

HENRY FIELDING AS A POLITICAL PLAYWRIGHT

**Pamukkale University
Social Sciences Institution
Master of Arts Thesis
Western Languages and Literatures Department
Department of English Language and Literature**

Sevda KAPLAN

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Meryem AYAN

**September 2013
DENİZLİ**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ ONAY FORMU

Batı Dilleri ve Edebiyatları Anabilim Dalı, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Bilim Dalı öğrencisi Sevda KAPLAN tarafından Yrd. Doç. Dr. Meryem AYAN yönetiminde hazırlanan "Henry Fielding as a Political Playwright (Siyasi Oyun Yazarı Olarak Henry Fielding)" başlıklı tez aşağıdaki jüri üyeleri tarafından 19.09.2013 tarihinde yapılan tez savunma sınavında başarılı bulunmuş ve Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.



Doç. Dr. Mehmet Ali ÇELİKEL

Jüri Başkanı



Jüri-Danışman

Yard. Doç. Dr. Meryem AYAN



Yard. Doç. Dr. Recep Şahin ARSLAN

Pamukkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Yönetim Kurulu'nun 15.11.2013 Tarih ve 21/20 Sayılı kararı ile onaylanmıştır.



Prof. Dr. Turhan KAÇAR

Enstitü Müdürü

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that as required by these rules and conduct I have fully cited and referenced all materials and results that are not original to this work.

Signature



Name, Last Name: Sevda KAPLAN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I find it a sense of obligation on my part to thank my reverend supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Meryem AYAN for her valuable assistance and guidance along with her smiling face, and correction of my mistakes with ceaseless patience in all the time of research and writing of this thesis. Her patience and illuminating suggestions have made the completion of this thesis possible. I am also deeply indebted to my lecturers Prof. Dr. Ertuğrul İŞLER, Associate Prof. Dr. Mehmet Ali ÇELİKEL, Assist. Prof. Dr. Cumhuriyet MADRAN, Assist. Prof. Dr. Yavuz ÇELİK, Assist. Prof. Dr. Şeyda İNCEOĞLU for their deep academic and cultural knowledge during my MA education. Lastly, I take this opportunity to present my sincere thanks to Pamukkale University for its financial support and to my parents for their unceasing help and encouragement, especially to my mother Perihan KAPLAN for her spiritual support while writing my thesis. The guidance and support received from the people mentioned above who contributed to my thesis are vital for the success of this thesis. I am grateful for their invaluable assistance.

ABSTRACT
HENRY FIELDING AS A POLITICAL PLAYWRIGHT

KAPLAN, Sevda
M.A. Thesis in English Literature
Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Meryem AYAN
September 2013, 57 Pages

This thesis project examines the political playwriting of Henry Fielding, who began his writing career by writing plays for stage, yet today generally known as a novelist. Fielding's political career the years between 1707-1754 under the light of political and social events casting their shadow on theatres with the imposition of the Licensing Act of 1737 is discussed in this work. Fielding's three important political plays *Rape Upon Rape*, *The Modern Husband*, and *The Tragedy of Tragedies: or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great* are analyzed from the political and social perspective.

The study consists of an introductory part, three main chapters, and a conclusion part. In the introduction part, the origin, aims, and characteristics of political theatre whose founder is Erwin Piscator are briefly introduced. In the first chapter, the Augustus period covering the first half of 18th century is studied and in the second chapter, Fielding's political playwriting maintaining his identity as a political playwright at Sir Robert Walpole's period is handled. Also in the third chapter, the characters in the plays called *Rape Upon Rape*, *The Modern Husband*, and *The Tragedy of Tragedies: or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great* and what they make references to as socially and politically are studied in a detailed way with Fielding's political perspective.

This study reveals the moral, social, and political collapse in this environment based on the corruption of the Royal family in that period by examining political, satirical plays having important messages. Though Fielding is accepted as a novelist, in his political plays, Fielding's political playwriting rather than his identity as a novelist is taken into consideration because he, in his political plays, handled electoral abusiveness, the unethical behaviours of state officers who mock with the society's values and do not believe in the existence of political honesty, and the corrupted sides of authorities in his own period from the political point of view.

Key Words: Political Theatre, Sir Robert Walpole, The Licensing Act, Henry Fielding, Political Playwriting, *Rape Upon Rape*, *The Modern Husband*, and *The Tragedy of Tragedies: or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb The Great*.

