels, if not pity, at least a modicum of sympathy for the hero, who is beleaguered by his own insatiable desires and by the cunning, rebellion, and abuse of others. Fielding arouses some pity for the innocent Heartfrees as well as serious concern, if not fear, for their well-being. The fate of Mrs. Heartfree, who is rescued by the French captain who conceives the same passion for her that Wild had felt (II. xi), is not divulged until the second half of Book IV. Wild's determination to destroy Heartfree, his skill in procuring and presenting false testimony, and the verdict of guilty rendered by a jury make it seem probable that Heartfree will be executed--an expectation that is clearly intended to disturb the reader, if not arouse fear in him.

As the action develops, the characterization of Wild reveals some significant elements of the tragic hero. Like the protagonists of many tragedies, Wild is compelled to act to his fullest capacity, but in so doing he suffers and dies for his actions. Wild's single-mindedness, his intensity of will and passion, and his ability to endure his own nature reveal his overwhelming limitations as well as his unflagging efforts to transcend himself. One has only to compare

Wild to Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, or Captain Booth to see the tragic dimension that Fielding lends to his thief-hero. Joseph is a rather blank but pleasing protagonist whose ability to resist temptation and to save himself for his beloved Fanny is admirable but hardly compelling. Tom's vitality, impulsiveness, and good humor make him a more adequate hero for comedy as he indulges his appetites with gusto before contentedly accepting his lot as the husband of Sophia and the owner of a considerable estate. While Booth is in part the victim of an unfair social system, his fatalism, the ease with which he surrenders to women and his urge for gambling make him the most passive of Fielding's protagonists.

In contrast to the rather modest aspirations of these characters, Wild is consumed by an almost superhuman longing to become what he considers to be a great man, even if his efforts incur the enmity of others. For Wild, "Tis the inward Glory, the secret Consciousness of doing great and wonderful Actions, which can alone support the truly GREAT Man. . . . These must bear him up against the private Curse and public Imprecation" (II.iv.81-82). With will and conviction Wild endures his "curse" while struggling against others and on at least one occasion against a spark of his own humanity. Wild has the independence and boldness to challenge the norms of his world, rejecting religion, attempting to use the law for his own ends, and fashioning his own system of economics. Although Wild does not come to any profound new knowledge as the result of his suffering, as does a true tragic hero, the sustained intensity with which he

strains against his own limitations and combats the outer forces that oppose him creates at least the tainted aura of tragic heroism.

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There remain two other genres or modes that should be mentioned in this attempt to show what Fielding's book is like and what it is not like. Several scholars who have written at length about Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia have classified Jonathan Wild as apologue without explaining or illustrating their view in any detail. While George Sherburn acknowledged the rich irony of Jonathan Wild, he opined that the work "is primarily a moral apologue with wounding cuts at political and economic abuses. The persons tend, under these aims, to become mere intellectual formulae."[25] Andrew Wright has taken an even more restrictive view, writing that the book is "an entirely simple handling of one idea--or at most two. It is a diatribe against 'greatness' and an apology for 'goodness.' Jonathan Wild is a tract."[26]

In Fiction and the Shape of Belief: A Study of Fielding With Glances at Swift, Johnson and Richardson (1967), Sheldon Sacks twice categorizes Jonathan Wild as an apologue rather than as a satire or novel but fails to introduce any textual evidence in support of his opinion. Sacks's book, which explores the relation between ethical belief and literary form, is a work of classification and definition as much as a comprehensive study of Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia. The book merits discussion because it represents what I believe to be a basic misconception about prose fiction and because

it provides an excellent example of the tendency of Fielding scholars to peruse the three large novels while ignoring Jonathan Wild as though it has nothing in common with Fielding's other prose fictions.

Sacks defines apologue as "a work organized as a fictional example of the truth of a formulable statement or a series of such statements."[27] Although he acknowledges that apologue as a type "subsumes a great variety of forms, as different from each other as are the varieties of action which constitute the serious forms of novels" (p. 49), Sacks avoids describing any of the variant subtypes and limits his examination of the special demands of apologue to a ten-page consideration of Rasselas, which he introduces as being representative of the type. In this relatively brief discussion (pp. 49-60), Sacks sets forth a number of characteristics and prescriptions that he believes distinguish apologue from satire and the novel.

While the qualitative parts of a novel are relevant only to very generalized thematic statement, Sacks writes that apologue requires a most precise statement of theme in order to account for the artistic choices made by the author. More than the writer of satire or novels, the writer of apologue proclaims his formulated commitments instead of revealing a pattern of intuitive judgments. In Sacks's view fictional probability is irrelevant to the artistic end of apologue, since any attempt to suggest such probability could easily destroy the coherence of the work. The episodes of apologue are related to each other in rhetorical order, and the relationships among characters are dictated by the requirements for best

exemplifying the controlling theme.

Whereas the satirist and the writer of apologue may share the intention to ridicule, Sacks states that the writer of apologue is called upon to reveal his positive beliefs by fictional examples. The task of the writer of apologue is to increase interest in the agent of apologue to the greatest degree possible short of obscuring the relation of the controlling theme. Whatever is revealed about any major character is "almost of necessity and almost ruthlessly, limited to qualities directly required for their role in the apologue." In a footnote, Sacks adds that "some forms of apologues--e.g. Jonathan Wild and Candide--make more use than Rasselas does of the qualities which impart vividness to characters, but impose other kinds of restrictions to suppress the expectations appropriate only in actions [novels]" (p. 60 and n. 70).

What kinds of restrictions are imposed in Jonathan Wild in order to suppress the expectations that are appropriate to the novel, Sacks does not say. Although he confines his study of the special demands of apologue to a dozen pages and to one literary work, Sacks devotes more than two hundred pages to explaining the shape of belief as expressed in Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia, which conform to his definition of the novel as a "work organized so that it introduces characters, about whose fates we are made to care, in unstable relationships which are then further complicated until the complication is finally resolved by the removal of the represented instability" (p. 26). While the shape of belief in apologue is defined by the themes exemplified, Sacks writes that "the ethical beliefs, opinions,

and prejudices of novelists do not shape their novels, but rather have a discernible and vital shape within those novels" (p. 69).

Despite the interesting theorizing about differences in fictional kinds, Sacks's classification of Jonathan Wild as apologue is both undocumented and unconvincing. If Sacks had examined Jonathan Wild with as much attention as he gives to Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia, perhaps he would have recognized the many difficulties and inconsistencies in his classifications of Fielding's fiction. Contrary to Sacks's implication, Jonathan Wild does introduce characters about whose fate (not just the ideas they represent) we are made to care in varying degrees and in various ways. Furthermore these characters are involved in unstable relationships that undergo further complication before a final resolution removes the represented instability. Wild himself is of course the instability that has to be removed, and Fielding's depiction of the actions leading to that resolution arouses a range of responses in the reader. We care about the Heartfrees (somewhat mildly it is to be admitted) primarily because of the extreme injustices that they are forced to endure, while our interest in Wild is more intense and complex. Because of the cruelty that Wild wreaks on the innocent Heartfrees, our moral indignation is aroused and our interest in his fate is motivated by a desire for retribution; that is, we heartily hope that Wild's final punishment will be commensurate with his depravity. On the other hand, Wild's vitality and boldness (especially in comparison to Heartfree's bland passivity) inspire a degree of admiration, and his haplessness creates a certain amount of sympathy for him and

amusement at his expense that may be viewed as a comic analogue of pity.[28]

According to Sacks, fictional probability is irrelevant to the artistic end of the apologue. As we have seen, however, fictional probability plays an important part in Jonathan Wild, enhancing the characterization of Wild and the development of the action. Fielding's well-organized plot is constructed according to a firm sense of fictional probability that in turn is based on specific traits of the protagonist. It is not so much the repetitive ironic praise of the mock biographer but the consistency of Wild's character as he relentlessly aspires to greater actions that gives force, credibility, and cohesiveness to the book.

In the Preface to the Miscellanies Fielding offers the kind of precise formulation of the theme of Jonathan Wild that Sacks believes the apologue requires. But Fielding's prefatory comments are not part of Jonathan Wild itself. Unlike the finely drawn distinction in the Preface between (1) greatness, (2) goodness, and (3) greatness and goodness, such announcements of theme as do appear in the text are not overly specific. For example, in the Newgate chapter, which Fielding specifically recommends for the reader's perusal, the very grave man declares to the inmates: "What a Wolf is in a Sheepfold, a great Man is in Society. . . . Every Prig is a Slave. His own Priggish Desires, which enslave him themselves betray him to the Tyranny of others" (IV.iii.195). The mock biographer begins his life of Wild with the assertion that "Greatness consists in bringing all Manner of Mischief on Mankind, and Goodness in removing it from

them" (I.i.3). The biographer concludes his account with the observation "that a Man may go to Heaven with half the Pains which it costs him to purchase Hell" (IV.xv.263). These three passages, which are about as well-defined thematic statements as can be found in the text, are the kind of generalized pronouncements of subject that Sacks says are necessary for explaining the relevance of all parts of a novel, not all parts of an apologue. Furthermore, Fielding clearly intends to ridicule his hero, yet the majority of fictional examples that he creates by no means illustrate his positive beliefs, as Sacks states is the case in apologue.

The problem with Sacks's theory is that his definitions of apologue, satire, and the novel are not mutually exclusive, as he claims they are. There is no reason why an author cannot in a single work ridicule immoral behavior, provide fictional examples of formulable statements, and also make the reader care about the fate of characters who represent specific ideas at the same time that they develop personal relationships that undergo complication and resolution according to the laws of probability. Sacks's classification of Jonathan Wild is, in a word, too reductive. He fails to take into sufficient account the complexity of Fielding's ethical, political, social, and aesthetic ideas, the richness of characterization that is based on insightful observation as well as on formulable concepts, the logical sequence of episodes, and the skillful mingling of techniques and modes with which Fielding amplifies his views while instructing and delighting the reader.

A similar objection may be made to Allen Wendt's brief and useful article, "The Moral Allegory of Jonathan Wild." Wendt presents an interesting corrective view of Heartfree, but in concentrating exclusively on Fielding's moral allegory he also offers a drastically reductive reading of the text. In Wendt's opinion Jonathan Wild, "in spite of its irony, has all the simple directness of a medieval morality play, in which Wickedness meets its downfall and Goodness triumphs." Wendt's interpretation is not quite so simple, however. "As an ethical allegory," he writes, "Jonathan Wild primarily criticizes immoderate 'greatness,' as embodied in its 'hero'; but as secondary purpose the allegory presents the limitation of passive goodness." Wendt alludes to "the allegorical structure of the book," which he says is unlike "the realism of Fielding's major novels,"[29] but he neither explains nor illustrates his point in any detail. Most of the article draws upon Fielding's other writings and those of the Latitudinarian divines in an effort to define Fielding's view of goodness and to demonstrate the degree to which Heartfree does not fully exemplify that quality. While Wendt's observations about Heartfree and the moral allegory are well taken, his failure to examine the structure, characterization, and style of Jonathan Wild tends to diminish Fielding's art by reducing it to a moral thesis.

Much of the allegory in Jonathan Wild is of course readily apparent. Like other works that belong unquestionably to the allegorical mode, Fielding's book presents a moral argument under the guise of a narrative that is at least partially novelistic. The major characters represent certain ideas or qualities and the

organization of plot sustains and elaborates the implicit analogy between personalities and concepts. But Jonathan Wild is more than just moral allegory. The name of Fielding's eponymous hero appropriately suggests the numerous levels at work in the book. Like the characters in a morality play who are given names of abstract vices (or virtues), Jonathan's surname proclaims him to be barbarous, lawless, violent, frenzied, crazy.[30] In addition Jonathan Wild is also the name of an illustrious criminal whose career was well known to many readers in Fielding's day. Moreover the name of this real outlaw was, after his execution, widely used as a vehicle for attacking the most powerful political leader of the age.

Unlike many allegorical characters, Fielding's hero is not simply a bloodness abstraction but a highly individualized personality. In certain scenes, such as Wild's deceitful persuasion of Mrs. Heartfree to flee with him, his tests of will with Bagshot and Blueskin, and his matrimonial dialogue with Laetitia, interest in Wild and his relationship with others substantially exceeds whatever the characters or episodes are supposed to exemplify. Also the actions that Wild and the other characters initiate are more diverse and appear less contrived than the actions in continuous allegories such as the morality play. To make matters more complicated, Fielding's narrative is mediated through a complex point of view and a sensitivity that embraces irony, ridicule, comedy, tragedy, and a wealth of political, historical, and literary allusions, all of which suggests that simple generic classifications cannot successfully describe a literary work that fully reflects the world in which a creative and observant

author lives and writes.

In sum, this attempt to show what Jonathan Wild is and what it is not can not be resolved with the designation of a single satisfactory label. Apologue and moral allegory are inaccurate or incomplete classifications of Jonathan Wild, as are criminal biography and picaresque novel, satire, comedy, or tragedy. There is something of each genre or mode in Jonathan Wild, yet to stress one or more elements at the expense of others is to impoverish the book. As we shall see in the concluding chapter of this study, one of Fielding's outstanding accomplishments in Jonathan Wild is his imaginative combination of diverse forms, modes, and techniques to create a unique work of art that may perhaps best be described as a genre with one member.

Notes

[1] Fielding warns the reader not to be surprised "if he shall find some Chapters very short, and others altogether as long; some that contain only the Time of a single Day, and others that comprise Years; in a Word, if my History sometimes seems to stand still, and sometimes to fly" (TJ, II.i.77).

[2] McKillop, The Early Masters of English Fiction (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1956), p. 17; Sherburn, A Literary History of England, ed. Albert Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967), p. 957; William Irwin, The Making of Jonathan Wild, p. 108; Dudden, II. 1110; Michael Irwin, The Tentative Realist (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 41; Alter, Fielding and the Nature of the Novel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 149; Wright, Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 45.

[3] See above, Chapter I, pp. 6, 8-9, 13-14.

[4] See above, Chapter I, p. 4 and n. 3.

[5] See above, Chapter IV, pp. 149-50 and 21.

[6] See above, Chapter IV, pp. 156 ff.

[7] Richetti, Popular Fiction (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 31.

[8] Lazarillo de Tormes, Guzmán de Alfarache, and Historia de la Vida del Buscón were first translated from the Spanish into English in 1576, 1623, and 1657 respectively. Lesage's Gil Blas was translated from the French in 1732. Smollett's translation appeared in 1749, six years after the publication of the Miscellanies.

[9] Lesage (1668-1747), as well as other French writers of the picaresque novel, gave his characters Spanish names and set the action in that country. Most of Nashe's The Unfortunate Traveller (1594), the first important picaresque novel in English, takes place in Belgium, Germany, and Italy.

[10] Murphy, in The Lives of Henry Fielding and Samuel Johnson, ed. Matthew Grace (Gainesville: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1968), p. 259.

[11] The Monthly Chronicle (London: Longman, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1838), I, 139.

[12] Banerji, Henry Fielding (1929; rpt. New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), p. 151.

[13] Alter, p. 149.

[14] See above, Chapter IV, pp. 158-59, 171-73 and n. 54.

[15] Price, To the Palace of Wisdom (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1964), p. 17.

[16] The reference to "Feather" (worn in the cap of Knights of the Garter) in the above quotation is another hit at the selective order of which Walpole was a member. See above, Chapter V, pp. 252-53. Cf. Pope's couplet: "A Feather shooting from another's head, / Extracts his brain, and Principle is fled" (The Dunciad, IV.521-22).

[17] In a truthful moment the Count reveals the self-interest that lies beneath the automatic, hypocritical use of language: "If I was sure to be no Longer, Mr. Wild, I apprehend you have a better Opinion of my Understanding than to imagine I would prosecute a Gentleman for the sake of the Public. These are foolish Words of Course, which we learn a ridiculous Habit of speaking, and will often break from us without any Design or Meaning" (I.xii.47).

[18] In his satire of "royalty" and usurpers in this scene, Fielding most probably had Shakespeare in mind: "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown" (Henry IV, Part II, III.i.31).

[19] Banerji, pp. 151, 156.

[20] "The Relationship Between Some of Fielding's Major and Minor Works," Boston University Studies in English, 5 (Winter 1961), 223.

[21] E.g., the unconventional nihilistic comedies of Ionesco (sometimes described as tragic farce); the novels and plays of Beckett; and dramatic and nondramatic works of "black comedy" which treat subjects such as death, violence, racism, and sexual perversion.

[22] In at least one instance Fielding seems to base an entire chapter on an unstated popular maxim that is applied to Wild. The extended commentary about the "miraculous" rescue of the hero from the open sea by Nature, who would not be diverted from her purpose of leading Wild to "the most proper and becoming End of all great Men" (II.xii.114), is a clever, prolix variation on the proverb:

"He that is born to be hanged, shall never be drowned" (The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs).

[23] The concealment of a lover is of course a convention of the Restoration stage.

[24] At one point Fielding seems to mock the emotions of fear and pity, at least in Wild's capacity to experience them. When Wild fears that Mrs. Heartfree may perish in the storm before he can ravish her, he makes the odious resolution that the mock biographer writes, "plainly proved him [Wild] to have these two Qualifications so necessary to a Hero, to be superior to all the Energies of Fear or Pity" (II.x.106).

[25] Sherburn, p. 957.

[26] Wright, p. 45.

[27] Sacks, Shape of Belief (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), p. 26. Subsequent page references are included in the text.

[28] I borrow this term from R.S. Crane's discussion of the reader's response to the character of Tom Jones in "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of 'Tom Jones'" (1950), rpt. with alterations and additions in Critics and Criticism, ed. R.S. Crane (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, Phoenix Books, 1952), p. 83.

[29] Wendt, ELH, 24 (December 1957), 306, 319-20, 312.

[30] William Irwin overlooks this point in The Making of Jonathan Wild, writing that the eponymous hero "is the only person in the book who does not bear an allegorical name" (p. 77).

Chapter VIII

THE ART OF JONATHAN WILD

Whether or not he is aware of the fact, almost every writer conceives of and creates his work in relation to writing that he knows. The more adventurous novelist begins at a point somewhat beyond the starting point of his sources, and the most original of novelists significantly extend the demarcations or effects of the genre by realizing possibilities that had not been perceived before. In most cases these exceptional innovations are the result of one of two methods: either the novelist discovers a new way of applying a literary tradition to the world about him, or he discovers a new way of combining literary traditions or devices. Fielding's achievement in Jonathan Wild encompasses a synthesis of both of these creative techniques.

While Fielding's originality is at times difficult to categorize precisely, it is possible to identify in Jonathan Wild at least two literary traditions that Fielding applied in a significantly novel manner to the world about him. Perhaps after the ironic inversion of values the most obvious stylistic device of Fielding's life of Wild is its mock-heroic or mock-encomiastic tone. The treatment of a trivial or reprehensible subject in a grandiose and laudatory manner had been a well-established tradition in European literature since antiquity. While Chaucer and later masters of the mode such as Dryden and Pope often employed the mock-heroic in a predominantly playful or relatively

uncomplicated fashion, Fielding's darker, more complex approach, in its most effective moments, profoundly challenges the perceptions and values of the reader by obliging him to reconsider his understanding of language, of men both "great" and criminal, and of the society in which he lives.

Fielding also inverted a more recent literary convention, one of his age, that had specific ethical and political connotations. As a number of scholars have noted, by the 1730s it had become commonplace for essayists, as well as for poets and playwrights, to compare politicians, conquerors, and tyrants to the lowly thief.[1] Instead of portraying his true subject (Walpole and other great men) as common criminals in the manner of other contemporary writers, Fielding reversed the process, presenting a more or less ordinary thief (Wild, an organizer and thief-taker) as a "great man." To be sure, Wild is damned with ironic praise by a method similar to Pope's depiction of the dunces or to Swift's persona's defense of nominal Christianity,[2] but by making his lowly protagonist aspire to greatness Fielding vastly enhanced the scope, sophistication, and focus of his attack. The simple inversion of a device that had frequently been employed by hack political writers enabled Fielding to make far-reaching observations not only about politics, but also about the moral, social, and literary ethos of the period.

In addition to his innovative adaptations of the mock-heroic and the politician-thief analogy, Fielding imaginatively combined a number of other literary forms and techniques to create striking

effects. There is little that is intrinsically new in Fielding's use of the various genres, modes, and devices that were described in the preceding chapter when they are analyzed independently, yet Fielding's juxtaposition and fusion of these disparate literary elements created a book that seems to defy generic classification. The purpose of this study is not, however, to arrive at a label for Jonathan Wild as a literary kind or type, but to demonstrate the originality and integrity of Fielding's accomplishment, to explain how the various parts work in combination with one another, and to suggest something of the vision that Fielding expressed through his creative application and amalgamation of traditional forms and techniques.

i.

Unlike some novelists who write without a clear consciousness of the generic and historical considerations that partly shape their works, Fielding, as is especially evidenced in his commentary in Joseph Andrews and in Tom Jones, was acutely aware of the virtues and deficiencies of various literary traditions. Fielding's knowledge of both English and classical literature was extensive; he, like other men of letters of the period, had a rigorously developed sense of genre and decorum; and his experience as a playwright and producer at the Haymarket had given him numerous opportunities to assess the effects of particular works on an audience. With these facts in mind it is reasonable to assume that when Fielding selected or rejected various

forms and devices it was with a discriminating knowledge of their advantages and disadvantages, of the expectations that they aroused, and of the implications that they created.

In attempting to understand how the diverse literary elements that Fielding includes in Jonathan Wild work together, it is instructive to examine the book as a series of generic signals that provide "false" or only partially correct clues to Fielding's overall aim. If these disparate forms and modes, which change from chapter to chapter and even within single chapters, appeared in a work by a writer of less talent and less learning than Fielding, one might be justified in presuming that the author did not know what he was doing or that he had lost control of his material. Rawson in fact raises the latter point a number of times in his generally admiring consideration of Jonathan Wild. He writes, for example, that "the stiff acerbities of the commentary on 'greatness' exist in a schematic separation from the action, and sometimes fail to blend with it. The action, on its own, tends against odds towards the more integrated amplitude of Fielding's novelistic manner, with fitful success. At times, the collision is untidy, fragmenting. The gap between what is said about Wild and what we see in the action is too great" (p. 109). While Rawson makes a valuable contribution in calling attention to the comedic values of Jonathan Wild, he questions the resulting portrait of Wild as both a "comic turn" and a dangerous villain. "It is not always clear how much Fielding is in control over this effect," he observes. "Some degree of assimilation of Wild's villainy to the domain of clowning and farce is not only intentional but explicit. Whether it is always

meant to disarm the harsher ironies is more uncertain" (pp. 112-13). Finally Rawson asks "whether Fielding would have used words like 'bombast' and 'false sublime' in the Preface, if he had not felt that a comic impulse had run away with more explicit intentions? and whether in the novel the urgency of the moral ironist has not become unconsciously disarmed by the playful and uppish detachment of the gentleman novelist?" (p. 233).[3]

Although there are some miscalculations of emphasis and length in Jonathan Wild, which will be discussed below,[4] Fielding's control is on the whole supple yet foreceful. What some critics may perceive as an erosion of control or a failure to maintain a consistent point of view is, in my opinion, a calculated effect that is produced by Fielding's deliberate opposition and interplay of genres, modes, and devices to create a singular work that is solidly grounded in various literary traditions but that is also strikingly distinctive.

Fielding's creative innovations can perhaps best be accounted for by the Renaissance doctrine of literary novum repertum, which Rosalie Colie describes in The Resources of Kind as "old bodies in new urns . . . new uses of old forms, seen in a new context."[5] Colie's examination of the theory and uses of genre in the Renaissance raises a number of significant points that are relevant to the study of literary works of all periods and which should be described in some detail before I apply them to Jonathan Wild.

Colie makes the important observation that "literary invention --both 'finding' and 'making'--in the Renaissance was largely generic, and that transfer of ancient values was largely in generic terms,

accomplished by generic instruments and helps." Colie recognizes that a genre-system offers "a set of interpretations, or 'frames' or 'fixes' on the world"; that individual kinds, as "abbreviations for a 'set' on the world," represent schematized values with special functions, and that it is possible for literary kinds to "act as myth or metaphor for a man's new vision of literary truth" (pp. 17, 8, 115, 30).

But Colie's interest in genre theory is less concerned with the connections between topic and treatment in the literary system than with the connections between literary kinds and kinds of knowledge and experience. Most of all she is interested in the process by which writers create new forms in order to express new ideas, even if, upon closer examination, those ideas prove not to be altogether "new."

There were of course numerous "rules" for the classically trained writer of the Renaissance to follow or to reject. It was, however, in the "real" literature, as opposed to criticism and history, that Colie uncovered the unwritten poetics by which writers worked and which they themselves created. She observed how certain writers refused to allow generic categories to dictate or predestine the size, scope, content, and manner of their works, but instead drew from uncanonical resources, experimented by deliberately mixing kinds, and followed out generic implications into new areas of expression. She demonstrated how a subliterary small form or device like the adage "fed" larger forms such as the emblem and the essay (which assimilated its convention and implications), and how other literary kinds (the emblem and devotional lyric; the epigram and the sonnet)

"fronted" or "melted into one another," revealing their specialness in common modes that enriched the possibilities of literature.

The culmination of this dynamic process by which writers recapitulated and revised, mythologized and combined existing kinds, was the emergence of literary nova reperta--the intentional creation of new literary forms that transformed the boundaries of literature as other nova reperta of the Renaissance such as the discovery of new lands and the heavens transformed the boundaries of the physical world. Among the literary nova reperta relevant to this study that Colie identifies are the essay, which she says developed as a partial fulfillment of the implications of adage-making, and the picaresque novel, which developed from coney-catching pamphlets, farce and fabliaux incidents, and folktale motifs. Other tangentially relevant genres that underwent substantial changes during the Renaissance were historiography, biography, autobiography, and the memoir.

While Colie's learned study of literary history and critical theory in the Renaissance is beyond the scope of this study, her perspective and her valuable insights into the creative process have broader applications that transcend her period of specialization. Colie's recognition of the values, social force, and function of evolving genre-systems is important for the study of all literature, as are her perceptions of how innovative writers "match" and mix existing symbolic forms or kinds in order to create new or more comprehensive expressions of the human experience. Colie suggests that experience may be seen as a searching for its own form through

the modulation or combination of existing forms. "At the time of writing, an author's generic concept is in one sense historical, in that he looks back at models to imitate and to outdo," she observes. "But the writer's view is also synchronic in that he considers the array of relevant works as important for him now, not himself as the bearer of their traditions." In Colie's view, "Genres may be conservative, but they are the craftsman's tools, by which, in addition to effecting cultural transfer, even nova reperta may be made" (pp. 30-31, 127).

In the following discussion of the uniqueness of Jonathan Wild I am indebted to Colie's elaboration of the concept of novum repertum and to her astute observations about how writers metamorphize genres for their thematic meanings and implications, how they combine or oppose even the most disparate of kinds, and how mixed genres represent modes of thought as well as modes of literature. Before returning to Jonathan Wild, however, it is necessary to refer to two other scholars whose theories are relevant to my reading of Fielding's book.

Perceptive as Colie's discoveries are about genre mixing as a means by which authors create new forms and express new visions of literary truth, they do not account altogether for the special qualities of Jonathan Wild. Fielding's imitation, parody, and interplay of genres and modes artfully guide the reader towards new perceptions and experiences that must be articulated if his work is to be fully appreciated. In considering the ways in which the diverse literary elements of Jonathan Wild work together to achieve

Fielding's intended purpose, I incorporate some recent insights of reader-response criticism as formulated by Wolfgang Iser and Peter J. Rabinowitz.

While some advocates of reader-oriented criticism have gone so far as to claim that the reader "creates" a literary work--a view that would negate most of the preceding pages of this study--Iser, in my opinion, presents the most balanced and cogent theory about the thorny problem of the interaction between text and reader. In a recent colloquy on the poetics of fiction he stated: "It is clear that the work itself cannot be identical with the text or with its actualization in the reading process proper, but must be situated somewhere in between."[6] (In an earlier essay Iser was somewhat more rigid, writing that "the literary work cannot be completely identical with the text or with the realization of the text, but in fact must lie halfway between the two."[7]) One may dispute at what point along the axis of text and reader interaction occurs (i.e., what relative importance should be given to the text and to the reader), but it would be a mistake to overlook altogether the active participation of the reader in realizing what the author has created, especially in a complex book like Jonathan Wild.

