THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BURLESQUE ASPECTS OF JOSEPH ANDREWS, A NOVEL BY HENRY FIELDING

By

ANNA COLLEEN POLK

Bachelor of Arts

Northeastern State College

Tahlequah, Oklahoma

1964

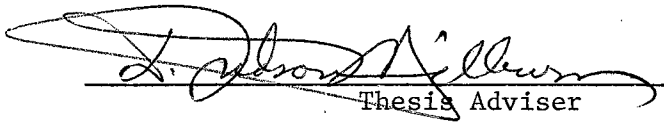
Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College
of the Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
May, 1969

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BURLESQUE

ASPECTS OF JOSEPH ANDREWS,

A NOVEL BY HENRY FIELDING

Thesis Approved:



Thesis Adviser

Samuel H. Woods, Jr.

William R. Wray

N. D. Durham

Dean of the Graduate College

PREFACE

This thesis explores the importance of the burlesque aspects of Joseph Andrews, a novel by Henry Fielding published in 1742. The Preface of the novel set forth a comic theory which was entirely English and which Fielding describes as a "kind of writing, which I do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our language" (xvii).[1] The purpose of this paper will be to discuss the influence of the burlesque in formulating the new genre which Fielding implies is the comic equivalent of the epic.

> Now, a comic romance is a comic epic poem in prose; differing from comedy, as the serious epic from tragedy: its action being more extended and comprehensive; containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters. It differs from the serious romance in its fable and action, in this; that as in the one these are grave and solemn, so in the other they are light and ridiculous: it differs in its characters by introducing persons of inferior rank, and consequently, of inferior manners, whereas the grave romance sets the highest before us: lastly, in its sentiments and diction; by preserving the ludicrous instead of the sublime. In the diction, I think, burlesque itself may be sometimes admitted; of which many instances will occur in this work, as in the description of the battles, and some other places, not necessary to be pointed out to the classical reader, for whose intertainment those parodies or burlesque imitations are chiefly calculated. (xviii)

Critics of the comic epic poem in prose have studied its tradition, its purpose in the age, and its evolution from Fielding's own

literary experience. One study made by Martin C. Battestin[2] explores the moral basis of Fielding's art. Battestin believes that although Joseph Andrews is rich in comedy, it is also very serious in its didactic purpose to correct the manners of the age. A study made by Ethel Thornbury[3] discusses the epic proportions of Fielding's novels. Other critics who have contributed significantly to a better understanding of Fielding's theory are Maynard Mack,[4] Wilbur Cross,[5] A. E. Dyson,[6] A. E. Digeon,[7] and W. B. Coley.[8]

Although each writer acknowledges the intrusion of the "parody and burlesque imitations"(xviii), none recognize its influence in the very structure of the genre. Generally, critics believe that Fielding began Joseph Andrews as another of the many burlesques of the novel of virtue, Pamela, but stumbled onto the character of Adams and abandoned his original purpose in order to pursue an art form of his own invention.[9] While it is true that Fielding obviously burlesqued scenes from Pamela in Joseph Andrews, it is more important that he intentionally used the parody and burlesque imitations to make the conventional epic form a comic work.

To develop this idea, I have divided the study into three parts. The first chapter attempts to define burlesque and examines its influence in the age of wit, the age during which Fielding was developing his literary theory. The second chapter is a refinement of the first, discussing Fielding's purpose for using burlesque in the novel. The third chapter discusses the burlesque of the heroic epic conventions, Fielding's method for making the epic in prose a

poetic comic work.

Several problems presented themselves in this study--some of which were only partially resolved. First, while burlesque is generally acknowledged as existing in the general framework of the age as a popular medium, there are no studies which place it in its rightful position, however low it may be, as a contributing factor to the temper of the age.

The second problem was sorting out the meanings of words in order to discover the definitions understood by Fielding when he was writing Joseph Andrews. In some cases only context can determine a possible meaning for terms such as "ridicule," "burlesque," or "parody." Since there were few dictionaries during Fielding's age, one must rely almost exclusively upon use in context by critics contemporary with Fielding--critics who are not always especially concerned with defining terms. As a result, meanings are often notional or subjective rather than lexical. For instance, Fielding's own definition of ridicule is subjective in that he departs from the traditional definition in order to adjust the medium to his theory. On the other hand, his definition of burlesque is the traditional lexical meaning during the 18th century. Only some time after the publication of Joseph Andrews, 1742, does one find attempts to define words objectively. For instance, Samuel Johnson (1755)[10] and Henry Home Lord Kames (1761)[11] intended their studies to be objective, but even their definitions were based upon opinion. The accuracy of the definitions, then, as they are presented here must necessarily be

limited to the evidence gleaned from the 18th century.

The third, and perhaps the most difficult, problem was effectively describing the complex age in which Fielding was writing Joseph Andrews. The year 1742 was near the end of an age which considered itself the age of wit and at the beginning of an age which was soon to become the romantic age. The age of wit was disentegrating for a number of reasons. First, the true wit resembling ideas was being overtaken by the false wit which resembled words in such exercises as punning and other plays on words.[12] Excess and exaggeration extending to men rather than manners degraded the spirit of wit. One form of exaggeration, sentimentalism, which exaggerated emotional circumstances was already well developed in the drama in such plays as Steele's The Conscious Lovers. Later forms of sentimentalism appeared in the verse of the Graveyard School of poetry. Fielding himself reacted to a sentimental work, Pamela, when he began Joseph Andrews. Various reactions against neo-classical points of view ultimately ended the age of wit and ushered in the approaching romanticism.

The sensibility of the coming romantic age emphasized love for the simple life of the rustic and contempt for cities and conventional society. Fielding's novel glorifies the rural existence and implies that city life is corrupting as in the case of Joseph. Also associated with sensibility was a benevolence which grew out of a desire to sympathize either in joy or sorrow with one's fellow humans. The Earl of Shaftesbury had first recognized this innate

human characteristic and Fielding introduces it into his theory to offset the sting of riducule which he often used with burlesque. For a fuller understanding of the complexities of the age in which Fielding was writing, I have relied for the most part on an exhaustive study made by D. Judson Milburn, The Age of Wit.[13]

The last problem with which I dealt was the study of the mock-heroic and its relationship to the burlesque in Joseph Andrews. Ethel M. Thornbury's Henry Fielding's Theory of the Comic Epic in Prose was particularly helpful in my study of the history of the epic form in England.[14] Another work, R. L. Brett's The Third Earl of Shaftesbury: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory, was also helpful in describing the decline of the epic poem.[15] English writers from Chaucer's time attempted to write epics, but only Spenser with his Faery Queen and Milton with his Paradise Lost succeeded in writing notable epics.[16] All other epic writings were insignificant, and interest in the epic waned after Milton's publication. By the time scientific discovery and intellectual searching for truth ushered in the age of reason and wit, the heroic epic was disappearing as a popular medium of art.

There were several reasons for its decline as an art form. First, the rules which commanded the composition of the epic form gave way to an emerging insistence of each individual to judge for himself what rules were necessary. A feud arose between the so-called "ancients" and "moderns" over this very idea. Besides, some

English critics felt no need to search the classical writers for models when England could boast her own classical tradition in the writings of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton. Last, the comic spirit of the age deflated that which was serious by making fun of it. As a result, the serious epic could find no place in an age which was persistent in mocking it. As a result, the heroic epic gave way to the mock-heroic or mock-epic, a genre which could well sustain the comic spirit of the age. From this mock-epic form Fielding would derive his comic epic poem in prose.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the assistance and guidance given me by the members of my committee, especially Dr. D. Judson Milburn who was always available for counsel, encouragement, and helpful suggestions for improving my thesis. I am also grateful to Dr. Samuel Woods, whose readings of my thesis resulted in pertinent observations which I used to strengthen my thesis.

In addition I would also like to thank Dr. E. E. Vineyard, President, and Dr. G. E. Burson, Dean, of Northern Oklahoma College, Tonkawa, who encouraged me and granted me summer study funds for work on my degree.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to my sister, Mrs. Barbara Walton, who patiently read my thesis for logic and development, and to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. Q. Polk, who encouraged me in the completion of this thesis.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Throughout this thesis, quotations from Joseph Andrews are taken from Henry Fielding, The Adventures of Joseph Andrews, with an introduction by Maynard Mack (New York, 1966). Roman and arabic numerals indicate, respectively, the book and chapter of the novel wherein the quotation or reference will be found. Quotations or references to the Preface will be indicated by lower case roman numerals.

[2]The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art: A Study of Joseph Andrews (Middletown, Conn., 1959), pp. 3-13.

[3]Henry Fielding's Theory of the Comic Prose Epic (New York, 1966), pp. 95-111.

[4]Mack, ed., Joseph Andrews, pp. vii-xvi.

[5]The History of Henry Fielding, 2nd ed. (New Haven, 1918), I, 314-359.

[6]"Satiric and Comic Theory in Relation to Fielding," Modern Language Quarterly, XVIII (September 1957), 225-237.

[7]The Novels of Fielding (New York, 1925), pp. 39-90.

[8]"The Background of Fielding's Laughter," ELH, XXVI, 229-252.

[9]Mack, ed., Joseph Andrews, p. x.

[10]A Dictionary of the English Language (1755), I (New York, 1967).

[11]Elements of Criticism (1761), ed. James R. Boyd (New York, 1883). Henry Home was a Scottish philosopher born at Kames in Berwickshire. He was called to the bar in 1723 and raised to the bench as Lord Kames in 1752. Elements of Criticism is his best known work.

[12]Joseph Addison, The Spectator, Nos. 58-62 (1711), in The British Essayists; with Prefaces, ed. Robert Lynam, IV (London, 1827), 216-237.

[13]*The Age of Wit* (New York, 1966).

[14]Thornbury, *Comic Prose Epic*, pp. 70-94.

[15]London, 1951, pp. 22-176.

[16]Ibid., p. 22.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

THE TRADITION OF BURLESQUE

The burlesque aspects of Joseph Andrews by Henry Fielding reflect a rich tradition of burlesque which grew in an age in which burlesque could flourish. The eighty-odd years from 1660, when King Charles II was restored to the throne of England, to 1742, when Joseph Andrews was published, was an age agitated by change and alarms. A succession of Kings and queens ascended the throne which resulted in frequent political change. And the Industrial Revolution had brought about a rapidly changing social structure for which England was unprepared.

The most significant change, however, was the emergence of a new philosophy which believed that discursive reason was superior to all else, including religious faith. Descartes, an eminent French philosopher who propounded the idea, had refused to take for granted even his own existence. His "Cogito ergo Sum" became a constant reminder of the importance of thinking. The fact that he could think, he believed, demonstrated the existence of his very soul, of God, and even of himself. Authority and faith had nothing to do with his belief.[1]

Scientists applied his principle of thinking coupled with observation to make some enlightening discoveries that would

influence future generations. In studying man's relationship to the universe, Sir Isaac Newton formulated the law of gravitation, meanwhile making other observations that laid foundations in the sciences of mathematics and astronomy. Robert Boyle established the foundations for modern chemistry. Their physical discoveries of the material world and the influence of the philosophy emphasizing the importance of the human intellect plunged England into the very midst of a scientific revolution, ironically a revolution that would foster the growth of burlesque.

In England, the philosophers Bacon, Hobbes, and Locke all belonged in various ways to the subsequent scientific movement which began in the 17th century. No longer were scholastic theories accepted as facts, as authoritarian statements that needed only to be restated periodically. With the scientific attitude of inquiry, observation, and discovery, ancient theories were rejected until they were proven. Sir Francis Bacon in his Novum Organum (1620) described and advocated an inductive and experimental method of scientific procedure. This work gave the cause publicity and lent it his prestige. He believed that man should conquer the physical world of Nature and use it for his convenience.

Thomas Hobbes in his Leviathan (1651) defended the cause of monarchy, rationalizing that man made a primitive contract with God sacrificing liberty to gain order. He and his followers searched for the real world through scientific investigation, seeing the world as a giant machine put in motion by a higher

being and worked by forces which could only be explained by mathematical formulas. He spent his life craving for order, explaining the intended order of the universe. He also sought to expose those who would bring about disorder.

John Locke sought to explode the presumption of the existence of innate ideas in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690). He believed that the human mind begins as a blank sheet of paper. It then receives all of its impressions from the external world by means of the senses. Thus, through observation and experience with the external world, man forms his own ideas. Although each differed slightly in his philosophy, all three stressed the importance of thinking as opposed to feeling. The new philosophy was not without opposition, however--an opposition which would nurture a climate conducive to the growth of burlesque.

Early in the age a dilemma arose when the new philosophy altered the spiritual views that poetry and religion had held sacred. Scientific facts seemed to cast doubt on the validity of the Scriputres as well as religious faith based upon feeling. One method of reconciling the new and old philosophies was that employed by the Cambridge Platonists, a group of divines. By using Neo-platonic doctrines, they were able to make the scriptures compatible with science by interpreting them in terms of allegory or mythology. By believing that this world is a shadow of the real world which lies behind it, the Cambridge Platonists could describe the spiritual world by using the material world as symbols. Their idealistic

philosophy which they composed by uniting science and the Christian faith could be utilized to restate in acceptable terms discrepancies in the changing society.[2]

The most dominant method of dealing with the confusions and conflicts which imposed themselves upon this age, however, was the use of a sharp-tongued instrument known as wit.[3] Men of letters deemed this process of intellection the most potent weapon for discovering truth. In coffee houses where men gathered who prided themselves on their facility for witty expression, the controversies of the day were subjected to judgment over a cup of chocolate or a good pipe. In drawing rooms as well as the public meeting places, the Tatler and Spectator reached out with their instruments of wit to comment upon the manners of men of the day, often calling attention to some vice or folly that the reader could recognize in himself. The theaters and shows were other popular places for exercising wit upon a controversial subject, whether it be a new farce on Colley Cibber by Henry Fielding or a comedy of manners by William Congreve. The spectators, themselves, found the theater a convenient gathering place where they could exchange wit with acquaintances. So wit did not confine itself strictly to literature. It was a spirit that pervaded the whole of the age, a spirit which would employ as one of its instruments the tradition of burlesque.

The most important aspect of wit at its best is its moral seriousness. Although a satirical device, it maintains the highly

serious purpose of discovering truth by exposing vice and by laughing folly out of existence. This attribute of wit was based on the belief of the rationalists that all men are basically good, have a moral sense, but inadvertently are sometimes led astray by outside circumstances. The literary men believed that if they pointed out these errors through wit, the innately good people with their rationis capax would see their folly in its true light and literally laugh it out of existence.[4]

The third Earl of Shaftesbury most notably developed this test for truth which would provide an answer to the conflicts brought about by the scientific inquiry. In A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm to Lord Somers in 1699, he put forth the theory that the poetic imagination can be as true as the conceptual statement.[5] The test for this truth can be found in ridicule, a term Shaftesbury used synonymously with the wit of the age.

The provocation for this letter came when refugee peasants from Cevennes, who invaded England after fleeing from the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, presented a problem with their extreme fanaticism. Shaftesbury gravely suggested that the most effective way to treat fanaticism was by ridicule, and the test of truth was whether a belief or principle could stand up to such treatment.[6] Freedom to exercise this ridicule was necessary, however; he illustrates in his letters:

> Let but the search go freely on, and the right measure of everything will soon be found. Whatever humor has got the start, if it be unnatural, it cannot hold; and

> the ridicule, if ill-placed at first, will certainly fall at last where it deserves.[7]

He restates the same ideas more emphatically in The Freedom of Wit and Humour a few years later:

> Truth, 'tis supposed, may bear all lights; and one of those principal lights, or natural mediums, by which things are to be viewed, in order to a thorough recognition, is ridicule itself. . . .[8]

Milburn has pointed out that Shaftesbury actually meant wit here instead of ridicule since, among several evidences, the terms of light to discover truth which he uses to describe ridicule have long been used for defining wit.[9] Since Shaftesbury was not particularly concerned with semantics in describing his moral theory, nor with a direct definition of wit, he could certainly use the words interchangeably because they are so closely associated.