ÖZET

SİYASİ OYUN YAZARI OLARAK HENRY FIELDING

KAPLAN, Sevda

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı ABD

Tez Danışmanı: Yardımcı Doçent Dr. Meryem AYAN

Eylül 2013, 57 Sayfa

Bu tez projesi bugün genellikle roman yazarı olarak bilinen, ancak yazarlık kariyerine sahne için oyun yazarak başlayan Henry Fielding'in siyasi oyun yazarlığını incelemektedir. 1737 Sansür Kanununun uygulanmasıyla tiyatrolara gölge düşüren siyasal ve sosyal olaylar ışığı altında Fielding'in 1707-1754 yılları arasındaki siyasi kariyeri bu çalışmada ele alınmaktadır. Fielding'in üç önemli politik oyunu *Tecavüz üstüne Tecavüz*, *Modern Koca*, ve *Trajedilerin Trajedisi veya Parmak Yüce Tom'un Yaşamı ve Ölümü* siyasal ve sosyal bakış açısıyla analiz edilmektedir.

Çalışma Giriş bölümünden, üç ana kısımdan ve sonuç bölümünden oluşmaktadır. Giriş Bölümünde, Erwin Piscator'un öncüsü olduğu Siyasal tiyatronun ortaya çıkışı, amaçları ve özellikleri kısaca tanıtılmaktadır. Birinci kısımda 18. Yüzyılın ilk yarısını kapsayan Augustus dönemi incelenmekte, ikinci kısımda ise Robert Walpole zamanında oyun yazarlığı kimliğini sürdüren Fielding'in siyasi oyun yazarlığı değerlendirilmektedir. Üçüncü kısımda ise *Tecavüz üstüne Tecavüz*, *Modern Koca*, ve *Trajedilerin Trajedisi veya Parmak Yüce Tom'un Yaşamı ve Ölümü* adlı oyunlardaki, karakterler ve onların sosyal ve siyasal olarak neye gönderme yaptıkları Fielding'in siyasi bakış açısıyla ayrıntılı olarak çalışılmaktadır.

Bu inceleme sert mesajlar taşıyan siyasal hicivli oyunlarını inceleyip o dönemdeki saray ailesinin yozlaşmışlığından yola çıkarak bu çevredeki ahlaksal, sosyal ve siyasal çöküntüyü göstermektedir. Fielding kendi döneminde yaşanan seçim yolsuzluklarını, toplumun değerleriyle alay eden ve siyasal dürüstlüğüne varlığına inanmayan devlet memurlarının etik olmayan davranışlarını, otoritelerin yozlaşmışlıklarını politik oyunlarında siyasal açıdan ele aldığı için, roman yazarı olarak kabul edilse de politik oyunlarında Fielding'in romancı kimliğinden ziyade siyasi oyun yazarlığı ele alınmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Siyasal Tiyatro, Robert Walpole, Sansür Kanunu, Henry Fielding, Siyasi Oyunyazarlığı, *Tecavüz üstüne Tecavüz*, *Modern Koca*, ve *Trajedilerin Trajedisi veya Parmak Yüce Tom'un Yaşamı ve Ölümü*.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ÖZET.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1

CHAPTER ONE

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND BETWEEN THE YEARS 1707-1754	6
---	----------

CHAPTER TWO

AN UNDISTINGUISHED PLAYWRIGHT OF HIS AGE: HENRY FIELDING

2. 1. Henry Fielding's Theatrical Development as a Political Playwright.....	16
2. 2. General Overview of Henry Fielding's Political Career.....	25

CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN HENRY FIELDING'S THREE POLITICAL PLAYS

3. 1. Rape Upon Rape.....	30
3. 2. The Modern Husband.....	40
3. 3. The Tragedy of Tragedies: Or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great..	47
CONCLUSION.....	52
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	55
C.V.....	57

INTRODUCTION

It is a known fact that the world is a stage as William Shakespeare, the greatest poet and playwright of English literature, utters in his play *As You Like It* and the world's stage has witnessed many important events in people's lives, that is, it has held mirror to the periods in which people live by means of theatre. The proper function of theatre, its role, and its relationship to public have been questioned for many centuries. To Samuel Johnson, an English critic, theatre was like "an echo of the public's voice"; to French playwright Jean Giraudoux, it was like "a trial"; to Swedish playwright, August Stringberg, it was like "a lay preacher"; for English playwright William Shakespeare, the stage was like "a mirror" held up to nature (qtd. in Kuritz, 1988: 1). Thus stage, namely theatre, has been "an incomparable instrument" for the expression of all human experience (Willet, 1986: 153).

However, many people thought that in the playhouse one actor or actress was playing several parts, that life on stage was performance, but in life because people were so caught up in their own performances, they seldom recognized the historic basis of all human behavior. This is why they were easily deceived by the actions of others, even though, as Fielding would later remark, "they tended to speak of human activities in the language of the stage" (qtd. in Rivero, 1988: 14). When looked at closely, most people were not aware of the fact that theatre was a mirror held to their lives by playwrights but the social function of theatre was to organize the feelings of society for a more vigorous attack on the social problems. The problem was placed on the crude stage and practiced. In the first place it dramatized their problems by reflecting the class struggle, the injustices, the oppressions and miseries of society and places all of these problems before their eyes. For this reason, almost at each period of history, theatre had been one of the issues that some authorities paid attention to and especially focused on.