According to Iser's theory, a literary work has two poles, the "artistic" and the "aesthetic." The "artistic" pole is the author's text, whose verbal components offer a sequence of schematized views containing the subject matter; the "aesthetic" pole is the actualization or the realization of the text that is accomplished by the reader. Iser believes that "as the reader passes through the

various perspectives offered by the text and relates the different views, schemata, and patterns to one another, he sets the work in motion and so sets himself in motion too." The message of a literary work is transmitted in two directions, that is, the reader receives the message by composing it. The text and the reader are interlocked in the reading process by structures that although they are contained in the text "do not fulfill their ultimate functions until they have affected the reader. Practically every discernible structure in fiction has this two-sidedness, consisting of the verbal and the affective. The verbal quality guides the reaction and prevents it from becoming arbitrary. The affective aspect is the fulfillment of that which has been prestructured by the language of the text."[8]

Among the structures or perspectives that organize the relationship between text and reader which is essential for comprehension are those of the narrator, characters, plot, and what Iser refers to as the "fictitious reader." Each perspective offers a particular view of the object intended while also opening up a view of other perspectives in the text. The interaction among these perspectives that are variously interwoven throughout the text is continuous, thus offering the reader constantly shifting constellations. The reader is obliged to relate the immediate "theme" (the view he is involved with at a particular moment) with the evolving "horizon" of the preceding perspective segments in the time-flow of reading. These various structures or perspectives, Iser says, allow "all positions linguistically manifested in the text to be observed,

expanded, and changed in a controlled manner. . . . Each change denotes not a loss, but an enrichment, as attitudes are at once and the same time refined and broadened." The continual switching of perspectives in turn "provides the theme-and-horizon structure, which enables the reader gradually to take over the author's presumably unfamiliar view of the world on the terms laid down by the author."[9]

Iser offers a more complete description of this complex process in The Implied Reader. As the reader looks forward and backward, makes and changes his decision, forms expectations and is shocked by their nonfulfillment, etc., Iser says he is steered by two main structural components in the text: "first, a repertoire of familiar literary patterns and recurrent literary themes, together with allusions to familiar social and historical contexts; second, techniques or strategies used to set the familiar against the unfamiliar. Elements of the repertoire are continually backgrounded or foregrounded with a resultant strategic overmagnification, trivialization, or even annihilation of the allusion" (p. 288). The familiarization of what the reader thought he recognized intensifies his expectations as well as his distrust of those expectations; similarly, links between things that the reader finds difficult to connect oblige him to reconsider data which he at first held to be straightforward.

In brief, Iser sees three important parts of the relationship between reader and text: "the process of anticipation and retrospection, the consequent unfolding of the text as a living event, and the resultant impression of life-likedness" (p. 290). Reading, in Iser's view, is a sort of balancing operation according to which the

reader constantly builds and breaks illusions, and thus reflects the process by which we gain experience in life. The reader assembles the unformulated parts of the text that represent its "intention" and in the process may "formulate" himself in the sense that he may discover what had previously seemed to elude his consciousness.

Peter Rabinowitz offers useful adjuncts to Iser's theory in two recent articles in which he identifies several different kinds of assumed readers and indicates ways of seeking out a novel's fundamental vision. In "Truth in Fiction: A Reexamination of Audiences," Rabinowitz attempts to explain how events portrayed in a novel are simultaneously treated as both "true" and "untrue" by postulating the existence of four separate audiences: (1) the actual audience, consisting of the flesh-and-blood people who read a given work; (2) the authorial audience, consisting of the hypothetical readers for whom an author writes; (3) the narrative audience, who believe that the narrator is a real "historian" but do not automatically assume that he is an accurate historian; and (4) the ideal narrative audience, who believe everything that is stated by the narrator.

The pretense involved in joining the narrative audience is, according to Rabinowitz, "an essential and desirable element" in a novel's effect, but it is the authorial audience (whose beliefs and knowledge are hypothesized by the author) that makes "decisions as to ultimate meaning or meanings, symbolic significance--any decision about the work <u>as art</u>." The distance between the authorial audience and the narrative audience tends to lie along an axis of "fact,"

while the distance between the narrative audience and the ideal narrative audience tends to be along an axis of ethics and interpretation; that is, the ideal narrative audience agrees with the narrator that certain events are good or bad or that a particular analysis is correct or incorrect, while the narrative audience is called upon to judge the narrator. "Much of the problem--and most of the joy--of reading irony," Rabinowitz writes, "comes from sorting out these three levels, and feeling the tensions among them."[10] The "realism" of a novel depends upon the proximity of the authorial and narrative audiences. As the gap between the two audiences widens, we become less emotionally involved in the reading and more aware of the novel as construct.

In "Assertion and Assumption: Fictional Patterns and the External," Rabinowitz suggests that an author cannot make artistic decisions without making some assumptions about the ethical beliefs and the historical, social, and literary knowledge of his readers (the authorial audience). There are almost always some connections between literary conventions and the assumed beliefs of readers, Rabinowitz holds, but these beliefs exist in the unspoken assumptions and not in the explicit assertions of the original convention. "We must learn to look not at the conventions themselves," he writes, "but at the gray area behind them, the implied backdrop that serves as the context in which they operate. For this backdrop is often the firmest reality in a novel."[11]

If the situations and actions in a work of fiction are to engage the desires and expectations of its readers, Rabinowitz says, the

authorial and narrative audiences must share some beliefs about reality. "All fiction is at heart realistic except insofar as it forces us to respond in some other fashion," he proposes. There must be some systematic way of marking or signaling what is understood (usually intuitively) by both the author and his various audiences. "Obviously, more study is needed," Rabinowitz acknowledges, "before we can explain fully what the signals separating the narrative from the authorial audience are and how they operate." The more realistic a novel is, i.e., the closer the authorial audience approaches the narrative audience, the easier it is to comprehend the novel's implied outlook. But even literature that employs the most unrealistic conventions incorporates some vision of the real world. "By taking into account where the work signals to us that it is departing from that vision of reality," Rabinowitz says, "we can often learn what that vision is, from the very structure of the text before us."[12]

Lest the theories of twentieth-century reader-response criticism appear too far removed from the eighteenth-century text that is the subject of this study, it is worth mentioning that in his novels Fielding offers some relevant indications of his understanding of the reading process. Perhaps Fielding's most explicit statement about his obligation as an author and the reader's role as an active participant if he is to realize the intended meaning of the text occurs in Tom Jones:

> And now, Reader, as we are in Haste to attend our Heroine, we will leave to thy Sagacity to apply all this to the Boeotian Writers, and to those Authors who are their Opposites. This thou wilt be abundantly able to perform without

> our Aid. Bestir thyself therefore on this Occasion; for tho' we will always lend thee proper Assistance in difficult Places, as we do not, like some others, expect thee to use the Arts of Divination to discover our Meaning; yet we shall not indulge thy Laziness where nothing but thy own Attention is required, for thou art highly mistaken if thou dost imagine that we intended, when we began this great Work, to leave thy Sagacity nothing to do, or that without sometimes exercising this Talent, thou wilt be able to travel through our Pages with any Pleasure or Profit to thyself. (XI.ix.614)

In Jonathan Wild Fielding's "Digression and Sub-digression" on puppet shows and romances demonstrate his comprehension of the pretense that is required on the part of what Rabinowitz identifies as the narrative audience. Fielding writes:

> To say the Truth, a Puppet-show will illustrate our Meaning better, where it is the Master of the Show (the great Man) who dances and moves every thing; whether it be the King of Muscovy, or whatever other Potentate, alias Puppet, which we behold on the Stage; but he himself wisely keeps out of Sight; for should he once appear, the whole Motion would be at an End. Not that any one is ignorant of his being there, or supposes that the Puppets are not mere Sticks of Wood, and he himself the sole Mover; but as this (tho' every one knows it) doth not appear visibly, i.e. to their Eyes, no one is ashamed of consenting to be imposed upon; of helping on the Drama, by calling the several Sticks or Puppets by the Names which the Master hath alotted to them, and by assigning to each the Character which the great Man is pleased they shall move in, or rather in which he himself is pleased to move them.
>
> IT would be to suppose thee, gentle Reader, one of very little knowledge in this World, to imagine thou hast never seen some of these Puppet-Shews . . . yet, if thou hast any Penetration, thou must have had some Occasions to admire both the Solemnity of Countenance in the Actor, and the Gravity in the Spectator. . . . He must have a very despicable Opinion of Mankind indeed, who can conceive them to be imposed on as often as they appear to be so. The Truth is, they are in the same Situation with the Readers of Romances; who, though they know the whole to be one entire Fiction, nevertheless agree to be deceived; and as these find Amusement, so do the others find Ease and Convenience in this Concurrence. (III.xi.166-67)

The reader of Jonathan Wild, "whose Instruction, as well as Diversion we have greatly considered in this History" (III.iv.134-35), is, I propose, not a member of Rabinowitz's narrative audience (who, as Fielding puts it, agree to be deceived), but is a member of the authorial audience, who assemble the shifting perspectives of the novel to arrive at its ultimate meaning. To be sure, throughout the book Fielding sports with the "gentle," the "good-natured," the "sagacious," the "judicious" reader, but the richly textured, many-faceted text that Fielding creates indicates that he also has a healthy respect for the knowledge and capacity of his hypothetical reader.[13] Certainly the wealth of allusions in Jonathan Wild that has already been discussed implies that Fielding assumed his hypothetical reader to have considerable knowledge about history, eighteenth-century politics, contemporary social behavior, specific literary works (both ancient and modern), and the art of language. If Fielding did not presume that his hypothetical reader shared his belief in Latitudinarian doctrine, he at least assumed that he had strongly developed ethical values and was able to make fairly subtle distinctions of character. Moreover, as I hope will become evident in the following discussion, I also believe that Fielding expected his hypothetical reader to have a firm sense of literary conventions so that he could respond appropriately to the thematic implications and effects of diverse genres and modes that are employed parodically and otherwise.

In sum, if we are to exhibit the "Penetration" of the "sagacious Reader" whom Fielding invokes, we should (following the theories of Iser and Rabinowitz for the reading of all fiction) fit together

the kaleidoscopic perspectives of Fielding's structures, attune ourselves to the constantly shifting modes of language and illusion-making, and seek out those areas where the text is silent. Only in so doing will we fully realize Fielding's intended meaning.

◆ ◆ ◆

To return to our investigation of how the various literary elements in Jonathan Wild work together and to the objections made by Rawson that Fielding is not always in control of his diverse material, I would argue that the "untidy, fragmenting" collision that Rawson sees between the "stiff acerbites of the commentary on greatness" (p. 109) and the oscillating amplification of Wild's action is a consistent and emphatic device that Fielding exploits in order to dramatize the egregious excesses and aberrations of both Wild and the mock biographer. While Rawson wonders if Fielding added morally charged words such as "bombast" and "the false sublime" to the Preface in order to counteract a rampant comic impulse in the book itself, I believe that from the first page of Chapter One Fielding consciously introduces a broad comic element that functions as an extension of his serious moral aims rather than as a diminishment of them. Had Fielding been dissatisfied with the prominence of the comic elements in Jonathan Wild, it seems most probable that he would have toned down some of them in his extensive revisions of 1754. Instead, as my study reveals, Fielding frequently enhanced the comedy in the revised edition by adding little actions, by expanding dialogue and commentary, and by sharpening phrasing.[14] The most useful view of

the matter is that Fielding intentionally introduces both structural and stylistic aspects of comedy in order to counterpoint harsher ironies and tragic overtones, but not in order to neutralize or to undo them. Comedy is a necessary and integral element of Jonathan Wild because it reveals the ridiculous side of evil and because in the last analysis it most consonantly expresses Fielding's providential view of the world.

But comedy is only one of several important modes in the book, as we have seen. A good deal of the art of Jonathan Wild consists in the skill with which Fielding plays genres, modes, and devices off against each other so that one element defines, deepens, and intensifies the other. Regardless of how open-minded an author's impulses may be, any form or literary convention that he presents offers by its very nature a schematized distortion, since it depicts life according to an imposed system of values. Fielding's response to this traditional dilemma was inventive and ambitious. Instead of limiting Jonathan Wild to one dominant genre or mode as most prose writers of his age would have done, Fielding apposed and conflated a number of literary traditions, which he treated both straightforwardly and in burlesque.

When Fielding mocks a form or device, as he does with the exemplary biography, the criminal biography, the epic epithet, and the intervention of Fortune and Nature, he accentuates that form or device at the same time that he reveals its shortcomings. When Fielding employs a form or device in a straightforward manner, it is with the aim of achieving a calculated response that raises traditional expectations and implications. The effect of this combination

of techniques is at once playful and serious. As the style, tone, and focus of the book shift repeatedly, the reader comes to know each genre and mode by another, but only after he has been kept off balance by Fielding's artful engendering of varied expectations and counter-expectations. By constantly manipulating the formal categories and devices of literature both in imitation and in burlesque, Fielding presents a dialectical revision of fictions, falsehoods, and partial truths at the same time that he evokes a wide range of responses from the reader. How Fielding achieves this unusual combination of effects may best be appreciated in a final consideration of the developing action of the book.

From the very beginning of Jonathan Wild it is obvious that Fielding does not intend the reader to "believe" Wild's history in the same way that he is to believe, say, the stories of Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Captain Booth. The farcical sketches of Wild's ancestors (I.ii) and the exaggerated comic tilt that Fielding gives to Wild's birth, parentage, and early education (I.iii) immediately set apart the treatment of Wild from the less stylized introductions of Joseph, Tom, and Booth. Fielding creates at the outset of Jonathan Wild the expectation that what follows will be an artificial and humorous rewriting of the history of a real person, while the reader who begins Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia is led to anticipate a realistic rendering of fictional characters about whom he heretofore has known nothing.

The specific generic expectations that Fielding introduces in the opening chapter of Jonathan Wild may be more clearly recognized

by comparing that chapter with its counterpart in Joseph Andrews, with which it has some superficial similarities. Both first chapters praise the superiority of example over precept, allude to biographies written by Plutarch and Cornelius Nepos, and facetiously criticize the writing of lives in general. While the commentary on biography in Joseph Andrews serves primarily as a bridge to discussing Richardson's life of Pamela and subsequently as a means of introducing Pamela's brother Joseph, the commentary on biography in the first chapter of Jonathan Wild is integral to the shape and meaning of the entire book. The chapter establishes the distinct voice of the mock biographer who is to tell Wild's story and permits that biographer to define his conceptions of greatness and goodness while setting forth his mock purpose of demonstrating that no mortal, not even a great man, can be a proper object of total adoration. Whereas Fielding soon abandons discussion or imitation of the exemplary biography in Joseph Andrews, the structure and style of this genre permeate the beginning of Jonathan Wild, with but one important qualification: Fielding of course burlesques exemplary biography. He playfully calls attention to certain flaws in the works of most biographers at the same time that he demonstrates the glaring incongruity of the form and style of the genre with the odious and inconsequential life of his protagonist.

No sooner does the reader attune himself to the ironic application of a lofty form and style to a base subject than Fielding abruptly lowers the genre. The account of Wild's adventures in Chapters iv-xiv of Book I may perhaps best be classified as a fusion

of the picaresque novel and the criminal biography, with the few episodes concerning Laetitia (ix, x) being modeled on stage comedy. This dramatic lowering of genre must have been surprising if not repugnant or puzzling to subscribers to the Miscellanies who recalled Fielding's close identification of Joseph Andrews with the epic, which Fielding conventionally considered to be the most worthy of literary kinds. The modern reader, who is more accustomed to the use of mixed genres than were Fielding's contemporaries, may be better prepared to understand the purpose and art of his strategy. Fielding incorporates aspects of the lower genres--the picaresque novel and the criminal biography--as an apt device for portraying the inferior morals of Wild, as well as to suggest, after the introductory presentation of the protagonist in the manner of exemplary biography, that Wild's depravities may not be very different from those of more exalted personages.

While Fielding in part burlesques criminal biography, he does not exploit the more satirisable characteristics of the genre, viz., its excessive concern with the sensational, gory, and morbid. The reason for this is not lack of familiarity with the genre on Fielding's part or lack of skill in capturing the salient particulars of the model for the purpose of burlesque. On the contrary, omission of the sensational is a further indication of the firm control Fielding exercised over the diverse material that he selected and rejected, emphasized or subordinated in order to achieve a desired overall effect. Clearly Fielding wanted to keep his hero

safely within the traditional parameters of comedy during the first quarter of his narrative. The Jonathan Wild of Book I is essentially a comic figure of prodigious affectation and vanity. He is part dandy and part maladroit suitor, part grandiose dreamer and part inefficient failure. Although Wild demonstrates shrewdness as a judge of weak men and manifests an exterior of impressive bluster and toughness, he is not presented as a seriously dangerous or threatening character. Wild's transgressions are of modest proportions and are directed for the most part against members of his petty criminal milieu. These actions reveal Wild to be more or less like the other characters, that is, he is as dishonest and conniving as the Count, Bagshot, the grave gentleman, and Mr. Snap, and as lustful as Laetitia, although he is unable to consummate all of his desires, as she does hers.

On the basis of the first fourteen chapters of Jonathan Wild the perceptive reader might suspect with good reason that the remainder of the book would present a fundamentally genial comic portrait of a petty thief, somewhat fortified by the more acerbic comparison of the lowly hero with eminent figures from the worlds of politics and society. The reader would do well, however, to bear in mind Fielding's admonition a little more than halfway through Tom Jones: "First, then, we warn thee not too hastily to condemn any of the Incidents in this our History, as impertinent and foreign to our main Design" (X.i.524).

With the introduction of the Heartfrees at the beginning of Book II and the depiction of Wild in sustained action against

characters who are not criminals, the incidents, design, and effects of Jonathan Wild change markedly. The major aspects of Fielding's aim and design have already been discussed,[15] but their effects on the reader have not. While a great deal more needs to be known about the phenomenology of reader response,[16] it should be noted that the affective approach to literature can be traced as far back as Aristotle's Poetics. There appear to be certain correlations between the formal properties of the various genres and the kinds of psychological experience that they produce, suggesting that authors are able to produce a species of engagement (or disengagement) in the reader by using fairly standard signs.

But even within this extremely broad theoretical framework, scholars have observed that in practice given literary works are rarely homogeneous. Richard Sewall writes in The Vision of Tragedy that "without a sense of the tragic, comedy loses heart; it becomes brittle, it has animation but no life. Without a recognition of the truths of comedy, tragedy becomes bleak and intolerable."[17] In his perceptive analysis of comedy Elder Olson speaks of "comic pathos, comic suffering."[18] Comedy, in the opinion of David Worcester, demands little of the audience, while the invective, burlesque, and irony of satire require increasing amounts of the reader's creative participation. Yet Worcester also writes: "If satire uses the technique of wit and the comic, how is it to be distinguished from 'pure' comedy? Clearly, no academic formula can be used to plot a sharp dividing line."[19]

Certainly it is easier to identify the responses of readers to works that belong predominantly to the tragic, comic, or satiric modes. The problem becomes more complex in describing the responses of readers to a highly stylized work like Jonathan Wild, which in addition to incorporating prominent elements of the comic, the satiric, and the tragic, is also allegorical and parodic. The presense of these last two modes by themselves is sufficient to produce decidedly disparate responses. (Angus Fletcher writes of the magical influence, psychic possession, and taboo restrictions that are at play in both allegorical literature and compulsive behavior; Norman Holland observes that parody produces an opposite effect of "a sense of resistance, distance, perhaps even of frustration."[20])

Although Hans Robert Jauss's article, "Levels of Identification of Hero and Audience," presents a most useful summary of the modalities of reader response,[21] the historical and generic orientation of his study demonstrates how "character" has changed in the course of literary history and provides little insight into reader response to a single work of as many modes as Jonathan Wild. We do know from our own experience, however, that there is a faintly ridiculous dimension to the most tragic heroes of literature and that the reader or viewer even of the plays of Ben Jonson and of Restoration comedies feels a degree of concern and sympathy for the characters which has not yet been adequately differentiated by criticism from the concern he feels for characters in Dostoyevsky or Hardy, for instance. I thus feel that in the following discussion I can validly comment on the range of responses that Wild and the Heartfrees evoke,

although these responses are often not as passionate or as tolerant as those consistently produced by characters such as Clarissa, Lovelace, Parson Adams, or Tristram Shandy.

In Book II Fielding begins to produce more varied species of engagement in the reader as the principal "good" characters make their appearance and Wild is given the opportunity to prove his "greatness" by doing more than exploiting fellow petty criminals. In Chapters i, ii, v, viii, ix, and x of the second book Wild becomes an unmitigated villain. He plots the swindling and robbery of his old schoolmate Heartfree; he poses as the good merchant's friend after his loss of money and jewels; he insidiously persuades Mrs. Heartfree to flee from London with him; and he attempts to rape her once she is in his charge. Wild's relatively minor offenses in Book I (picking pockets, masterminding robberies of sharpers and lucky gamblers, and overzealously assaulting a strumpet) are not taken seriously by the reader. The villainies that Wild commits against the Heartfrees arouse concern because they are perpetrated upon two honorable innocents and because they represent egregious violations of moral norms that the reader is presumed to share. The swindling and robbery of an honest, hardworking merchant, the fragmentation of his family, and the attempted rape of his virtuous wife are all heinous acts that are calculated to repel the decent reader, to whose sagacity, piety, good nature, and sensitivity Fielding alludes in various passages.

The reader of Book I experiences primarily cerebral pleasure as he reinterprets the mock biographer's satiric praise of Wild's

greatness and observes Wild's comic adventures with bemused but rather tolerant detachment. In Book II Fielding more directly engages the emotions and interests of the reader by appealing to his moral sense and by depicting the action in a more novelistic manner. The outrage that Wild's villainies against the Heartfrees arouse in the reader is due both to the stark collision that Fielding presents between almost total malevolence and almost total goodness, and to his more dramatic rendering of events. The episodic actions and the self-conscious elevation and lowering of style and genre that characterize Book I evolve into a more sharply focused, sustained narrative that occupies middle ground between the high and low of the preceding book. As Wild victimizes the Heartfrees, the causal connections between scenes tighten, character motivation becomes more concrete, and the comically distorted Wild of Book I develops into a genuinely threatening presence. With the emergence of Wild as a substantial character and Fielding's strengthening of the narrative, the reader is made to believe in the central action of Jonathan Wild with the kind of engagement that readers of Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia bring to their belief in the characters and situations of those works.

The comic element that Fielding has established in the first book is not abandoned in the second, however. After the introduction of the Heartfrees and Wild's elaborate planning of the swindle and robbery (II.i, ii), the third chapter of Book II is a model of compressed comic denouement: in rapid succession Wild is duped by the Count, robbed by Moll Straddle, and roundly rejected by Laetitia.

In the following chapter Wild soothes his injured pride with grandiose ruminations about greatness although he is unable to pay for his wine (II.iv). Subsequently the French captain casts Wild adrift, when, far from the eyes of others, he assumes a pose of fierce bravery, resolves to drown himself, and then promptly regains his oarless boat (II.x, xi, xii). In each of these episodes Wild is once again the mighty planner and ineffectual bungler who is bested by almost everyone except the Heartfrees.[22]

In conjunction with the evolving portrait of Wild as both ruthless victimizer and comic victim, Fielding introduces in Book II a new mode of sentimentality in his treatment of the Heartfrees. Although subordinated to more important overall effects, the streak of sentimentality is too persistent and too well controlled to ignore. When Fielding interjects it he does so unabashedly, drawing on clichés that were staples of sentimental stage comedy. The exemplary Heartfrees are absolute in their devotion to each other and to their children, they shed tears with poignant frequency, and the actions depicting their plight are rendered in a manner highly redolent of theatrical speech and tableau. When Mrs. Heartfree is first informed of her husband's arrest, the mock biographer reports that "she raved like one distracted but after she had vented the first Agonies of her Passion in Tears and Lamentations, she applied herself to all possible Means to procure her Husband's Liberty" (VI.vii.93). The account of Heartfree's reunion with his wife at Mr. Snap's is sketched in a similar tone: "The Moment he [Heartfree] saw her, a sudden Joy sparkled in his Eyes, which, however, had a very short Duration;

for Despair soon closed them again; nor could he help bursting into some passionate Expressions of Concern for her and his little Family" (II.vii.94).

Mrs. Heartfree's scene with the children, after having passed a sleepless night because of Heartfree's absence, is more theatrical than novelistic in conception. Her outcry has the urgency and drama of a line to be spoken for the benefit of an audience as well as for her daughter, and there is a staged quality about the presentation of physical action: "The Children being brought to her [Mrs. Heartfree], the eldest asked, where dear Papa was? At which she could not refrain from bursting into Tears. The Child perceiving it, said, Don't cry, Mamma, I am sure Papa would not stay abroad if he could help it. At these Words she caught the Child in her Arms, and throwing herself into the Chair in an Agony of Passion, cried out, No, my Child, nor shall all the Malice of Hell keep us long asunder." When Wild enters the room a few moments later he finds "the Mother with one Child in her Arms, and the other at her Knee" (II.ix.104).

In these blatantly sentimental scenes Fielding creates instant pathos by affecting the reader quickly and sharply, in contrast to the long-smoldering detestation that Wild's villainies against the Heartfrees inspire and the rather detached bemusement occasioned by Wild's comic blunders and the continuing satiric commentary of the biographer and the narrator. While Fielding unabashedly injects this element of sentimentality, it should be noted that he usually does not make it the focal point of a chapter. The teary reunion of the Heartfrees at Mr. Snap's, for example, is resolved by an ironic

remark of the biographer which, while underscoring the Heartfrees' tender loyalty to each other, also dramatically discredits the biographer and serves to introduce the behavior of others who are truly low and ridiculous. "They [the Heartfrees] pass'd an Hour in a Scene of Tenderness, too low and contemptible to be recounted to our Great Readers," the biographer interjects. "We shall therefore omit all such Relations, as they tend only to make human Nature low and ridiculous" (II.vii.95). The remainder of the chapter (equalling in length the sentimental depiction of the Heartfrees) consists of five humorous letters in which Heartfree's clients set forth outrageous reasons for not paying their debts.[23]

The scene between Mrs. Heartfree and her children ends with Wild's urgent request that she send the girls from the room. Mrs. Heartfree complies at once and the emphasis returns to Wild's villainy as he persuades her to leave her children with a servant, to pack her most valuable jewels, and to fly with him to Holland (II.ix). Fielding's introductions of sentimentality in Book II are not sufficiently commanding to dispel the drama, comedy, and satire of the central action, but are pronounced enough to suggest to the sensitive reader the possibility that, as in sentimental comedy, the good characters will ultimately prevail.

As actions lead to more disastrous consequences in Book III, the juxtaposition and conflation of comic, serious, and satiric elements continue in approximately the same proportion as in the preceding book. Wild pursues his machinations to destroy Heartfree, first by attempting to persuade him to escape from Newgate (v) and to

commit robbery (x), then by falsely charging him with defrauding his creditors by having ordered Mrs. Heartfree to remove the remainder of their jewels to Holland (xi). The drama increases as Heartfree summons a constable to arrest Wild (x) before he himself is arraigned on Wild's false accusation (xi). A short time afterwards Bluebeard vigorously challenges Wild's leadership of the gang (xiv). The comic complications deepen also with Wild's ill-fated wooing of Laetitia (vi, vii) and with their short-lived marital bliss (viii). Interspersed among the serious and comic strands of action is the ongoing satiric commentary of both the mock biographer and the narrator on Wild's morals and on such diverse matters as the embellishments of historians (vi), the nature of implacable hatred (ix), and the similarities between puppeteers and great men (xi).

At the beginning of Book III Fielding effects an important new modulation of the reader's attitude and expectations. The first chapter opens with a vivid portrait of Heartfree's initial hours in confinement, during which he dreams of his absent family, receives in silent astonishment the news of Mrs. Heartfree's flight to Holland, and, after accusing her and berating himself, finally persuades himself of his wife's disloyalty. Upon the arrival to his children Heartfree imprints "numberless Kisses on their little Lips" and the elder daughter's account of Mrs. Heartfree's departure from home brings "a Flood of Tears" (III.i.122) to the eyes of the exemplary husband and father.

Following this intimate revelation of Heartfree's feelings and the emotional reunion with his children comes his soliloquy (ii),

which seems to be presented in a straightforward manner, but which obliges the reader to reevaluate his opinion of the good merchant. While the language of the soliloquy is not excessively elevated (as is the case in the matrimonial dialogue [viii] and in Wild's debate with Bluebeard [xiv]), its finely balanced prose, rhetorical questions, and generalized commentary are somewhat out of joint. Heartfree begins by posing the problem in immediate personal terms: "WHAT shall I do? Shall I abandon myself to a dispirited Despair, or fly in the Face of the Almighty!" But the soliloquy, which "burst forth" from the sorely tried prisoner, soon becomes peculiarly abstracted and mannered in the style of a sermon: "But let us survey those whose Understandings are of a more elevated and refined Temper," Heartfree continues. "How empty do they soon find the World of Enjoyments worth their Desire or attaining! How soon do they retreat to Solitude and Contemplation, to Gardening and Planting" (III.ii. 123, 125-26).

Heartfree's disquisition treats of the beneficial uses of reason, yet in order to prove his point he either resorts to cliché or introduces an unreasonably exaggerated example. After likening a child's rattle to the pleasures of a mature man,[24] he equates persons of a refined, contemplative nature with trees: "they enjoy the Air and the Sun in common, and both vegetate with very little Difference between them" (III.ii.125). In employing reason as the capacity by means of which he places all hope in life after death, Heartfree overemphasizes the transiency of man and grossly minimizes his

importance on earth. Heartfree's soliloquy is, in short, a condensed Latitudinarian sermon of consolation.[25] Unlike the sermon that the Ordinary of Newgate reads to Wild (IV.xiii), Heartfree's soliloquy is not travesty, yet it is faintly parodic and not altogether appropriate. Heartfree is not a Latitudinarian divine addressing a congregation from the pulpit, but a ruined man whose wife, children, and resources have been taken from him. The effect of the soliloquy, with its abstracted formal tone and its moral of resignation in the face of life, is to mock Heartfree gently and to make him appear somewhat lacking in the vigor, inventiveness, and resiliency that make Wild so full of life. With little to fall back on but clichés, Heartfree in a sense becomes something of a stylized cliché.