Shaftesbury was not the only critic of the age to suggest that laughter could serve a moral purpose. Others had made the same suggestions: Rapin in his Reflexions (1674), Jeremy Collier in his Immorality of the English Stage (1698), and Dennis in his Large Account of the Taste of Poetry (1702).[10] But Shaftesbury's articulation of the theory, totally published in his Characteristics in 1707, distinguished itself because he went farther by suggesting that all evils which masqueraded as virtues, and falsehoods that posed as truth, should be bared. Ridicule, if given a free reign, will discover anything that is evil or unnatural:

> Nothing is ridiculous, except what is deformed; nor is anything proof against raillery, except what is

> handsome and just. And therefore 'tis the hardest thing in the world to deny fair honesty the use of this weapon, which can never bear an edge against herself.[11]

Because of this qualification, his theory became the statement of the moral purpose of wit during the age of wit. It is this tradition of a witty seriousness articulated by Shaftesbury that Fielding would incorporate into his comic epic poem in prose. Shaftesbury died before he knew of the tribute paid him by General Stanhope in a letter to Sir J. Cropley on April 26, 1712, for it epitomizes the influence he was to have on the age:

> I cease not to study Characteristics, and find my value and admiration for the author increase daily, nor do I believe anything hath been writ these many ages so likely to be of use to mankind, by improving men's morals as well as their understandings. I can at least affirm of myself that I am the better man for the study I have bestowed on them, and if I mistake not very much they will occasion a new turn of thinking as well as writing, whereby our English authors may become hereafter more instructive and delighting.[12]

The comic arts were a most natural medium for the moral purpose of wit. John Dennis believed that "the design of Comedy is to amend the follies of Mankind, by exposing them."[13] In fact he extends his design upon all classes of men:

> For Folly, as well as Vice, is personal, and the Satyr of Comedy falls not upon the order of Men out of which the Ridiculous Characters are taken, but upon the Persons of all Orders who are affected with the like Follies.[14]

His Defense of Sir Fopling Flutter, in emphasizing the moral purpose of comedy, also advocates exposure of vices and follies of all men:

> For as 'tis the Business of a Comick Poet to cure his Spectators of Vice and Folly, by the Apprehension of being laugh'd at; 'tis plain that his Business must be with the reigning Follies and Vices . . . . What vices and Follies may infect those, who are to come after us, we knew not; 'tis the present, the reigning Vices, and Follies, that must be the Subjects of our present Comedy: The Comick Poet therefore must take Characters from such Persons as are his Contemporaries, and are infected with the foresaid Follies and Vices.[15]

Although Fielding's cautious attitude toward the use of wit reflects its reputation in the years he was writing, his understanding of the moral purpose of wit can be seen from several excerpts from his writings.[16] This one from The Champion, January 3, 1739-40, cautiously expresses his admiration for the proper use of wit.

> When wit hath been used, like that of Addison or Steele to propagate virtue and morality; when like that of Swift, to expose vice and folly; it is then only that these become commendable, and truly worthy of our praise and admiration.[17]

He further aligns himself with the age of wit in his Dedication to Don Quixote in England:

> Socrates, who owed his destruction greatly to the contempt brought on him by the comedies of Aristophanes, is a lasting instance of the force of theatrical ridicule: here, indeed this weapon was used to an ill purpose; but surely what is able to bring wisdom and virtue into disrepute, will with great facility, lay their opposites under a general contempt. There are among us who seem so sensible of the danger of wit and humor that they are resolved to have nothing to do with them: and indeed they are in the right on 't; for wit, like hunger, will be with great difficulty restrained from falling on, where there is great plenty and variety of food.[18]

And in his Dedication to the Honourable George Lyttelton, Esq.,

in his Tom Jones (1749), he also lists wit as his method of attack on the follies and vices of men:

> Lastly, I have endeavoured strongly to inculcate that virtue and innocence can scarce ever be injured but by indiscretion, and that it is this alone which often betrays them into the snares that deceit and villainy spread for them. A moral which I have the more industriously laboured, as the teaching it is of all others, the likeliest to be attended with success, since I believe it is much easier to make good men wise than to make bad men good.
>
> For these purposes I have employed all the wit and humour of which I am master in the following history, wherein I have endeavoured to laugh mankind out of their favourite follies and vices. How far I have succeeded in this good attempt I shall submit to the candid reader, with only two requests: first, that he will not expect to find perfection in this work; and secondly, that he will excuse some parts of it if they fall short of that little merit which I hope may appear in others.[19]

In both his negative and positive attitudes toward this spirit, he reflects an ambivalence typical of the entire age.

It was natural, therefore, for Fielding to reflect this influence in his first novel. The effectiveness of Fielding's alignment with the age can be seen in a letter from a Miss Carter to a Miss Catherine Talbot in 1809 which compliments Fielding on his Joseph Andrews:

> Joseph Andrews contains such a surprising variety of nature, wit, morality, and good sense, as is scarcely to be met with in any one composition, and there is such a spirit of benevolence runs through the whole, as I think it renders it peculiarly charming. The author has touched some particular instances of inhumanity which can only be hit in this kind of writing, and I do not remember to have seen observed anywhere else; these certainly cannot be represented in too detestable a light, as they are so severely felt by persons they affect, and looked upon in too careless a manner by the rest of the

world.[20]

The wit which she recognized in the novel was the most effective and certainly the most delightful means which Fielding used for testing the truth.

Among the instruments of wit which Milburn lists as effective in carrying out the purpose of wit is the burlesque of Butler's Hudibras, as well as the personal satire of Dryden's Mac Flecnoe, the comedy of Congreve's The Way of the World, the raillery of Addison and Steele's Spectator, the moral satire of Pope's Epistles, the mock-heroic of Garth's Dispensary, the ridicule of Gay's The Beggar's Opera, and the irony of Swift's Gulliver's Travels.[21] Fielding's chief instrument of wit was burlesque. Milburn discusses five media of wit which he discovered the most often named and defined in the age--criticism, satire, ridicule, raillery, and humor. Though not defined, Burlesque, as well as caricature, mockery, mirth, irony, and merriment, was also an attitude and an approach to wit, according to Milburn.[22]

The word "burlesque" presents a real problem in definition. Samuel Johnson warned of this difficulty in The Rambler, No. 125, in 1751:

> It is one of the maxims of the civil law, that definitions are hazardous. Things modified by human understandings, subject to varieties of complication, and changeable as experience advances knowledge, or accident influences caprice, are scarcely to be included in any standing form of expression because they are always suffering some alteration of their state. Definition is, indeed, not the province of man; every thing is set above or below our faculties.

Nevertheless, attempts to define burlesque have been made by such critics as George Kitchin in his A Survey of Burlesque and Parody in English (1931)[23] and Richmond Bond in his English Burlesque Poetry (1932)[24] with little appreciable success as to the meaning in the age Fielding was writing. Kitchin hardly distinguishes between burlesque and parody.[25] Bond, who confines himself largely to verse, employs a complex progression of terms in which travesty and hudibrastic comprise the first part of the age and the term burlesque moves to a more exalted form in the latter part of the age in the form of the mock-heroic and parody. Burlesque itself he appoints as the generic term for these forms.[26] He is generally said to be ingenious though outdated in his nomenclature, although such a twentieth century critic as Irwin considers his definition of burlesque to be valid in defining Fielding's burlesque.[27] Other minor attempts to define burlesque have also proved unsatisfactory.

While contemporaries with Fielding did not define the term, its meaning must have been known since the term was often used to describe a particular work. Addison comes closer than any other writer to definition when he explains the nature of the two kinds of burlesque in the Spectator, No. 249, December 16, 1711:

> Burlesque is therefore of two kinds; the first represents mean persons in the accoutrements of heroes; the other describes great persons acting and speaking like the basest among the people.

Perhaps his view characterized all efforts to define burlesque: understanding and definition came inductively from the experience

of having contact with it.

The etymology of burlesque gives a few hints toward a definition of the term, and it reveals certain aspects of the word which comfortably place the age of wit as a very effective weapon. The term was first used in Italy in the fourteenth century by the poet Berni when he published his volume of Burlesque Rhymes.[28] He derived the word from the Italian burla which meant "ridicule, mockery," but it was imported to England from the French who had borrowed it from the Italians.[29] The words burla and burlare were listed in John Florio's Worlde of Wordes, Or Most Copious and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English (1598) without definitions. Apparently by 1656 the English word itself had acquired an articulated meaning for Blount's Glossographia gave a short definition of the word burlesque as "drolish, merry, pleasant." The 1681 edition added "also merry or drolish Poesie" since the bulk of burlesque writings at this time was in verse form.[30]

A 1658 definition by Edward Phillips in his New World of English Words defined burlesque similarly to Blount, "merry, drolish." The Glossographia Anglicana Nova (1707) added "or a mock Poetry" to usual "merry, drolish" and made no further changes in the 1719 edition.[31] The "ridicule, mockery" aspects of burlesque seem to disappear from the glossaries and word books until 1707, but the Oxford English Dictionary includes the element of ridicule in its definition for burlesque for that same period

of time:

> That species of literary composition, or of dramatic representation, which aims at exciting laughter by caricature of the manner or spirit of serious works, or by ludicrous treatment of their subjects.[32]

Between 1719 and 1755, when Samuel Johnson published his Dictionary, the element of ridicule became almost synonymous with burlesque. Apparently no dictionaries or word books listed the word during these years, but when the word appeared in Johnson's Dictionary, he stressed ridicule as the meaning of burlesque. For the noun form he lists "ludicrous language, or ideas; ridicule." For the verb form he lists "to turn to ridicule;" and for the adjective form, "jocular, tending to raise laughter, by unnatural or unsuitable language or images."[33] This return to ridicule was one of the major characteristics of burlesque during the age in which Fielding was writing. The 1828 edition of Webster's American Dictionary of the English Language, for instance, lists burlesque as a

> composition in which a trifling subject or low incident is treated with great gravity, as a subject of great dignity or importance; or a composition in which the contrast between the subject and the manner of considering it renders it ludicrous or ridiculous; as in Virgil's Travestie, the Lutrin of Boileau, Butler's Hudibras and Trumbull's McFingal.[34]

Very recently, a 1967 definition listed in the Encyclopedia Britannica, IV, defines burlesque as

> a comic imitation of a serious literary work, in which heroes behave like clowns and gods like the lowest of men. It is closely related to parody, in which the language and style of an author, poem or other work

> is mimicked; burlesque relies more on an extravagant incongruity between a subject and its treatment, and its effects are in general broader and coarser.[35]

As one can demonstrate, Fielding's definition does not differ significantly from the traditional definitions applied to burlesque. He expects burlesque to have "a certain drollery in stile" (xix) as do the 1656,[36] 1658,[37] and 1681[38] listings which used "drolish" to define burlesque. He says that the ridiculous falls within the province in his present work (xx), and the original Italian word meant ridicule.[39] Johnson also stressed ridicule as the chief meaning of burlesque in 1755.[40] Fielding believes that burlesque is the "exhibition of what is monstrous and unnatural" (xviii) in "sentiments and characters" (xix), and the 1656 definition from the OED embodies the same idea in "caricature of the manner or spirit of serious works, or by ludicrous treatment of their subjects."

Burlesque found expression in practically every art form. In painting, Hogarth's caricatures are notable, particularly "The Rake's Progress." Voluminous writing of burlesque verse prompted Richmond Bond's study of English burlesque poetry. Classic burlesque poems include Butler's Hudibras and Pope's mock-heroic Rape of the Lock. In drama, The Beggar's Opera has delighted thousands with its burlesque of sentimental opera and its ridicule of Sir Robert Walpole. Even Fielding's dramas, though he called them farces, were often burlesques of men and manners.

Although burlesque was a popular medium of wit because of the

laughter associated with it, comments by many writers of the age indicate that burlesque was not considered a reputable art form.[41] In fact, Giles Jacob, voicing a common view, complained:

> What has corrupted our modern Poesy is that Ridicule which we find in /burlesque/, as if nothing pleas's but what provokes our Laughter. This custom of Raillery and Ridicule is very pernicious, not only to all Poetry, but indeed to all Virtue . . . .[42]

Others who attacked burlesque similarly were Sir William Temple in his essay "Of Poetry,"[43] and Rymer in his "Short View of Tragedy."[44] The third Earl of Shaftesbury condescends to a use for burlesque "at any rate" by a comment on the age:

> And thus the natural free spirits of ingenious men, if imprisoned and controlled, will find out other ways of motion to relieve themselves in their constraint; and whether it be in burlesque, mimicry, or buffoonery, they will be glad at any rate to vent themselves, and be revenged on their constrainers.[45]

He was not quite as critical of the burlesque as other critics, but he did discourage use of it by remarking "that there is hardly such a thing found as mere burlesque in any authors of the politer ages."[46]

Perhaps a look at an English burlesque work which received much critical comment will shed more light on the reputation of burlesque in the age. Samuel Butler's Hudibras, a scathing attack on the Puritans, was called by a friend of the poet "the most admired piece of drollery that ever came forth."[47] Not all of the comments concerning his verse were so generous, however. His passages were said to be much too lengthy when brevity would have been more effective. He was vulgar in his imagery by calling

obvious brawls "combats" or "conquests" and by treating low subjects in lofty, heroic terms.[48] He debased his poetry by using long, awkward couplets that became the subject of much argument between critics. Dryden particularly disliked the eight syllable lines because he felt there was not enough room to "turn a thought around."[49] He felt that the shortness of this verse that was used in Hudibras and its quick returns to rhyme debased the dignity of the style. He also believed that double rhyme is not proper for a manly style but is fit only for burlesque writing. In effect, he discourages use of "such a little instrument" as burlesque.[50] John Dennis disagreed with Dryden that the verse form Butler used was not agreeable to burlesque. Instead he states:

> It follows from what has been said, that if the measure of eight syllables is agreeable in Pindarick Verse; it is much more agreeable to Burlesque, which is a kind of Satyr. Besides it is apparent that in Burlesque, the measure is often extended to the ninth and sometimes to the tenth syllable.[51]

Dryden and Dennis also disagreed on the style in Butler's burlesque. Dryden felt that literature for gentlemen should be written in the manner of gentlemen so as to maintain consistency between form and content. A translation by Dennis of Boileau's view of burlesque from the poem, Chant premier, in L'Art Poetique supported Dryden's view:

> Whatever you write, let a Gentleman's manner appear in it; the lowest stile of the man, who knows how to write, will still have a noble air with it. But rightly to observe this rule, you must be sure to decline Burlesque, which not long since insolently appear'd indeed a while, but pleas'd only as it was a fantastick novelty: It

> debas'd the dignity of Verse by its trivial Points,
> and taught Parnassus a Billingsgate Dialect.[52]

Dennis, however, supported the cause of the English burlesque poetry since he felt that Boileau's comments referred only to Scarron and the French burlesque and not to Butler and the English burlesque. Dennis, who proudly called himself a "judicious Poet and Critick," felt that Scarron had nothing of a gentleman, little good sense, and little true wit without which he believed there can be no good sense. He points out as a result that Scarron was popular for only a little while and had not been imitated by any of the famous French wits.[53] Butler, however, whom Dryden disliked, was a gentleman in burlesque in Dennis' estimation, because he possessed much wit and good sense in his true observation of mankind and in his display of a purity in language. Dennis proclaims that Butler "writ with a just design, which was to expose Hypocrisie," and justifies his burlesque by assigning it a purpose. Scarron's only design was to ridicule heroic poetry and this incensed Dennis as he felt heroic poetry to be "the noblest invention of human wit."[54] To Dennis, then, Boileau's censure did not extend to Butler's burlesque.

The minor controversy which excluded burlesque from total acceptance as an honorable art form resulted partially from the complexities of wit itself. Ideally, wit was a respectable tool by which laughter at a ridiculous manner, act, or situation served to entertain and delight the onlooker as well as to prevent him from discovering himself in the same situation. In moderation

and good taste, the wit was true and reputable. Wit, however, was such a popular medium of entertainment that practically all men, talented or not, attempted wit in conversation, writing, and manner. As a result, the fine strain of true wit became impregnated with too many instances of false wit, a clever play on words rather than ideas.[55] Although burlesque was not an instrument of false wit, it was abused and used to excess by unwitty men who carelessly directed their wit toward men rather than manners. Ultimately it became associated with "lowness," and this was its state when Fielding was writing Joseph Andrews.

Influenced by the prevailing reputation of burlesque as one of the lesser tools of wit, Fielding disparaged the use of burlesque in the Preface to Joseph Andrews. In fact, he was so aware of its reputation in his age that he was anxious to distinguish between it and what he actually intended in his comic theory:

> But though we have sometimes admitted this /burlesque/ in our diction, we have carefully excluded it from our sentiments and characters; for there it is never properly introduced, unless in writings of the burlesque kind, which this is not intended to be. Indeed, no two species of writing can differ more widely than the comic and the burlesque; for as the latter is ever the exhibition of what is monstrous and unnatural, and where our delight, if we examine it, arises from the surprising absurdity, as in appropriating the manners of the highest to the lowest, or e converso; so in the former we should ever confine ourselves strictly to nature, from the just imitation of which will flow all the pleasure we can this way convey to a sensible reader. And perhaps there is one reason why a comic writer should of all others

> be the least excused for deviating from nature, since it may not be always so easy for a serious poet to meet with the great and the admirable; but life everywhere furnishes an accurate observer with the ridiculous.
>
> I have hinted this little concerning burlesque, because I have often heard that name given to performances which have been truly of the comic kind, from the author's having sometimes admitted it in his diction only; which, as it is the dress of poetry, doth, like the dress of men, establish characters (the one of the whole poem, and the other of the whole man), in vulgar opinion, beyond any of their greater excellences: but surely a certain drollery in stile, where characters and sentiments are perfectly natural, no more constitutes the burlesque, than an empty pomp and dignity of words, where everything else is mean and low, can entitle any performance to the appellation of the true sublime. (xviii-xix)

Fielding himself agreed with Lord Shaftesbury's opinion of mere burlesque that "there is no such thing to be found in the writings of the ancients" (xix), but in the cleverness of his diction he amends his agreement with more tolerance:

> But perhaps I have less abhorrence than he professes for it; and that, not because I have had some little success on the stage this way, but rather as it contributes more to exquisite mirth and laughter than any other; and these are probably more wholesome physic for the mind, and conduce better to purge away spleen melancholy, and ill affections, than is generally imagined. Nay, I will appeal to common observation, whether the same companies are not found more full of good-humour and benevolence, after they have been sweetened for two or three hours with entertainments of this kind, than when soured by a tragedy or a grave lecture. (xix)

Fielding chooses "another science" (xx) to underline the distinction he wishes to make between the comic and the burlesque. He uses for illustration the comparison between the works of a comic history painter and the works of a caricaturist. The comic

history painter strives for the "exactest copying of nature" while the caricature is allowed all license "to exhibit monsters, not men; and all distortions and exaggerations whatever are within its proper province" (xx). Fielding digresses to comment on the painter Hogarth for whom he has great admiration as he believes that not only do Hogarth's figures seem to breathe but "they appear to think." Of course, thinking is the greatest attribute of the age of wit.