Traditionally, it was thought that conventional theatre included entertainment, and it was available just for authorities because they used it for their own purposes by preventing people from seeing the obvious facts. For example, the direct representation of politics was prohibited on English stage in the 19th century but it was not difficult to identify the presence of political themes, so theatre in this age was reshaped by

innovative playwrights such as Samuel Beckett, Henrik Ibsen, and George Bernard Shaw. Also in 19th century, there was a tendency among avant-garde intellectuals to dismiss all forms of definitions of theatre. One of them was Erwin Piscator, who was claimed to have fathered the political theatre. He was aware that, as the most public of the arts, theatre and politics have been side by side. “The struggle for the theatre was much more than an aesthetic question....” (Piscator, 1980: 160). When the subject of theatre was related with politics, the relationship between them was seen as a dangerous one because it bothered many authorities; as a result, even the relationship was a forbidden one, a two way traffic between them always went on. It seemed to exercise enormous influence on politics, and this influence was called political theatre in which the issues of the day were put on stage. He used theatre to convey radical political instruction by thinking that the business of this kind of theatre was to deliver a social message, and Erwin argued that “a playwright must subordinate his own ideas, his own originality, so as to learn from the politicians” (Willet, 1986: 108). So political playwrights who were interested in social concern and its collective drive must be concerned with the social and political background and economic basis on which it rests.

Erwin Piscator, born in 1893, was the originator of political theatre that was one of the most important movements marking the 20th century. He was opposed to war, military, monarchy, the bourgeoisie but his aim was the proletariat and classless society. In the light of Marxian thought, apart from political theatre, “he prepared the way for agitation and propaganda, political revue, documentary theatre and epic theatre later developed by Bertolt Brecht” (Innes, 1972: 8). He was most widely known through his connection with Brecht, who took his concept of theatre from Piscator. As an innovator, “he first gained his experience as a student at the court theatre in pre-war Munich, as an actor in an army theatre group and as a director; he opened the central theatre in opposition to Volksbühne, a theatre for working classes, as he established himself as one of the Volksbühne’s principal directors” (Innes, 1972: 2). His involvement in politics was equally important. After he had acted during the war, he joined the communist party. Then he founded his first theatre Das Tribunal in 1919 (Innes, 1972: 3). Without funds, he went back to the first principles of drama by playing without a proper stage, costumes, lightening and relying on amateur working class actors. Under such conditions, he went on writing short scripts. They were written to make an

immediate propaganda. His productions affected every aspect of the theatre that offered an opportunity for evaluating the validity of the stage as a place for contemporary society. He introduced mass-media to the stage to make the theatre capable of handling twentieth-century issue. He attempted to represent current events or recent history in a direct manner. His extensive use of mechanical aids such as film in stage productions, the illumination of the stage from below was important staging techniques. Thus, fusing film into a dramatic action was Piscator's great innovation, and the use of film made it possible to shift viewpoints and the action gained the 'epic' ability to comment on itself (Innes, 1972: 4). Moreover, he proved the practical use of the theatre as an instrument for propaganda. His intention was to cause the audience to consider their social environment critically. As a result, he used political theatre to awaken consciousness.

The early 1920s in continental Europe witnessed the rise of political theatre. The war had raised political consciousness and such men as Erwin Piscator saw the dramatic medium as a powerful political force. The movement of political theatre, first launched in 1920 as proletarian theatre by Piscator, pursued the subject of political development by attaching importance to the audience's mind rather than sense in order that people could live in a better life. To the understanding of political theatre, its subject was politics. The aim was to use theatre as a means of propaganda, to vaccinate politics to proletarian, and to make the theatre the most efficient factor standing out in a war fought for proletarians. By using Agitation and propaganda, Piscator stated that "he had to be honest with the facts, truthful to people" (qtd. in Willet, 1986: 64). For him, the politics of a political theatre was more essential as a result of the worsening situation in his own country. It should lead to workers to organize and take action by facing the problems he posed. It started with the aim of applying socialist principles to theatre, realization of worker's social power, class oppression, the struggle between labor and capital, division between rich and poor. There was an ongoing class system in which rich people earned more and flourished their properties while the great majority of the people, namely working class were slaves to the wages of these people that had enormous influence on middle class revolution.