While it may be tempting for critics to cite the soliloquy as another example of Fielding's lack of control over his material, I believe that the opposite is the case. In the soliloquy Fielding presents religious doctrine with which he is in ultimate agreement, but at the same time he satirizes, through exaggeration and parody, the shortcomings of this philosophy as man's only hope for survival in a ruthless and competitive world. The true target of the satire is of course Heartfree, whose devotion should not be questioned, but who is intended to be seen as being too passive and too "nobly" or uncritically complacent at his lot. A clue to Fielding's intention in the chapter occurs after Heartfree has worked himself into such enthusiasm that he becomes "invulnerable to every human Attack." When Mr. Snap informs Heartfree that he has the writ remanding him

to Newgate, we learn that Heartfree received "the Message as Socrates did the News of the Ship's Arrival, and that he was to prepare for Death" (III.ii.128). In this brief allusion Fielding seems to suggest an element of grandiose posturing on the part of Heartfree. As Wild identifies with great men such as Alexander and Caesar, does Heartfree here identify with Socrates (as he is later to do)?[26] The deduction that Fielding appears to encourage the reader to make is that while Heartfree is certainly no Wild, both characters fall short of the heroes with whom their names are linked.

Despite the dramatic antithesis of their morals, Wild's and Heartfree's soliloquies have parallel aspects. Wild uses bombast in pursuit of "great" actions, while Heartfree genteelly dedicates himself to almost total passivity. The ironic incongruity between the subject matter of Wild's outbursts and his situation applies also to Heartfree's soliloquy, in which he expounds the uses of reason as a means of salvation, yet fails to use reason to deal effectively with his own plight. An element of Heartfree's soliloquy conforms to his personality and religious beliefs (as well as to Fielding's view of providence), but in a complex book that reverberates with ironies it is not surprising that Fielding's good man also becomes a target of satire, although the satire is not as blatant and trenchant as that reserved for the reprehensible characters. Pious and decent as Heartfree is, as the result of his soliloquy the reader is obliged to view his resignation and submission in a not altogether favorable light. At the same time the soliloquy modifies the narrative

expectations of the reader. Even though almost all of Wild's plots have backfired, Heartfree's complacency and passivity further one's expectation that Wild, in spite of his own blunders, may somehow succeed in destroying his erstwhile friend.

The satiric treatment of the Heartfrees--in addition to the biographer's continuing references to them as "weak," "silly," "simple," "ungrateful," etc.--is expanded in Book III and at the beginning of Book IV with a new association between the good and bad characters. In earlier passages Fielding created sympathy for the Heartfrees, sentimentally depicting their behavior. Towards the end of Book III and in the opening of Book IV Fielding intensifies this streak of sentimentality, while he also mocks it by having Laetitia travesty the Heartfrees' proclivity for tears and their overwrought pronouncements of concern for their family. When Heartfree is remanded to Newgate, he entreats the loyal Friendly to be a father to his poor children should any fatal accident happen to him, "at which Words the Tears gushed from his [Heartfree's] Eyes" (III.xii. 171). In the following chapter Laetitia disowns her sister Theodosia for giving birth to an illegitimate child, after first having "burst into Tears, and lamented over her Father, that such Dishonour should ever happen to him and herself" (III.xiii.173). The pattern is repeated in the first two chapters of Book IV. During another reunion in Newgate, Heartfree "with Tears in his Eyes" (IV.i.182) embraces his elder daughter and laments the hard fate to which he fears he is leaving her. In the next chapter Laetitia, with "Tears

trickling down her lovely Cheeks," is reunited with Wild in Newgate. He begs her to dry her eyes, but Laetitia laments the fact that she will be scandalized for Wild's sins. "There goes she whose Husband was hanged: Methinks I heart them crying so already," Laetitia complains, "at which Words she burst into Tears" (IV.ii.188, 189).

These scenes underscore the contrasting morals of the Heartfrees and of Laetitia and Wild, but the close linking of the tearful reactions of the good and bad characters tends also to ridicule the selflessly noble sentiments of the Heartfrees. The sympathy of the reader remains on the whole with the Heartfrees, who are so ruthlessly victimized by Wild; yet as they suffer Wild's villainies they are (despite their tears) rather self-righteous, stiff, and passive, especially in comparison with the appealing Punch-and-Judy vitality exhibited by Wild and Laetitia. In lightly mocking the character and behavior of the Heartfrees, Fielding makes them appear slightly more human and therefore perhaps slightly more attractive to the reader than they otherwise would be.

In Book IV the skillful interweaving of sentimental, serious, satiric, and comic modes continues, sometimes within a single chapter but more usually in successive chapters. After the reader's compassion for Heartfree has been rekindled by Friendly's touching promise to take care of the Heartfree children in the event of his death, the good merchant is found guilty by a jury. Just as Wild is about to triumph, however, his fortunes begin to plummet. Blueskin's attempt to murder him is resolved humorously with the comment about Fortune's

rearrangement of Wild's guts, but then "worse Consequences" (IV.i. 186) are promised with the passage of an Act of Parliament as a trap into which Wild soon falls.

The next three chapters emphasize respectively the comic, the satiric, and the serious. With the farcical reunion of Wild, Laetitia, and Fireblood in Newgate, the reader is given the satisfaction of seeing the hero berated by his wife and spurned by his faithful friend, who has arrived in order to comfort Laetitia (ii). The "Curious Anecdotes relating to the History of Newgate" (iii), which recounts Wild's rise to power as leader of the imprisoned prigs, is a satiric setpiece that most fully expresses the political themes of the book while providing an appropriate pause before the most dramatic segments of the action. Once the death warrant for Heartfree comes down (iv), the mood grows darker again with Wild's real and visionary horrors. His struggle over Heartfree's fate adds psychological realism, mounting suspense, and deeper, more sympathetic characterization, but these effects are promptly attenuated with a return to comedy and satire as Wild expresses mock-heroic concern for his reputation and the chapter concludes with an apologia for his momentary vacillation: "for, I apprehend, no Mind was ever yet formed entirely free from Blemish, unless peradventure that of a sanctified Hypocrite, whose Praises some well-fed Flatterer hath gratefully thought proper to sing forth" (IV.iv.200).

Fielding's talent for juxtaposing sentimental, melodramatic, comic, suspenseful, and satiric elements in a single episode is

nowhere better demonstrated than in the fifth chapter, which depicts Heartfree's preparation for death, the eleventh-hour return of Mrs. Heartfree, and the cynical behavior of the commanding officer. The chapter begins in a decidedly sentimental mode as Heartfree takes final leave of his children "with a Tenderness which drew a Tear from one of the Keepers" and passionately embraces the ever-faithful Friendly, who desires to accompany Heartfree "to his End." The surprise of Mrs. Heartfree's last-second arrival is enhanced by the purposely vague chapter subtitle, "Containing various Matters," and by the coy reference to the appearance of "a Friend" of whom Heartfree "was to take a harder and more tender Leave than he had yet gone through." It is not until the next sentence that the identity of the newly arrived is revealed: "This Friend, Reader, was no other than Mrs. Heartfree herself, who ran to him [Heartfree] with a Look all wild, staring, and frantic, and, having reached his Arms, fainted away in them without uttering a single Syllable." The dramatic reunion is immediately undercut by Mrs. Heartfree's rather operatic questions, by the official's concern about missing his dinner, and by Heartfree's ludicrous response: "I will bear all with Patience" (IV.v.201, 202).

During the remainder of the scene tension is maintained with repeated references to the dwindling minutes as the focus fluctuates from the sentimental to the cynical, the satiric to the straightforward, and the farcical to the melodramatic with such rapidity that at times it is difficult to separate one effect from

the next. "Many a Gentleman had bought ten Minutes with a Woman dearer, (IV.v.202), the commanding officer quips after receiving five guineas from Friendly so that Heartfree can retire to a room for the final designated minutes with his wife. Before Heartfree can voice his heartfelt concerns, Mrs. Heartfree faints once more and the ten minutes pass without any communication between the couple. Although one of the officers has been unmoved by the imminent parting of the pair, Mrs. Heartfree's pale looks cause him to run up and down for water and drops with the utmost hurry and confusion.

Meanwhile Heartfree's responses swing from the incongruous to the passionate to the sublime. He begs the pardon of the venal commanding officer for delaying his own execution; he kisses the pale lips of Mrs. Heartfree with the fervor of a bridegroom; and he beseeches God that it may be His pleasure to let him join his wife in a better world than this. The commanding officer extorts the promise of twenty guineas more from Friendly so that the couple may spend half an hour together before announcing that Heartfree has been reprieved. The volatile scene then ends on a happy comic note with the employment of a surgeon to bleed the Heartfrees and Friendly before leaving them to share their joy. With only a slight emendation or two, a stage director mounting a dramatization of the action could validly instruct the actors to play the scene either melodramatically, tragically, or farcically. That Fielding fuses all of these elements in a single episode reveals his complex and supple imagination.

With the conclusion of Chapter v, the main section of Jonathan Wild comes to a temporary halt while Fielding works his last significant modulations of style and of the reader's expectations. What follows, after an explanation of Heartfree's reprieve according to "the strictest Rules of Writing and Probability" (IV.vi.205), is a sort of novel within a novel, consisting of Chapters vii, viii, ix, and xi, in which Mrs. Heartfree recounts her adventures after the captain of the French privateer had abandoned Wild in the oarless boat. Mrs. Heartfree's tale simultaneously serves a number of purposes. First, it "bleeds" or calms the reader, providing relief similar to that which the surgeon ministers to the Heartfrees and Friendly after the great excitement that they have experienced.[27] Secondly, Mrs. Heartfree's tale burlesques the genres and subgenres of the romance, travel literature, and possibly the interpolated tale. Most important of all, it radically expands the dimensions of the book by emphasizing a poetic or allegorical level that prepares the reader for the conclusion of the main action in which all strands and modes of the plot are bound together in a culminating dramatization of Fielding's vision.

The relief that Mrs. Heartfree's tale furnishes after the intense scene in which she is reuinted with Heartfree should be apparent. Her narrative takes the reader far beyond the confining walls of Newgate to the high seas and across the plains of distant Africa as she encounters sea captains, pirates, sailors, a French hermit, and an African magistrate. The expansive changes of scene provide the reader with greater space in which to breathe, and the

the cast of new characters and the allusions to French, nautical terminology, and the African dialect all help to create an aura of exotic novelty. Although Mrs. Heartfree's tale abounds in conflict and surprise, it is modulated by Fielding's genial satire of the heroine's garrulity, her vanity, and her propensity to overdramatize potential catastrophe. That Mrs. Heartfree is safe and composed enough to recount her adventures in such an embellished manner allays the reader's anxiety about the outcome and permits him to consider the possibility of the sort of literary satire that characterized earlier portions of the book, in which events were not to be taken too seriously.

In the Preface to the Miscellanies Fielding wrote that with the exception of "one Chapter, which is visibly meant as a Burlesque on the extravagant Accounts of Travellers" (M, p. 11), he had confined himself to the rules of probability. The chapter to which Fielding referred was judiciously eliminated in his revisions for the second edition,[28] but the remaining chapters of Mrs. Heartfree's tale also contain a notable element of burlesque. In Rawson's opinion these chapters "are largely sober narrative, especially by the standards of what they are alleged to be parodying, and not at all difficult to take straight" (p. 258, n. 30). If the reader does take these chapters straight, however, he misses some of the humor of the tale, which satirizes the extravagant accounts of travelers as well as a subgenre of romance and most probably the convention of the interpolated tale.

Mrs. Heartfree's adventures are based on the central motif of a particular type of romance that had had a recent revival and in which a virtuous woman is relentlessly pursued in exotic settings by lustful sea captains, pirates, and potentates, etc., but manages against great odds to preserve her integrity.[29] During the course of her tale Mrs. Heartfree is accosted not by one captain, but by two (the gallant Frenchman and the crude Englishman); she is nearly raped in the jungle by the Count, who had masqueraded as her protector; she is importuned by a lonely hermit on the verge of breaking his religious vows; and she is propositioned by the African magistrate, who is an example of the almost perfect government official. Because of the frequency with which these assaults on Mrs. Heartfree's virtue occur, they tend in the end to become humorous instead of threatening. By magnifying the central action of a type of romance, by placing his heroine in extreme situations, and by describing portions of her adventures in ornate or titillating language, Fielding spoofs a subgenre as well as certain aspects of the romance in general.

In a sense Mrs. Heartfree is the "author" of her narrative and the foibles that she reveals in telling her story may, by extension, be ascribed to the authors of the romances that Fielding burlesques.[30] Although Mrs. Heartfree remains admirably faithful and resourceful throughout her tale, she is garrulous and vain in relating her adventures, particularly when recounting the many compliments paid to her. "IF I mistake not, I was interrupted just

as I was beginning to repeat some of the Compliments made me by the Hermit," she says as she prepares to resume her story. "Just as you had finished them, I believe, Madam," the magistrate corrects her. Despite her claim that she derives no pleasure from repeating compliments, Mrs. Heartfree continues as though she had not heard the magistrate: "He [the hermit] concluded then with telling me, Though I was, in his Eyes, the most charming Woman in the World, and might tempt a Saint to abandon the Ways of Holiness, yet my Beauty inspired him with a much tenderer Affection towards me, than to purchase any Satisfaction of his Desires with my Misery" (IV.xi.231).

In a similar fashion Mrs. Heartfree delivers an embellished account of her departure from the hermit before stopping herself and acknowledging her excess:

> He [the hermit] fetched a very heavy Sigh, and, squeezing me tenderly by the Hand, he saluted my Lips with a little more Eagerness than the European Salutations admit of; and told me, he should likewise remember my Arrival at his Cave to the last Day of his Life; adding,--O that he could there spend the whole in the Company of one, whose bright Eyes had kindled--: but I know you will think, Sir, that we, Women, love to repeat the Compliments made us, I will therefore omit them. (IV.xi.232)

At several points in her narrative Mrs. Heartfree unnecessarily alarms Heartfree with inflammatory descriptions of events that turn out not to be as catastrophic as she at first suggests. Mrs. Heartfree introduces her account of the drunken English captain's assault on her in the following manner: "I now passed several Days pretty free from the Captain's Molestation, till one fatal Night." Upon perceiving how pale Heartfree grows, Mrs. Heartfree assures

him that she has been restored unsullied to his arms. "Perhaps I gave it a wrong Epithet in the Word fatal," she corrects herself, before continuing only slightly less dramatically, "but a wretched Night, I am sure I may call it, for no Woman, who came off victorious, was, I believe, ever in greater Danger" (IV.vii.213).

Mrs. Heartfree likewise recounts her efforts to offer very liberal promises to the Count in the hope that this would put him off until the captain and sailors could rescue her and her jewels. "But, alas! I was mistaken," she exclaims before again perceiving the anguish in Heartfree's face. "My Dear, Don't you apprehend any Harm.--But, to deliver you as soon as possible from your Anxiety" (IV.ix.222), she says before repeating the Count's violent oaths to have her and providing a rather graphic description of his attack.

In all of these passages Fielding seems to burlesque the verbosity, "vanity," and grossness of writers of certain romances. He satirizes their practice of inflating the action with overblown speeches and sensationalized descriptions, of titillating the reader with unduly ornate or provocative language, and of overdramatizing events that have a predictably fortunate outcome. The excess, exaggeration, and improbability of Mrs. Heartfree's narration become, in effect, a criticism of the strategies and techniques of some writers of romance.

Moreover the comparative brevity of Mrs. Heartfree's tale (four chapters) and its insertion between crucial points in the concluding action of a larger work of prose fiction most probably

are sly hits at both the short romance and the interpolated tale. Between 1700 and 1740 a good deal of the fiction published in England consisted of short romances of little literary merit that were often sold in series of "novels." According to William H. McBurney, the avid taste of the public for this kind of reading material "was not greatly altered even by the works of Richardson and Fielding."[31] Fielding's attempt in the Preface to Joseph Andrews to dissociate his own book from the popular romances of the day and his identification with words of "more extended and comprehensive" action, "containing a much larger Circle of Incidents, and introducing a greater Variety of Characters" (Preface, JA, p. 4) suggests much about his opinion of the short romance.

In addition, the apparent incongruity of Mrs. Heartfree's adventures with the remainder of Jonathan Wild may be read as a satire on the indiscriminate use of the interpolated tale by writers of less imagination and skill than Fielding. In the hands of these inferior writers the interpolated tale (inherited, to be sure, from romances running all the way from antiquity to 1700) often became an extraneous segment that bore no relation to the main line of action or to the central theme of the larger work of which it was a part. But although the setting, style, and subject matter of Mrs. Heartfree's story differ markedly from the chapters that precede and follow it, her narrative, as we shall see, is thematically, dramatically, and symbolically linked with the rest of the book.

Surely literary satire is an important element of Mrs. Hearfree's account, yet satire is not its primary raison d'être.

In addition to providing relief to the reader at a critical point in the action and allowing Fielding to continue his burlesque of various genres and modes, the narrative represents Fielding's final modulation of the reader's perceptions and expectations. Ostensibly Mrs. Heartfree's tale is introduced for the purposes of entertainment and illumination. When the conscientious magistrate visits Newgate, Heartfree tells him that his wife has been relating "some Adventures, which perhaps might entertain him to hear," and she desires that the Justice hear these adventures, "as they might serve to illustrate the Foundation on which this Falshood had been built, which had brought on her Husband all his Misfortunes." The initial expectation is that Mrs. Heartfree's account will conform to "the strictest Rules of Writing and Probability" that the biographer invokes before demonstrating that Heartfree's reprieve was "at least as natural as delightful" (IV.vi.207-208, 205).

While the argument may be made that everything Mrs. Heartfree relates is not beyond the limits of probability, there is a notable degree of bizarreness and contrivance about several occurrences. Mistreatment of women at sea, the capture of private vessels by freebooters, and violent storms and shipwrecks were undoubtedly matters of historical record during Fielding's age. The revelation, however, that the civil gentleman with whom Mrs. Heartfree has "lived in great Familiarity" and "regarded as my Protector" (IV.vii.212) is no other than the Count, who tempts her with the very jewels that he had taken from Heartfree, strains the reader's

credulity, as does the last-second rescue of Mrs. Heartfree by the French hermit and the present to her of "a very rich Jewel" (IV.xi. 235), which the African magistrate says is of less value than her chastity.

Mrs. Heartfree's liberal use of nautical terms and her alert observations about the sailors' fondness for rum and the tender affection that they show for their sinking ship add a patina of realism to her story, yet the fact that she escapes disaster against overwhelming odds not once, but again and again and again strongly suggests the introduction into the narrative of other dimensions that transcend probability and realistic detail. There is, in short, a fairy-tale quality about Mrs. Heartfree's miraculous survival and her return to Heartfree unsullied, not only with the jewels that had been taken from him, but with the reward of another valuable jewel for having remained chaste. Those who have difficulty in believing Mrs. Heartfree's adventures, especially after the less exotic but thoroughly sordid view of life in London that is presented in Books I, II, and III, might recall the criticism that Fielding makes in Tom Jones of readers who "have so little Historic or Poetic Faith, that they believe nothing to be either possible or probable, the like to which hath not occurred to their own Observation" (VIII.i.396). Clearly Fielding intends the poetic or allegorical element of Mrs. Heartfree's tale to take precedence over historicity and realistically rendered particulars.

Mrs. Heartfree's virtue is important to her and to Heartfree, who grows visibly upset at several points during her tale when he

believes that his wife's integrity has been compromised. But Mrs. Heartfree's fidelity to her husband assumes greater importance on an allegorical level as a symbol of the triumph of self-control, constancy, and purity over the wantonness that is epitomized by Wild, the English captain, and the Count. The reward of the immense jewel that Mrs. Heartfree receives from the African magistrate has material value, but should of course also be read as a symbolic expression of the worth of pure and abiding virtue. Fielding seems to underscore the point in the final chapter of the book by having the biographer cite the executed hero's twelfth maxim: "THAT Virtues, like precious Stones, were easily counterfeited; that the Counterfeits in both Cases adorned the Wearer equally, and that very few had Knowledge or Discernment sufficient to distinguish the counterfeit Jewel from the real" (IV.xv.258).

In case the reader has not already made it, the explicit connection between jewels and virtues in Wild's maxim provides a theorem from which the reader can make the appropriate literal and symbolic deductions. The maxim should remind the reader of the difference between the counterfeit necklace that Wild offered to Laetitia and the real jewels with which Mrs. Heartfree returns to Heartfree and which help to insure their future. More importantly, the reader is expected to have gained sufficient knowledge--the biographer's persistent inversion of moral values notwithstanding--to discern the difference between the virtues pretended to by Wild, Laetitia, and the many other reprehensible characters, and the

virtue of Mrs. Heartfree, which is both precious and genuine.

A number of scholars have criticized Jonathan Wild for lacking a sufficiently strong character to counteract the "greatness" of Wild. Arnold Kettle, perhaps the most vigorous of these critics, writes that the basic weakness of the book "is that no one on the 'good' side actually fights for human values (as Tom Jones, for instance, does)." While identifying Heartfree as "the chief representative of 'goodness' in the novel," Kettle believes that "Fielding castrates him as a moral agent and yet at the same time makes him bear the positive values of the fable on his shoulders."[32]

Kettle, as well as almost everyone else who was written about the antithesis of goodness and greatness in Jonathan Wild, seems to overlook the emergence of Mrs. Heartfree in Book IV as a forceful exponent of Fielding's positive values. It is almost as though Fielding had anticipated the criticism that twentieth-century scholars were to make about the passivity and ineffectiveness of his good man. In order to compensate for the merchant's obvious inadequacies for the structure of the fiction, Fielding assigned a larger role to Mrs. Heartfree, making her reappear in the concluding section of the book as a stalwart adversary of Wild, though essentially on a symbolic level.

In her tale Mrs. Heartfree alludes to Wild only once (as "that Villain" [IV.vii.208]) and during the action of her narrative she never enters into direct conflict with him. (The account of Wild's attempt to ravish Mrs. Heartfree during the storm at sea is related

much earlier in Book II, Chapter x.) For Fielding to have depicted a literal confrontation between Mrs. Heartfree and the hero so near the end of Jonathan Wild would undoubtedly have distorted the main action, focus, and ironic stance of the work. Despite the absence of Wild from Mrs. Heartfree's tale, the dramatic contrast between the two figures remains implicit. Mrs. Heartfree employs perseverance, resourcefulness, cunning, and courage in defense of goodness instead of in pursuit of greatness as does Wild. Unlike the eponymous hero, Mrs. Heartfree does not become a slave to passion or to greed, nor does she seek to improve her situation by resorting to hypocrisy or cynicism despite the extreme circumstances in which she finds herself. In the symbolic world of her tale, Mrs. Heartfree's goodness enables her to withstand the assaults and blandishments of five men who in a sense represent extensions or variations of Wild's cruelty, lasciviousness, hypocrisy, and materialism.

Formidable as Mrs. Heartfree is, it must be emphasized that she does not survive her adventures by virtue of her admirable qualities alone. Just as Wild is subject to the fixed design of Fortune, so Mrs. Heartfree ultimately owes her triumph to Providence. While she is not exactly timid about calling attention to how her force of character and her astute actions helped her, she often acknowledges that "Heaven" or "Providence" insured her well-being. When Heartfree pales at her inaccurate reference to the "fatal Night" that she endured with the drunken captain, Mrs. Heartfree comforts him with the assurance "that Heaven had preserved her Chastity, and again had restored her unsullied to his Arms" (IV.vii.213). She

reemphasizes the assistance that Heaven provided at the end of her vivid account of how she had tricked the captain into drinking more punch than he could handle: "But Heaven was now graciously pleased to relieve me: for in his Attempt to pursue me, he [the drunken captain] . . . so bruised himself, that I was not only preserved that Night from any Danger of my intended Ravisher; but the Accident threw him into a Fever, which endangered his Life" (IV.vii.214-15).

Les there be any doubt about the overriding moral of Mrs. Heartfree's tale, Fielding has her conclude her narration with the maxim: "THAT PROVIDENCE WILL, SOONER OR LATER, PROCURE THE FELICITY OF THE VIRTUOUS AND INNOCENT." That the maxim is printed in block capitals--a device that is reserved for only a few key words or phrases in the text[33]--seems to indicate the emphasis that Fielding desired to be given to the sententia. Mrs. Heartfree says that she is persuaded that this "is the surest Truth" (IV.xi.237). Although it is questionable whether Fielding, who undoubtedly had witnessed many injustices during his years on the bench, shared Mrs. Heartfree's absolute belief, in the fairy-tale atmosphere of her story Fielding surely intends the reader to accept Mrs. Heartfree's maxim figuratively if not literally.

More significantly than by providing entertaining relief or spoofing literary subgenres, Mrs. Heartfree's tale expands the scope, mode, and implications of the entire book. After more than one hundred chapters that juxtapose the satiric, comic, sentimental, and tragic modes, Fielding introduces in Mrs. Heartfree's narrative an

expansive new dimension of allegory that requires a final adjustment of the reader's sensibilities and which must engage his poetic and religious faith in order to be effective. The diverse actions of Mrs. Heartfree's adventures dramatize her simple maxim, while the structure and symbolism of her tale prepare the reader for the more universal view of Providence that is articulated in the closing chapter, in which appropriate rewards are distributed to all of the good and bad characters.

Having returned Mrs. Heartfree safely home and provided the reader with a cogent explanation of her survival, Fielding concludes the main action of the book in four chapters that record the conviction, sentencing, and isolation of Wild (xii), the conference between the Ordinary of Newgate and the condemned prisoner (xiii), Wild's public hanging (xiv), and a final tribute to the hero along with accounts of the other characters (xv). The emphasis is mostly on the comic and satiric, with incidental touches that border on the tragic (Wild's bravura in pursuing greatness to the very end) and which exult in the sentimental (the glowing relationships of love and friendship among Heartfree, his wife, two daughters, son-in-law, and grandchildren).

In these chapters Fielding avoids the fault of the "lazy Poet," who bestows too little care on his fifth act and "dismisses the Hero with a sneaking and private Exit, who had in the former Part of the Drama performed such notable Exploits" (IV.xiv.250).[34] Following the elaboration of Mrs. Heartfree's adventures, Fielding

refocuses on the eponymous hero and writes for him and the reader an appropriate "exit" that incorporates the drama, spectacle, and telling lines that are the hallmark of successful plays. Fielding very loosely bases Chapters xii and xiii on events during the last three months of the real Wild's life, and his description of the protagonist's trip to Tyburn (xiv) closely parallels accounts of the real Wild's execution that had appeared in newspapers and pamphlets in 1725.[35]

The chronicle of Wild's final weeks and especially the closing mock-eulogy reintegrate themes and modes that were prominent in earlier sections of the book. In juxtaposing burlesques of the criminal and the exemplary biography, Fielding underscores for one last time the connections in literature and in life between the low and the high. Jonathan Wild concludes with a "happy" ending for the principal characters as well as for the reader. Wild achieves what he had so long aspired to, the consummation or apotheosis of greatness --being hanged by the neck until dead, an accomplishment realized by only a very few great men. The Heartfrees achieve an end to all of their sufferings, and the reader gains the satisfaction of seeing harmony and order reestablished literally and metaphorically with the punishment of Wild for his cruelties and the reward of the Heartfrees with lasting tranquility, prosperity, and love.

In the last analysis Fielding achieves many of his effects by utilizing comedy as a mediating, but not a neutralizing mode between the harsher extremes of satire and the tragic. The genial,

reassuring properties of comedy, which depict in an entertaining manner the imperfections and failures of Wild and the other characters, intervene between satire, which ridicules and condemns evils that Fielding believes lead to the bad life, and aspects of the tragic, which dramatize the Heartfrees' plight and Wild's quasi-heroic struggle against his own limitations. In satisfying almost all of the expectations and counterexpectations that he raises, Fielding honors literary conventions at the same time that he challenges them; he affirms and he denies, he mocks and he exalts. Fielding's imitation and burlesque of literary elements, his juxtaposition of the high and the low, and his combination of realistic representation with symbolic illustration in a sense redefine genres and modes by exposing their hidden aspects, by pointing out their differences and their affinities, and by underscoring their shortcomings and their absurdities.

The originality of Fielding's accomplishment is particularly striking when one takes into account that Jonathan Wild was written during a period when literary formalism was at its height. The Augustan concepts of genres delineated clear distinctions of purpose, scope, and style, providing writers with tried and proven ways of organizing and expressing subjects whose implications were rich in social and moral meanings. Fielding's subversion, expansion, and blending of literary elements greatly enhanced the dimensions and implications of Jonathan Wild. By playing numerous genres, modes, and devices off against each other and against the political, social, literary, and moral values of the day, Fielding was able to

present in that work a more complex view of human nature, society, and the universe than has generally been recognized.

ii.

Before considering the vision that Fielding expresses in Jonathan Wild, we, as members of the narrative and authorial audiences, should examine in more detail some of the "structures" or "perspectives" that Iser believes organize the relationship between text and reader and which are essential for comprehension. Fielding's narrative techniques, his characterizations, and his distinct style all of course contribute significantly to our understanding of the book's ultimate meaning.

Perhaps most important to readers of Fielding's day was the novelist's ability to tell a story. In the narrative of Jonathan Wild, Fielding makes skillful use of foreshadowing, dramatic irony, pacing, and manipulations of time that affect the reader's expectations, interest, and understanding in diverse ways. As we have seen, Fielding achieves various effects of foreshadowing by naming and modeling his protagonist after a real person, by presenting a "history" of his hero's fictitious forebears, by having the mock biographer refer constantly to Wild's "greatness," by vividly depicting Wild's near-heroic singlemindedness, and by alluding to the intimate interest of Nature and Fortune in Wild's fate.

In addition Fielding indicates the consequences of Wild's criminal activites in explaining why Wild was concerned at the news that Heartfree had been conveyed to Newgate: "In fact, he [Wild] was uneasy at the Place of Mr. Heartfree's Confinement, as it was to be the Scene of his future Glory, and where consequently he should be frequently obliged to see a Face which Hatred, and not Shame, made him detest the Sight of" (III.iv.135). Wild's short-lived marital bliss is also foreshadowed in the clarification of the hero's apparent enslavement to Laetitia (III.iv.133), and the altercations that Wild and Laetitia subsequently have in Newgate are prefigured in the narrator's observations after they have been married only two weeks (III.ix.157).