Fielding, anticipating criticism of its lowness, argues that burlesque will sometimes be admitted to his diction but not to his sentiments and characters:

> In the diction, I think, burlesque itself may be sometimes admitted; of which many instances will occur in this work, as in the description of the battles, and some other places, not necessary to be pointed out to the classical reader, for whose entertainment those parodies or burlesque imitations are chiefly calculated.
>
> But though we have sometimes admitted this in our diction, we have carefully excluded it from our sentiments and characters; for there it is never properly introduced, unless in writings of the burlesque kind, which this is not intended to be. (xx)

Fielding's effort to restrict the burlesque to the diction of a work altered the theory of the traditional burlesque. In altering the theory of the burlesque itself, he attempted to align it with a more respectable art--that of parody. He calls his burlesque "those parodies or burlesque imitation," two means of art that are both concerned with imitating diction. The word parody has more clearly defined beginnings than does the word

burlesque, perhaps accounting for its more respectable reputation in Fielding's time, although both concepts probably existed before the words. It comes through the Latin parodia into English from the Greek equivalents for para + ode, meaning beside-song.[56] The first date listed for it in the OED is 1598, the definition as follows:

> A composition in prose or verse in which the characteristic turns of thought and phrase in an author or class of authors are imitated in such a way as to make them appear ridiculous, especially by applying them to ludicrously inappropriate subjects; an imitation of a work more or less closely modelled on the original, but so turned as to produce a ridiculous effect. Also applied to a burlesque of a musical work.[57]

The same year, 1598, John Florio's Worlde of Wordes, Or Most Copious and Exact Dictionarie in Italian and English listed parodia "a turning of a verse by altering some words." Parody did not appear in Blount's Glossographia in 1656 but the 1681 edition gave parodize as "to change the signification of a Verse, by altering some words." It was omitted in the 1707 edition, however, indicating perhaps the little use of the word. Edward Phillips' New World of English Words (1658) also did not list parody, but the sixth edition of John Kersey in 1706 did. Here parody was introduced as "a Poetick Sport, which consists in putting some serious Pieces into Burlesk, and affecting as much as is possible, the same Words, Rhimes and Cadences."[58] Johnson's Dictionary (1755) lists parody as "a kind of writing, in which the words of an author or his thoughts are taken, and by a slight change adapted

to some new purpose."

The meaning of parody altered little from its beginning. In 1706 it was associated with burlesque as the means of making serious pieces into burlesque works. As a matter of fact, it was produced so little until the eighteenth century that it was generally included under the more popular term of burlesque.[59] Consequently, parody escaped much of the censure that accompanied burlesque. Only one note found in Shaftesbury's Advice to an Author by Robertson mentions parody disparagingly, but only because in this case he considers the parodies "no other than mere burlesque or farce."[60]

From the earliest beginnings of the age of wit (1650, according to Milburn) to 1742, the date of publication of Joseph Andrews, when wit was declining in place of an increasing sentimentalism, burlesque was present in the framework of the age. However, because of its nature to exaggerate, to mock, to ridicule, and to make monstrous, it was associated with "lowness," an attitude assigned to that which disregarded a serious moral purpose. As a result, it was considered to be one of the excesses which contributed to the decline of wit. Fielding, who fully recognized the criticism which resulted from its use, sought theoretically to elevate burlesque by limiting it to the diction in Joseph Andrews.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Brett, p. 14.

[2]Ibid., pp. 16-21.

[3]Milburn, p. 191.

[4]Ibid., p. 29.

[5]Brett, p. 28.

[6]Ibid., p. 46.

[7]"A Letter Concerning Enthusiasm," Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions. Times, etc. (1732), ed. John M. Robertson (Gloucester, Massachussets, 1963), I, 10. All subsequent references will be to this edition.

[8]Ibid., I, 44.

[9]Milburn, pp. 138, 140.

[10]Brett, p. 179.

[11]"Freedom of Wit and Humour," Characteristics, I, 85.

[12]Brett, Shaftesbury, p. 54, quoting Rand, The Life, Unpublished Letters and Philosophical Regimen of Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury (London, 1900), pp. 329-330.

[13]"Large Account of Taste," The Critical Works of John Dennis, ed. Edward Niles Hooker (Baltimore, 1939), I, 284. All subsequent references will be to this edition.

[14]Dennis, "The Usefulness of the Stage," I, 182.

[15]Ibid., "Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter," II, 248.

[16]Milburn, p. 106.

[17]Quoted in Winfield H. Rogers, "Fielding's Early Aesthetic and Technique," Fielding, ed. Ronald Paulson (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962), p. 29.

[18]Ibid., p. 34.

[19]Henry Fielding, The History of Tom Jones, with an afterword by Frank Kermode (New York, 1963), p. viii.

[20]F. Homes Dudden, Henry Fielding (Oxford, 1952), p. 390, quoting A Series of Letters between Mrs. Elis Carter and Miss Catherine Talbot (London, 1809), i, 23-24.

[21]Milburn, p. 141.

[22]Ibid., p. 205.

[23]George Kitchin, A Survey of Burlesque and Parody in English (Edinburgh, 1931).

[24]Richmond P. Bond, English Burlesque Poetry (Cambridge, Mass., 1932).

[25]Kitchin, xxii.

[26]Bond, p. 10.

[27]W. R. Irwin, "Satire and Comedy in the Works of Henry Fielding," ELH, XIII, 181.

[28]"Burlesque," New International Encyclopedia, 1920, IV, 181.

[29]Bond, p. 18

[30]Ibid., p. 19.

[31]Ibid.

[32]"Burlesque," Oxford English Dictionary, 1961, II, 1189.

[33]Dictionary (1755), 1967, I.

[34]Bond, p. 7.

[35]John Michael Cohen, "Burlesque," Encyclopedia Britannica, 1967, IV, 434.

[36]OED, 1961, II, 1189.

[37]Edward Phillips, cited by Bond, p. 19.

[38]Blount's Glossographia, Ibid.

[39]Cited by Bond, p. 18.

[40]Dictionary (1755), 1967, I.

[41]Hooker, ed., "Preface to the Miscellanies in Verse and Prose," I, 432.

[42]Quoted by Hooker, I, 432.

[43]"Of Poetry," Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century, ed. Joel E. Spingarn (Oxford, 1908-1909), III, 102.

[44]"Short View of Tragedy," Spingarn, II, 214-215.

[45]"Freedom of Wit and Humour," Characteristics, I, 50.

[46]Ibid., I, 51.

[47]Quoted by George Sherburn, A Literary History of England, ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York, 1948), p. 734.

[48]Ibid., p. 738.

[49]Quoted by Hooker, "Preface to the Miscellanies in Verse and Prose," I, 8.

[50]"An Account of the Ensuing Poem, Annus Mirabilis," Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford, England, 1926), I, 10.

[51]Hooker, ed., "Preface to Miscellanies in Verse and Prose," I, 9.

[52]Quoted by Hooker, I, 7.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

[55]Spectator, Nos. 58-62.

[56]Bond, p. 18.

[57]"Parody," Oxford English Dictionary, 1961, IX, 489.

[58]Quoted by Bond, p. 19.

[59]Ibid., p. 20.

[60]Robertson, ed., "Advice to an Author, Characteristics, I, 160.

CHAPTER II

MORAL PURPOSE OF BURLESQUE

Joseph Andrews, a representative work of its age, contains the moral seriousness that was required of all quality works of the age of wit, a moral seriousness which propagated virtue and morality and exposed vices and follies. The aim of every work of the age was to present delight and instruction. Fielding, influenced by his age, supported this view in the June 10, 1740, edition of The Champion in writing of Hogarth's influence in his paintings.

> I shall venture to assert that we are much better and easier taught by the examples of what we are to shun, than by those which would instruct us what to pursue: which opinion, if not new, I do not remember to have seen accounted for, tho' the reason is perhaps obvious enough, and may be that we are more inclined to detest and loathe what is odious in others, than to admire what is laudable . . . on which account I esteem the ingenious Mr. Hogarth as one of the most useful satyrists any age hath produced. In his excellent works you see the delusive scene exposed with all the force of humour, and, on casting your eyes on another picture you behold the dreadful and fatal consequence. I almost dare affirm that those two works of his, which he calls The Rake's and The Harlot's Progress, are calculated more to serve the cause of virtue, and for the preservation of mankind, than all the folios of morality which have been ever written: and a sober family should be no more without them, than without The Whole Duty of Man in their house.[1]

Two years later in his publication of Joseph Andrews, his first chapter repeated the view that "examples work more forcibly

on the mind than precepts" (I,1). He proposes the idea that a great man can influence only those of his acquaintance, whereas a man writing his biography can do a more extensive service to mankind than the great man himself. He says that "our own language affords many of excellent use and instruction, finely calculated to sow the seeds of virtue in youth, and very easy to be comprehended by persons of moderate capacity" (I,1). He then names several popular nursery tales and romances which he says, "in all these delight is mixed with instruction, and the reader is almost as much improved as entertained" (I,1).

Although there were many aspects of wit that are said to have served this purpose of distinguishing the false from the true by exposing the false to laughter, this paper is concerned with only two--burlesque and ridicule. Ridicule was a readily acceptable instrument for discovering the truth as this was the medium on which Shaftesbury based his "test of truth."[2] Fielding, in fact, claimed ridicule as his province in Joseph Andrews. Its function was to expose an unnatural situation, object, or manner to laughter by making fun of it. If it could not survive the laughter without appearing ridiculous or silly, its viewers or readers were supposedly instructed to avoid a similar unnatural situation. As a result, the moralistic bent of the age was diverted to the basic purpose of delighting and instructing (xx-xxi).

Burlesque, however, was not generally acclaimed as a medium for moral indictment in the age. Instead the trend was to indict

burlesque as a low form of wit and an undesireable medium. Nevertheless, burlesque served very effectively to comment upon the moral problems of the age. Shaftesbury, giving only partial praise, cited Hudibras as an example in which burlesque is, indeed, successful in delighting and instructing:

> In effect, we may observe, that in our own Nation, the most successful Criticism, or Method of Refutation, is that which borders most on the manner of the earliest Greek Comedy. The highly-rated burlesque Poem /Hudibras/, written on the Subject of our Religious Controversys in the Last Age, is a sufficient Token of this kind. And that justly admir'd Piece of Comick Wit /The Rehearsal/ given us some time after by an Author of the highest Quality, has furnish'd our best Wits in all their Controversys, even in Religion and Politicks, as well as in the Affairs of Wit and Learning, with the most effectual and entertaining Method of exposing Folly, Pedantry, False Reason, and ill Writing.[3]

As a matter of fact, burlesque has traditionally been associated with ridicule and naturally assumes a moral purpose in this capacity. Even Samuel Johnson's definition of burlesque uses the word "ridicule," and Shaftesbury, who pointed to ridicule as an effective test for truth, recognized that burlesque was one of the instruments for inflicting ridicule.[4] Because of Shaftesbury's prejudice against burlesque, however, he deemed it an improper tool for the use of ridicule. He stated in his Freedom of Wit and Humour that "there is hardly such a thing found as mere burlesque in any authors of the politer ages," but he also recognized that it is a most popular tool for executing ridicule.[5] In fact, "the ablest negotiators have been known the notablest buffoons; the most celebrated authors, the greatest masters of

burlesque." But the proper use of wit issues from ridicule, not burlesque and buffoonery, according to Shaftesbury.[6]

The reputation of burlesque arose not only from its association with the excessive and unnatural use of wit, but also from the dislike of an insecure middle class of Augustans who were perhaps only one generation removed from such places as the Billingsgate fish market and Grub Street where "lowness" was the general rule. Name calling, buffoonery, burlesque, raillery, and other such instruments were therefore considered inferior and low because they were abundant and enjoyed in these sections. Wit in all its aspects preferred to have a reputation associated with gentlemen rather than with fish wives. For this reason, it is possible that critics did not wish to admit such a "low" device as burlesque as an instrument for inflicting ridicule, thereby discovering truth. Nevertheless, the main literary practitioners, such as Swift,[7] Pope,[8] and Gay,[9] frequently violated Neo-classical theory deliberately in order to use burlesque to execute the moral purpose of the age, exposing vice and folly and discovering truth. Addison's Spectator, No. 249, begrudges burlesque as one of the "trivial Arts of Ridicule" but recognizes, if somewhat sarcastically, that his age exceeds that of the ancients in this medium:

> . . . and it is very remarkable, that notwithstanding we fall short at present of the Ancients in Poetry, Painting, Oratory, History, Architecture, and all the noble Arts and Sciences which depend more upon Genius than Experience, we exceed them as much in Doggerel,

> Humour, Burlesque, and all the trivial Arts of Ridicule.[10]

Giles Jacobs' condemnation of burlesque also associates burlesque with ridicule when he notes that it was the ridicule that could be found in burlesque which had corrupted modern poetry.[11] Burlesque had become so closely aligned with ridicule by 1755 that Samuel Johnson gave ridicule as his chief definition for burlesque. Naturally, burlesque, so closely associated with ridicule, could not escape a function of delighting and instructing in the moral purpose of the age.

Fielding complicates his own theory, however, by obviously distinguishing between the burlesque and the ridicule, consequently limiting the moral function of burlesque.

> Now, what Caricatura is in painting, Burlesque is in writing; and in the same manner the comic writer and painter correlate to each other. And here I shall observe, that, as in the former the painter seems to have the advantage; so it is in the latter infinitely on the side of the writer; for the Monstrous is much easier to paint than describe, and the Ridiculous to describe than paint. (xx)

Because of the misleading syntax of these lines and the known association of burlesque with ridicule during the age, it is natural for the reader to see "Ridiculous" as synonymous with "Burlesque." It is clear that "Caricatura" and "Burlesque" each represent the distortion of nature in their respective "science," but Fielding's reference in the remainder of the passage is ambiguous. Is "the former" "Caricatura" or the entire independent clause? And is "the latter" "Burlesque" or the independent clause

"in the same manner the comic writer and painter correlate to each other"?

Supposing that "the former" refers only to "Caricatura" and "the latter" refers only to "Burlesque," then "Monstrous" would be "Caricatura," obviously, and "Ridiculous" would be "Burlesque." In this case, the burlesque aspects of Joseph Andrews would be definitely identified with the ridicule which he took as his province and there would be no doubt of its importance in the moral theory of the novel.

But the first sentence of the next paragraph dispels any confusion by referring to "this latter species", i.e., "the Ridiculous," which does not "in either science so strongly affect and agitate the muscles as the other; yet it will be owned, I believe, that a more rational and useful pleasure arises to us from it." Since Caricatura and Burlesque are reported to evoke a greater degree of response, Fielding is apparently referring to the comic, not the burlesque.

The comparison is misleading because the reference in his clauses is not clear. Therefore, the Monstrous, referring to the burlesque and caricature, is easier to paint than describe, while the Ridiculous, referring to the comic and comic history painter, is easier to describe than paint. The parallel is also misleading because one naturally expects the inferior art to be the easier to perform. In this case, however, Fielding is simply being consistent with his theory that "life everywhere furnishes an

accurate observer with the ridiculous" (xix). This he lists as the one reason why a comic writer should not be excused for deviating from nature.