The emergence of the working class consciousness in the domain of social life created materials such as the struggle between the classes in the form of strikes, political and social conflicts, oppression in industry, and economic insecurity of petty middle

class. Furthermore, there were many humorous incidents both in the workers' lives and the capitalist class' social life that could be portrayed and a political message that could be conveyed. The representatives of the ruling class were placed upon the stage and exposed most bitterly. War finance was the subject of a most cruel satire and the morality of finances was placed on the lower order. There was a note of Piscator's written in 1937 which said "I can only work against bourgeois society, I can never work with it or through it" (qtd. in Willet, 1986: 152). Thus, political and social problems are reflected in this period by means of theatre as follows:

Social guilt, moral choice, the socialist propaganda of the time and in particular the questioning of bourgeois morality, the hypocrisy of organized religion, the bad faith of bourgeois marriage can be seen as providing the whole agenda of Edwardian ethical drama (Samuel, et al. 1985: 10).

For Piscator, the audience was also very important to awaken the consciousness. His audience was the workers because they should observe their surroundings from different perspectives and perceive them accurately. As political theatre was not indifferent to the problems of life, its first aim was to save the audience from rooted values. It was because that these rooted values had control over the society's morality, art, and daily life. That is why, he tried to attract the audience to theatre. His outstanding directing in the plays, the cheap play shows at factories and slums made him successful, and workers came to watch it. They understood that theatre was not a place for a luxury and only the bourgeoisie but a warm atmosphere in which their problems were handled. Especially the usage of language appealed to their understanding as "...simplicity of expression, lucidity of structure, and a clear effect on the feelings of a working-class audience. The subordination of all artistic elements aims to the revolutionary goal..." (Piscator, 1980: 30). One handicap for Piscator was cheap tickets which caused his destruction because the money he earned was not enough for stage decor, technical expenses, costume and so on.

As above-mentioned, the principles laid down in Piscator's political theatre started with theatre's assuming a political task and these principles, based on the principle of historical materialism of Marxist philosophy, served as a weapon in the class struggle of the theatre. Also they helped the audience to get rid of the effect of conditioning and to recognize the realities of life. As a result, it can be said that the

concept of Piscator's political theatre was the most important way of increasing the effectiveness of current efforts made in the process of politicization. He worked in a theatre at a time of intense political activity and political tensions, and went on to apply his new methods in a variety of quite different political climates and systems (Willet, 1986: 193).

In a brief conclusion, Piscator, as the originator of the epic theatre and an active reformer, emphasized the social and political content of theatre rather than its emotional effect on audience. He used the theatre in order to make people conscious by expressing radical political views. Piscator, as a political playwright, who marked his period with his revolutionary motives stated that "he has fought for political theatre for thirty years" (Innes, 1972: 7). In each century, there were many political playwrights that affected their periods like Piscator. One of them was Henry Fielding who had a great place in English literature with his identity as a novelist in the 18th century, but he was also an ardent political playwright as well as a novelist. Like Piscator, Fielding used the theatre as a means of propaganda by handling the political and social events of his period. He also aimed at making people, especially lower class conscious. Apart from his identity as a novelist, Fielding was also an important political playwright of his period. So the main topic of this thesis is to analyze Henry Fielding as a political playwright by making political and social references to his period between the years 1707-1754.

CHAPTER ONE

THE POLITICAL BACKGROUND BETWEEN THE YEARS 1707-1754

Theatres lost the interest and support of the Royal palace after the death of Charles II in 1685 and they exposed to intense criticism and attack in the early years of the 18th century. When William III also died in 1702 and Queen Anne acceded to throne, it was accepted as the end of Restoration period, but at the same time as the beginning of Augustan age with the reign of King George I who came to power after the death of Queen Anne. Thus, the first years of the 18th century were called “the Augustan Age” because of the fact that England lived the glory of Rome in the period of the Augustus (Çelik, 2005: 152). It was regarded also as a Golden Age like the Roman history that achieved political stability, power, and a developing art. There were two opposing parties whose political opinions were sharply divided and periodical and journalism were the vehicles to express their political opinions. Also people were keenly interested in political activity. Initially, it was also quiet and peaceful for theatres and they indeed acted extremely sensitive to the political events and social unrest during the first half of the 18th century but after 1720, in parallel to social and political turmoil, there was a great unrest in the country.

After the death of Queen Anne in 1714, the prime minister, “Sir Robert Walpole grasped power in 1720 by extricating the government from crisis and he consolidated his position through patronage” (Uglow, 1995: 10). The death of King George I in 1722 and the dissolution of parliament gave the electors their first chance to elect Robert Walpole since his rise to power in 1722. The dependence of George I and II on Walpole and his narrow circle discouraged many talented men and women from coming to the Court. The government was blamed for the disaster, and a political crisis developed as an election approached. When the general election was held, Walpole emerged with a secure parliamentary majority. Thus “elections were largely controlled by landowners and politicians who were interested in bribing for winning their elections” (Battestin, 1989: 219). Under Walpole, because the cooperation between the Crown and Parliament was essential, the Crown’s powers were limited by law. The king could appoint his own

ministers but they had to be chosen from men in whom Parliament had confidence. To create aristocracy was important for the King; however, “Hanoverian monarchs” used it to maintaining its value. Although the Royal supremacy over the church continued, in the 18th century, this power was largely limited to church patronage (McCrea, 1981: 60).