Less obvious is Fielding's planting of the motif of the debtor as innocent victim before Heartfree makes his initial appearance. In introducing the Count, who is confined at Mr. Snap's sponging house, Fielding writes:

> for it seems the Law of the Land is, that whoever owes another 10 l. or indeed 2 l. may be, on the Oath of that Person, immediately taken up and carried away from his own House and Family, and kept abroad till he is made to owe 50 l. whether he will or no; for which he is, perhaps, afterwards obliged to lie in Gaol; and all these without any Trial had, or any other Evidence of the Debt than the above-said Oath, which if untrue, as it often happens, you have no Remedy against the Perjurer; he was, forsooth! mistaken. (I.iv.15)

The Count is not exactly an innocent victim, but the commentary about the law's treatment of debtors prepares the reader in part for what is later to happen to Heartfree on a grander scale. The debt for which Heartfree is jailed is considerably more than

£2 or £10, and he is given a trial by jury following his imprisonment in Newgate. Heartfree is convicted, however, on the basis of Wild and Fireblood's false testimony that he ordered Mrs. Heartfree to take his most valuable effects to Holland in order to defraud his creditors. If it had not been for the arrests of Wild and Fireblood for capital crimes and Fireblood's desire to try to save himself, Heartfree would not have had any recourse against the perjured charges that were willfully made against him by the two criminals.[36]

Fielding's skillful use of dramatic irony, his sure sense of pacing, and his astute handling of time also significantly enrich the developing action. Fielding first uses dramatic irony with humorous effect after Wild has arranged for Bagshot to rob the Count of his winnings at the hazard table. The crime is reported with a minimum of detail: "This [Wild's plan] was accordingly executed, and the Count obliged to surrender to savage Force what he had in so genteel and civil a Manner taken at Play" (I.viii.30). Three chapters later, after the main action is advanced by the depiction of Wild's failure with Laetitia and his success in seizing three-fourths of the booty that Bagshot had taken from the Count, Fielding returns to the robbery with an increment of comedy and characterization.

The Count, who has been confined once again at Mr. Snap's, is ignorant of Wild's responsibility for his misfortune. After embracing Wild and boasting of his great success at the gaming table, the Count offers an account of the robbery that, Fielding says,

"the Reader, as well as Mr. Wild, hath had some Intimation of before; adding, however, one Circumstance not hitherto mentioned, viz. that he had defended his Money with the utmost Bravery, and had dangerously wounded at least two of the three Men that had attacked him. This Behaviour Wild, who not only knew the extreme Readiness with which the Booty had been delivered, but also the constant Frigidity of the Count's Courage, highly applauded, and wished he had been present to assist him" (I.xi.42).

While Fielding perhaps overplays Wild's knowledge of the truth a whit, the dramatic irony requires the reader to become somewhat of a participant in the action at the same time that it makes pertinent revelations of character. In order to relish the humor of the scene, the reader is obliged to recall the earlier description of the robbery and to make the logical deduction about the discrepancy between it and the Count's version. The dramatic irony simultaneously reveals the cowardice, pretense, and deviousness of the Count as well as Wild's talents for feigning loyalty and sympathy while exploiting the weaknesses of his victim. All of these traits play an integral part in the more serious actions that the Count and Wild later perpetrate against the Heartfrees.

As part of a larger strategy to deflate Wild at the same time that he underscores his vulnerability, Fielding at several points directs the dramatic irony against his hero. After Laetitia fights off Wild's initial advances (I.ix), the following chapter begins with the disclosure that as soon as Wild had departed

Laetitia opened her closet to call forth Tom Smirk. Similarly, when the trusted Fireblood delivers Wild's love letter to Laetitia, the reader (as well as Fireblood) is treated to a lively demonstration of her sexual inclinations (III.vii). Later the readiness with which Fireblood offers false testimony against Heartfree is explained by the fact that "beside the Ties of Engagement in the same Employ, another nearer and stronger Alliance" subsisted between Wild and Fireblood, who is reported to have "just departed from the Arms of the lovely Laetitia" (III.x.164).

The dramatic irony in each of these scenes ridicules Wild by revealing him as a spurned lover and common cuckold. The pleasure that the reader derives from this knowledge is threefold. First he is made to feel superior to the "great" Wild (who prides himself on discerning the vulnerabilities of others) by being privy to facts that the hero does not share until the end of the book. Secondly, even though Wild has not yet realized that he is being betrayed, the reader enjoys seeing the hero being paid back for the many injustices that he has inflicted upon others. Thirdly, when Wild at last catches Laetitia in the arms of Fireblood (IV.x), the reader experiences the additional satisfaction of watching Wild learn the cruel truth. Because the reader has known of Laetitia's liaison for some time, he is not as surprised as Wild is and can consequently savor the art with which Fielding depicts Wild's reactions. The enhanced effects that Fielding achieves in this scene because of the preceding dramatic irony may be appreciated

by comparing it to the earlier incident in which the reader and Wild learn at the same time that the hero's gift to Laetitia is a worthless imitation. Although Fielding's rendering of the first event is wittily embellished, the focus is on what has happened to Wild. In the later scene the emphasis is on how Wild responds to Fireblood and Laetitia's affair, enabling the reader to relish more fully Wild's absurd posturing, his genuine fury, and his injured pride.

Counterpointing the essentially comic play of dramatic irony with Wild is Fielding's use of the technique for other effects with the Heartfrees. Much of the tension, drama, and suspense of the main action depends upon the Heartfrees' remaining ignorant of Wild's true intentions for as long as possible. The reader of course has ample knowledge of Wild's morals before the Heartfrees appear, and once the exemplary couple encounter the hero the reader is kept duly informed of the intricacies of Wild's plans to victimize them. Fielding thus positions the reader at a point from which he can appreciate Wild's cunning at the same time that he experiences indignation at Wild's ruthlessness.

By withholding knowledge of Wild's true character and actions from the Heartfrees, Fielding creates an important element of sympathy for them while also demonstrating their gullibility. Accordingly the reader learns of the swindling and robbery of Heartfree with compassion for the merchant and anger at Wild. In subsequent scenes the reader commiserates with the bandaged

and insolvent Heartfree while he savors the finesse with which Wild recovers Heartfree's £200 from Moll Straddle and then borrows £30 from his victim. After Heartfree is confined at Mr. Snap's, Fielding heightens the irony by having Wild berate Heartfree for the liberality with which he had extended credit to the Count. In an especially delicious touch Fielding permits Wild to tell Heartfree a portion of the truth: "I confess I have the least Reason of all Mankind to censure another for an Imprudence of this Nature, as I am myself the most easy to be imposed upon, and indeed have been so by this Count, who if he be insolvent, hath cheated me of five hundred Pounds" (II.viii.99). In contrast to the reader, Heartfree does not realize that the money which Wild has been cheated of is in fact his own.

In addition to eliciting the ire, sympathy, and grudging admiration of the reader, the dramatic irony also arouses his mounting impatience. The reader is informed of Wild's motivation in twice attempting to entrap Heartfree by encouraging his escape from Newgate, and cannot help wondering how long it will be before Heartfree at last sees through the hero. However, by the time that Heartfree grows sufficiently distrustful to have Friendly obtain a warrant for Wild's arrest, the good merchant's complacency and passiveness have been so thoroughly established that it becomes questionable whether he will be able to save himself even with full knowledge of the facts.

Fielding, in short, artfully balances the effects of dramatic irony on the comic and serious strands of the plot. By

keeping Wild's misadventures with the Count, Laetitia, Blueskin, and Fireblood from the Heartfrees, Fielding makes his hero appear to the good characters as a far more formidable figure than the reader knows him to be. Had Heartfree been aware of Wild's singular lack of success with Laetitia, he might not have feared quite so much for the safety of his wife. Had he known of Wild's association with inveterate criminals, he might have been more suspicious of the Count and have more vigorously challenged Wild's false testimony before the authorities. On the other hand, Fielding emphasizes his hero's vulnerabilities and greatly increases the reader's amusement by withholding from Wild information about Fireblood and Laetitia. Through the judicious use of dramatic irony Fielding thus modulates the reader's attitudes towards Wild and the Heartfrees, maintaining a compelling degree of tension and suspense at the same time that he signals the reader that all may not turn out as disastrously as Heartfree fears.

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Although Jonathan Wild is considerably shorter than Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia, its length and scope still require pacing, condensation of non-essential material, and heightening of the most important matters. One effective technique that Fielding uses to alter tempo and to intensify material undoubtedly grew out of his experience in writing for the stage. A good number of the most vivid parts of Jonathan Wild are conceived as scenes in the theatrical sense: that is, a specific setting is presented,

a problem introduced with different characters having specific goals, and through the conflict of these characters a resolution is arrived at with a subsequent relaxation of tension.[37] The dialogue in these scenes is vibrantly dramatic, tending to draw the reader closer to the action; the effect is to highlight a specific idea and/or character trait while developing the plot through conflict.

Fielding controls the pace of each scene by regulating the length and tone of the characters' speeches. When the dialogue is brief and barbed, as in much of the matrimonial dialogue, the illusion of time passing quickly is presented even though the scene may be relatively long. Conversely, more lengthy, ponderous exchanges, such as Wild's dialogue with the Count on prigs and statesmen (I.v), his arguments advocating the division of labor (I.viii), and his debate with Blueskin about substance and shadow (III.xiv), retard the action, obliging the reader to disregard the dramatic situation for a moment and to concentrate on the ideas of the speaker.

It is, however, the resolution of a scene, rather than its shifting internal rhythms, that exerts the more noticeable effect on the overall pacing of the book. Some scenes are resolved with Wild's triumph over an adversary, as in the showdown with Bagshot in which the hero ends up with three-fourths of the booty (I.viii). More often Wild is unable to impose his will upon others, as in the matrimonial dialogue (III.ix), the struggle to control Blueskin (III.xiv), and the defense of his "honor" against Fireblood (IV.x).

In general, scenes that end in Wild's triumph tend to quicken the pace and to increase the reader's anticipation of Wild's next adventure (which is usually marked by failure). Scenes that end in defeat for Wild tend to slow down the action, focusing attention on the hero's shortcomings and providing the reader with a brief interlude in which to savor Wild's setback.

As he does in Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, Fielding at times likens the telling of his story in Jonathan Wild to a journey that is most successfully accomplished with judicious pauses, halts, and stops during which the reader (and writer) may rest and better consider what he has already experienced. "HERE, Reader, thou must pardon us if we stop a while to lament the Capriciousness of Nature in forming this charming Part of the Creation" (I.x.39), Fielding states before commenting on women's preference for worthless beaux like Tom Smirk. "As we are in no great Haste, we will stop and make a Simile" (I.xiv.55), he interjects before comparing the locking up of the Count and Bagshot to the huntsman's return of his hounds to their kennel. "We will now take a little Breath; and therefore we shall here close this Book" (I.xiv.61), Fielding writes a few pages later with a hint of fatigue after having related in a single chapter the conclusion of the card game at Mr. Snap's, Wild's satisfaction in having reaped sixty-five guineas, the ruminations of the hero on the proper employment of hands, the loss of his plunder at dice, and the plotting of a robbery that nets him eighteen pence. Before depicting the final

arrest of Heartfree, Fielding takes almost an entire chapter to comment on the similarities between the stages of the world and Drury Lane, and between great men and puppeteers. The following chapter begins with the statement: "TO return to my History, which, having rested itself a little, is now ready to proceed on its Journey" (III.xii.168).

Fielding also quickens the pace by expressing his concern that the reader may lose patience or pay too much attention to minor matters. "We shall hasten on to Matters of true Importance, and immense Greatness" (I.vii.30), Fielding states after apologizing for the brief chapter that provides a blank history of Wild's eight years in America. "BUT we have already perhaps detained our Reader too long in this Relation, from the Consideration of our Hero" (IV.xii.237), he begins the chapter following the conclusion of Mrs. Heartfree's tale.

More often Fielding accelerates the tempo by summarizing nonessentials (at the same time that he humorously calls attention to his excision). Wild's idle conversation during his initial wooing of Laetitia is not as important as his physical assault and Laetitia's equally forceful defense of her person. The preliminaries are thus summarized: "The Tea-Table was soon called for, at which a Discourse passed between these young Lovers, which, could we set it down with any Accuracy, would be very edifying as well as entertaining to our Reader" (I.ix.36). During Wild's second visit with Laetitia, Fielding writes that Wild "repeated a Speech which, as the Reader

may easily suggest it to himself, I shall not here set down" (II.iii.78). These judicious expungings of Wild's words contrast of course with the verbatim transcripts of his matrimonial dialogue and with the ample reproductions of Wild's speeches on such important subjects as greatness, honor, and priggery.

While Fielding increases movement by eliminating or summarizing nonessentials, he just as often retards or arrests the action with embellishing descriptions, observations, and commentary. Many of these interruptions are of only a parenthetical phrase or a sentence or two, but Fielding also includes more lengthy passages that call attention to his leisurely play of humor. The elaborate description of Laetitia's "most beautiful Undress" (I.ix. 35) halts the action but vividly establishes Laetitia's character before the explosive end of the chapter. Similarly the introductory observations about Blueskin's contempt "of those ridiculous Distinctions of Meum and Tuum" (III.xiv.175) and about his impatience with the common form of exchanging property by trade set the scene for his dramatic challenge of Wild.

Fielding concludes his expansive comparison of great men and puppeteers with a jest about his rambling excursions: "But this being a Sub-digression, I return to my Digression" (III.xi.167). Perhaps the most clever lengthy commentary in the book occurs in "The strange and yet natural Escape of our Hero," which follows the chapter in which Wild hurls himself headlong into the sea. Claiming that he is much better read in natural than in super-

natural causes, Fielding announces that he will "endeavour to account for this extraordinary Event from the former of these" (II.xii.112). He then quotes Horace twice, comments on the designs and tenacity of Nature and on man's inability to discern the end by the means, implies that Wild's qualities are far from heroic, and reasons ab effectu in explaining how Wild regains his boat, from which point the action resumes in the following chapter.

A final aspect of Fielding's narrative skill is his modest but artful manipulations of time. While Fielding does not attempt any radical experiments with the temporal conventions of the period, as Sterne was to do five years after the second edition of Jonathan Wild, the few modulations that Fielding effects merit notice. In one chapter he passes over eight years in which nothing of consequence occurs and in other passages he moves back in time in order to elucidate actions that had already taken place, with an increment in dramatic and thematic effects.

Most of the chapters of Jonathan Wild are in traditional linear sequence, although they do not contain the kind of meticulous documentation of the passing months, days, and hours that, for example, Richardson's fictional letters provide. In fact there are in Jonathan Wild very few references to the passage of more than a few days. When Fielding mentions a specific period it is usually for reasons that have little to do with the charting of time. For example, after Heartfree unsuccessfully tries to bring charges against Wild, the reader learns that "FOUR Months had now passed

since Heartfree's first Confinement, and his Affairs had begun to wear a more benign Aspect; but they were a good Deal injured by this Attempt on Wild" (III.x.164-65). The purpose of mentioning the time span of four months seems to be primarily dramatic contrast. By indicating that sufficient time had passed for Heartfree's situation to improve, Fielding makes the further tribulations awaiting the good merchant appear that much more distressing.

Reference to the longest stretch of elapsed time in Jonathan Wild occurs in the "very short Chapter, containing infinitely more Time and less Matter than any other in the whole Story." The period that Wild spends in America after having committed an unspecified crime is actually determined by Fielding's humorous comparison of a young gentleman's tour of Europe with his hero's transportation to the New World for the customary seven-year sentence. Fielding jokes about the ridiculous nature of the brief chapter and the insignificance of many men's histories, even if they be famous. At the same time he also provides a straightforward reason for quickly passing over Wild's stay in America: "But howsoever long his Abode there was, it must be a Blank in this History; as the whole Story contains not one Adventure worthy the Reader's Notice" (I.vii.28, 29). Had Fielding not wanted to include the joke about Wild's "grand tour" as part of his overall strategy of equating the high and the low, he could well have omitted the entire chapter without any loss of dramatic interest.

The one scene in which the passing of a specific period of time plays a significant part is the chapter depicting Mrs. Heartfree's return just as Heartfree is about to depart for Tyburn. When Friendly pays five guineas so that the Heartfrees can spend ten minutes together, the commanding officer informs them that they must be expeditious since Heartfree is obviously too well-bred to make his fellow prisoners wait for him at the Tree. The reunited couple then retires to a room for the allotted minutes, "which the Commander without carefully measured with his Watch" (IV.v.203). Much of the tension in the chapter depends on the rapidly passing ten minutes, on Friendly's lack of money with which to buy additional time from the commanding officer, and of course on the Heartfree's mistaken belief that they are about to part forever.[38]

Fielding's most important manipulations of time involve the interruption of the developing action in order to depict events that have occurred earlier. As the central character, Wild commands the foremost attention of Fielding and the reader, but the tribulations of the Heartfrees, which are caused by Wild's "greatness," also require vivid treatment, if only to dramatize the depths of Wild's depravity. Fielding adroitly balances these concerns by occasionally moving backwards in time in order to portray the Heartfrees' ordeals at critical points in the action where they will have the maximum dramatic and thematic effects.

Near the end of Book II, Fielding prepares for the largest dislocation of time, which does not actually take place until much

later in Book IV. After the French captain rescues Mrs. Heartfree from Wild, Fielding shifts attention back to the hero: "We will leave him [the captain], however, at present, in the Pursuit of his Wishes [to have Mrs. Heartfree], and attend our Hero in his Boat; since it is in Circumstances of Distress that true Greatness appears most wonderful" (II.xi.109). Fielding does not return to the captain and Mrs. Heartfree for another twenty-three chapters, or until Wild has done all the harm he can to the Heartfrees.

In the intervening pages Fielding effects two smaller shifts of time, the first of which concerns Heartfree and the second of which precedes Mrs. Heartfree's tale. After the elaborate commentary about Wild's "miraculous" recovery of his boat (II.xii) and a description of his efforts to regain the shore and London (II.xiii), Fielding concludes Book II by reassuring the reader of Wild's well-being: "Since we have returned him [Wild] safe to the principal Scene of his Glory, we will a little look back on the Fortunes of Mr. Heartfree, whom we left in no very pleasant Situation; but of this we shall treat in the next Book" (II.xiii.118). The first two chapters of Book III, presenting Heartfree's doubts about his wife, his reunion with Friendly and his children, and his lengthy soliloquy, create sympathy for the good merchant but also prepare for his further victimization by dramatizing his resignation and passivity. Having accomplished both of these purposes, Fielding then moves the action forward quickly. "BUT we must not detain our Reader too long with these low Characters" (III.iii.128), he remarks before

revealing Wild's plans for the robbery of the gentleman from Dover and his more diabolical plots to entrap Heartfree.

Following the eleventh-hour arrival of Mrs. Heartfree and the dramatic news of Heartfree's reprieve (IV.v), Fielding stops the action and moves backwards in time once more. The explanation of how Heartfree's reprieve came about and the introduction of the conscientious magistrate, who desires to learn as much as possible about the entire affair, lead to the larger block of Mrs. Heartfree's tale, which represents Fielding's most extended manipulation of time. Mrs. Heartfree is earnestly relating some of her adventures when the magistrate arrives at Newgate and begs her to continue her discourse (III.vi). At Heartfree's suggestion she begins her account with the accidental meeting of her husband and Wild in London.

Fielding's skill as an "editor" is apparent in his artful integration of Mrs. Heartfree's tale with her earlier misadventures at sea. While he avoids needless repetition, Fielding includes enough previously described material to reorient the reader. "As it would be useless, and perhaps tedious, to the Reader," he writes, "we shall only repeat that Part of her Story to which he is only a Stranger, beginning with what happened to her after Wild had been turned adrift in the Boat, by the Captain of the French Privateer" (IV.vi.208).

Mrs. Heartfree begins her tale in the following chapter, explaining that the vengeance that the French captain exerted on

Wild was due not so much to honor and justice as to his passion for her--a fact that was also mentioned in the earlier section: "for the Frenchman had conceived the same Sort of Passion, or Hunger, which Wild himself had felt, and was almost as much resolved, by some Means or other, to satisfy it" (II.xi.109). Having refreshed the reader's memory, Mrs. Heartfree proceeds to relate her adventures in chronological order but not uninterruptedly. As she is repeating some of the many compliments paid to her by the French hermit, a horrid uproar at the gate puts a temporary stop to her narration. After the similes likening this noise to a raging bull or many shrill-voiced women, Fielding reveals Wild's discovery of Fireblood and Laetitia (IV.x). This brief return to the present, depicting Wild's ridiculous defense of his "honor" with words and with his fists, provides both comic relief and an effective device for counterpointing the egregious actions of Wild, Fireblood, and Laetitia with the exemplary behavior of Mrs. Heartfree in her tale.

Once order is again restored with the separation of Wild and Fireblood, Heartfree and the magistrate desire Mrs. Heartfree to conclude her tale, which she does quickly after explaining why the African magistrate rewarded her with a jewel and how Providence assisted her speedy return home on an English man-of-war. "TO conclude my Story; I met with no Adventure in this Passage at all worth relating, 'till my landing at Gravesend, whence the Captain brought me in his own Boat to the Tower. In a short Hour after my Arrival we had that Meeting, which, however, dreadful at first, will,

I now hope, by the good Offices of the best of Men, whom Heaven for ever bless, end in our perfect Happiness" (IV.xi.236).

With Mrs. Heartfree's shift from the narration of past events to an expression of concern for the future, Fielding guides the reader back to action in the present. Time moves forward again in the three chapters that depict Wild's final days and moments, and following the hero's execution Fielding presents first a timeless summary of Wild's character and then a glimpse of the future with the imminent deaths of the evil characters and the longer, happy lives of the good characters. Fielding's treatment of time in Jonathan Wild thus extends from the pseudo-history of Wild's forebears to the unspecified future in which the fates of various characters are determined by their morals. In accordance with the conventions of exemplary and criminal biography, most of the action develops chronologically, but when it suits his purpose Fielding also manipulates time in order to dramatize the plight of the two characters whom Wild most seriously harms.

The subdivision of Jonathan Wild into books and chapters in quite symmetrical,[39] but within these regular parameters Fielding achieves varied effects of pacing and emphasis. He accelerates the tempo by summarizing nonessentials and by dramatizing scenes, and he retards the action with embellished language and with extended descriptions, observations, and commentary. In addition he foreshadows the fate of his hero in numerous ways: he employs dramatic irony to enrich the comic and serious strands of the plot, and he

shrewdly manipulates time in order to obtain maximum dramatic and thematic effects. All of these narrative techniques greatly enhance the telling of Wild's story.

iii.

It has often been pointed out that Fielding's approach to characterization in all of his fiction is external and is determined to a great extent by demands of formal structure and by his desire to render generalized representatives of human nature. As preceding chapters have demonstrated, the characters in Jonathan Wild are especially shaped by Fielding's imposition of a range of moral, literary, and historical considerations. Despite the importance of these organizing schemas, Fielding's characterizations strike a creative balance between universalized types, who are indicators of moral and social values, and particularized individuals, whose behavior is both idiosyncratic and credible.

Fielding's initial conception of his characters as generalized representations is evident in his extensive use of type names, which reveal a salient characteristic while often projecting allegorical overtones. The happy combination of historicity and allegory that is expressed in the surname of the eponymous hero serves Fielding's multiple purposes admirably. The names of other characters--Heartfree, Fireblood, Friendly, Count La Ruse, Smirk, Snap, Fierce,

and Sly--are self-explanatory. With the exception of Fireblood these characters are all given Christian names, but Fielding refers to them mostly by their surnames, thus emphasizing the general qualities that they personify.[40]

Like many novelists of the period, Fielding provides little physical description of his characters. Only Bagshot is portrayed with specific reference to physique, complexion, and hair: "He was then six Feet high, had large Calves, broad Shoulders, a ruddy Complexion, with brown curled Hair, a modest Assurance, and clean Linen" (I.xii.45). Even in this brief sketch, however, the emphasis is not so much on Bagshot's physical attributes as on his manner and attire. While Fielding omits details about the physical appearance of his personages, his external presentation of character is evident in the numerous references to clothes as an index of improper manners and morals.[41] The Count is introduced with the explanation that he has been confined at Mr. Snap's for having failed to pay for some suits that he had received. "Notwithstanding the Disparity which Age, Title, and above all Dress, had set between them" (I.iv.17), the Count resolves to enter into an acquaintance with Wild and subsequently advises the hero to dress "in good Cloths" (I.vi.27) so that he can reap the advantage of his talents among the best company. Under the Count's tutelage Wild makes "a considerable Figure" (I.vi.28), passing as a gentleman of great fortune, but when Wild becomes leader of the prigs of Newgate, his baseness and declining condition are reflected in the sleazy garments that he strips from Roger Johnson.

Fielding's most detailed descriptions of dress depict the silly pretentiousness of Tom Smirk and the slovenly wantonness of Laetitia. "As we take Dress to be the Characteristic or efficient Quality of a Beau, we shall, instead of giving any Character of this young Gentleman, content ourselves with describing his Dress only" (I.x.38), Fielding remarks before cataloging Smirk's white stockings and buckles of pinchbeck plate, his blue coat with metal buttons, his ill-fitting, brown-colored wig, and his overly short cape and breeches of red plush. So devastating is the portrait of Smirk's dress that it is unnecessary for him to speak or to act in order to reveal more about himself.

Laetitia's actions and words are well recorded, but Fielding's initial description of her attire (I.ix) is one of the stylistic highlights of the book. The worn muslin handkerchief that reveals parts of Laetitia's naked breast, her spotted gown, half-gold lace that is almost fringe, her filthy undergarment, and the ill-matched ribbons on her shoes all capture with humor and accuracy the soiled undisciplined state of Laetitia's soul, as well as the appeal that her shabby person has for Wild. While critics have cited this passage for its stylistic achievements, to my knowledge no one has pointed out its similarities to Herrick's poem "Delight in Disorder," which Fielding may have been alluding to, if not parodying. Many of Herrick's topoi--"A Lawne about the shoulders," "an erring Lace," "the tempestuous petticote," "a carelesse shooe-string"--are paralleled in Fielding's ironic description. The last lines

of the poem could serve as a genteel expression of the effect of Laetitia's attire on Wild. The sweet disorders in dress, Herrick concludes, "Doe more bewitch me, then when Art / Is too precise in every part."[42]

In addition to the use of type names and description of dress as an indicator of moral and emotional qualities, Fielding's external approach to characterization most fully manifests itself in the firm rhetorical control that he maintains over his characters, most noticeably, but not exclusively, through the persona of the mock biographer. As was discussed earlier, the pervasive use of ironic epithets tends to formalize characters by fixing them according to static, patently distorted terms. References to the "great" Wild, the "mean," "base," "low" Heartfree, "faithful" Achates, "chaste" Laetitia, "silly" Friendly, etc., keep these figures somewhat at a distance and represent a manipulation of character as well as of the reader's responses.[43]

Although Fielding is not known for psychological exploration, it should be pointed out that he does make some attempts to analyze or depict the inner lives of his principal characters. Between passages of narration, external description, and dialogue (in which the speakers reveal themselves directly), Fielding inserts brief but insightful observations about the motivations, perceptions, and rationalizations of his personages. We learn for example that Laetitia, "among many other good Ingredients, had three very predominant Passions, to wit, Vanity, Wantonness, and Avarice.

To satisfy the first of these, she applied Mr. Smirk and Comp. to the second, Mrs. Bagshot and Comp. and our Hero had the Honour and Happiness of solely engrossing the third" (II.iii.77). Heartfree is described as having "an honest and open Disposition. He was of that Sort of Men, whom Experience only, and not their own Natures, must inform, that there are such things as Deceit and Hypocrisy in the World" (II.i.64). Wild, on the other hand, had "wonderful Good-nature when his Greatness or Interest was not concerned" (III.xiii. 173), but not having the least grain of honesty he "had resolved, perhaps a little too generally, that there was no such thing" (III.x.161).

As the action develops Fielding provides more penetrating insights into the passions, machinations, and fears that determine Wild's behavior. His apparent enslavement to women "might more properly be called a Slavery to his own Appetite" (III.iv.133), since once Wild satisfies that appetite, as he does with Moll and Laetitia, he has no further use for the woman. Wild's "great Aversion to Satisfaction and Content, which is inseparably incident to great Minds," causes him to enlarge his views, for "this noble Avidity which increases with Feeding is the first Principle or constituent Quality of these our Great men" (I.xiv.55). When Wild rejects murder as not being horrible or barbarous enough to express his hatred for Heartfree, Fielding explains that this hatred is based on fear, rising "from an Apprehension that the Person whom we have ourselves greatly injured, will use all possible Endeavours to revenge and

retaliate the Injuries we have done him" (III.iv.134).

A number of references to Wild's ability to control his facial expressions[44] suggest the contrast between his sham public behavior and his more complex private sentiments. After Wild receives "with a very placid Countenance" Fireblood's information about the conspiracy against him and informs the gang that since they have repented, nothing was more noble than forgiveness, Fielding illuminates the combination of pragmatism, self-delusion, and nervous vigilance that prompted Wild's public declaration: "It really arose from much more noble and political Principles. He considered that it would be dangerous to attempt the Punishment of so many; besides, he flattered himself that Fear would keep them in Order; and indeed Fireblood had told him nothing more than he knew before, viz. that they were all complete Prigs, whom he was to govern by their Fears, and in whom he was to place no more Confidence than was necessary" (III.xiv.180).