While ignoring any association of burlesque with ridicule, Fielding sought to discover the source of the ridicule which would make up the basis of the moral purpose of his novel. He discovered that the ancient, Aristotle, who usually freely defined terms, did not define ridicule except to say that villainy is not the proper use of it. He neglected to say what is. Fielding found ridicule partially defined by Abbé Bellegarde, a modern critic, but he did not name a source for it either (xxi). His Reflexions Upon Ridicule, however, offered some theory which Fielding could draw upon in developing his own doctrine of the ridiculous--the connection of ridicule with affectation: "Affectation is the falsification of the whole person which deviates from all that is natural, whereby it might please, to put on an ascititious air, wherewithal to become ridiculous".[12]

In these words Fielding was to argue that affectation was the only real source of the ridiculous and from this he would develop his theory in Joseph Andrews: "The only source of the true Ridiculous (as it appears to me) is affectation . . . ." Now, affectation proceeds from one of these two causes, vanity or hypocrisy . . . . (xxi)

Fielding believed that "vanity is nearer to truth than the

other, as it hath not that violent repugnancy of nature to struggle with, which that of the hypocrite hath" (xxi). Numerous examples are found throughout the novel: Parson Adams displaying his superior learning by arguing he has travelled widely in his reading (II,17); Lady Booby insulted at Joseph's refusal of her charms (I,5); Madam Slipslop vainly considering herself "better" than a young lady riding with her in a coach (II,5); and Beau Didapper proudly exhibiting his stylish dress (IV,4). The narrator in a burlesqued soliloquy even moralizes on vanity itself.

> O Vanity! how little is thy force acknowledged, or thy operations discerned! How wantonly dost thou deceive mankind under different disguises! Sometimes thou dost wear the face of pity, sometimes of generosity: nay, thou hast the assurance even to put on those glorious ornaments which belong only to heroic virtue. Thou odious, deformed monster! whom priests have railed at, philosophers despised, and poets ridiculed; is there a wretch so abandoned as to own thee for an acquaintance in public?--yet, how few will refuse to enjoy thee in private? nay, thou art the pursuit of most men through their lives. The greatest villainies are daily practiced to please thee; nor is the meanest thief below, or the greatest hero above thy notice. Thy embraces are often the sole aim and sole reward, of the private robbery and the plundered province. It is to pamper up thee, thou harlot, that we attempt to withdraw from others what we do not want, or to withhold from them what they do. All our passions are thy slaves. Avarice itself is often no more than thy handmaid, and even Lusty thy pimp. The bully Fear, like a coward flies before thee, and Joy and Grief hide their heads in thy presence.
>
> I know thou wilt think, that whilst I abuse thee I court thee, and that thy love hath inspired me to write this sarcastical panegyric on thee; but thou art deceived;

> I value thee not of a farthing; nor will it give me any pain, if thou shouldst prevail on the reader to censure this disgression as arrant nonsense; for know, to thy confusion, that I have introduced thee for no other purpose than to lengthen out a short chapter; and so I return to my history. (I,15)

Fielding has a lot of fun with this mock-serious passage in which he ridicules vanity. The vanity of such affectations as he names invoke surprise and pleasure from a reader. And Fielding intended to delight the reader, because "from the discovery of this affectation arises the Ridiculous, which always strikes the reader with surprise and pleasure" (xxii). Dennis had expressed a comparable view in his Remarks on the Rape of the Lock by stating that laughter in comedy is likely to spring from surprise when against our expectation.[13]

Numerous examples of hypocrisy appear in Joseph Andrews and are entertaining because of the excellence of the ridicule. The examples, however, tend to confuse hypocrisy and vanity, and Fielding warns, "there is some difficulty in distinguishing them" (xxi). As a result, the characters appear to reveal folly rather than vice. The single character in the novel who most often reveals inconsistency is the virtuous Parson Adams who, in his naiveté, cannot refrain from contradicting his words with his actions.

One instance occurs when he has promised Joseph to keep confidential Lady Booby's proposition to Joseph, but in spite of himself he reveals the secret to Madam Slipslop:

> "But of what nature will always remain a perfect secret with me," cries the parson: "he forced me to promise, before he would communicate any thing. I am indeed concerned to find her ladyship behave in so unbecoming a manner. I always thought her in the main a good lady, and should never have suspected her of thoughts so unworthy a Christian, and with a young lad her own servant." (II,3)

Another time Parson Adams has just been acquitted by a judge for a mistaken robbery. He makes a speech about the folly of disputing when neither party is interested and then proceeds to dispute with the judge as to whether he should have bound him over to jail, until Fanny calls him away.

> He accordingly took leave of the justice and company: and so ended a dispute in which the law seemed shamefully to intend to set a magistrate and divine together by the ears. (II,11)

One of the most memorable incidents is that in which Adams dutifully preaches a long sermon to the unhappy Joseph about accepting Providence in everything. In the midst of his delivery, he receives word that his son has drowned. The sermon forgotten, he goes into an uncontrollable fit of passion. Joseph, confused and righteous, chides him with his own words and naively calls him a hypocrite because he does not practice what he preaches. (IV,8)

The benevolence with which we respond to the ridicule of Adams reflects a spirit begun with Shaftesbury who believed that only evil was the proper object of ridicule. An increasing awareness of a sensibility in the age which led to indulgence in pity, emotional distress, and a preoccupation with self influenced Fielding's own theory of benevolence. While Shaftesbury's object

was to use ridicule for exposing evil, Fielding chose to restrict his ridicule only to affectations, a cause which he argues in the Preface to Joseph Andrews:

> Now, from affectation only, the misfortunes and calamities of life, of the imperfections of nature, may become the objects of ridicule. Surely he hath a very ill-framed mind who can look on ugliness, infirmity, or poverty, as ridiculous in themselves; nor do I believe any man living, who meets a dirty fellow riding through the streets in a cart, is struck with an idea of the Ridiculous from it . . . . Much less are natural imperfections the object of derision; but when ugliness aims at the applause of beauty or lameness endeavours to display agility, it is then that these unfortunate circumstances, which at first moved compassion tend only to raise our mirth . . . . Great vices are the proper objects of our detestation, smaller faults, of our pity; but affectation appears to me the only true source of the Ridiculous. (xxii)

He is so careful in his own theory not to misplace the use of ridicule that he gives four reasons by way of explanation to his reader for any appearances of the misuse of it:

> First, that it is very difficult to pursue a series of human actions, and keep clear from them. Secondly, that the vices to be found here are rather the accidental consequences of some human frailty or foible, than causes habitually existing in the mind. Thirdly, that they are never set forth as the objects of ridicule, but detestation. Fourthly, that they are never the principal figure at that time on the scene: and lastly, they never produce the intended evil. (xxiii)

Joseph Andrews, in a long soliloquy during which Parson Adams falls asleep, echoes the views of the author when he defies "the wisest man in the world to turn a good action into ridicule" (III,7), almost the exact wording from an earlier work by Shaftesbury when he said "one may defy the world to turn real bravery or generosity into ridicule."[14]

In order to preserve his benevolence by not turning "a good action into ridicule," Fielding of necessity had to disassociate ridicule from burlesque. Burlesque, as before noted, tends to exaggerate to the grotesque when applied to men and manners. By removing ridicule from burlesque, Fielding could limit the function of burlesque to the diction where it could distort only style and not men and manners. Therefore, the ridicule alone would serve to discover truth without the burden of distortion.

In breaking down the traditional association of burlesque with ridicule, Fielding assigned to each name a distinctive role in the moral purpose of his novel. Ridicule maintained its usual task of delighting the reader through surprise of an affectation. Any instruction received, of course, would depend upon the nature of the affectation and its effect upon the viewer. Burlesque, however, assumed a more specialized position in the moral basis of the novel in that it would devote all its energies to the entertainment or delight of the learned reader. No longer would it need the element of ridicule to engage in the moral sentiments of the age.

Some twenty years after the articulation of Fielding's theory, Henry Home, Lord Kames, was to also argue a distinction between two kinds of burlesque. The first he lists as the kind of burlesque that "excites laughter merely." To illustrate this part of the definition he suggests Virgil Travestie and the case of the Secchia Rapita in which a grave subject which contains no

impropriety is "brought down by a certain coloring so as to be risible." According to Kames, this kind of burlesque makes the readers laugh because the authors are already laughing.[15]

The second aspect of burlesque which he calls "a great engine of ridicule" is that which "provokes derision or ridicule." He defined ridicule as follows: "a ridiculous object is improper as well as risible, and produceth a mixed emotion, which is vented by a laugh of derision or scorn." To illustrate this aspect of burlesque which employs the ridiculous, he offers the Lutrin. It deals with "a low and trifling incident, to expose the luxury, indolence, and contentious spirit of a set of monks. Boileau, the author, gives a ridiculous air to the subject by dressing it in the heroic style, and affecting to consider it as of the utmost dignity and importance." In this kind of composition, in order to preserve the effectiveness of the ludicrous contrast, the author must "always show a grave face and never betray a smile."[16]

Kames warns of too much exaggeration of the burlesque that aims at ridicule by elevating the style too far above the subject:

> Though the burlesque that aims at ridicule produces its effect by elevating the style far above the subject, yet it has limits beyond which the elevation ought not to be carried: the poet, consulting the imagination of his readers, ought to confine himself to such images as are lively, and readily apprehended: a strained elevation, soaring above an ordinary reach of fancy, makes not a pleasant impression: the reader, fatigued with being always upon the stretch, is soon disgusted; and if he persevere, becomes thoughtless and indifferent. Further, a fiction gives no pleasure unless it be painted in colors so lively as to produce some perception of reality; which never can be done effectually where the

images are formed with labor difficulty.[17]

He names the Batrachomyomachia, supposedly a composition of Homer, as an offender of this degree of burlesque.[18] It was this form of burlesque that contributed to its reputation of lowness. Kames warns against the perversion of this talent of wit, "for where an object is neither risible nor improper, it lies not open in any quarter to an attack from ridicule." If applied to an improper subject, it cannot "stand the test of correct and delicate taste; and truth will at last prevail even with the vulgar,"[19] an idea that began with Shaftesbury in 1699 and prevailed at least until Kames' theory in 1761.

Kames' specific distinction between ridicule and burlesque in 1761 perhaps can be attributed to the spirit of sensibility which had by this time nearly overshadowed the age of wit. With increased emphasis on sympathy with one's joys and tragedies, comedy gave way to such literature as sentimental dramas, graveyard poetry, and pre-romantic poetry. Ridicule had no place in a sentimental work. Fielding's theory, however, still reflected a prevailing allegiance to wit, although his distinction between burlesque and ridicule also reflects a tinge of the sensibility that was rapidly gaining in spirit.

By divorcing the burlesque from the ridiculous in his novel, Fielding does not destroy its value as an instrument of the age. The key words in describing the moral tenets of the age are "delight" and "instruction," terminology at least as old as

Horace's Ars Poetica. Fielding prescribes in his Preface that his burlesque in diction is written for the express entertainment of the learned reader. Kames' later work distinguishes burlesque from ridicule by specifying that burlesque "excites laughter merely," a task accomplished by taking a subject which contains no impropriety, or no unnaturalness, and taking it down "by a certain coloring so as to be risible." The author is already laughing at the situation, so it is easy for the reader to laugh also.

To illustrate his use of the burlesque that intends only laughter and delight, Fielding describes some of the secondary characters of his novel. Particularly effective are the descriptions of Mrs. Tow-wouse, Beau Didapper, and Parson Trulliber.

> And indeed, if Mrs. Tow-wouse had given no utterance to the sweetness of her temper, nature had taken such pains in her countenance, that Hogarth himself never gave more expression to a picture.
>
> Her person was short, thin, and crooked. Her forehead projected in the middle, and thence descended in a declivity to the top of her nose, which was sharp and red, and would have hung over her lips, had not nature turned up the end of it. Her lips were two bits of skin, which, whenever she spoke, she drew together in a purse. Her chin was peaked; and at the upper end of that skin, which composed her cheeks, stood two bones, that almost hid a pair of small red eyes. Add to this a voice most wonderfully adapted to the sentiments it was to convey, being both loud and hoarse. (I,14)

Only Chaucer can equal descriptions of this sort. Although Mrs. Tow-wouse has not been favored by nature, there is certainly nothing unnatural about her. As the hostess at an inn she is very humble and obliging to anyone who appears to be a gentleman.

But anyone less than a gentleman who seeks service in her inn is treated with surliness and served inferior beer and little food. In a sense she is a pathetic character because her husband no longer has any passion for her. But all pity is replaced by hilarity when she discovers her husband in the very act of making love to a servant girl named Betty. The consequences are that Betty is discharged; Mr. Tow-wouse becomes completely submissive, promising to perform a number of things in gratitude for his wife's reconciliation; and Mr. Tow-wouse quietly and contentedly resigns himself to being reminded of his transgressions, as a kind of penance, once or twice a day, during the residue of his life!

Fielding is so contemptuous of Beau Didapper that his laughter is evident throughout every description of him. Although he appears a strange little creature to the twentieth century, his affectations are quite natural in his age.

> Mr. Didapper, or beau Didapper, was a young gentleman of about four foot five inches in height. He wore his own hair, though the scarcity of it might have given him sufficient excuse for a periwig. His face was thin and pale; the shape of his body and legs none of the best, for he had very narrow shoulders, and no calf; and his gait might more properly be called hopping than walking. The qualifications of his mind were well adapted to his person. We shall handle them first negatively. He was not entirely ignorant; for he could talk a little French, and sing two or three Italian songs: he had lived too much in the world to be bashful, and too much at court to be proud: he seemed not much inclined to avarice; for he was profuse in his expenses: nor had he all the features of prodigality; for he never gave a shilling: no hater of women; for he always dangled after them; yet so little subject to lust, that he had,

> among those who knew him best, the character of great moderation in his pleasures. No drinker of wine, nor so addicted to passion, but that a hot word or two from an adversary made him immediately cool.
>
> Now, to give him only a dash or two on the affirmative side: though he was born to an immense fortune, he chose, for the pitiful and dirty consideration of a place of little consequence, to depend entirely on the will of a fellow, whom they call a great man; who treated him with the utmost disrespect, and exacted of him a plenary obedience to his commands; which he implicitly submitted to, at the expense of his conscience, his honour, and of his country, in which he had himself so very large a share. And to finish his character; as he was entirely well satisfied with his own person and parts, so he was very apt to ridicule and laugh at any imperfection in another. Such was the little person, or rather thing, that hopped after Lady Booby into Mr. Adams' kitchen. (IV,10)

Another description in which the diction is colored so that the author and the reader are laughing and delighted is that of Parson Trulliber.

> The hogs fell chiefly to his care, which he carefully waited on at home, and attended to fairs; on which occasion he was liable to many jokes, his own size being with much ale rendered little inferior to that of the beasts he sold. He was indeed one of the largest men you should see, and could have acted the part of Sir John Falstaff without stuffing. Add to this, that the rotundity of his belly was considerably increased by the shortness of his stature, his shadow ascending very near as far in height, when he lay on his back, as when he stood on his legs. His voice was loud and hoarse, and his accent extremely broad. To complete the whole, he had a stateliness in his gait, when he walked, not unlike that of a goose, only he stalked slower. (II,14)

Trulliber was an interesting parson who preached brotherly love and charity to his parishioners but failed to practice his preaching to a fellow parson, Adams, who beseeched him for seven

shillings to pay his bill at the inn. Instead, Trulliber kicked the hapless Adams out of his house.

Each description reveals the delight in the coloring of the diction, thus complying with Fielding's rule that he will use burlesque in the diction. Kames' later work, though not commenting on Joseph Andrews, defines this aspect of burlesque further by saying that the subjects used must be natural and made laughable only by the coloring of the diction.[20] Each of the three characters, though they may appear exaggerated at first, is certainly natural and probably drawn from Fielding's observance of such characters in his own experience.

A flaw in Fielding's theory seems to appear, though, as the reader realizes that the same examples which illustrate his use of the burlesque in diction also illustrate his ridicule of affectation. For instance, Beau Didapper and Mrs. Tow-wouse are both entirely hypocritical in nature since they each affect the opposite of what they are. All three exhibit vanity--Mrs. Tow-wouse's pride in her inn, Parson Trulliber's in his prize hogs, and Beau Didapper's in his pretty figure.

It has been generally admitted that Fielding violated his theory in practice as did his contemporaries.[21] In theory one can distinguish his intended purpose for each instrument, either burlesque or ridicule. Nevertheless both must be employed through the diction, a fact which prevents his theory from being practical since the actual use of burlesque and ridicule in Joseph Andrews

reveals no distinction.

Although Fielding implied a distinction between his burlesque imitations and ridicule, he did not discuss the relationship of parodies with ridicule. While the traditional burlesque was a popular if somewhat tainted instrument of wit employing ridicule, parody received very little attention during the age of wit although it could very well fit into the age as a medium for transmitting ridicule. Kames' comments in 1761 distinguished it from other kinds of ridicule, however:

> A parody must be distinguished from every species of ridicule; it enlivens a gay subject by imitating some important incident that is serious: it is ludicrous, and may be risible; but ridicule is not a necessary ingredient.[22]

Also, Samuel Johnson's definition of parody omits any association of it with ridicule.[23] If one assumes, then, that Kames' definition is typical, parodies, like Fielding's burlesque imitations, were also a medium of delight through use of the diction and, therefore, distinguished from ridicule.[24] However, Kames qualified his definition by conceding that parody may be successfully employed for the express purpose of promoting ridicule--but only when ridiculing diction:

> The interposition of the gods, in the manner of Homer and Virgil, ought to be confined to ludicrous subjects, which are much enlivened by such interposition handled in the form of a parody, witness the Cave of Spleen, Rape of the Lock, canto iv.; the goddess of Discord, Lutrin, canto i.; and the goddess of Indolence, canto ii.[25]

Numerous examples of this kind of parody which ridicules a

ludicrous subject by use of a heroic style usually associated with epic can be found in Joseph Andrews and will be illustrated in the next chapter. Even this kind of ridicule is separate from that prescribed by Fielding since it does not seek to expose affectations of men and manners. The affectation, if any, is imposed by the author himself on a low subject which he mockingly describes in lofty terms for the express purpose of delighting the reader--not instructing him. Therefore, Fielding's burlesque imitations and parodies in Joseph Andrews, when defined this way, operate theoretically within the bounds of his rules and achieve that portion of the moral purpose he has confined them to.