From 1720 to 1742, Robert Walpole would dominate English politics for the next quarter-century, the years of Henry Fielding’s adult life. Walpole dominated the government; he was aware of the importance of public opinion and was active using and controlling the press. In 1723, he bought the *London Journal* and made it the voice of his government. Then various publications were combined into the *Daily Gazetteer*. He helped it through treasury and tried to restrict the opposition press by taxation. Under such circumstances, the rise of opposition was a great success. *The Craftsman*, a journal, was the flashpoint of the opposition to Walpole. It revealed much about the nature of politics in Fielding’s England. From 1722 until 1754, roughly Fielding’s adult life, Walpole and Henry Pelham dominated and shaped English political life by taking the support of parliamentary of Whigs. They thought that their second source of power was the favor of the court. Although the king could not keep a minister in power against the will of the Commons, he controlled an important patronage and could have great influence on the elections. As Brian McCrea, an important critic, points out:

In Fielding’s political career, the most important fact about the eighteenth century political life was to make up the parliamentary opposition that Walpole and Pelham faced. The great parliamentary battles of the mid-eighteenth century were not between Whigs and Tories but between groups of the Whigs (1981: 65).

London, the city to which Fielding came in 1727, was a political battleground. At the heart of his literary uncertainty was a political inability to choose between two different political groups and two different conceptions. Especially, in the Liberals’ and the Conservatives’ political arena, as two competing parties, theatres were an important propaganda tool for their struggles. As Fielding’s political views changed, so did the play he wrote, as well as the companies that performed them.

As Walpole was man of action, he attached importance to the government’s deeds and ignored literature. For this reason, he preferred to bribe the members of

Parliament that voted for him instead of spending money on poets and authors. Thus “it turned to a country whose two kings and prime minister had no idea of literature, were indifferent to theatres” (Abrams, ed. 1993: 1770). In this respect, English playwrights did not have a protection from the government, so they tried to find publishers that would support themselves. “Walpole's this one-sided relationship with theatres basing on his self-interests continued in 1727 when George II acceded to the throne after the death of George I” (Abrams, ed. 1993: 1770). However, together with *The Beggar's Opera*, staged at the beginning of this new era, the so-called proximity between Walpole and theatres began to disappear gradually. Although Lord Chamberlain and his superior Walpole, indifferent and insensitive to theatres, did not meet any negative things that would disturb them in the reign of George I, they were often disturbed by theatres in the reign of George II. In fact the playwrights of this period began to write plays with their political identities and they blamed administrators for what was happening around them. The most important of all these playwrights was Henry Fielding who was accepted as “the main reason of Licensing Act” (Çelik, 2005: 160).

To understand Henry Fielding's ten years as a playwright, it is important to know the world in which he earned his living because in early eighteenth-century England, it was not an easy business for a playwright to support oneself with the pen:

Poetry did not pay; the novel as we conceive it was practically undreamt of; journalism and hack writing were barely past their infancy, and decidedly ill-paid. The young writer's best hope had traditionally been the theatre, but by the 1720s those prospects were far from bright....Few writers had been making a living out of the theatre (Hume, 1988: 1).

That Fielding became a celebrated playwright could hardly have been predicted in 1728 because of the bad conditions of theatres. The dominant fact about the “London theatre was simple: it was a patent monopoly in which Drury Lane and Linconln's Inn Fields carried on their business” (Hume, 1988: 1). Most of the managers holding that monopoly had very narrow point of views. Their companies were to be tolerated, and all other companies were to be silenced. It proved that the years 1727-28 were not different from the years that preceded them from the aspects of theatres' bad conditions. The two companies alternated politely until the coronation of George II. Neither of them was receptive to new plays since they were both subject to the Lord Chamberlain's authority

and was hardly to be allowed to stage disrespectful plays. Despite their dim point of views, there were some successful plays such as *The Provok'd Husband* and *The Beggar's Opera* that triggered rapid changes in the theatrical situation. In 1731, Fielding, exhibiting the royal family on the stage with his play *The Welsh Opera*, clearly criticized and attacked Walpole and the way his governing the country in his first plays.