The most direct presentations of Wild's private thoughts occur in his soliloquy on greatness (II.iv) and in the doubts that he expresses before hurling himself into the sea (II.xi). Towards the end of the book Fielding also provides less internalized but vividly poignant descriptions of Wild's increasing mental instability. Shortly after his display of good nature at the news of Theodosia's illegitimate child, Fielding writes of Wild:

> He was under a continual Alarm of Frights, and Fears, and Jealousies. He thought every Man he beheld wore a Knife for his Throat, and a Pair of Scissars for his Purse. As for his own Gang particularly, he was

> thoroughly convinced there was not a single Man amongst them, who would not, for the Value of five Shillings, bring him to the Gallows. These Apprehensions so constantly broke his Rest, and kept him so assiduously on his Guard, to frustrate and circumvent any Designs which might be forming against him; that his Condition, to any other than the glorious Eye of Ambition, might seem rather deplorable, than the Object of Envy or Desire. (III.xiii.174)

Perhaps Fielding's most effective intimation of Wild's mental state occurs when he learns of the arrival of the dead warrant for Heartfree's execution. "The Blood forsook his [Wild's] Countenance, and, in a cold still Stream, mov'd heavily to his Heart, which had scarce Strength enough left to return it through his Veins." Wild's body "so visibly demonstrated the Pangs of his Mind" that in order to escape observation he retires to his room, where he sullenly gives vent to bitter agonies:

> WHEN his Mind was thoroughly fatigued, and worn out with the Horrors which the approaching Fate of the poor Wretch [Heartfree], who lay under a Sentence which he had iniquitously brought upon him, had suggested, Sleep promised him Relief; but this Promise was, alas! delusive. . . . So at least it proved to Wild, adding visionary to real Horrors, and tormenting his Imagination with Phantoms too dreadful to be described. At length starting from these Visions, he no sooner recovered his waking Senses, then he cry'd out: "I may yet prevent this Catastrophe. It is not too late to discover the Whole." (IV.ix.198-99)

Much of the art of Jonathan Wild depends on Fielding's realization of Wild not as an intellectualized concept or abstraction, but as a complex, full-blooded character with a vital inner and outer life. Despite the inhumanity of Wild's philosophy and his barbarous treatment of others, he emerges as an intensely human protagonist fraught with compelling appetites, weaknesses, illusions, and

vulnerabilities. Wild's hunger for transient pleasure as well as for what he perceives to be the more lasting satisfactions of life is ravenous. Fielding successfully evokes Wild's sexual vitality, which he refers to as an "Appetite," with tantalizing images of food.[45] But Wild's hunger is not only of a sexual nature. In his ruminations on the inward glory of aspiring to great and wonderful actions, Wild refers to the "glorious Appetite of Mind" (II.iv.92-93) that motivates potential great men. Wild's boldness, cruelty, insolence, avariciousness, pride, treachery, and hypocrisy are all manifestations of this insatiable desire to manipulate others in the relentless quest for power and riches.

One of Fielding's finest touches of characterization is his demonstration of how Wild's consuming passions warp his usually astute judgment of others. The eminence of Wild as a leader among prigs depends to a great extent on his "wonderful Knack of discovering and applying to the Passions of Men" (I.viii.34) for his own purposes, yet those very qualities that mark Wild out for "greatness" ill-equip him to comprehend the Heartfrees, whose natures are so different from his own. Wild's general habits of libertinism and the specific lust that he conceives for Mrs. Heartfree render him incapable of understanding the look of benevolence that spontaneously flows from Mrs. Heartfree when she learns of her husband's past obligations to Wild. Fielding writes:

> It is therefore no Wonder that our Hero should misconstrue, as he did, the poor, innocent, and simple Affection of Mrs. Heartfree towards her Husband's Friend, for that great and generous Passion, which fires the Eyes of a

> modern Heroine, when the Colonel is so kind as to indulge his City Creditor with partaking of his Table to Day, and of his Bed to Morrow. Wild therefore instantly returned the Compliment, as he understood it. (II.i.65)

Wild's miscalculations concerning Heartfree result in more serious consequences for himself. Although his method with fellow criminals was "NEVER to communicate more of an Affair than was necessary" (IV.xv.257), in attempting to destroy Heartfree by enticing him to commit a capital crime Wild cannot help revealing his base nature, the exposure of which arouses Heartfree's suspicions and righteous indignation. Wild first mistakenly attributes Heartfree's refusal to attempt an escape from Newgate, even if it involves murder, to the good merchant's fear of bloodying his hands or provoking a ghost or God's revenge. When he makes his second proposal Wild is confident that Heartfree "would (at least in his present Necessity) agree without Scruple to a simple Robbery, especially where any considerable Booty should be proposed, and the Safety of the Attack plausibly made appear" (III.x.161). Instead Heartfree delivers a resounding sermon to Wild, which is interrupted by the arrival of a constable with a writ for the hero's arrest.

While it has been said that the characters in Fielding's novels do not change, that only the circumstances in which they are involved change, Fielding does effect a considerable degree of character development in his portrayal of Wild. Throughout the action Fielding graphically depicts the relentless mental and physical activity of his hero as he strives to satisfy his various appetites and suffers the complications that his passions produce.

In the ascendant stages of his career, and especially in his plots against the Heartfrees, Wild is motivated first by greed, then by lust, and finally by hatred. After he has expended what appears to have been almost limitless vigor, Wild's obsessions become more internalized as his mind seethes with fears and jealousies, but he endures a decline in energy, efficaciousness, self-confidence, and dignity.

To be sure Wild's circumstances change in part because of the actions of Blueskin, the learned judge, the conscientious magistrate, and Fireblood, but it is primarily through the depiction of Wild's own limited acts and his internal reactions that Fielding completes the transformation of his hero from the high-spirited, ambitious young man of Book I into the rather pathetic, haunted figure whose "greatness" is redeemed in the final chapters only by his execution and by the fulsome eulogy of the mock biographer. Unlike Heartfree, whose easy conscience enables him to sleep despite his tribulations, Wild sleeps less and less, while his agitations of mind and his vocal outbursts grow more intense. His discovery of Laetitia in Fireblood's arms elicits "hollowing, scolding, crying, swearing" and "every different Articulation which is within the Scope of the human Organ" (IV.ix.227-28); fear of his enemies and the pronouncement of his death sentence drive Wild to drink, "by Means of which he was enabled to curse, and swear, and bully, and brave his Fate" (IV.xii.239).

Fielding does not fully dramatize Wild's fall, since to do so would contradict the overall strategies and emphasis of the book,

but he does offer sufficient particulars to document a significant disintegration according to which things not only happen to Wild but happen within him. Wild's futile bickering with Laetitia while in Newgate, his ludicrous verbal and physical defense of his "honor" against Fireblood, his inability to prove his "innocence" in court despite having obtained false witnesses, his taking to the bottle, and his abortive attempt at suicide all reveal an impressive erosion of the hero's once formidable powers.

In contrast to Wild's deterioration, Mrs. Heartfree's return in Book IV celebrates her development as a resourceful and independent woman. It is Mrs. Heartfree, not her husband, who functions in the final book as the true foil to Wild. While the protagonist languishes in prison, we learn from Mrs. Heartfree of her maturation into a cunning but honorable woman who is determined enough to maintain her integrity against almost overwhelming odds. Earlier in the book Mrs. Heartfree appears as the trusting, passive mate to Heartfree who makes a number of misjudgments of her own that lead to increasing difficulties. First she misapprehends the attention that Wild pays to her with his eyes and with encomiums of her beauty (II.i). When Wild visits Heartfree after he has been robbed and swindled, Mrs. Heartfree, like her husband, exaggerates the obligation that they owe to the hero (II.v), and later she defends Heartfree's willingness to give credit to "such a Person as the Count appeared to be" (II.viii.100). Mrs. Heartfree's most egregious error, and the one that paves the way for her dire tribulations, is her

readiness to believe that her husband would order her to leave the children and take their remaining jewels to Holland in order to evade the statutes of bankruptcy (II.ix).

The valuable jewels that Wild is trying to steal from Mrs. Heartfree would of course, as the hero says, easily enable Heartfree to "satisfy his Creditors" (II.ix.104)--not to mention procure his bail, without having to be taken from the country. In the heat of Wild's cunning entreaties Mrs. Heartfree also fails to note a dramatic change in the hero's "concern" for her children. The night before, Wild had not permitted Mrs. Heartfree to stay at Mr. Snap's with her husband "on account of his little Family, whom he [Wild] would not agree to trust to the Care of Servants in this Time of Confusion" (II.viii.100). The next morning, however, Wild refuses to allow Mrs. Heartfree to take her children with her, "saying, they would only retard their Flight, and that it would be properer for her Husband to bring them" (II.ix.105).

While Mrs. Heartfree later amply acknowledges the role of Providence in enabling her to return safely home, her story also reveals her remarkable personal growth. In London Mrs. Heartfree had devoted almost all of her attention to her husband and children and "rarely went abroad" (II.ii.65); by the end of her adventures she has acquired not only much knowledge about life at sea but considerable worldly wisdom (symbolized perhaps rather preposterously by her ability to converse in French with the captain of the privateer, the hermit, and the interpreter of the African magistrate). Throughout

her myriad adventures Mrs. Heartfree's morals remain beyond reproach, but since the separation from her husband she has managed to glean a deeper understanding of the ways of men and women. She relates that the English captain talked to her "with the loose Licence in which the most profligate Libertines converse with Harlots, and which Women abandoned only in a moderate Degree detest and abhor." In describing the French captain's efforts to woo her, she says she knows well that "as there are some Dispositions so brutal, that Cruelty adds a Zest and Savour to their Pleasures; so there are others whose gentler Inclinations are better gratified, when they win us by softer Methods to comply with their Desires" (IV.vii.212, 209).

Mrs. Heartfree's actions during the course of her travels reveal presence of mind, newfound shrewdness, and a practical bent that would have served her and Heartfree well at home and most probably have prevented their victimization by Wild. Mrs. Heartfree outwits the English captain by matching drinks with him until he gets so drunk that she can make her escape from his cabin (IV.vii). She resolves to be "very liberal of Promises" to the Count in order to gain time until the return of the captain and crew, and despite being frightened by the appearance of the hermit, she has "Spirits enough to take up the Casket of Jewels, which the Villain [the Count], in falling, had dropt out of his Hands" (IV.vii.222, 223-24).

Although Mrs. Heartfree appears in relatively few chapters and her adventures and foibles are lightly satirized, Fielding

portrays her as a fairly well-rounded character who is genuinely shaped by her experiences. Her transformation from a sheltered wife who echoes her husband's ideas on trade, to an experienced traveler who knows a privateer from a third-rate man-of-war, to a courageously resourceful woman of impeccable integrity, is convincingly rendered. Mrs. Heartfree serves as an embodiment of moral and aesthetic concepts, but Fielding also succeeds in making her credibly human. She makes mistakes, develops extraordinary strengths under extreme circumstances, and also reveals a formidable streak of vanity and garrulity. In the end Mrs. Heartfree's demonstrated ability to act in order to save herself and to preserve her ideals, regardless of how desperate the situation appears, suggests that she is better prepared than any other character in the book to survive in the future.

The one notable problem of characterization concerns Heartfree, who is substantially but not fatally limited by the schematic conceptions that inform his creation. As the exemplification of goodness, which according to Fielding's terms includes benevolence, honesty, and honor, but not parts or courage, Heartfree is assigned a distinctly passive role. His primary function is to underscore Wild's utter depravity by serving as the foil who is most often and most severely victimized by the hero. While Fielding expended a good deal of creative energy in portraying Wild as highly individualized, abounding in the quirks, weaknesses, and excesses of life, he apparently was content to

depict Heartfree as a rather lackluster opposite of Wild without viewing him fully as a character in his own right.

It is often difficult for an author to make a "good" character as dramatically interesting as an evil one, yet it is not simply Heartfree's moral qualities that produce a certain pallidness in his realization. That the admirable morals of a character do not necessarily make him colorless is demonstrated in Fielding's depiction of Mrs. Hearfree as a worthy but garrulous and vain wife, and in his finest creation of all, Parson Adams, whose moral beliefs are very similar to those of Heartfree.

The major problem with Heartfree's characterization is his complacency, resignation, and ultimate inertia. In contrast to the incessant activity of Wild, Fielding immobilizes Heartfree both figuratively and literally as the captive of Wild's machinations, as the captive of the authorities, and in a sense as the captive of Latitudinarian doctrine. After his initial accidental encounter with Wild, Heartfree is seen recovering from a blow suffered during his robbery; subsequently he is confined at Mr. Snap's, at Newgate, in the Fleet, and again at Newgate. Heartfree receives Wild, Friendly, his children, and Mrs. Heartfree in these quarters, but in fact he can do little to improve his situation except perhaps to console himself with theological tenets.

Although there is something mildly offensive to us about Heartfree's self-righteous piety, those who see him as being too perfect misinterpret Fielding's characterization. Clearly Heartfree's

capacity for sound judgment is far from perfect. Just as Wild's unwavering immorality prevents him from recognizing goodness in others, Heartfree's benevolent nature prevents him from perceiving the malicious self-interest of others. Wild himself aptly characterizes his former schoolmate when he recalls that "Heartfree's Faults were rather in his Heart than his Head; that tho' he was so mean a Fellow, that he was never capable of laying a Design to injure any human Creature, yet was he by no Means a Fool, nor liable to any gross Imposition, unless where his Heart betrayed him" (II.ii.71).

Heartfree's own recollections of Wild as a schoolboy should have alerted him to the potential danger of resuming their acquaintance. When Wild hints of the Count's ignorance about jewels and suggests that Heartfree "might extort what Price of him he pleased" (II.ii.70), there should have been little doubt in Heartfree's mind that the morals of his erstwhile schoolmate had not changed. Furthermore, as a jeweler who had suffered some losses lately and still had "many Debts due to me from People of great Fashion" (II.v.85), Heartfree should have been more suspicious of the Count's "handsome House ready furnished in one of the new Streets" (II.ii.69) and not placed so much importance, as he later tells Wild, on "the Figure and outward Appearance of the Count and his Equipage" (II.viii.99).

But Heartfree's limitations exceed his poor judgment. When Moll Straddle appears downstairs with one of the banknotes

that he realizes has been robbed from him, Heartfree accepts Wild's judgment that he is "too much flustered to examine the Woman with sufficient Art" (II.v.85). In failing to look after his own affairs, Heartfree inadvertently gives Wild the opportunity to extricate himself from a potentially dangerous situation while simultaneously furthering his pose as a helpful and loyal friend. Had Heartfree interrogated Moll himself, he might have discovered Wild's role in the robbery and have spared himself and Mrs. Heartfree from their impending ordeals. Following this failure to act in his own interest--mitigated somewhat by his physical condition after the robbery, but compounded by his excessive trust in Wild--Heartfree expresses "so much Concern and Confusion" (II.vii.93) at news of the Count's disappearance that the proprietor of the Count's note has the good merchant arrested. While Mrs. Heartfree attempts to procure bail for him, it apparently never occurs to Heartfree to ask her to use some of the jewels still in their possession for this purpose. Throughout much of the action that follows Heartfree remains confined. Even if he had wanted to take a more active role in his own exoneration, his status as a prioner would most probably have prevented him from doing so.

Considering that Fielding created Heartfree as both the antithesis of Wild's malevolence, insatiable appetites, and lack of control, and as an exemplary believer in Latitudinarian creeds, there is a certain appropriateness in his portrait of the good merchant as a patient, passive, and somewhat unworldly man.

Heartfree is not, however, altogether lacking in flesh and blood.

Occasionally Fielding penetrates the schematized concepts that he imposes on Heartfree to provide glimpses of a human being reacting to extreme circumstances in a lifelike manner. Heartfree's lofty moral standards prevent him from noticing Wild's obvious attraction to his wife, but after he learns that she and Wild have fled to Holland, his innate goodness does not prevent him from doubting his wife's integrity. Although he recalls the loving tenderness that she had always shown him, Mrs. Heartfree's prolonged absence, the lack of any communication from her, the fact that she departed with all of his jewels, and above all her pretense of having obeyed his command temporarily convince him of his wife's infidelity.

Fielding evokes Heartfree's fondness for his absent family by relating the dream that he has during his first night of confinement and its distressing aftereffects:

> He perhaps paid too severely dear both for his Repose, and for a sweet Dream which accompanied it, and represented his little Family in one of those tender Scenes, which had frequently pass'd in the Days of his Happiness and Prosperity, when the Provision they were making for the future Fortunes of their Children used to be one of the most agreeable Topics of Discourse, with which he and his Wife entertained themselves. The Pleasantness of this Vision, therefore, served only, on his awakening, to set forth his present Misery with additional Horror, and to heighten the dreadful Ideas which now crowded on his Mind.

Heartfree receives Friendly's news of Mrs. Heartfree's departure in shocked silence, then cries out, "My Wife deserted me in my Misfortunes!" The "Agony of Despair" (III.i.119-20, 121) that Heartfree suffers as he questions his wife's fidelity, berates

himself for the rashness of his suspicions, and finally persuades himself of her disloyalty are all summarized with incisive keenness.

At another crucial moment Fielding has Heartfree lose his customary self-control. After one of the officers who has come to arrest him refers to his children as "those little Bastards" and another officer offers to take the smaller child rudely from Heartfree's knee, the enraged father starts up and "catching the Fellow by the Collar, dashed his Head so violently against the Wall, that, had he had any Brains, he might possibly have lost them by the Blow" (III.xii.168, 169).

Heartfree's response to Friendly's promise to care for his children in the event of his execution is also poignantly portrayed. After expressing his gratitude to Friendly, Heartfree berates himself for having doubted the loyalty of his wife, "that best of Women," and overpraises her with the ardor of one who expects to lose what is most valuable to him: "O Friendly, thou didst know her Goodness, yet, sure her perfect Character none but myself was ever acquainted with. She had every Perfection both of Mind and Body, which Heaven hath indulged to her whole Sex, and possessed all in a higher Excellence than Nature ever indulged to another in any single Virtue" (IV.i.183-84).

Although Heartfree is slow to suspect Wild's explanation of his return to London without Mrs. Heartfree, Fielding complicates the point with references to Wild's confident manner and seemingly plausible story, as well as with touching insights into Heartfree's

fears and essential decency. Because Heartfree does not want to believe in his wife's possible inconstancy, he tends at first to believe Wild. When his suspicions are subsequently aroused, Heartfree's benevolence, loyalty, and fair-mindedness make him unwilling to condemn Wild without certain evidence. Consequently he "laid hold on every probable Semblance to acquit him" (III.ix.158). Only after Wild proposes that he escape from Newgate is Heartfree convinced of the hero's villainy, recognizing at last the absurdity of his story and fearing that Wild has abducted, robbed, and murdered his wife.

In depicting the various turns of Heartfree's mind, Fielding allows the usually placid merchant a dramatic moment or two in which he vents his frustrations and reviles the hero. "Would you then lessen my Misfortunes by robbing me of what hath been my only Comfort under them? . . . Give me therefore no more Advice of this Kind," Heartfree warns Wild after declaiming that he would rather suffer the loss of liberty than the loss of his conscience if his liberty depended upon committing a crime. "Dost thou think then, thou little, paltry, mean Animal . . . that I will forego such comfortable Expectations for any pitiful Reward which thou canst suggest or promise to me" (III.vi.139-40, 163), he again castigates Wild after the latter's second proposal of escape.

Most of Heartfree's longer speeches and his soliloquy are self-righteous and haughtily solemn, yet Rawson goes a bit too far when he writes that "in the case of Heartfree there is very little humour, and therefore no safety valve for certain primary elements

of Fielding's temperament; not only his tendency to uppishness, but a dislike of gravity, a scepticism of virtuous cant, and an authorial need to assert his emotional control of situations through rich feats of ironic modulation" (p. 234). As we have seen, Fielding does give play precisely to the elements of his temperament that Rawson enumerates, particularly in Heartfree's lengthy soliloquy that obliges the reader to revise his opinion of the good merchant and perhaps of the relevance of religious doctrine in certain situations. In other briefer passages Fielding facetiously likens some of Heartfree's reactions to those of Socrates, mocks his unabashed sentimentality, and burlesques his partially outrageous behavior upon Mrs. Heartfree's return. Near the end of the book Fielding even suggests that Heartfree may have something of a sense of humor when he smiles at Mrs. Heartfree's apt use of nautical terms.

While these humorous and critical depictions of Heartfree are rather tentatively expressed, especially in comparison with Fielding's treatment of Wild, Laetitia, Fireblood, and the Ordinary, they, along with the intermittent revelations of Heartfree's more intense feelings and thoughts, help make him somewhat more than a pale foil and countersymbol. The shortcomings that do exist in the characterization of Heartfree are more than compensated for, however, by Fielding's most vital protagonist and by the many vividly drawn minor characters.

The sharp-tongued Laetitia, whose vanity, wantonness, and avarice vie with each other in vibrant disarray, is probably

Fielding's most amusing female character. As a second-rate great man, Fireblood manifests many notable qualities and is guilty of so many misdeeds that his ultimate betrayal of Wild should not come as a surprise. The pretentiousness, cowardice, and deviousness of the Count are deftly delineated in the earlier chapters (although he emerges as a rather conventional villain in Mrs. Heartfree's tale). Moll Straddle's tearful explanation of how she spent £400 of the money that she took from Wild on Jack Swagger and on silk brocade and Flanders lace brings her to life in a few sentences. Blueskin's speech and his violent attempt on Wild's life make him a convincing adversary, as Marybone's willingness to rob but not to commit murder makes him a touching victim. Ignorance, prejudice, and hypocrisy (among other reprehensible qualities) do not prevent the Ordinary of Newgate from discussing matters of religion with stunning effect. The French hermit, who grows so captivated by Mrs. Heartfree that he wavers on the verge of breaking the vow that he has maintained for thirty years, is memorable because of the exotic life that he has chosen and because he is the only character in the book whose beliefs are truly tested.

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Interwoven throughout the action or commenting on it are several entities who are not characters in the traditional sense, but whose presence nevertheless has a similar effect. Fielding constructs a composite characterization of society as a whole,

ranging from its most fashionable members to the lowest thieves, in his allusions to the mores and his descriptions of the concrete behavior of largely anonymous individuals.

"ROGER MORECRAFT," "CHA. COURTLY," "CATH. RUBBERS," "PETER POUNCE," and "CHA. EASY" (II.vii.95-97), who write genteel letters to the desperate Heartfree, are not really characters but capsulized representations of the upper class, to whom Fielding usually refers as ladies and gentlemen. As is demonstrated in their failure to pay their debts to Heartfree, these are frivolous, irresponsible, self-indulgent individuals who live beyond their means and who squander their time playing cards and seeking amusement at Vauxhall. Their sexual behavior is licentious and barely masked by euphemisms and convenient customs. What the "Gentlemen of this our Age" (II.viii.101) agree to call love is plainly revealed to be nothing more than unbridled lust. "A fine well-bred Woman" (II.ix.103) passes sleepless nights, not because of the absence of her husband, but because of his return from a long voyage or journey. When these ladies and gentlemen marry, the honeymoon is the only period "in which it is fashionable or customary for the married Parties to have any Correspondence with each other" (III.ix.160).

At the other end of the social order are the common criminals, who share a number of similarities with the politicians of the age. These highwaymen, pickpockets, housebreakers, and shoplifters spend much of their time quarreling over insignificant differences instead of plundering the public; they sometimes do the

devil's work for nothing, and frequently they support leaders who betray and exploit them. Although they are quick to speak of honor and honesty, the loyalties of these men are mercurial, as is evidenced by the members of Wild's gang who shift their allegiance from Wild to Blueskin and back to Wild, and by the prigs of Newgate who throw their support to Wild when he challenges the leadership of Roger Johnson.

Occupying midground between these two extremes are more ordinary people to whom Fielding refers simply as neighbors of the Heartfrees. While they are not as trifling and self-indulgent as persons of fashion or as dishonest and violent as criminals, they are neither compassionate nor generous; they frequently change their opinions about their fellow citizens; and they revel in malicious gossip. Shortly after Heartfree is confined at Mr. Snap's, Mrs. Heartfree hastens to the neighbors in order to beg their help in securing bail, "but as the News [of Heartfree's arrest] had arrived at their Houses before her, she found none of them at home, except an honest Quaker, whose Servants durst not tell a Lie" (II.vii.94). When Heartfree's efforts to prosecute Wild fail, the neighbors exaggerate the good merchant's ingratitude as much as possible, "not in the least scrupling, in the violent Ardour of their Indignation, to add some small Circumstances of their own Knowledge of the many Obligations conferred on Heartfree by Wild" (III.x.165). Subsequently these neighbors are not surprised to learn of the charge of embezzlement that is brought against Heartfree. In fact

"many of them declared they expected no better from him. Some were assured he could pay forty Shillings in the Pound, if he would. Others had overheard Hints formerly pass between him and Mrs. Heartfree, which had given them Suspicions. And, what is most astonishing of all is, that many of those who had before censured him for an extravagant heedless Fool, now no less confidently abused him for a cunning, tricking, avaricious Knave" (III.xii.171).

Without introducing individualized personalities who have specific dramatic roles, Fielding thus characterizes the full spectrum of society "in this degenerate Age" (III.x.164). From top to bottom, the community at large is shown to be frivolous, irresponsible, self-indulgent, licentious, ungenerous, gossip-mongering, fractious, hypocritical, disloyal, violent, and criminal. To be sure Fielding appropriately relegates these anonymous members of society to the background, but his continuing allusions to their mores and behavior provide muted testimony to the rare qualities manifested by the few good characters in the book.

A final segment of society is referred to--usually by the mock biographer or by Wild and always in a derogatory manner--as the "Vulgar." The reader is expected to deduce that these people are honest, forthright, and discriminating. Their moral perceptions are sound and they do not distort the true meanings of words. Terms such as "Cardinal Virtues" (I.xiii.52), "iniquitous" (I.xiv.59), "Evil" (IV.iv.200), and "Honesty" (IV.xii.237) are an important part of their vocabulary, and their translations of the corrupt

terminology employed by the biographer, Wild, and lesser and greater personages in the criminal and political world are unerringly accurate. What the biographer describes as overreaching is "in the vulgar Phrase, cheating" (II.ii.69), and what great men sum up as policy or politics, "the Vulgar call Treachery, Dissembling, Promising, Lying, Falsehood" (II.v.89-90). The "Vulgar" recognize the true meaning of greatness to be "Villainy" (III.ix.158) and they consider a complete great man as nothing more than "an accomplished Rascal" (III.xiii.172). In his initial dialogue with the Count in which they compare the merits of prigs and statesmen, Wild warns that "we must carefully avoid being misled by the vulgar erroneous Estimation of Things" (I.v.22). Before many more chapters it should become apparent that Fielding intends the just estimations of the "Vulgar" to serve as a proper standard of judgment.

More prominent than Fielding's anonymous characterization of society as a whole are the _personae_ of the mock biographer and the narrator,[46] who enter into a dramatic relationship with the reader as they relate the action and comment on it. Although neither the mock biographer nor the narrator is identified by name, their distinct temperaments, tastes, thoughts, judgments, and morals are amply developed. Perhaps the biographer emerges as the more dominant _persona_ at the beginning of the action because of the novelty and exorbitance of his praise of Wild. Earnest, persistent, given to hyperbole, and of course blatantly mistaken in his admiration of "greatness" and of Wild's manifestations of it, the mock biographer

quickly determines much of the form and tone of the book.

Despite his egregious shortcomings, the biographer is not without some admirable qualities. He takes his subject seriously and is a vigorous and dogged champion of it. His aspiration is to do justice to Wild as well as to edify the reader regarding the nature of what he himself believes to be true greatness. In so doing he exhibits a certain familiarity with the lives and biographies of so-called great men, a sense of form and decorum, and an independence of mind, wrong-headed as it is. Unlike some writers, the biographer takes care to define his terms, he is objective enough to admit that his subject has certain "weaknesses," he endeavors to stick to the facts, and he gathers as much relevant information about his subject as possible. In some respects the mock biographer is similar to the Ordinary of Newgate, whose judgments and morals are also grossly impaired, but unlike the Ordinary the biographer is not cowardly, hypocritical, lazy, or unlettered. In his biography, which testifies to his industry and conscientiousness as well as to his aberrations, the biographer of course employs many of the corruptions of language that Wild uses so effectively in striving to achieve "greatness." Like his subject, the biographer also manifests vigor and perseverance, he is ambitious, and he pursues his goal even if it exposes him to ridicule. Because he does not harm others but confines his efforts to chronicling the exploits of his paragon, the biographer is not as odious as Wild, but neither is he as pathetic or as faintly heroic.

While the attitude of the mock biographer towards the characters in the action is trenchant and unchanging (i.e., Wild is continuously

praised in superlatives and the Heartfrees are denounced in most derogatory terms), the attitude of the reader towards the biographer evolves. In the beginning the reader is surprised, perhaps outraged, and possibly delighted by the biographer's obtuse excesses. After a while his rigid, frequently repeated views become tiresome. The reader first learns not to take the biographer's pronouncements at face value and then translates his formulaic encomiums and depreciations into more appropriate language, i.e., "great" becomes "villainous," and "weak," "silly," and "mean-spirited" become "honest," "decent," and "generous," etc. As Wild's situation worsens while the biographer continues to shore up the hero's reputation, the biographer becomes increasingly ridiculous. In the end the biographer stands alone, a curious comic figure, irreparably discredited but unwavering in the proclamation of his mistaken beliefs.