While Fielding took ridicule as his province to delight and instruct, he also assigned to his parodies and burlesque imitations the most important end of the moral design--that of delighting by itself without the sting of ridicule. Numerous writers have noted the importance of delight over instruction. For instance, John Dennis in his Defense of Sir Fopling Flutter says "a true Comick Poet is a Philosopher, who, like old Democritus, always instructs us laughing."[26] Lamotte in his Essay Upon Poetry and Painting (1730) said "there is, however, one Branch of Poetry, which most directly tends /to delight/, and whose chief Aim and Province is to amuse, divert, and to raise Mirth and Laughter, that is, Comedy."[27] Addison has a young lady in his Tatler, No. 165, disputing with Sir Timothy Tittle, saying "for my part, I should think the greatest Art in your Writers of Comedies is to please."[28]

And Dryden also emphasizes that "delight is the chief, if not the only, end of poesy: instruction can be admitted but in the second place, for poesy only instructs as it delights."[29] He repeats and elaborates his views in other writings:

> They who will not grant me, that pleasure is one of the ends of poetry, but that it is only a means of compassing the only end, which is instruction, must yet allow, that, without the means of pleasure, the instruction is but a bare and dry philosophy: a crude preparation of morals, which we may have from Aristotle and Epictetus, with more profit than from any poet. . . .[30]

> At least I am sure it /instruction/ can be but its secondary end: for the business of the poet is to make you laugh: when he writes humour, he makes folly ridiculous; when wit, he moves you, if not always to laughter, yet to a pleasure that is more noble. And if he works a cure on folly, and the small imperfections in mankind, by exposing them to public view, that cure is not performed by an immediate operation. For it works first on the ill-nature of the audience; they are moved to laugh by the representation of deformity; and the shame of that laughter teaches us to amend what is ridiculous in our manners. This being then established, that the first end of Comedy is delight, and instruction only the second.[31]

Kames' 1761 commentary on terms associated with wit saw burlesque in two divisions in the 18th century--the first which excites only laughter, and the second which provokes derision or ridicule. The first division of burlesque, Fielding pioneered in the Preface to Joseph Andrews when he said there were burlesque instances in the diction of the work "not necessary to be pointed out to the classical reader, for whose entertainment those parodies or burlesque imitations are chiefly calculated." The second kind of burlesque also excites laughter, but the laughter arises from ridicule of the subject, manners, or work. In any

case, all examples of the burlesque are given to the most important aspect of the moral purpose of the age--to entertain by delighting through laughter. Because of its special function of delighting in the moral thesis of Fielding's novel, the burlesque aspects deserve a recognition hitherto unaccorded this device, which contributes significantly to the moral purpose of the novel.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Quoted in Aurelien Digeon, The Novels of Fielding (New York, 1925), p. 24.

[2]Milburn, pp. 133-141.

[3]"Advice to an Author," Characteristics, I, 169.

[4]Ibid., "Freedom of Wit and Humor," I, 50.

[5]Ibid., I, 51.

[6]Ibid., I, 44.

[7]Jonathan Swift, The Battle of the Books, 1704.

[8]Alexander Pope, The Rape of the Lock, 1712.

[9]John Gay, The Beggar's Opera, 1728.

[10]Joseph Addison, Spectator, No. 249.

[11]Quoted in Hooker, ed., "Preface to the Miscellanies in Verse and Prose," I, 432.

[12]Quoted in Dudden, p. 332.

[13]Dennis, "Remarks on the Rape of the Lock," II, 331.

[14]"Freedom of Wit and Humour," Characteristics, I, 86.

[15]Kames, p. 199.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid., p. 200.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid., p. 204.

[20]Ibid., p. 199.

[21]See above, footnotes 7, 8, and 9.

[22]Kames, p. 204.

[23]"Parody," Dictionary (1755), 1967, II.

[24]Kames, p. 204.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Dennis, "Defence of Sir Fopling Flutter," II, 250.

[27]Quoted in Hooker, ed., "The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry," I, 515.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Dryden, I, 116, 142-143.

[30]Ibid., I, 112.

[31]Ibid., I, 143.

CHAPTER III

COMIC ELEMENT OF BURLESQUE

Fielding's choice of burlesque as the chief means for making the epic comic was not his original idea. Traditionally the comic epic, like the tragic epic, had its beginnings in Homer, who employed a burlesque of the heroic called mock-heroic.

> But Homer, who shared in both tendencies, was superior to the other poets of either class. As for his supremacy in the serious style, he stands alone, not only through the general excellence of his imitations, but through their dramatic quality as well; for he makes his personages live before us. So also was he superior in the comic vein, since he first marked out the general lines of Comedy, by rendering the ludicrous--and not personal satire--dramatic; for his mock-heroic Margites stands in the same relation to Comedy as the Iliad and Odyssey to Tragedy.[1]

The "mock-heroic Margites," however, was lost and not available as a source for imitation by subsequent writers. Nevertheless, The Batrachomyomachia, or The Battle of the Frogs and Mice, which some critics also attribute to Homer,[2] serves as a model for the comic version of the epic. Kames has cited this work as employing the extremes of burlesque.[3] Fielding no doubt was familiar with the work since a close associate of his, James Ralph, was the translator of the work.

Although Fielding's Preface to Joseph Andrews fails to mention The Batrachomyomachia, it acknowledges his acceptance of

the traditional history of the comic epic, as accepted in his time.

> The Epic, as well as the Drama, is divided into tragedy and comedy. Homer, who was the father of this species of poetry, gave us a pattern of both these, though that of the latter kind is entirely lost; which Aristotle tells us, bore the same relation to comedy which his Iliad bears to tragedy. And perhaps that we have no more instance of it among the writers of antiquity, is owing to the loss of this great pattern, which, had it survived, would have found its imitators equally with the other poems of this great original. (xvii)

As a writer in the eighteenth century, an age when wit and satire pervaded all the literature, Fielding would readily choose the popular mock epic form as a medium for his art. However, he did not wish to follow the traditional pattern of verse since his talents lay in prose. Therefore, he sought to enumerate his theory as a prose work rather than a poetic work.

> And farther, as this poetry may be tragic or comic, I will not scruple to say it may be likewise either in verse or prose: for though it wants one particular, which the critic enumerates in the constituent parts of an epic poem, namely metre; yet, when any kind of writing contains all its other parts, such as fable, action, characters, sentiments, and diction, and is deficient in metre only, it seems, I think, reasonable to refer it to the epic; at least as no critic hath thought proper to range it under any other head, or to assign it a particular name to itself. (xvii)

Fielding did not find his sanction for the use of prose in the comic epic in Aristotle, but he did find it in the more contemporary Le Bossu.

> If a man were to write an epic in prose would it be the same thing as an epic poem? I think not, for a poem is a discourse in <u>verse</u>. But this would not prevent it from being an epic <u>nevertheless</u>.[4]

Supporting his use of prose, Fielding argued that many of the

heroic romances are actually prose epics. He illustrated this idea in his Preface:

> Thus the Telemachus of the archbishop of Cambray appears to me of the epic kind, as well as the Odyssey of Homer; indeed, it is much fairer and more reasonable to give it a name common with that species from which it differs only in a single instance, than to confound it with those which it resembles in no other. Such are those voluminous works, commonly called Romances, namely Clelia, Cleopatra, Astraea, Cassandra, the Grand Cyrus, and innumerable others, which contain, as I apprehend, very little instruction or entertainment. (xviii)

Having argued that the prose does not destroy the epic quality of a work, Fielding also implied that the epic must contain some "instruction or entertainment," a quality which he partially supplies with the burlesque aspects of his work as illustrated in the preceding chapter. Having, therefore, justified the use of prose in the comic epic, he then defines his new genre, the comic epic poem in prose:

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

More specifically, burlesque is the device which makes his comic epic poem in prose of the comic kind:

> In the diction, I think, burlesque itself may be sometimes admitted; of which many instances will occur in this work, as in the description of the battles, and some other places, not necessary to be pointed out to the classical reader, for whose entertainment those parodies or burlesque imitations are chiefly calculated. (xviii)

Although the purpose of Fielding's Preface was to explain his comic epic poem in prose, not his burlesque aspects, one can piece together his plan for making the epic poem comic through the use of burlesque and a prose diction.

The burlesque diction in Fielding's novel springs from a rich tradition of the mock-heroic. In addition to the Margites and The Batrachomyomachia, which made a mockery of the heroic style of the epic, Fielding had also read a wealth of comic efforts which prepared him for the development of his own burlesque style. Among the fiction of his own and earlier times which he had read were The Golden Ass of Apuleius, The Satyricon of Petronius, The Dialogues by Lucian, Don Quixote by Cervantes, Le Roman Comique by Scarron, Gil Blas by Lesage, and Le Paysan Parvenu by Marivaux.[5] The Rape of the Lock by Pope, a very popular poem in the eighteenth century, set forth the English version of the comic heroic epic. Significantly, Kames was to call it a heroi-comical poem.[6]

Maynard Mack points out that Fielding was quick to see that the tradition of the "mock-heroic offered one of the best positions from which to underscore those modes of the ridiculous that arise from affectation."

> Affectations being, in one possible way of looking at them, the adoption of heroic stances by persons not entitled to them (the pretense that our natures, passions, acts are profound, irresistible, deliberate, like those of heroes), the easiest way of deflating them is to let them, like Aesop's frog, inflate themselves a little more. Fielding accomplishes this inflation, like all the great practitioners of mock-heroic, primarily through his style. He includes, of course, for what he calls his classical reader, a multitude of explicit mock-epic jokes--ranging from Homeric similes through the epic genealogy of Joseph's cudgel to the hilarious and surprisingly circumstantial travesty of Oedipus at the close--where the humor is largely at the expense of epic forms and the heroic attitude toward life. But the subtler and more characteristic type of mock-heroic in Fielding is that which is illustrated in passages like the following. "Curse his beauties," says Lady Booby of Joseph,"...which can basely descend to this despicable wench, and be ungratefully deaf to all the honours I do him. And can I then love this monster?" In passages of this sort, the mock-heroic style is fully functional, enabling the author to put before us in a single dimension both the character as it understands itself and as he wants us to understand it.[7]

Fielding's development of this "fully functional" mock-heroic style probably arose from his burlesque of Pope's translation of Homer, rather than from a burlesque of Homer's original style. Pope, who diligently translated the Iliad and the Odyssey into the eighteenth century style of English poetry, resorted to periphrasis to bring poetry to Homer's lines. As one writer said, it is "A pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." It has been generally agreed that Pope's diction in the Iliad is "artificial" and inflated, a style which Fielding could easily burlesque in the comic epic. Further, Pope's Homer was more popular with the reading public of England than other translations

because of its easy style and poetry. The version was also well known, an important fact on which Fielding relied for response to his burlesque of the diction, as he implies in his reference to the "classical reader."

Although Fielding's greatness lies in his burlesque of the heroic diction of the epic, the influence of popular mock-epic works contributed significantly to his novel. One in particular he acknowledges on the title page of the novel: The History of the Adventures of JOSEPH ANDREWS and of his friend Mr. Abraham Adams; Written in Imitation of the MANNER of Cervantes, Author of DON QUIXOTE. He also notes his self-imposed restrictions--imitation only of manner. Fielding's admiration of the frequently imitated Don Quixote is evident from the presence of the work in his personal library.[8]

Wilbur Cross has pointed out many similarities in Don Quixote and Joseph Andrews. Each contains a hapless character on a journey, Mr. Abraham Adams in one, and Sancho Panza in the other. Each is grouped into four books in the manner of the epic. Each has chapters with pleasant or facetious headings and closing lines with similar pleasant diction. Some of Fielding's episodes paralleled episodes in Cervantes, such as "The History of Leonora" in Joseph Andrews and "The Curious Impertinent, "in Don Quixote, both serving the same purpose of halting the action. Each adopts a certain drollery of style which becomes mock heroic on occasion such as the description of a contest in Cervantes and the description

of a sunrise in Fielding. Each author points out the absurd or ridiculous incidents, manners, and characters with frankness. Each author employs a narrator to comment on the action in a mock-heroic attitude. And each work makes light of a serious work, Fielding of Richardson's Pamela, and Cervantes of the romances of chivalry. In spite of what seems like a tremendous influence on Fielding's development of his genre, Fielding manages to maintain an air of originality.

Another specific work which Cross believes influenced Fielding was Le Paysan Parvenu by Marivaux. In particular, the scene in which Lady Booby attempts to seduce Joseph is seen in a comparable situation in Marivaux where the young man Jacob is removed from the country to the city life by Madame de Fecourt. The narrative in both works exhibits a certain gaiety of tone in the description that borders on the mock-heroic.[9]

F. Homes Dudden noted that Fielding also knew the mock-heroic passages of Scarron's Roman Comique and L 'Eneide Travestie and the comic situation from Lesage's Gil Blas that seemed a model for the Booby Hall mistaken affair between Beau Didapper and Dame Slipslop.[10] Fielding had also imitated Moliere's satire during his playwriting days as well as Boileau's theory of burlesque, according to A. E. Digeon. The familiarity with Abbé Bellegarde's work through the English translation, Reflections upon Ridicule, or what it is that makes a man ridiculous; and the means to avoid it, also served Fielding in his formulation

of his style in the comic epic.[11]

Fielding's early writings reflect the vast influence of the mock-heroic in the literature of the eighteenth century. His dramas, which he called farces,--The Temple Beau, The Author's Farce, and Tom Thumb--foretell the style which he would develop for his comic epic poem in prose in Joseph Andrews. The term "mock-heroic" does not appear in Fielding's descriptions of his new genre. Instead he uses the more disreputable term "burlesque." Two reasons may account for this. First, burlesque was an older term, more widely used than mock-heroic, and similar in purpose--that of assigning a dignified and inflated style to a low character or situation. Second, Fielding was already labeled a burlesque writer because of his dramas. For fear that his new genre would be labeled a burlesque also, he defended the term by explaining its benevolence in the novel.

Although Fielding does not call his diction "mock-heroic," a style which delights a reader because of its incongruity between matter and diction, it obviously is. It also tends to give the novel a certain classical acumen, even though it employs witty satire rather than true heroics.

The mock-heroic diction of Joseph Andrews produces one of the most delightfully funny novels ever written. Fielding's burlesque of such eighteenth century genres as the sentimental novel and sentimental drama, as well as the conventional epic, provide much entertainment for the learned reader. For example a passage in

which Joseph laments for his sister Pamela, for his virtue, and for his beloved Fanny when he thinks he is dying parodies the formal speech given by a heroic character in the epic. It also mocks Richardson's inflated style in the sentimental novel, Pamela:

> O most adorable Pamela! most virtuous sister! whose example could alone enable me to withstand all the temptations of riches and beauty, and to preserve my virtue pure and chaste, for the arms of my dear Fanny, if it had pleased Heaven that I should ever have come unto them. What riches, or honours, or pleasures, can make us amends for the loss of innocence? Doth not that alone afford us more consolation, than all worldly acquisitions? What but innocence and virtue could give any comfort to such a miserable wretch as I am? Yet these can make me prefer this sick and painful bed to all the pleasures I should have found in my lady's. These can make me face death without fear; and though I love my Fanny more than ever man loved a woman, these can teach me to resign myself to the divine will without repining. O, thou delightful charming creature! if Heaven had indulged thee to my arms, the poorest, humblest state, would have been a paradise; I could have liv'd with thee in the lowest cottage, without envying the Palaces, the dainties, or the riches of any man breathing. But I must leave thee, leave thee for ever, my dearest angel! I must think of another world; and I heartily pray thou mayst meet comfort in this. (I,13)

Lady Booby's dramatic frustration over her spurned love for Joseph becomes an effective mockery of the overdramatization characteristic of the sentimental drama which sought to move its viewers through sentimental emotion. Her mock-heroic soliloquy returns periodically throughout the novel to ridicule, first of all, the exaggerated sentiment and, second, her folly as a gentlewoman pining for her footman.