To the accompaniment of above-mentioned theatrical panorama, the Charitable Corporation, the Excise scheme of 1733 were other contentious events because Walpole wanted “to serve the interests of land owners by reducing the burden of land tax because they were country gentlemen that held the fate of ministries in their hands” (Langford, 1989: 28). He manipulated the court's political machinery against the wishes of country gentlemen. Besides this event, governmental election was also contentious. That governmental corruption at the election created a big argument in the society. When Walpole wanted to reduce land tax in the hope of gaining the rich landowners' votes, to give extensive powers to officers, wide jurisdiction to magistrates, an Englishman's right on his property was put at risk. So England became a political battleground in 1732 as Walpole's plans about custom duties. The government and the opposition were ready for the general election in 1734 with the introduction of taxes. Its opponents saw the excise scheme as a threat to liberty and property. The nation cried for liberty, property as they protested Excise. “The common situation indicated how English aristocracy of this era often sacrificed political principles in the cause of personal ambition as the national debt required Englishmen to think of money, value, of the nature of their national wealth in very different terms” (Campbell, 1995: 9). During the same general period, as Neil Mckendrick has called, “the birth of consumer society” required them to place themselves in the new institutions, practices and values of commercialized society (qtd. in Campbell, 1995: 9). As corruption in English society and politics was dominant, Fielding pursued success as a playwright. His goal, as most eighteenth-century political writers, was to propose alternatives to dark, repressive state.

At these years, even in the theatre the assault went on, the government was fairly severe about enforcing the restrictions of theatrical activities to the patent houses. Fielding retreated into his silence but it was a conscious one. Although the political faith was not totally provided by Fielding, his faith in human nature was strong and vital.

This faith would show itself throughout his literary career. Later in 1734, he returned to politics. Fielding seemed to emerge from his uncertainty and to speak with a strong voice. In *Pasquin*, he returned to the figure of the Court, but he used it to attack ministry, and by means of this play, “he set up an analogy between stage and state, used signs of corruption in the drama to satirize corruption in the state” (McCrea, 1981: 72). Moreover, his anti-Walpole writings reflected his true political senses. Meanwhile, Walpole stayed in power by maintaining his mastery of parliament as well as by bringing financial prosperity to England’s ruling class. Between the years 1728 and 1736, Fielding evolved from neutrality to opposition. General corruption was a part of opposition through the 1730s and 1740s. He would accuse Walpole of corrupting the nation. The allusion to the freedom of the stage would moreover have suggested “the opposition’s resistance to the government’s desire to strengthen the Lord Chamberlains censorial powers” (McCrea, 1981: 75). The forces that would drive Fielding from the stage in 1737 were beginning to stir. Fielding’s plays did not in themselves cause the ministry to pass the amendment to “the Vagrants Act” generally known as the stage Licensing Act 1737, the ministry moved with the determination to grasp greater control of the stage (Cleary, 1940: 106).

Such genres as farce and burlesque gained importance together with Fielding who made a serious criticism of the society in which he lived. For example, he revealed electoral corruption, the inferior behaviors of the public officers who ridiculed the virtues of society and did not believe the existence of political integrity in his plays, *A Dramatic Satire on the Times*, *Pasquin*, *Rape Upon Rape*. These plays were not accepted in Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Afterwards, Fielding staged them in Haymarket Little Theatre that he directed. In this process, Walpole thought that the usage of the stage for attacks against government and its governors would not be good for themselves and he planned to practice censor under the pretext that the plays were too exaggerated to accept because many plays were staged that assailed Walpole, government, and even the King. Fielding’s periodic theatrical attack on Walpole happened at the Haymarket theatre in *The Historical Register for the year 1736*. Walpole attended this performance; he even attacked an actor insulting him. The next year Walpole read the play *The Golden Rump* to the House of Commons. His aim was “to show Parliament the kind of attacks and obscenities to which he was subject” (qtd. in Kuritz, 1988: 228). In response, Parliament passed the Licensing Act to limit such

plays. It forbade any plays “for gain, hire, or reward” not licensed by the Lord Chamberlain and authorized playing only in theatres in city of Westminster. This meant that “the companies could perform legally only at Drury Lane and Covent Garden” (Kuritz, 1988: 229). This Act proved to be dominant figure in the life of theatres. The Lord Chamberlain was manager who personally decided on theatrical policy; the choice of plays for production, the hiring of the actors and the assignment of role. Thus the Lord Chamberlain retained authority over the theatres.

However, Fielding claimed that Walpole wrote *The Golden Rump* himself to help get the Act passed. It resulted, in part, from Walpole’s dislike of the political satires attacking his Prime Ministership (Kuritz, 1988: 228). That is to say, *The Golden Rump*, thought to be written by Henry Giffard, was a chief trigger for the Licensing Act, which all new plays had to be approved and licensed by Lord Chamberlain before production. The play was passed on the ministry by the manager of Lincolns Inn Fields and was used in Commons as evidence of the need for higher theatrical censorship. Step by step the movement to limit political satire on stage was linked to the activities of Fielding. Furthermore, *The Grub Street Opera’s* performance was presented by the censor and the company that would have performed it was harassed by the law (Cleary, 1940: 138). Its satire on the royal family was more likely to tempt Walpole to take the law.