In contrast to the mock biographer, the narrator is discriminating, sagacious, sensitive, and subtle. His moral views are worthy, but unlike the biographer he does not consider himself infallible and is far less insistent in his observations. While the biographer is intently and narrowly serious about his subject, the narrator maintains a broader perspective. He is aware of the serious menace that greatness represents but he also recognizes its weaknesses and its ludicrous and pathetic aspects, all of which perceptions give rise to his wider range of expression.

By turns the narrator is indignant, compassionate, plain-spoken, astonished, tactful, open-minded, mischievous, and modest.

He denounces the refusal of Heartfree's creditors to settle their debts as a "detestable Picture of Ingratitude," believes that Wild's fate at Tyburn "is heartily to be wished to every great Man," and deplores the fact that "the proper Catastrophe" of both great and petty criminals is "a Sight much more rare in populous Cities than one would reasonably imagine it should be" (II.viii.98; IV.xiv.250, 253). While the prevalence of immorality and injustice at times inflames the passion (and imagination) of the narrator, in other passages he states the obvious in a subdued plain-spoken manner. The post-honeymoon dialogue between Wild and Laetitia, "tho' we have termed it matrimonial, had indeed very little Savour of the Sweets of Matrimony in it"; of the sleazy, ill-fitting garments that Wild strips from Roger Johnson, the narrator remarks, "to speak sincerely, there was more Bravado than real Use or Advantage in these Trappings"; it is probable that Wild "never took (i.e., robbed the Prisoners of) a Shilling, which he himself did not pay too dear for"; "to confess the Truth," he says, "[Newgate] is a Castle very far from being an improper, or misbecoming Habitation for any great Man whatever" (III.ix.157; IV.iii.197; III.xiv.180).

Despite his penetrating knowledge of human nature and of the workings of society, the narrator marvels at some of the events that he relates. He finds it "most astonishing of all" (III.xii.171) that many of the neighbors who had once censured Heartfree for being extravagant subsequently accuse him of being avaricious. "What may seem more remarkable," he observes of Wild and Johnson's struggle

for power, "was, that the Debtors, who were entirely unconcerned in the Dispute, and who were the destined Plunder of both Parties, should interest themselves with the utmost Violence, some on Behalf of Wild, and others in Favour of Johnson" (IV.iii.194).

Unlike the biographer, who is so infatuated with his subject that he often seems to be oblivious of the reader, the narrator is ever mindful of the reader's credulity, tastes, and morals. "It may be necessary to account for this Visit, especially to our more sagacious Readers, whose Satisfaction we shall always consult in the most especial Manner" (II.viii.101), the narrator notes before explaining the reason for Wild's apparent act of friendship in visiting Heartfree at Mr. Snap's. When Wild is abandoned at sea, the narrator tactfully omits the hero's "Round of Blasphemies, which the Reader, without being over pious, might be offended at seeing repeated" (II.xi.110), and out of respect for the reader's sensibilities and "that Philogyny which is in us" (I.x.40), he discreetly draws the curtain over the scene describing the freedoms that Laetitia allows Smirk. The tolerance, compassion, and fair-mindedness of the narrator are evidenced in his comments about the treatment accorded to Theodosia after she has given birth to the Count's son: "The good-natured Reader of the Male kind may be inclined to compassionate her, at least to imagine she was sufficiently punished for a Fault, which . . . it should be either less criminal in a Woman to commit, or more so in a Man to solicit her to it" (II.xiii.174).

While the biographer reveals some knowledge of history and biography, the narrator is much more cultured and worldly. He

embellishes his narration with quotations from or allusions to the works of Homer, Sophocles, Horace, Ovid, and Claudian; he criticizes faulty playwriting techniques; and he refers to well-known comedies of the period and to the puppet theatre. In addition the narrator knows much about the habits and mores of society from top to bottom. He is acquainted with the marital arrangements among the fashionable set and the camaraderie that exists between husband and gallant. He knows the measures of redress these people take at Westminister Hall and at Doctors' Commons, as well as the legal stratagems employed by lawyers in order to defend their guilty clients. He has observed the practice of bailiffs who wait outside of gaming houses with writs in hand, he can translate the canting language of thieves, and he knows both the type of woman who walks Bridge Street and Drury Lane and the eating houses of Covent Garden that cater to all of the appetites of young gentlemen. The narrator has also traveled through the hills near Bath, seen the amusements at Bartholomew Fair, appreciated the craft of the toymaker William Deard, suffered polite conversation at the dinner table, and recognized the similarities between Court and Newgate, and the Tower and Tyburn.

If Heartfree's worthy qualities are confined primarily to his heart, the narrator is abundantly endowed with admirable qualities of both head and heart. His culture, his worldly knowledge, his sound judgment, his agility of mind, his vitality, humor, and wit all distinguish him from the good but rather dull merchant. In the

end it is neither Heartfree nor his wife who endures as the dominant spokesman for goodness and decency, but the narrator himself. By degrees he emerges as a reasonable and reassuring presence who sees through the errors, excesses, and pretentions of the biographer and the other characters. Intelligent, sympathetic, moral, and humorously appealing, the narrator gradually gains the respect and confidence of the reader at the same time that he entertains him. Ultimately the narrator becomes the reader's trustworthy companion and guide, artfully shaping his responses to the complex emotional, intellectual, moral, and aesthetic qualities of the book.

iv.

In attempting to analyze the singular style of Jonathan Wild, it is helpful to recognize certain distinctions between the manner and effect of Fielding's two personae. For the most part the biographer is the vehicle for Fielding's less subtle expressions of hyperbole, epithet, and irony. Although the style of the biographer is often prosaic and his favored verbal formulations rather heavy-handed, the ironic effects of his too frequently repeated assertions have somewhat more range than has usually been appreciated. After the reader has been surprised and perhaps shocked by the biographer's outrageous adulation of Wild's greatness, the continuing irony reveals serious corruptions of the concepts of greatness, honor, and honesty that are

perpetrated by the public in general and by writers (and leaders) of greater consequence than the biographer. At the same time the irony becomes increasingly humorous because Wild is obviously not of the same stature as other so-called "great" men, and because the biographer's perceptions and zeal are hopelessly mistaken.

On the other hand, the biographer's derogatory references to the Heartfrees do not have corresponding humorous and edifying effects. The tribulations of the good merchant and his wife are patently more serious than the misadventures experienced by Wild, and consequently they allow less latitude for comic description. While Heartfree's poor judgment, complacency, and passivity are well-documented, the biographer's ironic characterizations of Heartfree's commendable qualities do not so much inform the reader about the true nature of benevolence, honesty, and generosity as present a darker vision of the world in which decency is either willfully denied or unacknowledged for its genuine worth. The number of verbal formulations that the bigorapher employs in describing the greatness of Wild and the "pitiful low" behavior of the Heartfrees is quite limited; depending on the context, however, they produce shades of irony that include the surprising, shocking, edifying, humorous, disquieting, sarcastic, cynical, and bitter.

Fielding's second <u>persona</u>, the narrator, reveals a style that is on the whole considerably more varied, supple, and inventive than that of the biographer. As he expresses straightforward insights, humorous embellishments, and poignant witticisms, the

narrator often employs comic word play, periphrasis, epigram, understatement, and parenthetical commentary. The narrator's fondness for sporting with words is especially evident when it comes to sexual or political matters. After Laetitia has bloodied the impetuous Wild's cheeks at the beginning of their courtship, the narrator refers to the "violent Addresses of the ravished (or rather ravishing) Wild" (I.x.40), and following Fireblood's cuckolding of the hero, he alludes to the "strict Intercourses of Love and Acquaintance" (III.x.164) that subsist between husbands and gallants. Treachery, dissembling, promising, lying, and falsehood, according to the narrator, are summed up "in the collective Name of Policy, or Politics, or rather Pollitrics" (II.v.90).[47] The criminals whom Wild attempts to unite are described as being either "Tory Rory Ranter Boys" or "Wags" (II.vi.90), and the footnote that pretends to elucidate Wild's speech about hats concludes with a pun that refers to a woman's private parts.[48]

Some of the most humorous passages of the book are the result of the narrator's exuberantly periphrastic descriptions of mundane or tawdry matters. Two extended mock-heroic similes refer to Mr. Snap's locking up of the Count (I.xiv.55) and to Wild's outrage when he discovers that Laetitia has betrayed him with Fireblood (IV.x.228-29). Theodosia's mending of a pair of blue stockings is compared, with some amusing qualifications, to the heroic labor of Penelope (II.iii.75); and the circumstances of Bagshot's arrest are embellished with an elaborate allusion to

Snap's practice of waiting outside gaming houses like a "voracious Pike" before delivering "little Slips of Parchment, containing Invitations" (I.xi.43-44) for certain gentlemen to visit his house. Most ludicrous of all perhaps is the narrator's arch and windy reluctance to communicate to the reader what he undoubtedly has already deduced about Laetitia's sexual behavior: "But alas! When we discover all, as, to preserve the Fidelity of our History, we must, when we relate that every Familiarity had past between them, and that the FAIR Laetitia (for we must, in this single Instance, imitate Virgil, where he drops the pius and the pater, and drop our favorite Epithet of chaste) the FAIR Laetitia had, I say, made Smirk as happy as Wild desired to be . . . " (I.x.40).

Counterpointing the extravagant passages are the narrator's briefer, well-balanced turns of phrase that are both wise and witty. In explaining the Count's admiration for Wild, who he knows has picked his pocket, the narrator comments that "a wise Man, that is to say a Rogue, considers a Trick in Life, as a Gamester doth a Trick at Play. It sets him on his Guard; but he admires the Dexterity of him who plays it" (I.iv.17). Because Marybone refuses to commit Murder, he falls "as many Rogues do, a Sacrifice, not to his Roguery, but to his Conscience" (III.iii.132). Wild's relentless efforts to destroy Heartfree are explained with the observation that "while the good Man who hath received it, hath truly forgotten the Injury, the evil Mind which did it, hath it in lively and fresh Remembrance" (III.iv.134).

At times the narrator juxtaposes concise understatement with more lengthy elaboration, ordering the two elements so as to best emphasize his main point. The young gentleman from Kent whom Wild plans to rob is described as being "no Descendant of Solomon, or, if he was, did not, any more than some other Descendants of wise Men, inherit the Wisdom of his Ancestor" (III.iii.129). In lamenting the preference of ladies for men like Tom Smirk, the narrator writes: "For surely, however useful they may be in the Creation, as we are taught, that nothing, not even a Lousé, is made in vain; yet these Beaus, even that most splendid and honoured Part, which, in this our Island, Nature loves to distinguish in Red, are not, as some think, the noblest Work of the Creator" (I.x.39).

Whether expressing himself in epigrammatic or flamboyantly sprawling sentences, the narrator frequently supplements his main ideas with parenthetical commentary that clarifies, satirizes, and evaluates the proceedings. These additions may create an aura of authenticity, provide more explicit information, or elucidate a character's thoughts or motivations, as in the following examples:

> MR. Marybone (for that was the Gentleman's Name to whom he applied) readily agreed to the Robbery, (III.iii.129)
> The Turnkey would have confined Heartfree (he having no Money) amongst the common Felons; (II.xii.170)
> Mr. Bagshot (generously as he thought) offered to share the Booty, (I.viii.31)
> He agreed to the Robbery, but would not undertake the Murther, as Wild (who feared that by Marybone's demanding to search the Gentleman's Coat he might hazard Suspicion himself) insistead. (III.iii.131)

More inventive parenthetical material directs attention to the correct meaning of words, combines clarifying information with

humor and satire, alludes to literary artifices of the book itself, and injects the narrator's personal responses. The Count, having prepared several packs of cards for future exploits, with great alacrity defends "his favourite Amusement (or rather Employment)"; abandoned at sea, Wild blames the occasion of his suffering on "the whole Female Sex, and the Passion of Love (as he called it)"; two weeks after his marriage, "the Violence of Mr. Wild's Passion (or rather Appetite) for the chaste Laetitia began to abate" (I.xi.42; II.xi.110; III.ix.158). In bribing the maid at Mr. Snap's, Wild promises "that besides his Honour, the Count should leave a Pair of Gold Buttons (which afterwards turned out to be Brass)"; Fireblood delivers his false testimony with much "Coherence (tho' he was forced to collect his Evidence from the Hints given him by Wild in the Presence of the Justice and the Accusers)"; before Wild and Laetitia marry, appropriate settlements are made "and the Lady's Fortune (to wit, Seventeen Pounds and nine Shillings in Money and Goods) paid" (I.vi.26; III.x.164; III.vii.147).

Two of the narrator's favorite literary devices, the metaphor and the simile, are made the subjects of parenthetical remarks that call attention to stylistic aspects of the book. As Wild prepares to secure his pleasure and profit by leaving London with Mrs. Heartfree, the narrator begins a new chapter by referring to the extended metaphor with which he had concluded the preceding chapter: "WHEN first Wild conducted his Flame (or rather his Dish, to continue our Metaphor) from the Proprietor, he had projected a Design of conveying her to

one of those Eating-Houses in Covent-Garden, where female Flesh is deliciously drest" (I.ix.102). In an earlier passage the narrator jests about his use of simile in general and specifically about his simile comparing the road to greatness and the hills of Bath: "I fancy, Reader, if thou hast ever travelled in these Roads, one Part of my Simile is sufficiently apparent, (and indeed, in all these Illustrations one Side is generally much more apparent than the other)" (I.xiv.56).

Adding to the involvement of the narrator in the action are his parenthetical remarks reflecting his serious or facetious responses. "The Mind is desirous (and perhaps wisely too) to comfort itself with drawing the most flattering Conclusions from all Events" (III.i.120), the narrator observes soberly in explaining Heartfree's mistaken belief that the longer he waits for Mrs. Heartfree the more certain his deliverance will be. In his account of how Heartfree's reprieve came about the narrator states: "BE it known then (a Circumstance which I think highly credible) that the great Fireblood had been, a few Days before, taken in the Fact of a Robbery" (IV.vi. 205). Thievery among the imprisoned prigs, he says, is so extensive "that (which is almost incredible) as great Roguery was daily committed within the Walls of Newgate as without" (IV.xii.238).

Decidedly less forthright are the narrator's reactions to Wild's present of the necklace to Laetitia, "(with Sorrow I write it, and with Sorrow will it be read)", and his disclosure--"(I blush to name it)"--of the injury that Laetitia and Fireblood do

to Wild's honor. In relating the news of Theodosia's motherhood, the narrator becomes more effusive and more ridiculous: "It is indeed a Calamity highly to be lamented, when it stains untainted Blood, and happens to an honourable House. An Injury never to be repaired. A Blot never to be wiped out. A sore never to be healed. To detain my Reader no longer: Miss Theodosia Snap was now safely delivered of a Male-Infant, the Product of an Amour which that beautiful (O that I could say, virtuous) Creature had with the Count" (II.iii.78; IV.x.228; III.xiii.172).

In the end the frequency, variety, and poignancy of the parenthetical commentary establish a sort of supplementary dialogue between the narrator and the reader that heightens the conversational tone of the book at the same time that it effectively modulates the narrator's story. In a sense these relatively brief additions--informative, interpretive, and satiric--represent a distillation of the narrator's overall style, which encompasses the plain-spoken, the epigrammatic, the periphrastic, and the mock-grandiloquent.

Although the contrasting personalities, opinions, and styles of the mock biographer and the narrator are readily apparent in the gross, there is a certain reciprocity of styles and even a merging of identities in specific passages. In his repeated references to the "fair" Laetitia, the narrator employs epithet, hyperbole, and simple irony in the manner of the mock biographer (but not with the latter's trenchant effects of ambiguity, outrage, and acerbity). The narrator's gusto for hyperbole is evident in his mock-epic similes

and in his comparisons of the worth of a single beau and twenty Sir Isaac Newtons (I.x.40), and of the reactions produced by mention of the words "Pickpocket" and "Atheist" (I.xiii.50) at Mr. Snap's and at the Convocation respectively. At the conclusion of Wild and Laetitia's first interview in Newgate, the narrator extends irony to the brink of absurdity: "With strong Arm [Wild] flung her out of the Room; but not before she had with her Nails left a bloody Memorial on his Cheek: And thus this fond Couple parted" (IV.ii.190).

The biographer at times likewise appropriates stylistic devices more often associated with the narrator, such as comic word play, plainspeaking, parenthetical commentary, and witty turns of phrase. The biographer notes that Wild's ancestor Wolfstan distinguished himself by mistaking the command "Nemet eour Saxes, Take out your Swords" for "Nemet her Sacs, Take out their Purses" (I.ii.6), and records that in his youth Wild gave early indications "of the Sweetness of his Temper; for tho' he was by no Means to be terrified into Compliance, yet might he by a Sugar plumb be brought to your Purpose: Indeed, to say the Truth, he was to be bribed to anything, which made many say, he was certainly born to be a Great Man" (I.iii.10-11). Parenthetically the biographer sets the record straight about the nature of Wild's simultaneous exploitation of the Count and Bagshot: "for such were his [Wild's] great Abilities, and so vast the Compass of his Understanding, that he never made any Bargain without over-reaching (or, in the vulgar Phrase, cheating) the Person with whom he dealt" (II.ii.69). When Heartfree denounces Wild as a "little,

paltry, mean Animal," the biographer inserts parentheses in order to express his indignation: "(With such Language did he [Heartfree] treat our truly great Man)" (III.x.163).

In addition the biographer's observations about Wild's methods and his reproduction of Wild's numerous maxims at times resemble the epigrammatic style of the narrator. The biographer writes that Wild "often declared that he looked upon borrowing to be as good a Way of taking as any" (I.viii.34-35), and that it was Wild's constant maxim "Never to put it into any one's Head to do you a Mischief, by acquainting him that it is in his Power" (II.ix.103). Wild carried good nature "to that wonderful and common Height, that he never did a single Injury to Man or Woman, by which he himself did not expect to reap some Advantage" (I.xi.41), and he wisely said that a rogue, "like Gunpowder, must be used with Caution; since both are altogether as liable to blow up the Party himself who uses them as to execute his mischievous Purpose against some other Person or Animal" (III.xiv.180).

It is perhaps not surprising that in a work whose originality lies in the juxtaposition, fusion, and interplay of varied genres and modes, Fielding sometimes plays the voice of the narrator off against that of the biographer not only in the same chapter, but in the same paragraph and even in the same sentence, with the result that it is not always clear which of the two personae is speaking in certain passages.[49] For example, in the early chapter summarizing Wild's birth, parentage, and education, which seems to be the work of the

biographer, is it the biographer or the narrator who writes that Wild was said to have been born not in a lock-up, but "in an House of an orbicular or round Form in Covent-Garden" (I.iii.10)? Following what seems to be a jibe of the narrator about Wild's loss at dice because of his lack of mental endowment, is it the biographer or the narrator who declares, "In short (to be as concise as possible in these least shining Parts of our History) Wild accosted this Man, sounded him, found him fit to execute" (I.xiv.60) the robbery that nets them only two shillings?

Who is responsible, the biographer or the narrator, for the resounding understatement at the end of the following passage:

> But when I behold one Great MAN starving with Hunger and freezing with Cold in the Midst of fifty thousand, who are suffering the same Evils for his Diversion, when I see another whose own Mind is a more abject Slave to his own Greatness, and is more tortured and racked by it than those of all his Vassals; Lastly, when I consider whole Nations rooted out only to bring Tears into the Eyes of a GREAT MAN, not indeed because he hath extirpated so many, but because he had no more Nations to extirpate, then truly I am almost inclined to wish that Nature had spared us this her MASTER-PIECE, and that no GREAT MAN had ever been born into the World. (I.xiv.57)

To cite but one more of many ambiguous passages, who is speaking at the beginning of the chapter that follows Mrs. Heartfree's tale? "BUT we have already perhaps detained our Reader too long in this Relation, from the Consideration of our Hero, who daily gave the most exalted Proofs of Greatness, in cajoling the Prigs, and in Exactions on the Debtors; which latter now grew so great, i.e. corrupted in their Morals, that they spoke with the utmost Contempt of what the Vulgar call Honesty" (IV.xii.237). The introductory

clause taking into account the possible impatience of the reader seems to indicate that the narrator is speaking, but the reference to Wild's "most exalted proofs of GREATNESS" is obviously in the language and manner of the biographer. Would the biographer be likely, however, to translate the adjective "great" as "morally corrupt" since he has already closely defined the nature of greatness and clearly has little regard for honesty, integrity, and honor?

By merging at times the voice of the mock biographer and the narrator and at times permitting each to depict and comment on the action in his distinct manner, Fielding creates a complex kaleidoscopic style that constantly amuses, moves, and challenges the reader. The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great pretends to be told by the mock biographer, but it is overlooked by the ubiquitous narrator who continually elaborates, deflates, jests, mocks, discerns, explains, and interprets. In the end the biographer emerges as a conflation of the comic dupe and the satiric railer, while the narrator functions as a sort of vir bonus who is also playfully mischievous and something of an exhibitionist. Fielding's artful opposition and intermingling of the voices of these two personae account for much of the book's dynamic amalgam of tones and textures.

A final element of the style, which has been discussed elsewhere, is the grandiloquence, casuistry, invective, and humor that is directly rendered in the give-and-take of the principal characters' dialogue and in their longer speeches, soliloquies, and narration.[50] As Fielding sustains a creative tension between the

voices and viewpoints of the mock biographer and the narrator, so he exploits in the speech of Wild, Laetitia, and others, the acute incongruities between their lowly status and depraved morals, and their grander ambitions and pretensions. "That the same Capacity which qualifies a Mill ken, a Bridlecull, or a Buttock and File, to arrive at any Degree of Eminence in his Profession, would likewise raise a Man in what the World esteem a more honourable Calling, I do not deny" (I.v.22), Wild concedes to the Count in their initial statesmanlike dialogue. "AGREED.--But pray, Mr. Wild, why B--ch? Why did you suffer such a Word to escape you?" (III.viii.155), Laetitia demands of Wild. "I am no more a Friend to Deliberation than yourself," Blueskin rages at Wild during their argument about shadow and substance, "and so I tell you once for all, by G-- I never will give you the Watch. . . . Take your Pistols yourself, and go out on the Highway, and don't lazily think to fatten yourself with the Dangers and Pains of other People" (III.xiv.178). "Man of Honour! Doth this become a Friend? Could I have expected such a Breach of all the Laws of Honour from thee, whom I had taught to walk in its Paths?" (Iv.x.228), Wild addresses Fireblood in their final showdown.

While the directly rendered words of all of the personages, including Heartfree's soliloquy and Mrs. Heartfree's narration, aptly reflect their individual characters, certain general similarities exist between the styles of their speech and those of the biographer and the narrator. Wild's (and the other criminals') use of key words

such as greatness, honor, and honesty is identical to that of the biographer and produces similar effects of irony. Wild's, Laetitia's, and the Count's mock-grandiloquence (and to a lesser degree that of Heartfree in his soliloquy and passionate outbursts) is redolent of the narrator's fondness for periphrasis, parody, and burlesque. The invective of Wild, Laetitia, and the other prigs has its counterpart in the biographer's vigorous denunciations of the Heartfrees, and Wild's casuistry represents a more fully realized manifestation of the narrator's talent for twisting words.

Although it has become commonplace to summarize the style of Jonathan Wild as a tour de force of sustained irony, such an assessment is at best imprecise and incomplete. As we have seen, the irony is not always sustained, but quite frequently is interrupted with humorous commentary and plain-spoken truths. Moreover there are actually three kinds of irony at work. Fielding employs situational irony as a device for comically deflating Wild. At times he introduces dramatic irony for similar effect, but its principal function is to maintain the tension and conflict between Wild and the Heartfrees. Finally Fielding's verbal irony exhibits a diversity of shadings that reflect the respective temperaments, tastes, thoughts, and morals of his two personae.

In the last analysis it is not simply the prominent irony of Jonathan Wild, but Fielding's opposition and intermingling of the varied voices of the good and bad characters and of the biographer and the narrator that create the book's singular style. The resultant

prose is uncommonly rich in variations of diction, structure, and rhythm. The level of language, both in the directly rendered speech of the characters and in the narration, ranges from the formal and the artificially elaborate to the illiterate and the canting terms of thieves, including within these extremes the plain-spoken and the colloquial as well as slang and profanity. Lofty abstractions such as "greatness," "honor," and "honesty," which are essential to the moral schema of the book and its strategy of irony, are artfully balanced with concrete nouns such as "Newgate," "Hick's Hall," "writ," and "death warrant" that solidly root the action in a real world that the reader can visualize. The predominant imagery evokes the theatre, prisons, and judicial and political courts of eighteenth-century London, but there is also less specific imagery regarding jewels, food, and animals, and an abundance of historical and literary allusions that add a dimension of universality.

Depending on his purpose, Fielding varies his sentences from concise epigrammatic assertions, to plain statements of moderate length that relate necessary details without calling undue attention to themselves, to vast sprawling structures that unfold in layers with a host of qualifications, digressions, corrections, and personal interjections. Fielding's sentences often flow forward with increasing complication and momentum until they attain structural and semantic completion in a final word or two. Occasionally his sentences turn back on themselves, as in the assertion that Fireblood, having noted Laetitia's tender accent and wanton leer, "proceeded so

warmly, that to imitate his Actions with the Rapidity of our Narration, he in a few Minutes ravished this fair Creature, or at least would have ravished her, if she had not, by a timely Compliance, prevented him" (III.vii.145).

The dynamic upward and downward movement that Fielding achieves within a sentence or two may be seen in both his dialogue and narration. "You should place your Hopes in Repentance and Grace; and though it is most true, that you are in Danger of the Judgment; yet there is still Room for Mercy, and no Man, unless excommunicated, is absolutely without Hopes of a Reprieve," the Ordinary tells Wild, who promptly replies: "I am not without Hopes of a Reprieve from the Cheat yet . . . I will not die like a Pimp. D--n me what is Death? It is nothing but to be with Platos and with Caesars,--as the Poet says, and all the other great Heroes of Antiquity" (IV.xiii.243-44).

Wild's short-lived marital bliss is thus summarized: "WHEN the Boy Hymen had with his lighted Torch driven the Boy Cupid out of Doors; that is to say, in common Phrase, when the Violence of Mr. Wild's Passion (or rather Appetite) for the chaste Laetitia began to abate, he returned to visit his Friend Heartfree, who was now in the Liberties of the Fleet . . ." (III.ix.158). The description of Wild's arrival at Tyburn epitomizes the combination of the lofty and the low, the abstract and the concrete, the graceful and the blunt, which characterizes so much of Fielding's style: "BUT tho' Envy was, through Fear, obliged to join the general Voice in Applause on this Occasion, there were not wanting some who maligned this

Completion of Glory, which was now about to be fulfilled to our Hero, and endeavoured to prevent it by knocking him on the Head as he stood under the Tree" (IV.xiii.253-54).

An accurate appreciation of the stylistic achievements in Jonathan Wild must take into account, then, the various textures and the fluidity of Fielding's prose as it constantly moves back and forth from the high to the low, from the ironic to the plain-spoken, from the serious to the parodic, from the dramatic to the essayistic. As Fielding binds together the diverse elements of the book, his writing can be brittle, plain, dramatic, didactic, and flamboyantly entertaining. The prose style of Jonathan Wild, in short, is as flexible, inventive, and effective as is Fielding's fusion of modes and genres in shaping the reader's responses and in guiding his interpretation.

V.

In the last analysis a novelist's use of genres and modes, his presentation of character and setting, and the narrative and stylistic devices with which he tells his story are tools that he employs in order to express his vision. Before discussing Fielding's vision of human nature, society, and the universe it should be said that impressive as his achievement is, Jonathan Wild is not without flaws, some of which have already been mentioned and others of which

merit restatement in this final consideration.

Despite the meticulous attention that Fielding devoted to smaller as well as larger matters in his revisions of 1754, there remain one or two inconsistencies that he would probably have corrected had he lived longer and had there been sufficient demand for a third edition. While these small points do not detract from the overall effect of the book, they remind us of the sustained concentration that a novelist must focus on the fictional world that he creates. In summarizing the robbery of Heartfree by two of Wild's confederates, Fierce and Sly, Fielding writes that "those Gentlemen . . . attacked and spoiled the Enemy of the whole Sum he had received from the Count" (II.iii.73). Yet when Wild visits the wounded victim on the following morning, Heartfree expresses "great Satisfaction that he had put the Count's Note in another Pocket-Book, adding that such a Loss would have been fatal to him" (II.v.85). Perhaps this second account reveals a subconscious effort on the part of Fielding to make Heartfree appear more prudent and businesslike--a change that Fielding attempted to effect with several insertions and emendations in the revision.[51]

A second inconsistency involves Moll Straddle's disposal of some of the spoils from the swindling and robbery of Heartfree. When Wild confronts Moll at Heartfree's shop, he retrieves the £500 note that she had taken from him the night before but learns that Moll has squandered two other notes of £200 each. In the final accounting of Heartfree's fortune, however, we read that the prodigious value of

the diamond that the African magistrate gave Mrs. Heartfree "infinitely recompensed the Loss of those Jewels which Miss Straddle had disposed of" (IV.xv.262). Here perhaps Fielding's concern with jewels as an indicator of virtue caused him to make the slip about Moll's loss.