> Whither doth this violent passion hurry us! What meanness do we submit to from its impulse! Wisely we resist its first and least approaches; for it is then only we can assure ourselves the victory. No woman could ever safely

> say, so far only will I go. Have I not exposed myself to the refusal of my footman?--I cannot bear the reflection. (I,8)

Near the end of the novel when Joseph and Fanny publish the banns for their marriage, Fielding's mocking diction is that of a tragic figure. Yet the exaggeration and mockery of the overdone sentiment produce laughter rather than tears:

> What am I doing? How do I suffer this passion to creep imperceptibly upon me? How many days are passed since I could have submitted to ask myself the question?--Marry a footman! Distraction! Can I afterwards bear the eyes of my acquaintance? But I can retire from them; retire with one, in whom I propose more happiness than the world without him can give me! Retire--to feed continually on beauties, which my inflamed imagination sickens with eagerly gazing on; to satisfy every appetite, every desire, with their utmost wish. Ha! and do I dote thus on a footman? I despise, I detest my passion.--Yet why? Is he not generous, gentle, kind?--Kind! to whom? to the meanest wretch, a creature below my consideration. Doth he not--yes, he doth prefer her. Curse his beauties, and the little low heart that possesses them; which can basely descend to this despicable wench, and the ungratefully deaf to all the honours I do him. And can I then love this monster? No, I will tear his image from my bosom, tread on him, spurn him. I will have those pitiful charms, which now I despise, mangled in my sight; for I will not suffer the little jade I hate, to riot the beauties I contemn. No, though I despise him myself; though I would spurn him from my feet, was he to languish at them, no other shall taste the happiness I scorn. Why do I say happiness? To me, it would be misery. To sacrifice my reputation, my character, my rank in life, to the indulgence of a mean and a vile appetite! How I detest the thought! How much more exquisite is the pleasure resulting from the reflection of virtue and prudence, than the faint relish of what flows from vice and folly! Whither did I suffer this improper, this mad passion to hurry me, only by neglecting to summon the aids of reason to my assistance? Reason, which hath now set before me my desires in their proper colours, and immediately helped me to expel them. (IV,13)

Finally, she is able to overcome her passion--

> Yes, I thank Heaven and my pride I have now perfectly conquered this unworthy passion; and if there was no obstacle in its way, my pride would disdain any pleasures which could be the consequence of so base, so mean, so vulgar--(IV,13)

At this point Mrs. Slipslop interrupts Lady Booby's thoughts to tell her that it has just been discovered that Joseph and Fanny are brother and sister and cannot marry after all.

Fielding has told his reader that his burlesque in diction may be particularly discovered in the battles within the novel. One battle which rages the entire length of the novel is the mental battle of Lady Booby within herself to overcome her passion for Joseph. Near the beginning of the novel, the reader discovers that the little god, Cupid, with his arrows, is the real enemy of Lady Booby, for

> the little god Cupid, fearing he had not yet done the lady's business, took a fresh arrow with the sharpest point out of his quiver and shot it directly into her heart: in other and plainer language, the lady's passion got the better of her reason. (I,7)

One such battle she has with this little god, Cupid, employs many of the heroic devices of the epic--intervention of the gods, the epic simile, and heroic diction. This particular "battle" took place after she had attempted to remove Joseph from her life--and her heart:

> But what hurt her most, was, that in reality she had not so entirely conquered her passion; the little god lay lurking in her heart, though anger and disdain so hoodwinked her, that she could not see him. She was a thousand times on the very brink of revoking the

> sentence she had passed against the poor youth. Love became his advocate, and whispered many things in his favour. Honour likewise endeavoured to vindicate his crime, and Pity to mitigate his punishment. On the other side, Pride and Revenge spoke as loudly against him. And thus the poor lady was tortured with perplexity, opposite passions distracting and tearing her mind different ways. (I,10)

Fielding's narrator likens the battle to the weighing of both the attorneys in the hall of Westminster:

> So have I seen, in the hall of Westminster, where Serjeant Bramble hath been retained on the right side, and Serjeant Puzzle on the left, the balance of opinion (so equal were their fees) alternately incline to either scale. Now Bramble throws in an argument, and Puzzle's scale strikes the beam; again, Bramble shares the like fate, overpowered by the weight of Puzzle. Here Bramble hits, there Puzzle strikes; here one has you, there t'other has you; till at last all becomes one scene of confusion in the tortured minds of the hearers; equal wagers are laid on the success; and neither judge nor jury can possibly make any thing of the matter; all things are so enveloped by the careful serjeants in doubt and obscurity. (I,10)

Another struggle within Lady Booby occurred near the end of the novel in her dreams when she discovered that "the arrow had pierced deeper than she imagined; nor was the wound so easily to be cured" (IV,1). Someone has said that much of Lady Booby's speech is a burlesque of the Elizabethan tragedy queen, but Lady Booby's self pity more likely reminded Fielding's readers of the tragic sentiment in such dramas as Steele's, The Conscious Lovers. Her diction in the mockingly heroic manner is consistent with Fielding's efforts to confine his burlesque to the diction. The comic effect is derived from the incongruity between the heroics of the passion and the subject for this passion.

While Lady Booby was battling her own emotions, Fielding supplied the learned reader with numerous examples of "heroic" battles in his novel. The reader, surprised by the use of heroic diction to describe either a free-for-all, a tavern brawl, or just a fist fight, is delighted with the result.

Parson Adams, the one character who assumes heroic if sometimes ludicrous positions by always championing the cause of virtue and righteousness, is a poor but virtuous parson. Ironically he is often engaged in some sort of battle, usually one in which his fists find their mark. Assuming the language of the heroic which one expects to find in the heroic epic but not in a comic work, Fielding uses burlesque diction, after the manner of Cervantes.

The effect arising from this burlesque of the diction is first of delight, even laughter, then an awareness of how ridiculous the diction represents the matter, and ultimately an awesome awareness that this burlesque of the diction has actually elevated what would have been common and base to a sense of the heroic.

One instance of this effect occurred at an inn where Joseph was being cared for by the hostess of the inn. Her husband resented this aid given a footman and became very rude. Adams interceded and there was an argument, during which Joseph told the host to behave better to Mr. Adams, one of his "betters."

> At which the host (having first strictly surveyed Adams) scornfully repeating the word betters flew into a rage,

and telling Joseph, He was able to walk out of his house, as he had been to walk into it, offered to lay violent hands on him; which perceiving, Adams dealt him so sound a compliment over his face with his fist, that the blood immediately gushed out of his nose in a stream. The host being unwilling to be outdone in courtesy, especially by a person of Adam's figure, returned the favour with so much gratitude, that the parson's nostrils began to look a little redder than usual. Upon which he again assailed his antagonist, and with another stroke laid him sprawling on the floor.

The hostess, who was a better wife than so surly a husband deserved, seeing her husband all bloody and stretched along, hastened presently to his assistance, or rather to revenge the blow, which to all appearance, was the last he would ever receive; when, lo! a pan full of hog's blood, which unluckily stood on the dresser, presented itself first to her hands. She seized it in her fury, and, without any reflection, discharged it into the parson's face; and with so good an aim, that much the greater part first saluted his countenance, and trickled thence in so large a current down to his beard, and all over his garments, that a more horrible spectacle was hardly to be seen, or even imagined. All which was perceived by Mrs. Slipslop, who entered the kitchen at that instant. This good gentlewoman, not being of a temper so extremely cool and patient, as perhaps was required to ask many questions on this occasion, flew with great impetuosity at the hostess's cap, which, together with some of her hair, she plucked from her head in a moment, giving her, at the same time, several hearty cuffs in the face; which, by frequent practice on the inferior servants, she had learned an excellent knack of delivering with a good grace. Poor Joseph could hardly rise from his chair; the parson was employed in wiping the blood from his eyes, which had entirely blinded him; and the landlord was just beginning to stir; whilst Mrs. Slipslop, holding down the landlady's face with her left hand, made so dexterous a use of her right, that the poor woman began to roar, in a key which alarmed all the company in the inn.

It was now no difficulty to put an end to the fray, the conquerors being satisfied with the vengeance they had taken, and the conquered having no appetite to renew the fight. The principal figure, and which engaged the eyes of all, was Adams, who was all over covered with

> blood, which the whole company concluded to be his own; and consequently imagined him no longer for this world. But the host, who had now recovered from his blow, and was risen from the ground, soon delivered them from this apprehension, by damning his wife for wasting the hog's puddings, and telling her all would have been very well, if she had not intermeddled, like a b---- as she was; adding, he was very glad the gentlewoman had paid her; though not half what she deserved. The poor woman had indeed fared much the worst; having, besides the unmerciful cuffs received, lost a quantity of hair, which Mrs. Slipslop in triumph held in her left hand. (II,5)

The passage at first appears to be a slapstick rendition of a barroom brawl and there appears to be very little burlesque in the diction. But observe that a punch in the nose is called a "compliment over the face." The host did not receive a bloody nose; instead "the blood immediately gushed out of his nose in a stream." The host hit back so as not to be "outdone in courtesy" and to return "the favour with so much gratitude." Because Adams' "nostrils began to look a little redder than usual," he again "assailed his antagonist" and laid him sprawling on the floor with another "stroke." The hostess revenged "the blow" when "lo!" a pan of hog's blood "presented itself" to her hands and she "discharged" it into the parson's face, the greater part of which "first saluted his countenance." Fielding burlesqued the diction by referring to Adams and Slipslop and Joseph as the "conquerors" who were satisfied with their "vengeance," and the innkeepers as the "conquered." One is reminded of Pope's periphrasis in the Rape of the Lock when he used such witty expressions as "Glitt'ring forfex," meaning "scissors."

Because of this mocking diction, the reader is highly entertained, precisely what Fielding intended.

The most heroic and most comical of all the burlesqued battles is that one in which Adams becomes the prey for pursuing dogs who were released for sport by an unnatural huntsman. In this battle Fielding employs all the epic conventions that Homer would have used in a heroic battle. This "battle" is between the dogs and Adams, with some assistance from Joseph for Adams, a situation which Homer would hardly deem suitable for his epic. But Fielding goes even further in burlesquing the diction by extending a parody to the conventions of the epic form. In this particular "battle" there is an interruption in the action, an invocation to a muse, a catalogue of the history of Joseph's cudgel, an epic simile, an interference from the gods, and, of course, the heroics of the battle itself.

The battle begins when the dogs devour a rabbit which they have just caught:

> The hare was caught within a yard or two of Adams, who lay asleep at some distance from the lovers; and the hounds in devouring it, and pulling it backwards and forwards, had drawn it so close to him, that some of them (by mistake perhaps for the hare's skin) laid hold of the skirts of his cassock; others at the same time applying their teeth to his wig, which he had with a handkerchief fastened to his head, began to pull him about; and, had not the motion of his body had more effect on him than seemed to be wrought by the noise, they must certainly have tasted his flesh, which delicious flavour might have been fatal to him; but being roused by these tuggings, he instantly awaked and with a jerk delivering his head from his wig, he with most admirable dexterity recovered his legs, which now seemed the only members

> he could entrust his safety to. Having, therefore, escaped likewise from at least a third part of his cassock, which he willingly left as his exuviae or spoils to the enemy, he fled with the utmost speed he could summon to his assistance. Nor let this be any detraction from the bravery of his character: let the number of the enemies, and the surprise in which he was taken, be considered; and if there be any modern so outrageously brave that he cannot admit of flight in any circumstance whatever, I say (but I whisper that softly, and I solemnly declare without any intention of giving offence to any brave man in the nation), I say, or rather whisper, that he is an ignorant fellow, and hath never read Homer, nor Virgil, nor knows he any thing of Hector or Turnus; nay, he is unacquainted with the history of some great men living, who, though as brave as lions, ay, as tigers, have run away, the Lord knows how far, and the Lord knows why, to the surprise of their friends, and the entertainment of their enemies. But if persons of such heroic disposition are a little offended at the behaviour of Adams, we assure them they shall be as much pleased with what we shall immediately relate of Joseph Andrews. (III,6)

The humiliation of being worried by dogs is spared Adams in this introductory action to the battle by the dexterity of Fielding's diction which allows not one little bit of lowness to mar the dignity of the parson. The laughter arises when the reader realizes almost with surprise that this is a ridiculous situation. It is made all the more humorous and delightful by the author's refusal to crack a smile at what surely appears to be a hilarious scene. Heroically, Adams delivers himself from the dogs by leaving behind him his "exuviae or spoils to the enemy," i.e., a good part of his already worn cassock.

Fielding then lapses into the Cervantean practice of interrupting the action to give particular detail to a tangent,

this time a discourse on why Adams took "flight." He chides the reader who "cannot admit flight in any circumstance whatever" to read the classics of Homer and Virgil where a like incident has occurred without detracting from the "bravery of his character." Upon viewing the figure of Adams in this predicament, the huntsman, instead of calling off his dogs, has spurred them on, declaring "it was the largest jack-hare he ever saw". (III,6)

Fielding now calls upon a muse, "whoever thou art," who "presidest over biography, and hast inspired all the writers of lives in these our times" to assist him in what he finds himself "unequal to":

> Do thou introduce on the plain, the young, the gay, the brave Joseph Andrews, whilst men shall view him with admiration and envy, tender virgins with love and anxious concern for his safety. (III,6)

The detailed history of a weapon is a standard convention in the classic epic, and Fielding burlesques the diction of such history in the detailed account of Joseph's cudgel which he will use to fend off the dogs:

> No sooner did Joseph Andrews perceive the distress of his friend, when first the quick-scenting dogs attacked him, than he grasped his cudgel in his right hand; a cudgel which his father had of his grandfather, to whom a mighty strong man of Kent had given it for a present in that day when he broke three heads on the stage. It was a cudgel of mighty strength and wonderful art, made by one of Mr. Deard's best workmen, whom no other artificer can equal, and who hath made all those sticks which the beaux have lately walked with about the Park in a morning; but this was far his masterpiece. On its head was engraved a nose and chin, which might have been mistaken for a pair of nutcrackers. The learned have imagined it designed to

> represent the Gorgon; but is was in fact copied from the face of a certain long English baronet, of infinite wit, humour, and gravity. He did intend to have engraved here many histories: as the first night of Captain B___'s play, where you would have seen critics in embroidery transplanted from the boxes to the pit, whose ancient inhabitants were exalted to the galleries, where they played on catcalls. He did intend to have an auction-room, where Mr. Cock would have appeared aloft in his pulpit, trumpeting forth the praises of a china basin, and with astonishment wondering that, "nobody bids more for that fine, that superb"--He did intend to have engraved many other things, but was forced to leave all out for want of room. (III,6)

One wonders what is happening to poor Mr. Adams while the author interrupts the action to give this historical account of the weapon. The diction, imitating the heroic manner of Cervantes, is elevated to burlesque the lowness of the subject. The cudgel is more of a billy club than a weapon of great valor. It is "low"--a weapon carried by foot travelers to ward off danger--not an instrument for heroic combat. Notice the triviality of the subject matter which is treated so majestically: it was made "by one of Mr. Deard's best workmen" who was a toymaker; and the first night of "Captain B___'s play" which was to be historically engraved on the head of the cudgel was a reference to a play which closed the first night. The audience was refunded the admission price because the play was so dull.

The battle continues:

> No sooner had Joseph grasped his cudgel in his hands than lightning darted from his eyes; and the heroic youth, swift of foot, ran with the utmost speed to his friend's assistance. He overtook him just as Rockwood had laid hold of the skirt of his cassock, which being torn, hung to the ground, (III,6)

The burlesque of the diction here gives Joseph a very heroic nature as "lightning darted from his eyes" and he was "swift of foot." The name given the hound that was heatedly pursuing Adams is a very noble and heroic name--Rockwood--indicating that he possesses great strength and valour as well as a heroic nature (III,6).

In the thick of this scene the author again chooses to interrupt, this time with a heroic comparison to Joseph's valour. However, he is unable to think of a comparison but interrupts anyway:

> Reader, we would make a simile on this occasion, but for two reasons: the first is, it would interrupt the description, which should be rapid in this part; but that doth not weigh much, many precedents occurring for such an interruption: the second, and much the greater reason, is, that we could find no simile adequate to our purpose: for, indeed, what instance could we bring to set before our reader's eyes at once the idea of friendship, courage, youth, beauty, strength, and swiftness? all which blazed in the person of Joseph Andrews. Let those therefore that describe lions and tigers, and heroes fiercer than both, raise their poems or plays with the simile of Joseph Andrews, who is himself above the reach of any simile. (III,6)

He justifies his interruption by the fact that "many precedents /have occurred/ for such an interruption," indicating his parody of the practice in the classic epic.

The action now resumes with rapid description and is perhaps the most skillful parody of the periphrastic style in the epic that can be found.