The controversial and repressive aspect of the Licensing Act in 1737 in the final end eliminated the jurisdictional conflicts and it provided some reduction in theatrical competition at the closer governmental supervision by referring to the act:

The act had two major provisions: A restriction of theatres to those who held a royal patent or were granted licenses by the Lord Chamberlain and a requirement that all new plays, epilogues and prologues be submitted at least two weeks in advance for review by a stage licenser (Loftis, 1979: 32).

However, not until 1739 did the licenser prohibit a play: Henry Brooke’s *Gustavus Vasa*, a political allegory, was the first to be censored as Walpole thought that the villain of the play bore resemblance to him. *The Daily Gazetteer*, the voice of ministry, reported that some playwrights were recruiting to slander the government. As the ministry planned, it warmed to the task of attacking Fielding and hinting his danger.

The battle began for Fielding in 1737. Under the threat of censorship, Fielding was not in the mood of conciliation. He vowed to continue fighting the battle against Walpole and his corruption. He was hardened to fight and his essay *the Adventurer in Politics* was published. It was really a political essay rebutting *the Gazetteer* (Cleary, 1984: 109). The implication was that this was a reaction to the attack in *the Gazetteer*. It also repeated *The Historical Register's* crime offering a criticism of the raising of prices at Drury Lane by Charles Fleetwood that begs also to be read as a criticism of Walpole's corrupt political system based on buying votes with the proceeds from ever rising taxes:

....I cannot help thinking his manner of proceeding somewhat too arbitrary, and his method of buying actors at exorbitant prices to be of very ill consequence. For the town must reimburse him these expenses, on which account those advanced prices so much complained of must be always continued; which, though the people in their present flourishing state of trade and riches may very well pay, yet in worse times I am afraid they may fall too heavy, the consequence of which I need not mention. Moreover, should any great genius produce a piece of most exquisite contrivance, and which would be highly relished by the public, though perhaps not agreeable to his own taste or private interest, if he should buy the chief actors, such play, however excellent, must be unavoidably sunk, and the public lose all the benefit thereof. Not to trouble the reader with more inconveniences arising from this argumentum, many of which are obvious enough, I shall only observe that corruption hath the same influence on all societies, all bodies, which it hath on corporal bodies, where we see it always produce an entire destruction and total change (Cleary, 1984: 110).

More importantly, it allowed Fielding simultaneously to mock *the Gazetteer* and Walpole. He went on ironically to insist that "scene of the politicians ridicules the absurd and inadequate notions persons among us, who have not the honour to know them, how of the ministry and their measures" (Cleary, 1984: 110). To Fielding, the politicians were represented "as a set of blundering blockheads rather deserving pity than abhorrence" (qtd. in Cleary, 1940: 111). In 1739-1742, having failed to take his campaign against Walpole to the journals in 1737, Fielding did so in 1739 as chief editor, principal essayist in the *Champion*. The establishment of it was obviously encouraged by rising attack on the government triggered by the outbreak of the war Jenkin's Ear with Spain despite Walpole's efforts to avoid. The ministry was satirized as corrupt, inept, and eager to lose the war with Spain and Fielding settled upon Walpole as the greatest of negative examples. There were not, even in Swift, many single sentences with such a freight of directed fury:

Can there be a more instructive lesson against that abominable and pernicious vice, ambition, than the sight of mean man, raised by fortunate accidents and execrable vices to power, employing the basest measures and the vilest instruments to support himself; looked up to only by sycophants and slaves and sturdy beggars, wretches, whom even he must in his heart despise in all their Tinsel; looked down upon, and scorned and shunned by every man of honor, nay, by every man of sense, and those whom his rotten rancorous heart must, in spite of himself, reluctantly admire; who knows that he is justly hated by his whole country, who sees and feels his danger; tottering, shaking, trembling; without appetite for his dainties, without abilities for his women, without taste for his elegances, without authority from his power, and without ease in his place, or repose on his bed of down (Cleary, 1984: 131).

Consequently, Walpole was claimed the right to control all the money, praised corruption and held money dearer than liberty as country. In other words, he was the ruler hated by the ruled, so Fielding, as a playwright, concentrated on legal and social follies and their depiction of degenerate England.