But these are of course small details. More substantial shortcomings that affect the reader's responses in various ways include the persistent ironic formulas of the mock biographer, the characterization of Heartfree, and the structure and pacing of Book IV. Repetition is a valid rhetorical device for adding emphasis and clarity, but like any literary device it must be used judiciously. Without question, the biographer's ironic encomia of Wild are essential to Fielding's basic strategy, and some of the biographer's favorite formulations such as "great" and "great man" are aptly chosen for their political implications. While the biographer's jaundiced phrases have their effective moments and encompass more shades of irony than has generally been recognized, it must be said that after a while they begin to pall. At the outset the reader is surprised (and perhaps shocked) by the fulsome praise of Wild, and then he is amused by the inappropriate adulation. With the introduction of the Heartfrees in Book II, the biographer has a new subject for his perverse epithets and commentary, but soon the reader learns to make the necessary inversions or translations of these denunciations, and Fielding's technique loses its effectiveness, suggesting the limitations of simple verbal ironies in longer literary works.

Perhaps Fielding would have been able to sustain the device more effectively had he developed some complicating variations further dramatizing the biographer's obtuseness, the complex nature of Wild's character, and perhaps a qualification or two regarding Heartfree. Conscientious, outspoken, and effusive as the biographer is, however, his vocabulary is quite limited. He employs most of his stock phrases shortly after the introduction of the principal good and bad characters, and these expressions do not change very much from the early chapters to the end of the book.

While the characterization of Heartfree has been unfairly criticized by some scholars, there is no denying the fact that he is not one of Fielding's more successful creations. Scholars who have faulted Fielding for not making Heartfree resolute and aggressive enough to stand up to Wild have, I believe, misunderstood Fielding's intended portrayal of a decent but markedly flawed human being. The standard that some critics would like to see Heartfree bear is in fact taken up by Mrs. Heartfree late in the book--on a symbolic level--in the narration of her adventures. Within the schematic limitations that Fielding imposes on Heartfree, he does give his good merchant one or two dramatic moments, and in other passages he satirizes him gently. Given some of the qualities that Heartfree is intended to embody (trusting simplicity, piety, resignation, etc.), there is a certain aptness in his rather pallid portrait. But Heartfree is also too much shaped by Fielding's formulaic conception of him as the obverse of Wild, and he is not given enough latitude

to respond to the experiences that he undergoes in a personal manner. He lacks the intensity and idiosyncrasies of Wild, Laetitia, Fireblood, Mrs. Heartfree, the Count, and the Ordinary of Newgate, all of whom exemplify specified moral qualities yet also emerge as memorable characters in their own right. Whatever impression of Heartfree the reader retains is of the quality of goodness being wronged, rather than of a singular fictional personage.

In the final chapter of Jonathan Wild Fielding's plot achieves an appropriate and satisfying resolution, yet Book IV is the weakest portion of a work that is for the most part tightly constructed. Some of the scenes at the beginning of the fourth book are particularly effective: the Newgate "election (IV.iii); Wild's soliloquy after the arrival of Heartfree's dead-warrant (IV.iv); and the reunion of the Heartfrees (IV.v). In general, however, there is an overall letdown of the momentum, tension, and complication that Fielding has skillfully maintained throughout the first three books. The problem is, I think, that Wild has done everything that he is going to do to Heartfree by the end of Chapter xii of Book III. Wild's soliloquy regarding Heartfree, after his dead-warrant has come down, depicts the omission of action rather than its commission, since Wild "bravely" resolves after some hesitation to "consign over Heartfree to his Fate" (IV.iv.200).

The main tension in Jonathan Wild is generated by the direct conflict between the qualities of greatness and goodness, as personified by Wild and the Heartfrees; once Wild and Heartfree are

imprisoned at the beginning of Book IV there are no complicating developments regarding their relationship. Instead the remaining action depicts the larger working out of poetic justice. Mrs. Heartfree is reunited with Heartfree at the eleventh hour and he receives a reprieve. After Wild has fabricated the testimony that leads to Heartfree's arrest, trial, and conviction, he is undone by actions that in no way involve Heartfree. (Blueskin stabs Wild for having impeached him, and Wild is arrested for accepting a reward for the return of stolen goods without apprehending the thieves.) Wild is given a triumph of sorts in attaining Johnson's place as the leader of the prigs in Newgate, but this soon proves to be a Pyrrhic victory as Wild experiences a precipitous loss of prestige, power, and confidence. Heartfree never sees Wild while they are both prisoners in Newgate, and Mrs. Heartfree is not allowed to confront the hero, who surely would not have the upper hand in such a meeting.

The four chapters of Mrs. Heartfree's tale also substantially reduce tension and conflict in Book IV. Although the tale is amusingly written, provides relief after the dramatic reunion of the Heartfrees, develops the character of Mrs. Heartfree, and adds a significant allegorical dimension to the entire book, it also retards and diffuses the central action by drawing attention away from Wild and Heartfree and by recounting actions that have taken place in the past and at a distance, involving characters that are for the most part new to the reader. Since Mrs. Heartfree is back in London telling the story of her adventures we are pretty much assured of

their happy outcome. Our pleasure in reading the tale is derived from the graphic description of dramatic and exotic incidents, and from the edifying moral of her saga. But the engagement that these chapters produce is at the expense of a loss in overall tension and focus, since the narrative occurs near the end of the book, where most authors usually strive for climactic depictions of the principals. In his revision of 1754 Fielding eliminated from Mrs. Heartfree's tale an entire chapter which was primarily literary burlesque and which added little to her characterization or to any of the central themes. If Fielding had made further cuts in Mrs. Heartfree's tale he might still have retained its distinctive allegorical qualities and yet made Book IV more consistent in tone, shape, and length with the three books that precede it. (In the 1754 edition Book IV is twenty-two pages longer than Book I, twenty-six pages longer than Book II, and twenty-one pages longer than Book III.)

Finally the criticism has been made, principally by Arnold Kettle,[52] that in Book IV Fielding fails to hold true to the vision of greatness tyrannizing over goodness that he has maintained through much of the action. In my opinion such a view reflects a reductive or selective reading of the complex action that Fielding develops through the inventive opposition and interplay of genres and modes in imitation and in parody. While an ending in which Wild succeeds in destroying Heartfree would provide a forceful climax, it would also deny the tragi-comic vision of the self-

destructive nature of "greatness" that Fielding consistently renders, and it would also negate the powerful allegorical vision presented in Mrs. Heartfree's tale of goodness enduring with the help of Providence.

Certainly one may take issue with Fielding's simplistic moral categories, his partial vision of the inefficacies of "greatness," his view of the abiding capacity of goodness, and his overriding belief in Providence both as theoretical formulations and as competent philosophical reflections of reality. The task of the literary critic or scholar is not, however, to criticize an author's philosophy per se, but to evaluate how convincingly he realizes that philosophy in the fictional world that he creates. William Gass puts the matter well in a recent essay: "The artist is not asked to construct an adequate philosophy," he writes, "but a philosophically adequate world, a different matter altogether."[53]

vi.

The world that Fielding creates in Jonathan Wild through the inventive combination of genres and modes, the evocative presentation of character and setting, and the skillful deployment of narrative and stylistic devices validly challenges the reader at the same time that it reassures him. While some of the conventions and techniques that Fielding incorporates are by themselves relatively simple, the

vision of human nature, of society, and of the universe that he expresses through their artful integration is substantial.

The true nature of "greatness," as personified by the eponymous hero, is of course the announced subject of Jonatnan Wild. In contrast to the mock biographer's mistakenly simplistic views, the enduring vision that Fielding presents is far more discriminating (and desirable). Fielding reveals both the ludicrous and tragic undersides of the kind of "greatness" that Wild formulates and practices as well as its constant dangers. The man who strives incessantly to achieve "greatness" by mastering others is shown to be no longer the master of himself, but a slave to his own insatiable appetites. Fielding warns, however, that the hypocrisy, cunning, and ruthlessness of such a man should never be underestimated, for he is highly skilled in exploiting the weaknesses of others; he cleverly uses the truth (or at least part of the truth) for evil ends; he is capable of master-minding ingenious schemes; and whatever "loyalty" to people he possesses is governed strictly by the use that particular individuals happen to have for him at a given moment. But determined and intelligent as the aspiring "great" man may be, he is unable to retain for any length of time the rewards that he may reap. In this respect Fielding's vision of "greatness" inches towards the tragic at the same time that it asserts its comic roots.

In the end Fielding demonstrates that the "great" man fails, not because he declines to go "deep enough in Roguery" (IV.xv.258) --as Wild's thirteenth maxim admonishes--but precisely because he

does engage so deeply in roguery. Sooner or later, Fielding suggests, seekers of "greatness" reveal their unscrupulous methods and goals (either unwittingly or not) and therein lie the seeds of their destruction.

While the vulnerability of the "great" man is not always apparent, especially to those whom he exploits, the relationship between the "great" man and a good man like Heartfree (whose vulnerabilities Fielding makes very apparent) is not quite so simple as has been suggested. Henry Knight Miller states only part of the truth when he writes that "the kind of trusting simplicity he [Heartfree] represents is precisely the quality that permits hypocritical and designing villains like Wild to exist and thrive."[54] Fielding convincingly illustrates how the benevolent impulses and uncritical judgment of a good man like Heartfree abet exploitation by a "great" man, but he also makes it abundantly evident that Heartfree did not start a "great" man like Wild on the road to crime, nor are Wild's misdeeds directed exclusively against the innocent. To the contrary, a good number of Wild's felonies (extortion, conspiracy, perjury, etc.) are committed against those who are neither trusting nor simple, but hardened criminals like himself. By having Wild exploit his schoolmates, Bagshot, the Count, Tom Fierce, Marybone, and Blueskin, as well as Heartfree, Fielding intimates that "greatness" manifests itself in the character of some men at an early age, shaped perhaps by family background, by environment, and even by what they read. Although the good man who fails to defend his own interests

undoubtedly helps the "great" man's cause, he is not the sine qua non for the existence of the "great" man.

In the Preface to the Miscellanies Fielding writes: "Nothing seems to me more preposterous than that, while the Way to true Honour lies so open and plain, Men should seek false by such perverse and rugged Paths: that while it is so easy and safe, and truly honourable, to be good, Men should wade through Difficulty and Danger, and real Infamy, to be Great" (M, p. 10).[55] Fielding's observation about the difficulties and dangers leading to "greatness" is well taken, but his vision of goodness, as presented in the action of Jonathan Wild, is somewhat less heartening. The path to goodness for both of the Heartfrees is honourable, but it is neither easy nor safe. Rather Fielding demonstrates that the world is fraught with dangers for the good person who fails to exercise sound judgment, to learn from experience, and to act resolutely (and justly) in his own behalf.

But Fielding also indicates that Providence assures the eventual triumph of goodness, although in contrast to his usual treatment of important ideas he offers little elaborating commentary on the subject. Fielding seems to be serious about Heartfree's confidence in time as "the sure Friend of Justice" ((I.x.165), and about Mrs. Heartfree's maxim, THAT PROVIDENCE WILL, SOONER OR LATER, PROCURE THE FELICITY OF THE VIRTUOUS AND INNOCENT" (IV.xi.237). Through the working out of the conflict between Wild and the Heartfrees, Fielding suggests that the ways of God are just and justifiable, although they are not always as timely as man may wish.

While Fielding's belief in Latitudinarian doctrine has been amply documented in his essays and fiction, the relationship between good and evil that he presents in Jonathan Wild has not been sufficiently discussed. In addition to asserting that Providence is a powerful force in the universe, Fielding indicates that action by astute and decent men in behalf of others is also necessary if goodness is to triumph. Accordingly the "learned Judge," who recognizes that Wild's efforts are calculated for his own benefit and not for "the general Good of Society" (IV.i.186), procures an Act of Parliament as a means of putting an end to Wild's criminality. Similarly, when the "good Magistrate" (IV.vi.207) notices that Wild and Fireblood (the two witnesses whose testimony sent Heartfree to prison) have recently been remanded to Newgate, he takes it upon himself to examine all of their cases in greater depth. That such honest and conscientious individuals are not limited to the legal profession, the shores of England, and Christian society is implied in the characterization of the French hermit, who delivers Mrs. Heartfree into safe hands despite his passion for her, and in that of the African magistrate, who first tries to win Mrs. Heartfree's favors with an immense present, and then rewards her for her integrity and makes it possible for her to begin the journey home.

The manner in which Fielding suggests that iniquity occasions evil acts of retribution as well as good actions in behalf of innocent victims has not, to the best of my knowledge, been pointed out. It is of course Wild's exploitation and denunciation of Blueskin

that causes the latter to stab his erstwhile boss and present betrayer. This attempted murder in turn prompts the learned judge to inquire if Blueskin were avenging some past evil; consequently the judge discovers Wild's widespread criminal activities and procures the act of Parliament in order to deal with them. But Wild's insatiable desire to profit from the "labor" of others causes him to continue receiving stolen goods and accepting rewards for their return--a capital felony for which he is eventually arrested. Similarly, Fireblood's own quest for "greatness" causes him to be arrested for his part in a robbery. He in turn confesses his and Wild's conspiracy against Heartfree because he justifiably fears that Wild may impeach him and because he wants to save his life at any cost. Fireblood's freedom is not long-lived, however. We learn that while Wild consummates his "greatness" at Tyburn and Heartfree recovers his freedom, reputation, and fortune, Fireblood is hanged for having committed an unspecified crime.

From Fielding's organization of the plot we may infer that he views evil, not as simply existing and thriving by virtue of the presence of innocence, but as existing on its own account and in sufficient force to imperil the lives of virtuous and iniquitous men alike. But sooner or later, Fielding implies, the hypocrisy, greed, lust, ruthlessness, and cowardice of "great" men lead to their defeat through a combination of evil and benevolent impulses. While Fielding maintains that the triumph of goodness is ultimately assured by Providence, he also indicates that acts of "greatness"

occasion retribution by unprincipled individuals as well as altruistic actions by men of principle, who come to the assistance of those who may not always be able to help themselves.

In the last analysis the allegorical and satirical modes that Fielding affects in Jonathan Wild should alert the reader against interpreting the action of the book too literally. Fielding of course is not saying that all "great" men are executed by the authorities without ever reaping rewards for their efforts. The numerous references to Caesar and Alexander, and especially the unmistakable allusions to Walpole, should constantly remind the reader that some "great" men do indeed achieve enormous wealth and power that they manage to maintain for many years in the face of vigorous opposition. (On a lesser scale, the success that a common criminal like the real Jonathan Wild enjoyed for a number of years also lends historical perspective to Fielding's intended view.)

Similarly, Fielding is not saying that all good men who place their faith in God and all good women who preserve their chastity in extreme circumstances will live out their lives in love, honor, and prosperity as the fortunate Heartfrees are said to do. The allusions linking Heartfree and Socrates provide at least one historical example of an honorable man who dies as a result of living according to worthy principles.

By the end of Jonathan Wild all of the reprehensible characters who are mentioned "in the light of Greatness" (IV.xv.263) have paid for their misdeeds with their lives. The cumulative effect

of Fielding's vivid depiction throughout the action of the pervasiveness of evil and of the voraciousness of indulgent self-interest is to create the impression that although individual characters like Wild, Fireblood, the Count, Laetitia, and Blueskin perish, the qualities that they exemplify live on. At the same time Fielding suggests that the goodness which the Heartfrees personify will in the end prevail by the grace of Providence, because of the benevolent actions of others, and as a result of the self-destructive nature of "greatness." In Fielding's world, in sum, there is evil enough to test severely even the most decent of men and women, yet there is also good enough, ultimately, to exalt the soul.

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While Fielding's faith in the goodness and power of a Supreme Being lends a semblance of harmony and order to his universe, his view of the mores and of the economic, legal, and political systems of eighteenth-century English society is more ambiguous, revealing attitudes that are at once subversive and inspiring. Fielding's imaginative juxtaposition of disparate genres and modes--the high and the low, the imitative and the parodic--is the device by which he emphasizes the similarities rather than the differences between the extreme poles of Augustan society--its wealthiest and most influential members on the one hand, and its lowest members, the common criminals and strumpets, on the other. Although much of the action in Jonathan Wild takes place at Mr. Snap's sponging house, in common wine cellars and taverns, and in Newgate, Fielding of course is not

writing so much about the criminal underworld as about powerful political leaders and wealthy, fashionable members of society. The implication is that although there are differences between these two classes, these differences are more of degree than of kind, i.e., both the genteel members of society and the rabble are hypocritical, greedy, licentious, cunning, ruthless, etc. Primarily it is the manner in which the members of these two classes satisfy their appetites that marks the essential differences between them.

Existing somewhere in between these two extremes is the merchant or rising middle-class, of which Heartfree is a member and with whom Fielding's sympathies lie despite some gentle satire. Embedded in the portrayal of Heartfree, however, is an indication or two of Fielding's ambiguous attitude concerning the proper place in society that the burgeoning merchant class is to occupy. Near the end of Heartfree's soliloquy in which he entrusts his happiness to God, the good merchant ponders the future of his children, "whether it be their Fate to procure Bread with their own Labour, or to eat it at the Sweat of others." The former situation may be the sweeter, Heartfree decides before resolving: "I will do my utmost to lay the Foundations of my Childrens Happiness, I will carefully avoid educating them in a Station superior to their Fortune" (III.ii.127). While Heartfree's prospects at this point appear to be dim, the essence of his reflections here is that earning one's way in the world by one's own labor is preferable to living off the labor of others, and that it is proper to limit one's expectations to one's

social class. At the end of the book, however, after Heartfree has grown wealthy and secure, he appears to revise his view. Willing to pay a dowry of £2,000 so that his younger daughter can marry a "young nobleman," Heartfree does "his utmost to persuade her to the Match" (IV.xv.262). The daughter refuses, however, giving no other reason than that she wants to dedicate her days to her father. In this final passage Fielding presents a more conservative, complacent, and reassuring viewpoint, championing loyalty to family and class in a changing society in which fortunes are made and lost and in which the possibilities of new connections between classes exist.

While Heartfree alludes only briefly to the stratification of society according to economic, social, and cultural status, Wild incisively expatiates on this theme at several points in the action. When he attempts to take the largest share possible of the booty that Bagshot has stolen from the Count, Wild first expresses his view of how society is structured. "It is well said of us, the higher Order of Mortals," Wild lectures Bagshot, "that we are born only to devour the Fruits of the Earth; and it may be as well said of the lower Class, that they are born only to produce them for us" (I.viii.32). Later, when Wild reflects with satisfaction on the sixty-five guineas that he has reaped from Bagshot and from the gentleman who picked Bagshot's pocket, he anatomizes society in more detail, dividing all of mankind into two great categories, "those that use their own Hands, and those who employ the Hands of Others." The merchant would seem to challenge the character of "greatness" were it not

for a further distinction that Wild draws: he separates "those who employ Hands for the Use of the Community in which they live" (yeomen, manufacturers, merchants, and "perhaps" gentlemen) from "those who employ Hands merely for their own Use, without any Regard to the Benefit of Society." Belonging to that latter "noble and Great Part" are "Conquerors, absolute Princes, Statesmen, and Prigs" (I.xiv.57, 58). The wealth and influence of these various members of society, Wild says, is determined essentially by the number of hands that they employ.

By having Wild, the most persuasive but untrustworthy character in the book, offer the most penetrating analysis of society, Fielding seems to have found, either consciously or not, an appropriate vehicle for expressing some of his more ambiguous attitudes. Wild's explanation of how society works is uncomfortably accurate, but his decision to achieve eminence in that division of society to which he aspires is of course easy to disagree with and to condemn. (After lecturing Bagshot on the upper and lower orders of mortals, Wild takes three-fourths of Bagshot's booty; following his reflection on the employment of hands, Wild resolves to procure a gang that will rob for him while receiving very moderate rewards.)

The reader, in short, recognizes a strong element of truth in what Wild says about the organization of society at the same time that he recognizes the unjustness in what Wild does. Notwithstanding Wild's patently heinous actions, his astute anatomy of society counterpoises Fielding's idealized advocacy of selfishness in a society that

purportedly exists for the public good. In placing a contradictory, unflinchingly realistic philosophy in the mouth of his most forceful but thoroughly disreputable character, Fielding presents an unsettling alternative view which he discredits without rationally refuting. In this manner Fielding makes an essentially subversive viewpoint appear somewhat more palatable to the reader (as it may have appeared to himself as well).

It is instructive to note that Wild expresses a critical portion of his philosophy in the parlance of merchants. In considering the criteria for power and esteem in society, Wild cites with approbation the concept of labor and reward as perceived by the merchant class: "The mercantile Part of the World, therefore, wisely use the term Employing of Hands, and justly prefer each other, as they employ more or fewer; for thus one Merchant says he is greater than another, because he employs more Hands" (I.xiv.57-58). Wild is of course a common thief, but in lecturing Bagshot on the determinants by which some members of society consider others to be lesser or "greater" he thinks like an entrepreneur or an ambitious merchant. At other points in the action Fielding actually has Wild impersonate an entrepreneur or merchant. During his early association with the Count, for example, the biographer reports that Wild "made a considerable Figure, and passed for a Gentleman of great Fortune in the Funds" (I.vi.28). After his misadventures at sea we learn that Wild "borrows" sufficient money to return home by framing "so dextrous an Account of his being a Merchant . . . and of his great Effects

in London" (II.xiii.117).

John Richetti observes in Popular Fiction Before Richardson that the "heroes" of criminal narratives revolt against social and moral restraint, that their drive is primarily towards economic self-determination, and that their triumphs and abasements "mirror the ideological tension between the new secular world of action and freedom and the old religious values of passivity and submission."[56] While the subjects of criminal pamphlets wage open war against most of the traditional norms of society, Fielding's treatment of his hero, as we have seen, is more complicated and is double-edged. Wild victimizes criminals as well as decent citizens as he conducts his "business" or "trade," which is socially and morally unacceptable (and according to Fielding's comic strategy also economically disastrous). But Wild's incessant machinations do not truly represent a revolt against the norms of society. Rather he imitates the methods and manners of established members of society such as its political leaders and its men of fashion, and he models a substantial part of his philosophy and his modus operandi on principles of the rising merchant class, which in fact gave its support to Walpole, a prime satirical target of the book.

Curiously Fielding shows his good merchant actively engaging in his trade on only one occasion, when he is swindled and robbed by Wild and his sundry confederates. Throughout most of the action Heartfree does not exemplify qualities of the merchant class, but rather the traditional religious values of passivity and submission

that Richetti mentions. Only at the very end of the book does Heartfree prosper, presumably after learning how to drive a hard bargain and to collect debts from the fashionable members of society who had previously taken advantage of him. The significance of Heartfree's final prosperity, however, is complicated by the symbolic equation of jewels and virtue that is developed in Mrs. Heartfree's tale. In the concluding chapter that ties together the various themes of the book, Heartfree appears to be rewarded more for his virtue than for his acumen and industry as a merchant.

Wild, on the other hand, reveals to a great extent the character traits, methods, and philosophy of the merchant or entrepreneurial class. At the beginning of the action he literally employs his own "hands" to pick the pocket of the Count. Soon after he employs the hands of others--Bagshot to rob the Count and the former military gentleman to pick Bagshot's pocket--in order to gain profit without laboring himself. As the action develops, Wild strives diligently to employ and organize others in hope of acquiring increasingly larger rewards. The express purpose of the gang that he forms is to plunder the public, but Wild also plunders the members of his gang by rewarding them as little as possible for their "labor" while also attempting to wield absolute power over them through a variety of threats, lies, and intrigues.

Fielding's characterizations of his two principal antagonists--the petty thief who often thinks and acts like a merchant or entrepreneur, and the good merchant who exemplifies piety,

submission, and passivity--reveals, I believe, the profound ambiguities of his views of man's nature and the skills that he must develop in order to succeed in society. In his sham identifications of Wild as a gentleman of the funds and as a merchant of great effects, and more partiuclarly in his vivid depiction of Wild's initiative, energy, resourcefulness, and aspirations, Fielding intimates a darker underside of the class to which his good merchant actually belongs and with which he appears to be in sympathy. While Wild masquerades as a merchant or entrepreneur, Fielding seems to disguise Heartfree's true identity as a merchant. I suggest that Fielding's intentional blurring of the roles of his two principal characters manifests an unresolved tension between his idealized view of the merchant as a sort of gentleman of the new class (industrious, honest, and pious) and a not-so-muted acknowledgement of the energy, cunning, ambition, and underhandedness that may be required to achieve success (and perhaps respectability) in the rapidly changing society of eighteenth-century England.

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The vision of law and politics that Fielding presents reveals a corresponding duality without underlying ambiguities. As is evidenced in his depiction of the ease with which Wild has Fierce and Marybone executed on the basis of false testimony, Fielding suggests that the manner in which the law is applied to criminals is far from flawless. Wild's success in evading the charges brought against him by Heartfree calls into further question the

perspicacity, objectivity, and integrity of at least one justice. Accordingly we learn that Fireblood, who Wild claims was abandoned at sea with him, "went through his Examination with such Coherence (tho' he was forced to collect his Evidence from the Hints given him by Wild in the Presence of the Justice and the Accusers)" that Wild is acquitted and Heartfree is charged with "the blackest Ingratitude, in attempting to take away the Life of a Man, to whom he had such eminent Obligations" (III.x.164).

Even the conscientious magistrate, who eventually plays an instrumental role in restoring Heartfree's freedom, jewels, and reputation, is shown to be fallible, for he also is duped by cleverly doctored evidence and deterred by his "decent" impulses from permitting an impartial hearing of all the facts. One would hope that Fielding the magistrate exercised better judgment and control over his feelings in dispensing justice to those who appeared before him at Bow Street. It is only after both Wild and Fireblood have been arrested on other criminal charges that Fielding's fictional magistrate, "who did indeed no small Honour to the Commission he bore" (IV.vi.205), undertakes a more thorough investigation of the facts and takes into fuller account his impression of Heartfree's character.

Other shortcomings of the law are revealed in various commentary by the narrator, the biographer, and Wild himself. At the beginning of the action the narrator expresses incredulity at the harsh treatment that the law accords debtors--a theme that later receives fuller expression in the depiction of some of Heartfree's

tribulations. After the good merchant has been imprisoned for failing to honor the Count's note, Wild denounced "the Severity of Creditors, who seldom or never attended to any unfortunate Circumstances, but without Mercy inflicted Confinement on the Debtor, whose Body the Law, with very unjustifiable Rigour, delivered in their Power" (III.v.137). Wild's remarks here, like his speeches on the structure of society, are another example of his propensity for speaking the truth in the service of evil, since his criticism of rigorous legal prosecution, especially, is designed to persuade Heartfree to attempt an escape from Newgate.

In a lighter vein the narrator observes that Blueskin, who is soon to be betrayed by Wild, has an "absolute Contempt of those ridiculous Distinctions of Meum and Tuum which would cause endless disputes, did not the Law happily decide them by converting both into Suum" (III.xiv.175). Blueskin offers an accurate glimpse of Wild's real regard for the law when he tells Wild that he serves as the head of their gang for the good of the other thieves so that he might "pack Juries, bribe Evidence, and so contribute to their Benefit and Safety." Wild promptly counters by distinguishing between an illegal society or gang and a legal society, undoubtedly exaggerating for his own immoral purposes the nature of the latter "where the chief Magistrate is always chosen for the Public Good, which, as we see in all the legal Societies of the World, he constantly consults, daily contributing, by his superior Skill, to their Prosperity, and not sacrificing their God to his own Wealth, or

Pleasure, or Humour" (III.xiv.176). The mock biographer sets the record straight about Wild's true view of the law in his final appreciation of the hero: "He said, Laws were made for the Use of Prigs only, and to secure their Property; they were never therefore more perverted, than when their Edge was turned against these; but that this generally happened through their Want of sufficient Dexterity" (IV.xv.256).

Despite circumvention of the law by clever criminals, the unjustness of statutes concerning debtors, and the fallibility of some members of the legal profession, it is important to note that in the end it is the just application of the law that brings about the executions of the malicious characters and the exoneration of Heartfree. Among the legitimate professionals in Jonathan Wild it is not the clergy but men of the law who eventually "save" the Heartfrees. The law may work imperfectly and its practitioners may not always be astute or upright, Fielding suggests, but the law does provide the means to attain true justice if it is properly applied. Perhaps Fielding's ideal vision of the man of law is epitomized in the satirical characterization of the African magistrate, who is obliged "in Time of Peace, to hear the Complaint of every Person in his Dominions, and to render him Justice" but who, lest he should form too elevated opinion of himself, "receives every Evening in private, from a kind of Beadle, a gentle Kick on his Posteriors" (IV.xi.234). That Fielding situates this exceptional magistrate in another society in far-off Africa lends an aura of

remoteness, if not unreality, to this ideal.

A similar spectrum of appalling flaws and inspiring possibilities informs Fielding's vision of politics. The vigorous unmasking of Wild's character, the detailed depiction of his modus operandi, the unmistakable allusions comparing him to Walpole, and the broader linking of the character and methods of prigs and statesmen all contribute to Fielding's searing indictment of political leaders and of the system by which they rise and fall. In his initial dialogue with the Count, Wild provides an apt summary of Fielding's skeptical view of politics: "In Civil Life, doubtless, the same Genius, the same Endowments have often composed the Statesman and the Prig: for so we call what the Vulgar name a Thief. The same Parts, the same Actions often promote Men to the Head of superior Societies, which raise them to the Head of lower; and where is the essential Difference, if the one ends on Tower-Hill, and the other at Tyburn?" (I.v.19-20).

Wild adroitly demonstrates some of these endowments when he extricates himself from a potentially disastrous situation by recovering Heartfree's stolen bank notes from Moll Straddle and persuading her and James Sly to impeach Thomas Fierce, another prig who has tried to withhold from Wild the greater part of the booty that he and Sly had taken from Heartfree. The skill with which Wild plays with the passions of men, sets them at variance with one another, and works his own purposes out of jealousies and apprehensions that he himself creates are not, according to the mock

biographer, what "the Vulgar call Treachery, Dissembling, Promising, Lying, Falsehood, &c.," but are "by great Men summed up in the collective Name of Policy, or Politics, or rather Pollitrics" (II.v.89-90).