> Now Rockwood had laid fast hold on the parson's skirts, and stopt his flight; which Joseph no sooner perceived than he levelled his cudgel at his head and

> laid him sprawling. Jowler and Ringwood then fell on his great-coat, and had undoubtedly brought him to the ground, had not Joseph, collecting all his force, given Jowler such a rap on the back, that, quitting his hold, he ran, howling over the plain. A harder fate remained for thee, O Ringwood! Ringwood, the best hound that ever pursued a hare, who never threw his tongue but where the scent was undoubtedly true; good at trailing, and sure in a highway; no babbler, no over-runner; respected by the whole pack, who, whenever he opened, knew the game was at hand. He fell by the stroke of Joseph. Thunder and Plunder, and Wonder and Blunder, were the next victims of his wrath, and measured their lengths on the ground. Then Fairmaid, a bitch which Mr. John Temple had bred up in his house, and fed at his own table, and lately sent the squire fifty miles for a present, ran fiercer than she, being descended from an Amazonian breed, and had worried bulls in her own country, and now waged an unequal fight, and had shared the fate of those we have mentioned before, had not Diana (the reader may believe or not if he pleases) in that instant interposed, and, in the shape of the huntsman, snatched her favourite up in her arms.
>
> The parson now faced about, and with his crab-stick felled many to the earth, and scattered others, till he was attacked by Caesar and pulled to the ground. Then Joseph flew to his rescue, and with such might fell on the victor, that O eternal blot to his name! Caesar ran yelping away. (III,6)

The catalogue of worriors here--Ringwood, Thunder and Plunder, and Wonder and Blunder, Fairmaid, and Caesar--is characteristic of the heroic epic. Each hound, is described in accordance with his reputation. Fairmaid is so valued that the gods interpose to save her, a favorite machine of the classicists to turn the tide in a battle. In this case the benefactor is Diana, but in the shape of the huntsman. The mocking tone of the diction is so delightful to the reader that he is almost unaware of the baseness of the subject, although the incongruity between it and the

diction is what springs his delight. The battle continues, but not for long:

> The battle now raged with the most dreadful violence, when, lo! the huntsman, a man of years and dignity, lifted his voice, and called his hounds from the fight; telling them, in a language they understood, that it was in vain to contend longer, for that fate had decreed the victory to their enemies.
>
> Thus far the muse hath with her usual dignity related this prodigious battle, a battle, we apprehend, never equalled by any poet, romance or life writer whatever, and, having brought it to a conclusion, she ceased: we shall therefore proceed in our ordinary style with the continuation of this history. (III,6)

In a burlesque of the heroic style, the huntsman recalled his hounds because "fate had decreed the victory to their enemies."

Fielding recalls to the reader that the muse has related this "battle" with her "usual dignity" and that he will return to his ordinary style for the remainder of the story, thus leaving his burlesque in diction for a while. This "battle," as Fielding calls it, is the most heroic of all encounters which he describes in his novel. Other encounters employ the use of the burlesque in diction but not the obvious parody of the conventions of the heroic epic.

The next battle ensues when the huntsman discovers Fanny, who is nursing Adams and Joseph from the last foray, and desires her. The three travelers escaped the huntsman and his ill-natured friends to an inn where they spent the night. Some of the huntsman's men pursued them and were unsuccessful in snatching

Fanny without first battling Adams and Joseph. A man called the Captain

> was leveling a blow at his head, which would probably have silenced the preacher for ever, had not Joseph in that instant lifted up a certain huge stone pot of the chamber with one hand, which six beaux could have lifted with both, and discharged it, together with the contents, full in the captain's face. The uplifted hanger dropped from his hand, and he fell prostrated on the floor with a lumpish noise, and his halfpence rattled in his pocket; the red liquor which his veins contained, and the white liquor which the pot contained ran in one stream down his face and his clothes. Nor had Adams quite escaped, some of the water having in its passage shed its honours on his head, and began to trickle down the wrinkles or rather furrows of his cheeks, when one of the servants, snatching a mop out of a pail of water which had already done its duty in washing the house, pushed it in the parson's face; yet could not he bear him down, for the parson, wresting the mop from the fellow with one hand, with his other brought the enemy as low as the earth, having given him a stroke over that part of the face where, in some men of pleasure, the natural and artificial noses are conjoined. (III,9)

The scene borders on caricature in description as one envisions the virtuous Adams covered with the contents of the chamber pot, but the delight in the situation is heightened by the dexterity of the diction in avoiding the lowness which is appropriate to the scene. Instead of hitting the captain on the nose with the mop, he "brought the enemy as low as the earth, having given him a stroke over that part of the face where, in some men of pleasure, the natural and artificial noses are conjoined." The exaggeration of the diction calls forth the comic that would not be present in language not colored by burlesque.

The gods in the guise of Fortune intervene in this battle,

however, and Joseph and Adams are not the victors:

> Hitherto Fortune seemed to incline the victory on the travelers' side, when, according to her custom, she began to show the fickleness of her disposition; for now the host entering the field, or rather chamber, of battle, flew directly at Joseph, and darting his head into his stomach (for he was a stout fellow, and an expert boxer) almost staggered him: but Joseph stepping one leg back, did with his left hand so chuck him under the chin that he reeled. The youth was pursuing his blow with his right hand, when he received from one of the servants such a stroke with a cudgel on his temples, that it instantly deprived him of sense, and he measured his length on the ground.
>
> Fanny rent the air with her cries; and Adams was coming to the assistance of Joseph; but the two serving-men and the host now fell on him, and soon subdued him, though he fought like a madman, and looked so black with the impressions he had received from the mop, that Don Quixote would certainly have taken him for an enchanted Moor. But now follows the most tragical part; for the captain was risen again, and seeing Joseph on the floor, and Adams secured, he instantly laid hold on Fanny, and, with the assistance of the poet and player, who, hearing the battle was over were now come up, dragged her, crying and tearing her hair, from the sight of Joseph, and, with a perfect deafness to all her entreaties, carried her down stairs by violence, and fastened her on the player's horse; and the captain mounting his own, and leading that on which this poor miserable wretch was, departed, without any more consideration of her cries than a butcher hath of those of a lamb; for indeed his thoughts were entertained only with the degree of favour which he promised himself from the squire on the success of this adventure. (III,9)

The delight here is not in so great a degree as other instances as it arrives only from cleverness of the mock-heroic diction.

Fielding uses Fanny as the reason for another battle. Back at the parish she was walking in a lane where she had appointed

to meet Joseph. A young gentleman on horseback accosted her with much passion but she was able to fend him off as he was "not of the Herculean race." He left his servant, however, to negotiate for him while he paid a visit to Lady Booby, his relative.

> The trusty fellow, who was employed in an office he had been long accustomed to, discharged his part with all the fidelity and dexterity imaginable; but to no purpose. She was entirely deaf to his offers, and rejected them with the utmost disdain. At last the pimp, who had perhaps more warm blood about him than his master, began to solicit for himself; he told her, though he was a servant, he was a man of some fortune, which he would make her mistress of--and this without any insult to her virtue, for that he would marry her. She answered, if his master himself, or the greatest lord in the land, would marry her, she would refuse him. At last, being weary with persuasions, and on fire with charms which would have almost kindled a flame in the bosom of an ancient philosopher, or modern divine, he fastened his horse to the ground, and attacked her with much more force than the gentleman had exerted. Poor Fanny would not have been able to resist his rudeness a short time, but the deity who presides over chaste love sent her Joseph to her assistance. He no sooner came within sight, and perceived her struggling with a man, than like a cannon ball, or like lightning, or any thing that is swifter, if any thing be, he ran towards her, and coming up just as the ravisher had torn her handkerchief from her breast, before his lips had touched that seat of innocence and bliss, he dealt him so lusty a blow in that part of his neck which a rope would have become with the utmost propriety, that the fellow staggered backwards, and perceiving that he had to do with something rougher than the little, tender, trembling hand of Fanny, he quitted her, and turning about, saw his rival, with fire flashing from his eyes, again ready to assail him; and, indeed before he could well defend himself, or return the first blow, he received a second, which, had fallen on that part of the stomach to which it was directed, would have been probably the last he would have had any occasion for; for the ravisher lifting up his hand, drove the blow upwards to his mouth, whence it dislodged three of his teeth; and now not conceiving

> any extraordinary affection for the beauty of Joseph's person, nor being extremely pleased with this method of salutation, he collected all his force, and aimed a blow at Joseph's breast, which he artfully parried with one fist, so that it lost its force entirely in the air; and stepping one foot backward, he darted his fist so fiercely at his enemy, that had he not caught it in his hand (for he was a boxer of no inferior fame) it must have tumbled him on the ground. And now the ravisher meditated another blow, which he aimed at that part of the breast where the heart is lodged; Joseph did not catch it as before, yet so prevented its aim, that it fell directly on his nose, but with abated force. Joseph then moving both fist and foot forwards at the same time, threw his head so dexterously into the stomach of the ravisher, that he fell a lifeless lump on the field, where he lay many minutes breathless and motionless. (IV,7)

Fielding does not burlesque as much of the diction in this battle but he does burlesque the tactics of battle which are characteristic of the serious epic. Homer did not usually fight his battles over the virtue of a young maiden, especially a servant girl. Helen of Troy was a stolen queen who must be returned for reasons not romantic, so Fielding is not burlesquing or parodying a situation from Homer. But he does have in common the intense business of the battle, complete with vivid description. This example would perhaps be one of the weakest ones of the burlesque in the battle, because the diction describing the battle is not so anachronous with the reason for the battle, which is the heroic defense of a woman's virtue by her betrothed. Our delight arises in this passage with the careful diction of Fielding which burlesques a more polite diction to prevent vulgar usage. An example is the blow which Joseph directs at the ravisher which, "had it fallen on that part of the stomach to which

it was directed, would have been probably the last he would have had occasion for."

One of the most entertaining interruptions in a battle came when Adams rescued a maiden, who turned out to be Fanny, from a ravisher. The exaggerated and burlesqued diction describing the brains of the ravisher is among the most delightful in the novel. Adams lifted his crabstick and

> levelled a blow at that part of the ravisher's head, where, according to the opinion of the ancients, the brains of some persons are deposited, and which he had undoubtedly let forth, had not Nature (who, as wise men have observed, equips all creatures with what is most expedient for them) taken a provident care (as she always doth with those she intends for encounters) to make this part of the head three times as thick as those of ordinary men, who are designed to exercise talents which are vulgarly called rational, and for whom, as necessary, she is obliged to leave some room for them in the cavity of the skull; whereas, those ingredients being entirely useless to persons of the heroic calling, she hath an opportunity of thickening the bone, so as to make it less subject to any impression, or liable to be cracked or broken; and indeed, in some who are predestined to the command of armies and empires, she is supposed sometimes to make that part perfectly solid. (II,9)

Aside from the battles, Fielding colors his descriptions with a delightful use of the mock-heroic diction. One such instance is the passionate parting between Joseph and Fanny:

> A thousand sighs heaved the bosom of Joseph, a thousand tears distilled from the lovely eyes of Fanny (for that was her name). Though her violent love made her more passive in his embraces; and she often pulled him to her breast with a soft pressure, which, though perhaps it would not have squeezed an insect to death, caused more emotion in the heart of Joseph, than the closest Cornish hug could have done. (I,11)

The exaggeration of the heroic description interspersed with

such ludicrous comparisons as squeezing an insect to death and a Cornish hug which implies the wrestling holds of wrestlers in Cornwall invoke delight and laughter from the knowledgeable reader.

Joseph continues to be exaggeratedly heroic in his love for Fanny. When he fears he is going to die from a beating, he fetches a deep sigh and cries, "Poor Fanny, I would I could have lived to see thee! but God's will be done" (I,13). His heroic love for Fanny extended to a little gold piece which she had given him--"not to preserve my life from starving, nor to redeem it from a robber, would I part with this dear piece!" (I,2) he answers when the hostess demands it in payment for boarding Adams' horse.

Nor was Fanny incapable of the heroic love which she held for Joseph. Joseph and Fanny had just been reunited in an inn. Adams, who had smoked three pipes, dropped off to sleep and left the couple

> to enjoy by themselves, during some hours, a happiness of which none of my readers who have never been in love are capable of the least conception, though we had as many tongues as Homer desired to describe it with, and which all true lovers will represent to their own minds, without the least assistance from us.
>
> Let it suffice then to say, that Fanny, after a thousand entreaties, at last gave up her whole soul to Joseph; and almost fainting in his arms, with a sigh infinitely softer and sweeter too than any Arabian breeze, she whispered to his lips, which were then close to hers, "O Joseph, you have won me; I will be yours for ever." (II,13)

Fielding calls attention to the incongruity between the heroic diction and the matter himself in this last passage in which Joseph has failed to keep Fanny from being carried away by

a ravisher:

> Joseph so sooner came perfectly to himself, than, perceiving his mistress gone, he bewailed her loss with groans which would have pierced any heart but those which are possessed by some people, and are made of a certain composition, not unlike flint in its hardness and other properties; for you may strike fire from them, which will dart through the eyes, but they can never distil one drop of water the same way. His own, poor youth, was of a softer composition; and at those words, "O my dear Fanny! O my love! shall I never, never see thee more!" his eyes overflowed with tears, which would have become anything but a hero. In a word, his despair was more easy to be conceived than related. (III,11)

One of the main points which Fielding makes about his theory is that it is written in prose--not poetry. Nevertheless he burlesques the inflated poetic images, such as personification and simile, characteristic of Pope's Homer. The result is delightful, giving his prose work an aesthetic sound of poetry. The first image sets the time which Joseph must visit Lady Booby at her beckoning:

> Now the rake Hesperus had called for his breeches, and having well rubbed his drowsy eyes, prepared to dress himself for all night; by whose example his brother rakes on earth likewise leave those beds in which they had slept away the day. Now Thetis, the good housewife, began to put on the pot, in order to regale the good man Phoebus after his daily labors were over. In vulgar language, it was the evening when Joseph attended his lady's orders. (I,8)

Fielding delights in double meanings such as the one implied in the "brother rakes on earth." In other places in the novel he has at times employed this double meaning which is not wholly burlesque in diction and which descends to that false wit which plays with words. One such instance is the description of Betty,

the chambermaid's, love affairs: "While she burnt for him, several others burnt for her. Officers of the army, young gentlemen travelling the western circuit, inoffensive squires, and some of graver characters, were set afire by her charms!" (I,18) Another is the offensive wit of the lawyer in his teasing of Joseph in his naked state in the coach after his beating. (I,12)

Another example of the poetic personification that elevates from the vulgar setting is one which describes the morning after Joseph has been brought to an inn nearly dead from a beating:

> Aurora now began to show her blooming cheeks over the hills, whilst ten millions of feathered songsters, in jocund chorus, repeated odes a thousand times sweeter than those of our laureat, and sung both the day and the song; when the master of the inn, Mr. Tow-wouse, arose, and learning from his maid an account of the robbery, and the situation of his poor naked guest, he shook his head, and cried, "good-lack-a-day!" and then ordered the girl to carry him one of his own shirts. (I,12)

A third personification that lends a poetic setting also concerns the morning after Adams, Joseph, and Fanny have spent the night with the Wilson's on their journey home. Mrs. Wilson always takes a morning walk in the garden.

> That beautiful young lady the Morning now rose from her bed, and with a countenance blooming with fresh youth and sprightliness, like Miss ____, with soft dews hanging on her pouting lips, began to take her early walk over the eastern hills; and presently after, that gallant person the Sun stole softly from his wife's chamber to pay his addresses to her; when the gentleman asked his guest if he would walk forth and survey his little garden; which he readily agreed to; and Joseph at the same time awaking from a sleep, in which he had been two hours buried, went with them. (III,4)

Fielding's burlesque of personification seems to raise burlesque above its reputed lowness. It does not solicit a raucus laughter. Rather it affords the reader delight in the beauty of the moment before he is brought back to a vulgar setting. The laughter, of course, springs from the incongruity.

The burlesque of the epic simile also, inadvertently, serves as an interruption in the action in some cases. Numerous examples of the burlesque of the epic simile appear in Joseph Andrews. The delight in these passages arises from the incongruity evident between an inferior action and its comparison to a more noble circumstance. The most humorous that borders almost on caricature is a description of Mrs. Slipslop while attempting to seduce Joseph:

> As when a hungry tigress, who long has traversed the woods in fruitless search, sees within the reach of her claws a lamb, she prepares to leap on her prey; or as a voracious pike, of immense size, surveys through the liquid element a roach or gudgeon which cannot escape her jaws, opens them wide to swallow the little fish; so did Mrs. Slipslop prepare to lay her violent amorous hands on the poor Joseph. . . . (I, VI)

Either comparison to a hungry tigress or a voracious pike is not at all flattering to the frustrated Mrs. Slipslop. She becomes a comic character when her attempt to seduce Joseph is compared to the violence attendant upon survival. It is the gross exaggeration here that causes critics to accuse Fielding of employing "low" burlesque that extends to men and manners--not just the diction.

It could be argued that Fielding caricatures, but he

generally controls his diction so carefully that the burlesque does not extend to the character. Probably influenced by the sentimentalism that was taking the sting from the low forms of wit, his comic effect arising from the burlesque was often accompanied by pity for the comic character. Although Mrs. Slipslop provides laughter through Fielding's exaggerated description of her intent, she also becomes a pitiful creature because she cannot control her desires, though the reader feels little sympathy for her.

Another simile describes Lady Booby's response when Joseph tells her he hopes to keep his virtue after she has as much as said he may have his way with her body:

> You have heard, reader, poets talk of the statue of Surprise; You have heard likewise, or else you have heard very little how surprise made one of the sons of Croesus speak, though he was dumb. You have seen the faces, in the eighteenpenny gallery, when, through the trapdoor, to soft or no music, Mr. Bridgewater, Mr. William Mills, or some other of ghostly appearance, hath ascended, with a face all pale with powder, and a shirt all blood, with ribands; --but from none of these, nor from Phidias or Praxiteles, if they should return to life--no, not from the inimitable pencil of my friend Hogarth, could you receive such an idea of surprise, as would have entered in at your eyes had they beheld the Lady Booby, when those last words issued out from the lips of Joseph-- (I,8)

Fielding paints another expression on one of his characters as he did on Lady Booby in her surprise at Joseph's reply. Parson Trulliber also becomes the recipient of a caricatured expression when he discovers that Parson Adams has not come to buy some of his prize hogs. Instead he has come to borrow seven shillings:

> Suppose a stranger, who entered the chambers of a lawyer, being imagined a client, when the lawyer was

> preparing his palm for the fee, should pull out a writ against him. Suppose an apothecary, at the door of a chariot containing some great doctor of eminent skill, should instead of directions to a patient, present him with a potion for himself. Suppose a minister should, instead of a round sum, treat my lord--, or Sir--, or Esq.--, with a good broomstick. Suppose a civil companion, or a lead captain, should, instead of virtue, and honour, and beauty, and parts, and admiration; thunder vice, and infamy, and ugliness, and folly, and contempt, in his patron's ears. Suppose when a tradesman first carries in his bill, the man of fashion should pat it; or suppose, if he did so, the tradesman should abate what he had overcharged, on the supposition of waiting. In short,--suppose what you will, you never can nor will suppose any thing equal to the astonishment which seized on Trulliber, as soon as Adams had ended his speech. A while he rolled his eyes in silence; sometimes surveying Adams, then his wife; then casting them on the ground, then lifting them up to heaven. (II,14)

Some epic similes in Joseph Andrews tend to appear quite serious and almost moralizing out of context, for their delight is dependent upon the subject of comparison. For instance, the thief who robbed Joseph is caught and placed in a room for safe-keeping. He is guarded by the constable and the man who caught him, who will probably receive a reward. The captor leaves the constable to watch the thief while he goes to the kitchen of the inn for refreshment. The constable, alone in the room with the thief, discovers himself sleepy and figures with himself how he can take a nap without the captive overtaking him and escaping. The solution he chooses is to go outside the room and post his chair at the door so that the thief cannot get away. Unhappily, he forgets about the window in the room and the thief takes advantage of it. A seemingly serious simile then presents itself

to the author and some delight to the reader.

> But human life, as hath been discovered by some great man or other (for I would by no means be understood to affect that honor of making any such discovery), very much resembles a game at chess; for as in the latter, while a gamester is too attentive to secure himself very strongly on one side of the board, he is apt to leave an unguarded opening on the other; so doth it often happen in life; and so did it happen on this occasion; for whilst the cautious constable with such wonderful sagacity had possessed himself of the door, he most unhappily forgot the window.
>
> The thief who played on the other side, no sooner perceived this opening, than he began to move that way; and finding the passage easy, he took with him the young fellow's hat, and without any ceremony stepped into the street and made the best of his way. (I,16)

One simile that borders on the ridiculous is a particularly delightful one which describes the scene in which Fanny is nearly raped by a fellow traveler but is rescued by Parson Adams who happens to be nearby:

> As a game cock, when engaged in amorous toying with a hen, if perchance he espies another cock at hand, immediately quits his female and opposes himself to his rival; so did the ravisher, on the information of the crabstick, immediately leap from the woman, and hasten to assail the man. (II,9)

Consequently, Parson Adams finds himself in another heroic combat.

Another simile paints a scene in which the reader, who is already acquainted with the characters of the novel, delights in the consistency of virtue in both Adams and Joseph. Finding only one horse between them for transportation, an argument ensued:

> Perhaps, reader, thou hast seen a contest between two gentlemen or two ladies quickly decided, though they have both asserted they would not eat such a

> nice morsel, and each insisted on the other's accepting it; but in reality both were very desirous to swallow it themselves. Do not therefore conclude hence, that this dispute would have come to a speedy decision: for here both parties were heartily in earnest, and it is very probably they would have remained in the inn yard to this day, had not the good Peter Pounce put a stop to it . . . . (III,12)

One of the most comical comparisons is the one made of Parson Adams when he innocently and unknowingly slept with Fanny during that hapless night in Booby Hall:

> As the cat or lap-dog of some lovely nymph, for whom ten thousand lovers languish, lies quietly by the side of the charming maid, and ignorant of the scene of delight on which they repose, meditates capture of a mouse, or surprisal of a plate of bread and butter, so Adams lay by the side of Fanny, ignorant of the paradise to which he was so near; nor could the emanation of sweets which flowed from her breath, overpower the fumes of tobacco which played in the parson's nostrils. (IV,14)

Besides the near burlesque in Fielding's similes, the reader may discover other instances in his work where the burlesque is not confined to the diction. For instance, there are the surprise meetings in the novel reminiscent of the epic romance: Joseph and Adams in the inn when Joseph is supposedly dying from a hyjacking; the surprise meeting of Joseph with Adams and Fanny; the rescue by Mrs. Slipslop in an inn of all three travelers. There is the contrived ending of the novel in which Fanny and Joseph are thought to be brother and sister for a while until it is discovered that Fanny is the sister of Pamela and Joseph is the son of Mr. Wilson.

Lord Byron was to argue that Fielding's burlesque did not descend to vulgarity, however. In his Letters he commented upon Fielding's control:

> It /vulgarity/ does not depend upon low themes, or even low language, for Fielding revels in both,--but is he ever vulgar? No, you see the man of education, the gentleman and the scholar, sporting with his subject--its master, not its slave.[12]

Byron's contemporary, William Hazlitt, though not commenting directly on Fielding's work, also defended the use of burlesque, a term which he interchanged with parody and travesty:

> The secret of parody lies merely in transposing or applying at a venture to any thing, or to the lowest objects, that which is applicable only to certain given things, or to the highest matters. 'From the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step.' The slightest want of unity of impression destroys the sublime; the detection of the smallest incongruity is an infallible ground to rest the ludicrous upon. But in serious poetry, which aims at riveting our affections, every blow must tell home. The missing a single time is fatal, and undoes the spell. We see how difficult it is to sustain a continued flight of impressive sentiment: how easy it must be then to travesty or burlesque it, to flounder into nonsense, and be witty by playing the fool. It is a common mistake, however, to suppose that parodies degrade, or imply a stigma on the subject; on the contrary, they in general imply something serious or sacred in the originals. Without this they would be good for nothing; for the immediate contrast would be wanting, and with this they are sure to tell. The best parodies are, accordingly, the best and most striking things reversed. Witness the common travesties of Homer and Virgil.[13]

Though bordering on burlesque that exceeds diction, Fielding's poetic imagery merely serves to give his prose work a poetic quality that transcends the lowness of the traditional burlesque.

If it seems that he has violated his rules at any time, an examination will reveal that he, like his contemporary English writers, did not allow rules to stand in the way when it interfered with what was effective and most consistent with the entire work. The skillful use of the burlesque in Joseph Andrews to make the novel comic simply proves that the author is in complete control of his work.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Thornbury, p. 98, quoting Aristotle's Poetics, ed. Lane Cooper, pp. 11-12.

[2]Thornbury, p. 98. According to Sir Paul Harvey, The Oxford Companion to English Literature, 4th ed. (Oxford, 1967), the Batramyomachia and the Margites were erroneously ascribed to Homer.

[3]Kames, p. 200.

[4]Quoted in Digeon, p. 233.

[5]Cross, p. 315.

[6]Kames, p. 200.

[7]Mack, ed., p. xii.

[8]Thornbury, pp. 7-19.

[9]Cross, pp. 321-323.

[10]Dudden, p. 339.

[11]Digeon, p. 83.

[12]Alan D. McKillop, The Early Masters of English Fiction (Lawrence, Kansas, 1956), p. 110.

[13]Quoted in Kames, p. 204.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Joseph Andrews is a burlesque work reflecting the spirit of a changing age, an age in which the traditional concept of burlesque is tempered by Fielding with a benevolence characteristic of an oncoming age. The traditional concept of burlesque, according to the earliest definitions of burlesque, was that exaggeration and caricature ridiculed and mocked manners and works, thus provoking laughter and merriment. Often the exaggeration was so gross that it was not acceptable in polite society as literary art. As a result, the burlesque style was considered trivial and low. Nevertheless it served some of the greatest writers of the day--Swift, Pope, Gay--as an effective vehicle for wit. Aware of its popular use, Shaftesbury noted that "the ablest negotiators have been known the notablest buffoons; the most celebrated authors, the greatest masters of burlesque."[1]

Fielding's own background in writing was influenced by the traditional definition of burlesque. Before turning to the novel, Fielding enjoyed some great success with his dramatic comedies which he called farces.[2] Among these were The Author's Farce, The Tragedy of Tragedies, and Pasquin. Winfield Rogers, a twentieth

century critic, explores Fielding's theory in his Fielding's Early Aesthetic and Technique. He believes that Fielding's farce was synonymous with traditional burlesque except that farce begins with life while burlesque begins with some piece of literature or literary style.[3] With the possible exception of The Tragedy of Tragedies, he believes that Fielding never wrote a pure burlesque.[4]

Rogers' belief may be valid since Fielding's theory of burlesque which he presents in his Preface to Joseph Andrews departs theoretically from the traditional definition of burlesque. Logically, his readers would assume that Joseph Andrews would fall into the same vein, much as his earlier Shamela had in spoofing Pamela. Perhaps, as has been suggested, he did begin the novel as another burlesque of Pamela, but somewhere in the writing of it his own comic theory began to take shape. As a result, the reader finds that Fielding's burlesque takes on a benevolence never before associated with it--that of eliminating ridicule except in the manner. Since there are no apparent dictionary listings of the word from 1719 to 1755, it is possible that the word had become divergent in its meaning and usage anyway. Significantly, however, Fielding articulated his theory in the years when a spirit of sentimentality was markedly altering the literary spirit of the age. The resulting benevolence which gained strength in the romantic age altered the attitude of burlesque so that its sharp ridicule gave way to a more benign mock-heroic style, or parody.

As Martin C. Battestin has noted, Fielding had a moral basis

to his art. The purpose of the ridicule in the novel was to instruct and delight the reader by making him laugh at the affectations of vanity and hypocrisy in others. The benevolence extended to his theory of the ridiculous allowed no ridicule of any deformity or unnatural thing unless it exhibited vanity or hypocrisy. With the separation of the ridicule of men and manners from a burlesque which was confined strictly to diction, Fielding limited the moral function of burlesque. But perhaps in limiting it strictly to delight he accorded to it the most desirable function in the novel. In the Preface he points out that his chief purpose in including burlesque is for the entertainment of the learned reader. And this very characteristic is what makes the novel a comic work.

The mock-heroic was an accepted style in the eighteenth century, illustrated in the classic work by Pope, The Rape of the Lock. In the definition of burlesque in 1719 one of its characteristics was "a mock Poetry." Fielding does not call Joseph Andrews a mock-heroic work, but his distinction that burlesque will be admitted only in the diction relates his work specifically to the mock heroic. Other likenesses have already been noted. Rogers' study identifies burlesque in diction as the mock heroic. It is interesting to speculate why Fielding so carefully theorized upon his "parodies and burlesque imitations" when he could have easily called his comic element mock heroic. Perhaps the knowledge that his work would automatically be labeled burlesque led him to defend it by diverting the reader's attention to a variation on burlesque.

Perhaps the terminology more accurately suited his intention.

Whatever the reasons for Fielding's particular articulation of his theory, it remains that Joseph Andrews is a comic work because of a studied burlesque--a burlesque which Fielding manipulates in order to place his novel as a representative work of the divergent spirit of the age in which it was written.

FOOTNOTES

[1]"Freedom of Wit and Humour," Characteristics, I, 44.

[2]Rogers, "Fielding's Early Aesthetic and Technique," p. 27.

[3]Ibid., p. 30.

[4]Ibid., p. 26.

A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Addison, Joseph. The Spectator, Nos. 58-62 (1711). The British Essayists; with Prefaces, ed. Robert Lynam. Vol. IV. London, 1827.

Anderson, George K. and William Buckler. The Literature of England. Vol. I. Chicago, 1966.

Battestin, Martin C. "Lord Hervey's Role in Joseph Andrews." Philological Quarterly, XLII (April 1963), 226-241.

_____. The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art: A Study of JOSEPH ANDREWS. Middletown, Conn., 1959.

Baugh, Albert C. A Literary History of England. New York, 1948.

Bond, Richmond P. English Burlesque Poetry. Cambridge, Mass., 1932.

Brett, R. L. The Third Earl of Shaftesbury: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory. London, 1951.

"Burlesque," New International Encyclopedia. 1920. IV, 181.

"Burlesque," Oxford English Dictionary. 1961. II, 1189.

Coley, W. B. "The Background of Fielding's Laughter." ELH, XXVI, 229-252.

Cross, Wilbur L. The History of Henry Fielding. 3 vols. New Haven, 1918.

Dennis, John. The Critical Works of John Dennis, ed. Edward Niles Hooker. Baltimore, 1939.

Digeon, Aurelien. The Novels of Fielding. New York, 1925.

Dryden, John. Essays of John Dryden, ed. W. P. Ker. Oxford, 1926.

Dudden, F. Homes. Henry Fielding. Oxford, 1952.

Dyson, A. E. "Satiric and Comic Theory in Relation to Fielding." Modern Language Quarterly, XVIII (September 1957), 225-237.

Fielding, Henry. Joseph Andrews, ed. Maynard Mack. New York, 1966.

_____. Tom Jones, ed. Frank Kermode. New York, 1963.

Gay, John. The Beggar's Opera, ed. C. F. Burgess. New York, 1966.

Goggin, L. P. "Development of Techniques in Fielding's Comedies," PMLA, LXVII (September 1952), 769-781.

Hibbett, Howard S. "Saikaku and Burlesque Fiction." Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, XX (June 1957), 53-73.

Irwin, W. R. "Satire and Comedy in the Works of Henry Fielding." ELH, XIII, 168-188.

Johnson, Samuel. A Dictionary of the English Language (1755), facsimile edition. 2 vols. New York, 1967.

Kames, Henry Home, Lord of. Elements of Criticism (1761), ed. James R. Boyd. New York, 1883.

Kitchin, George. A Survey of Burlesque and Parody in English. Edinburgh, 1921.

Lauter, Paul, ed. Theories of Comedy. Garden City, New York, 1964.

McKillop, Alan D. The Early Masters of English Fiction. Lawrence, Kansas, 1956.

Milburn, D. Judson. The Age of Wit: 1650-1750. New York, 1966.

Moulton, Charles Wells, ed. The Library of Literary Criticism of English and American Authors. Vol. III. New York, 1935.

"Parody," Oxford English Dictionary. 1961. XIV, 489.

Rogers, Winfield H. "Fielding's Early Aesthetic and Technique." Fielding, ed. Ronald Paulson. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1962.

Saintsbury, George. Fielding. London, 1909.

Shaftesbury, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of. Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times, etc. (1732), ed. John M. Robertson. Vol. I. Gloucester, Mass., 1963.

Sherburn, George. "Fielding's Social Outlook." Philological Quarterly, XXXV (January 1956), 1-23.

Spilka, Mark. "Comic Resolution in Fielding's Joseph Andrews." College English, XV (October 1953), 11-19.

Spingarn, Joel E., ed. Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century. 3 vols. Oxford, 1908-1909.

Stephen, Leslie. Alexander Pope. New York, n. d.

Thornbury, Ethel M. Henry Fielding's Theory of the Comic Prose Epic. New York, 1966.

Urwin, G. G. Humorists of the Eighteenth Century. London, 1962.

Zimansky, Curt A., ed. The Critical Works of Thomas Rymer. New Haven, 1956.

VITA

Anna Colleen Polk

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BURLESQUE ASPECTS OF JOSEPH ANDREWS, A NOVEL BY HENRY FIELDING

Major Field: English

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, October 5, 1942, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. A. Q. Polk.

Education: Graduated from Will Rogers High School, Tulsa, Oklahoma, in May, 1960; attended Northeastern State College, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, from 1960 to 1964; received the Bachelor of Arts degree from Northeastern State College in May, 1964, with a major in English and a minor in Spanish; attended Oklahoma State University the summers of 1964, 1965, and 1967, and the academic year 1964-65; completed requirements for the Master of Arts degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1969.

Professional Experience: Graduate teaching assistant, English Department, Oklahoma State University, 1964-65; Instructor of English, Northern Oklahoma College, Tonkawa, Oklahoma, 1965-69.

Professional Organizations: National Education Association, Oklahoma Education Association, Northern Oklahoma College OEA Unit, National Council of Teachers of English, Conference on College Composition and Communication.