Wild again speaks forthrightly but for evil ends as the leader of a gang whose dissenting factions believe that their interests are incompatible, whereas their differences lie only in the style of their hats. In contrast to some of his deviously grandiloquent addresses to fellow criminals, Wild forcefully spells out the true end of all politics, exposing the foolishness of superficial "party" differences when the only essential principle of political parties is to rob the nation: "Is a Prig less a Prig in one Hat than in another?" he demands of his contentious gang. "If the Public should be weak enough to interest themselves in your Quarrels, and to prefer one Pack to the other, while both are aiming at their Purses; it is your Business to laugh at, not imitate their Folly. . . . Let me heart no more therefore of this Childish Disagreement, but all toss up your Hats together with one Accord, and consider that Hat as the best, which will contain the largest Booty" (II.vi.92).

Fielding's most devastating travesty of the political system occurs after Wild's criminality is at last recognized by honest officials who remand him to Newgate. There Wild challenges the leadership of Roger Johnson, whom he cynically accuses of undermining the liberties of Newgate by merely pretending to assist the prisoners' causes (IV.iii). According to the vision that Fielding

presents in this chapter, elections are a fraudulent process by which self-interested candidates promise the public whatever it wants to hear and then upon gaining office renege on their promises and plunder the very people who had helped to elect them.

Hypocritical, greedy, and ruthless as Fielding believes political leaders are, however, he also recognizes the degree to which they are abetted by a gullible public. According to Fielding's appropriate metaphorical language, political leaders are felons or "Prigs," while the trusting populace are "Debtors." That the general public fails to discern the corrupt and hypocritical language in which aspiring leaders couch their spurious promises but instead passionately take sides in contests from which they have nothing to gain is a source of consternation to Fielding: "What may seem more remarkable was, that the Debtors, who were entirely unconcered in the Dispute and who were the destined Plunder of both Parties, should interest themselves with the utmost Violence, some on Behalf of Wild, and others in Favour of Johnson. So that all Newgate resounded with WILD for ever, JOHNSON for ever. And the poor Debtors re-echoed the Liberties of Newgate, which in the Cant Language signifies Plunder, as loudly as the Thieves themselves" (IV.iii.194). In his poignant dramatization of how political leaders manipulate the public and especially in his observations about how leaders distort language in order to achieve unworthy ends, Fielding makes a number of points that George Orwell was to express more directly two hundred years later in his influential essay, "Politics and the English Language."[57]

But Fielding's vision of the political process is not altogether negative. In the "Advertisement From the PUBLISHER to the READER" that precedes the revised edition of 1754, Fielding recommends for perusal the one chapter discussed above, and "more particularly still the Speech of the Grave Man" (p. iv). In this passage Fielding presents his ideal vision of the political process. The "very grave Man, and one of much Authority" (IV.iii.194-95), who berates the debtors for not having recognized that both Wild and Johnson are criminals who aim to plunder them, warns that as long as men pursue their individual interests by either committing rogueries or defending themselves against them, they must seek the favor of those who have power to give them what they desire and to defend them from what they fear. Accordingly it becomes men's interest to promote this power in their political bosses, and any change of leadership merely substitutes one plunderer for another.

In order to put an end to this shameful process, the grave man proposes radical action that would require all citizens to sacrifice their private aims for the public good:

> Let us, therefore, who are confined here for Debt only, separate ourselves entirely from the Prigs; neither drink with them, nor converse with them. Let us, at the same Time, separate ourselves farther from Priggism itself. Instead of being ready, on every Opportunity, to pillage each other, let us be content with our honest Share of the common Bounty, and with the Acquisition of our own Industry. When we separate from the Prigs, let us enter into a closer Alliance with one another. Let us consider ourselves all as Members of one Community, to the public Good of which we are to sacrifice our private Views; not to give up the Interest of the Whole for every little Pleasure or Profit which shall accrue to ourselves. Liberty is consistent with no Degree of Honesty

> inferiour to this, and the Community where this abounds, no Prig will have the Impudence or Audaciousness to endeavour to enslave; or if he should, his own Destruction would be the only Consequence of his attempt. (IV.iii.195-96)

We may take the grave man's speech, I think, as Fielding's consummate vision of the ideal society, in which man's best nature gives expression to a political system that works for the benefit of all. Honesty, industriousness, and cooperation among individuals, Fielding suggests, are the surest safeguards against tyrannization by those who aspire to "greatness." In order to achieve the ideal society, men must no longer ruthlessly exploit others as Wild does, but limit their profits (and their pleasures) to what is commensurate with the public interest. While the "great" man becomes a slave to his appetites and consequently enslaves those whom he rules, members of the ideal society learn to achieve freedom from their selfish passions and consequently are able to establish a society that insures freedom for all. That Fielding has his grave man deliver his moving speech about the ideal society in the most famous prison of the period, surrounded by thieves and debtors who have been clamoring only for the "Liberties of Newgate," underscores the great distance between his idealized vision and the realities of man's nature and of the legal and political systems under which he lives.

Throughout almost all of Jonathan Wild Fielding presents life as it is or, in the tradition of the satirist, life as being worse than it really is; only in a few passages such as the grave man's speech, the conclusion of Mrs. Heartfree's tale, and the final chapter

of the book does Fielding present a vision of life as it should be. Yet both visions are important if we are to appreciate all that Fielding communicates. From the dramatic contrast between the vivid depiction of the sordidness of life and its inspiring possibilities, the reader is invited to piece together Fielding's ultimate observations, criticisms, and hopes. In the last analysis Fielding envisions an integral relation between the personal qualities of individuals and the political, social, moral, and aesthetic values of the society in which they live. In some respects Fielding's vision of the relationship between individuals and society is not unlike the connections implied in the conflicting juxtaposition of greatness and goodness that forms the core of the book.

Before the end of Jonathan Wild the reader is expected to come to the conclusion that the simplistic distinction that Fielding makes between greatness and goodness presents only a partial vision that does not encompass all of man's possibilities. There exists a third category of the great and the good, which although it is neither depicted in the action nor probably fully realizable, nevertheless provides a standard worth striving for. Ideally the great and good man combines the vigor, boldness, resoluteness, and astuteness of Wild with the selflessness, benevolence, and faith of Heartfree. In this idealized amalgamation Fielding envisions man's best hope for individual happiness, integrity, industriousness, and security. A society that is composed of such individuals will, in turn, be a just, enlightened, and productive society. Its legal and political systems

will require sacrifices on the part of individuals at the same time that these institutions will respect and protect the best interests of the individual. The literature of this ideal society will attempt to render the essential experiences of man as truthfully as possible by eschewing facile exploitations of his baser instincts and tastes and by appealing instead to his learning, his intelligence, his more refined sensibilities, and his good judgment. Finally, the abiding moral values of this society will be untainted by hypocrisy, equivocation, and cant, but rather it will be based on a synthesis of just principles, worthy actions, and unwavering faith.

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Jonathan Wild, in sum, exhibits the high sense of purpose, organization, style, and discernment that one expects of a superior work of art. Although some of the literary conventions and techniques that Fielding employs are relatively simple, his artful integration of them creates a fictional world of considerable range, substance, and impact. For the most part Fielding skillfully organizes his plot to achieve maximum effects. Notwithstanding a variety of scenes and styles, the central action is unified and cogently presented. Deepening motivations and complicating actions grow out of character as well as out of the clash of provocative ideas, and a good number of scenes build to effective climaxes which in turn form sequences that naturally and logically develop the major themes of the book.

With the exception of Heartfree, most of the characters are interesting and vital. The interaction of the main characters and their relationships with many of the minor characters, who either challenge or assist them, admirably serve to reveal individual traits while illuminating important ideas. While Fielding's characterizations do not have the psychological depth of those of Richardson or later novelists (and for his purposes should not have it), he does convincingly convey a degree of the felt reality of his leading personages. Wild and Mrs. Heartfree undergo certain internal as well as external changes as a result of their experiences. The actions of Wild, Mrs. Heartfree, Laetitia, and Fireblood (and to a lesser extent the inaction of Heartfree) are valid expressions of their personalities, motivations, and values, as revealed in vividly particularized situations. In addition Fielding enchances his characterizations with the entertaining and instructive commentary (both erroneous and astute) of his two _personae_, the mock biographer and the narrator.

Finally, the richly varied style with which Fielding tells his story is appropriately shaped by the diverse genres and modes that he employs in imitation and in parody, by the various aspirations, pretensions, and tribulations of individual characters, and by the discrete temperaments, standards, and aims of the mock biographer and the narrator. Style as well as form in _Jonathan Wild_ functions for the most part in ironic juxtaposition to the matter. While the substantial rhetorical triumphs that Fielding achieves through extensive allusions, similes, parody, irony, and comic wordplay produce a book

that clearly is not "realistic" in the sense, say, of novels by Defoe and Richardson, Fielding often uses the names of real places[58] and depicts a great deal of the authentic texture of life in eighteenth-century London with convincing moral, intellectual, and emotional validity. At the same time he presents the fuller implications of these experiences by accreting a dimension of heightened, non-literal truth that imposes a degree of order on the chaotic reality that he so vividly depicts.

As a number of philosophers, critics, and writers have suggested, employing varying definitions and aesthetic systems, the truth of a work of art lies ultimately in its self rather than in its fidelity to recognizable surfaces of the world. The truths that Fielding effectively presents in Jonathan Wild are shaped by dramatic and novelistic considerations as well as by historical, satirical, and symbolic ones; these truths are rich in social, political, moral, and aesthetic implications; and they require of the reader complex and perceptive responses.

In Tom Jones Fielding sets forth with characteristic good sense and humor certain qualifications for those who "lawfully may, and of those who may not" write fiction that he believed would favorably contribute to the developing genre of the novel. In Fielding's opinion a rare talent is required "to invent good Stories, and to tell them well." The ideal novelist who aims to do both, Fielding says, should possess "those Powers of the Mind, which are capable of penetrating into all Things within our Reach

and Knowledge, and of distinguishing their essential Differences." In addition this ideal author should possess a good share of learning that includes "a competent Knowledge of History and of the Belles Lettres," as well as an understanding of "all Ranks and Degrees of Men" that "can be learnt only in the World." But all of these qualities, Fielding warns, will not avail the ideal author "unless he have what is generally meant by a good Heart, and be capable of Feeling" (IX.i.488-94).

Fielding's abstract conceptions of the ideal novelist are of course a far cry from the actual qualities that a flesh-and-blood author brings to his task when he sets pen to paper in the contingencies of the real world. Likewise the book that an author completes usually falls far short of his initial conception of that work before he struggles to realize it. Notwithstanding the inevitable gap between the ideal and the actual, Fielding's achievements in Jonathan Wild indicate that he possesses many of the qualities that he demanded of his ideal author.

Although he loosely bases the central action of Jonathan Wild on the life of a real thief, Fielding also invents an engrossing story which he tells in a rich and distinctive style that combines justifiable moral outrage with the compassion, grace, and humor of a man of good heart and feeling. In his numerous allusions and his sundry commentaries on the writing of history, fiction, and drama, Fielding displays his considerable knowledge of history and belles-letrres (not to mention inferior popular literature). His well-observed depictions

of petty criminals and strumpets and their efforts to imitate the wealthy and powerful, as well as his portraits of the Heartfrees, of worthy and unworthy men of the law, of French and English sea captains, of a disgraceful clergyman, foolish beau, loyal apprentice, fickle neighbors, and the mock biographer, with his numerous allusions to the "Vulgar," amply reveal an understanding of all ranks and degrees of men. Lastly, Fielding's perceptive linking of the manners, methods, and morals of the highest and lowest members of society manifests the inventiveness and discriminating judgment that he says in Tom Jones lead to "a quick and sagacious Penetration into the true Essence of all the Objects of our Contemplation" (IX.i.491).

In sum, Fielding's imaginative rewriting of the "history" of a notorious criminal--created during a period when the genre of the novel was undergoing extraordinary developments--provides the modern reader with revealing views of life in eighteenth-century England at the same time that it presents memorable insights into political, moral, social, and literary matters that transcend its age. While some of the literary techniques that Fielding employs such as type names, simple irony, and the totally happy ending may be unsophisticated by modern standards, the creative manner in which he combines the forms and devices at his disposal produces a work of lasting originality. Fielding's convincing construction of a fictional world through the flamboyant use of rhetoric, his intermingling of the most farcical actions with the most catastrophic, his profound skepticism, and his

mocking but penetrating depictions of accepted practices and institutions all reveal affinities with some of our most imaginative contemporary novelists.

As befits other highly original books, The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great should be approached, if possible, with a minimum of historical, sociological, ethical, and literary preconceptions. Jonathan Wild, in short, should not be read as a sort of generic misfit, i.e., as a flawed formal satire, an overblown moral apologue, or an erratic novel that consistently violates traditional norms and expectations. Jonathan Wild is a fully realized work of integrity, force, and imagination that perhaps more than most books must be read and evaluated on its own terms. As this study has attempted to demonstrate, its distinctive shape, tone, and scope are ordered by a vision that is both comic and serious, literal and symbolic, solidly constructed with abstractions yet overflowing with the juices of life. In obliging the reader to recognize some of the fictions by which men live and suffer, Fielding presents a singular vision that is both challenging and reassuring. That readers during the past two and a half centuries have not appreciated all of Fielding's views nor recognized the skill with which he combined diverse literary elements in order to achieve his intended effects may say more about the shortcomings of readers than about Fielding's art in Jonathan Wild.

Notes

[1] See above, Chapter III, pp. 117-31.

[2] An Argument to Prove That the Abolishing of Christianity in England, May as Things Now Stand, Be Attended with Some Inconveniences . . . (pub. 1711).

[3] A.E. Dyson also criticizes Fielding's lack of control in a vigorous but not very perceptive critique that is shaped by rigid conceptions of genre. In Dyson's opinion Jonathan Wild reveals a "literary infirmity of purpose." He sees Fielding as merely setting out "to be 'clever' about human wickedness, without any driving bitterness or misanthropy to sustain him and with a consequent lack of control in his artistry" ("Satiric and Comic Theory in Relation to Fielding," MLQ, 18 [September 1957], 232).

[4] See above, pp. 523-27.

[5] The Resources of Kind: Genre-Theory in the Renaissance, ed. Barbara Lewalski (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 86. Subsequent references to this edition are cited in the text.

[6] "In Defense of Authors and Readers," comp. Edward Bloom, Novel, 11 (Fall 1977), 21. Iser's statement was made at a panel discussion titled "In Defense of Readers," which was part of a conference on the poetics of fiction, Brown University, April 14-15, 1977.

[7] "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," New Literary History, 3 (Winter 1972), 279-99, reprinted in The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 274. Subsequent references to this edition are cited in the text.

[8] "In Defense of Authors and Readers," p. 21.

[9] Ibid., pp. 22, 23.

[10] "Truth in Fiction," Critical Inquiry, 4 (Autumn 1977), 131, 133, 135.

[11] "Assertion and Assumption," PMLA, 96 (May 1981), 416.

[12] Ibid., pp. 413, 414, 417.

[13] In his consideration of Tom Jones, William Empson offers an interesting view of Fielding's reader acting with the author as a sort of judge or magistrate: "The unusual thing about Fielding as a novelist is that he is always ready to consider what he would do if one of his characters came before him when he was on the bench. . . . As to the reader of a novel, Fielding cannot be bothered with him unless he too is fit to sit on a magistrate's bench, prepared, in literature as in life, to handle and judge any situation. That is why the reader gets teased so frankly" ("Tom Jones," Kenyon Review, 20 [Spring 1958], 249).

[14] See above, Chapter V, pp. 226-35.

[15] See above, Chapter VI.

[16] Recent studies that have added to the growing body of knowledge in this field include: Georges Poulet, "Phenomenology of Reading," New Literary History, 1 (Winter 1969), 53-68; Hans Robert Jauss, "Levels of Identification of Hero and Audience," New Literary History, 5 (Winter 1973), 282-317; David Bleich, Readings and Feelings: An Introduction to Subjective Criticism (Champaign, Ill.: National Council of Teachers of English, 1974); and Norman Holland, 5 Readers Reading (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975).

[17] The Vision of Tragedy (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), p. 1.

[18] The Theory of Comedy (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968), p. 75.

[19] The Art of Satire (1940; rpt. New York: Norton & Co., 1968), p. 37.

[20] Fletcher, Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode (1964; rpt. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), Chapter 6, pp. 279-303; Holland, The Dynamics of Literary Response (New York: Oxford University Press, 1969), p. 285.

[21] In his study of the "aesthetics of reception," Jauss organizes reader response to the hero into five basic modalities: associative, admiring, sympathetic, cathartic, and ironic, each of which manifests positive and negative norms of behavior (New Literary History, 5 [Winter 1973], 298).

[22] The minor character Tom Fierce, who is hanged after Wild compels Moll Straddle to bring false charges against him (II.v), is another exception. Apart from Wild's cold-blooded extermination of Fierce and his further bullying of Bagshot (II.ii), Fielding's portrait of Wild in his criminal milieu in Books I and II is essentially that of a comic villain.

[23] Fielding's introduction of letters represents one more example of his imaginative adaptation of an established literary device. Letters were of course commonplace in most fiction of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, serving primarily to impart essential information and to complicate the action. Richardson developed the use of letters in fiction to an art form by making them reveal the most intimate thoughts and passions of highly particularized characters. The five letters that Fielding inserts after the Heartfrees' meeting at Mr. Snap's neither advance the action in a meaningful way nor reveal heretofore hidden aspects of important characters. Their purpose is to sketch a collective portrait of the fashionable segment of society that is concerned with its own trifling pleasures while ignoring the genuine distress of others. See above, p. 496.

[24] Readers might have recalled Pope's treatment of this cliché in An Essay on Man: "Behold the child, by Nature's kindly law, / Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw: / ..... / Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper stage; / And beads and pray'r-books are the toys of age:" (II, 11. 275-276; 279-80).

[25] For background information on Fielding's use of the consolation in his novels, see Henry Knight Miller, Essays on Fielding's Miscellanies: A Commentary on Volume One (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 250-51, 264-66, et passim.

[26] Heartfree explicitly identifies with Socrates when he rejects Wild's proposal that he escape from Newgate even if a murder or two should occur in the attempt. "I have read that Socrates refused to save his Life by breaking the Laws of his Country, and departing from his Prison, when it was open," Heartfree tells Wild. "Perhaps my Virtue would not go so far; but Heaven forbid Liberty should have such Charms, to tempt me to the Perpetration of so horrid a Crime as Murther" (III.v.139). Near the end of the action Fielding ridicules Wild with an additional allusion to Socrates: "The Day of his [Wild's] Trial now approached; for which, as Socrates did, he prepared himself; but not weakly and foolishly, like that Philosopher, with Patience and Resignation; but with a good Number of false Witnesses" (IV.xii.238).

[27] Fielding offers a concrete suggestion of this function in a comment after the emotional reunion of the Heartfrees: "I am convinced my good-natured Reader may almost want the Surgeon's Assistance also" (IV.vi.205).

[28] See above, Chapter V, p. 241 and n. 14.

[29] Fielding may well have been satirizing such novels of Penelope Aubin as The Life of Madam de Beaumont (1721); The Life and Amorous Adventures of Lucinda (1722); The Noble Slaves (1722); and The Life and Adventures of the Lady Lucy (1726). Mrs. Aubin's novels were notable for their vigorous combination of elements of the romance with pious affirmations of Christian values. Another possible target of Fielding's satire may have been Arabella Plantin's Two Novels. Viz. I. The Ingrateful: or, the Just Revenge. II. Love Led Astray: or, the Mutual Inconstancy (London, 1727).

[30] Rawson seems to overlook the connection between Fielding's literary satire and his satire of Mrs. Heartfree. He writes of Mrs. Heartfree's tale: "Even if, therefore, a certain element of parody does exist, it scarcely touches Mrs. Heartfree, and may not originally have been meant for any story concerning her" (p. 259, n. 30).

[31] McBurney, "Edmund Curll, Mrs. Barker, and the English Novel," PQ, 37 (October 1958), 399.

[32] Kettle, An Introduction to the English Novel (1951; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 48, 46, 47.

[33] See above, Chapter V, pp. 218-19.

[34] The conclusion of Jonathan Wild also avoids a weakness of many comedies of the period that Fielding criticizes in Tom Jones: "Our modern Authors of Comedy have fallen almost universally into the Error here hinted at: Their Heroes generally are notorious Rogues, and their Heroines abandoned Jades, during the first four Acts; but in the fifth, the former become very worthy Gentlemen, and the latter, Women of Virtue and Discretion." Fielding's subsequent commentary in this passage is also relevant to Jonathan Wild: "There is, indeed, no other Reason to be assigned for it [the incongruous change of character], than because the Play is drawing to a Conclusion; as if it was no less natural in a Rogue to repent in the last Act of a Play, than in the last of his Life; which we perceive to be generally the Case at Tyburn, a place which might indeed close the Scene of some Comedies with much Propriety, as the Heroes in these are most commonly eminent for those very Talents

which not only bring Men to the Gallows, but enable them to make an heroic Figure when they are there" (TJ, VIII.i.406).

[35] See above, Chapter II, pp. 78-79.

[36] Midway through the action Fielding develops the motif of the mistreatment of debtors by having Wild deliver some strong truths on the subject as a prelude to attempting to entrap Heartfree by proposing his escape from Newgate. After explaining to the good merchant (with only one important lie) how he had escaped the captivity that Mrs. Heartfree suffered, Wild "began to discourse on the Badness of the World; and particularly to blame the Severity of Creditors, who seldom or never attended to any unfortunate Circumstances, but without Mercy inflicted Confinement on the Debtor, whose Body the Law, with very unjustifiable Rigour, delivered into their Power" (III.v.137).

[37] A similar dynamic is also at work in the monodrama of Wild's soliloquies in which he debates with himself whether to defy death by leaping into the sea (II.xi) and whether to prevent Heartfree's execution by confessing his own perjury (IV.iv). Other portions of the narrative such as Wild's persuasion of Mrs. Heartfree to leave England (II.ix) and his unsuccessful attempts to persuade Heartfree to escape from Newgate (III.v, x) seem to be theatrical in conception, although the dialogue is either rendered indirectly or the speech of only one character is directly presented. Unlike Fielding's lively but fragmented plays, the dramatic scenes in Jonathan Wild are integrally related to larger considerations of character, plot, and theme.

[38] One might also mention in this discussion of time a brief passage that Fielding inserted in the second edition. Wild and Fireblood compound their perjury against Heartfree by advancing by several days the time when Mrs. Heartfree fled to Holland. In the original version Fireblood deposes that he accompanied Wild and Mrs. Heartfree to Harwich, where she showed him the casket of jewels and desired him to tell Heartfree that she had fully executed his command (of attempting embezzlement). In the revision Fielding added: "and this he [Fireblood] swore to have been done after Heartfree had Notice of the Commission, and in order to bring it within that time, Fireblood as well as Wild swore that Mrs. Heartfree lay several Days concealed at Wild's House before her Departure for Holland" (III.xii.170). While this added bit of perjury helped to persuade the justice to imprison Heartfree, time is not a significantly felt presence in the chapter, as it is in the scene depicting the Heartfrees' reunion.

[39] Books I and III of the second edition (1754) contain fourteen chapters each; Book II has thirteen chapters; and Book IV, fifteen. The lengths of the first three books do not vary by more than four pages: Book I is sixty-one pages; Book II, fifty-seven; and Book III, sixty-two. Book IV contains eighty-three pages. Pages in this edition measure 17 x 11 cm.

[40] Fielding's most imaginative naming of a character is reserved for Wild's one-time love and longer-term nemesis. In comparison with the common English names of the other characters (Jonathan, Thomas, Bob, James, Roger, etc.), the name of Laetitia is lofty-sounding and vaguely evocative of the past and of romance. The various definitions of the Latin word are rich in appropriate associations: "Laetitia. 1. Joy, gladness, pleasure; b. source of joy, a delight; 2. fertility (of land); luxuriance, fruitfulness (of vegetation); b. fine condition (of body); 3. ornamentation, floridity of style" (The Oxford Latin Dictionary). Fielding also refers to Wild's beloved by a not-so-lofty nickname when she leaves the arms of Bagshot to receive the hero (II.iii). According to Partridge's A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English, "letty" was nineteenth-century slang for a bed or lodging, which Fielding's character is for Bagshot as well as for many men both before and after her marriage to Wild. If the slang word had a longer history than Partridge records, Fielding's juxtaposition of the lofty-sounding name of Laetitia with the vulgar "Letty" would aptly express the link between high and low that is an important aspect of her characterization and a major theme of the book.

[41] In contrast to Fielding's attention to the dress of the Count, Wild, Snap, and Laetitia, he makes no mention of Heartfree's attire and comments only that the exemplary Mrs. Heartfree "followed no expensive Fashions or Diversions" (II.i.65).

[42]

Delight in Disorder.

A SWEET disorder in the dresse
Kindles in cloathes a wantonnesse:
A Lawne about the shoulders thrown
Into a fine distraction:
An erring Lace, which here and there
Enthralls the Crimson Stomacher:
A Cuffe neglectfull, and thereby
Ribbands to flow confusedly:
A winning wave (deserving Note)
In the tempestuous petticote:
A carelesse shooe-string, in whose tye
I see a wilde civility:
Doe more bewitch me, then when Art
Is too precise in every part.

(The Poetical Works of Robert Herrick, ed. L.C. Martin [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963], p. 28.)

[43] See above, Chapter VII, pp. 365-66.

[44] Wild's fifteenth maxim perhaps best summarizes the significance of the numerous references to the hero's countenance: "THAT the Heart was the proper Seat of Hatred, and the Countenance of Affection and Friendship" (IV.xv.259). In earlier passages we learn of Wild's "Countenance full of Concern, which he could at any Time, with wonderful Art, put on" (II.ii.67); and of his "perfect Mastery of his Temper, or rather of his Muscles, which is necessary to the forming a Great Character as to the personating it on the Stage" (II.iii.77). Wild receives the news that the woman downstairs wants to exchange Heartfree's stolen banknote with "notable Presence of Mind, and unchanged Complexion" (II.v.85). When he realizes that there is no one else around his little boat to see the fierce looks that accompany his blasphemies, Wild relaxes "a little the Terror of his Countenance" (II.xi.111). Execution offers Wild the "Opportunity of facing Death and Damnation, without any Fear in his Heart, or, at least without betraying any Symptoms of it in his Countenance" (IV.xiv.250). Wild, in sum, "was greatly superior to all Mankind in the Steadiness of his Countenance" (III.vi.135).

[45] See especially I.viii.101 and I.ix.102. Later Fielding mocks this device by having Wild write in his illiterate letter to Laetitia: "It would be the hiest Preassumption to imagin you eggnorant of my Loav" (III.vi.143).

[46] I prefer the term narrator rather than commentator, which sometimes has been used to describe Fielding's persona in the other novels. In addition to commenting on the action, the narrator of Jonathan Wild describes the action as well as the feelings and thoughts of various characters.

[47] Cf. Shamela's comment after repeating Mr. Williams's aversion to hearing scoundrels (the mayor of the borough and several aldermen) proclaim the principles of honest men over their cups: "I don't know why I mention this stuff to you; for I am sure I know nothing about pollitricks (Joseph Andrews and Shamela, ed. Martin Battestin [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1961], p. 335.

[48] "I shall conclude this learned Note with remarking, that the Term Old Hat, is at present used by the Vulgar, in no very honourable Sense" (II.iv.91). Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue

(1811; rpt. Chicago: Follet Publishing Co., 1971) contains the following entry for the term in question: "Old hat; a woman's privities: because frequently felt."

[49] The use of personal pronouns is not much help in attempting to discover whether the biographer or the narrator is speaking. Both personae employ the first person singular and plural in various passages.

[50] See above, Chapter VI, pp. 277-78, 301-307; Chapter VII, pp. 360-64; and Chapter VIII, pp. 431-33, 442-44.

[51] See above, Chapter V, pp. 228-29.

[52] An Introduction to the English Novel (1951; rpt. New York: Harper & Row, 1968), pp. 46-48.

[53] "Philosophy and the Form of Fiction," in Fiction and The Figures of Life (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1970), p. 9.

[54] Miller, Essays, p. 47. Allan Wendt also makes this point in "The Moral Allegory of Jonathan Wild," ELH, 24 (December 1957), 306-20.

[55] Fielding offers a wittier restatement of this point at the end of Jonathan Wild. Of the fate of "great" men, he writes: "When we reflect on the Labours and Pains, the Cares, Disquietudes, and Dangers which attend their Road to Greatness, we may say with the Divine, that a Man may go to Heaven with half the Pains which it costs him to purchase Hell" (IV.xv.263).

[56] Popular Fiction (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), p. 35.

[57] E.g., "In our time, political speech and writing were largely for the defense of the indefensible. . . . The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. . . . Politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred, and schizophrenia" ("Politics and the English Language," in The Orwell Reader [New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970], pp. 363, 364).

[58] Among the many places named in Jonathan Wild that might be of interest to the historian seeking information about eighteenth-century England are: Bath, Salisbury Plain, Deal, Dover, Harwich, Goodwin Sands, Smithfield, Drury Lane, Doctors' Commons, the

district of St. James, Newgate, the Fleet, Tyburn, Old Bailey, Hicks's Hall, Westminister Hall, and the Tower. Biographers and historians could not of course rely on Fielding's fictional treatments of Wild, Blueskin Blake, and Roger Johnson (see above, Chapter VI, pp. 268-80).

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