From its first issue to the fall of Walpole, Fielding was anti ministerial, critical of corruption and the vulgar mendacity of the government writer, electoral corruption. He continued to publish anti ministerial satire outside of the journal and remained an active champion partner. He also protested governmental policies and encouraged electors and the members of parliament to vote against Walpole. He was especially happy in warning of constitutional dangers and stressed that Walpole's corruption of Commons disturbed the separation and balance of powers. For him, in an ideal state the freedom of legislature to resist even a king must be guarded, for the chief function of Commons was to preserve the rights of subjects. The national wealth must never be at the discretion of the Crown. For ministers would then really control it. More importantly, the press must remain free to urge voters of all parties to preserve the trade and liberty of England by voting Walpole out of office.

Fielding remained very active as a reformer who held the pulse of the society in which he lived. Apart from the governmental policies, "his diagnosis centered upon the rage of the lower orders for luxury" (Cleary, 1940: 281). The poor were wasteful and were not hardworking people. They gambled and were able to remain in a dangerous state of idle drunkenness. They stole and intimidated to support their vices. Poor laws needed reforming so that the poor who were able to work could be made to do so rather than concentrated in ill-run Brides where they learned every variety of vice and crime.

Especially women were kidnapped by rascals. Their aim was to make women whore. For example, Elizabeth Cunning, girl of eighteen, disappeared in 1753. She exposed many devil behaviours, remained imprisoned, and she was threatened to death. When she succeeded in escaping from their hands, the town was determined to see justice done. However, Elizabeth was convicted of perjury and sentenced to be transported to America as she could not find enough witnesses. As a result, Fielding could not remain indifferent to the problems the society experienced. For him, the legal system must be made more efficient. The government must take on the “financial burdens of prosecution, change the rules of evidence so that the testimony of accomplices may weigh more heavily against defendants, and be less ready to pardon the convicted” (Cleary, 1984: 282). He also concentrated the oppression of brave officers on women and children by those in authority. In his many plays, Fielding concerned with needed legal reforms and corruption, civil and military, with crime, with venal injustices of many law courts.

Political abuses, the corrupt politicians, the influential seducing peers and their pimps were evils of the age of Walpole, so the government and great men were for more often criticized (Cleary, 1940: 288). Walpole’s influence over the King and Queen and his corrupt diversion of governments funds to enrich himself and his supporters were clear. As a reformer, he deplored corrupt courts, horrid prisons that encourage vice and crime, luxury, irreligion, gaming, sexual license. English political life remained unreformed; Walpole went unpunished for his supposed crimes in office but Fielding did his best as a political playwright and represented Walpole in his role of controller through corruption of Parliament. Nehemiah Vinegar, a critic, stated that “he applied himself to politics rather than amuse the town with essays of virtue and vice, words which have lost their ideas a great while” as Fielding did because the public lamented the ills of the land under Walpole: the death of trade, a prodigious debt, a useless army, an immense fleet and dreadful taxes to support them (qtd. in Cleary, 1940: 129).

Walpole was finally beaten in Common on a contested election, and then he resigned, ending an extraordinary era in which he had dominated and shaped English political life. After Walpole fell, the ministry was reconstructed. A court fool to prime minister, the danger and prevalence of political corruption was readily applicable to England under George II and was originally aimed at Walpole. George II was seen as

“the great disappointment of the age and Walpole, as his bad angel, was at the head of his corrupt ministry” (Cleary, 1940: 189). Meanwhile, Fielding fell silent again until the early fall of 1745. The year 1745 was a series of disasters for England deterioration in her military position abroad began in 1744, a declaration of war on England by the French. French invasion threatened liberty, property and safety of the English, as well as the present establishment in Church and State. There was also a threat from the Jacobites in the early 1746. “While Fielding waited for the appropriate moment to become overtly partisan, he worked to arouse patriotic feelings against the Jacobites” (Cleary, 1940: 211). It also allowed Fielding opportunity to mock the ministry, the abusers of the government. So he would finally become a magistrate as he was poorly rewarded for political writing in 1737 and 1741-1742.

The political pressures that kept Fielding so active in 1747-48 were gone in the months following and Fielding touched every other issue in a ministerial spirit. He remained dependent on the wealthy and politically powerful to implement reforms, and to pass needed laws. For example, the Gin Act- 1751 that “forbade the giving or selling of gin in jails, prisons, houses of correction, workhouse” was passed (Cleary, 1940: 281). After this act, the Robbery Bill was enacted that “forbade the sinfulness of adultery, the dangers of luxury, the vanity and hypocrisy of society snacks, and bad manners” (Cleary, 1940: 281). The government intended to suppress outrages and violence which were inconsistent. Since the reforms he favored were being actively pursued by the ministry, Fielding remained very active in the cause of reform as a playwright, magistrate, and essayist.

To sum up, Fielding was not a thinker in theatre but a man who combined exceptional theatrical talents with a strong political drive. His idea was that the theatre had to deal with the great political themes most relevant to its time with social revolution as most of his plays’ motive was revolutionary, and had political significance. So in his political plays *Rape Upon Rape*, *The Modern Husband*, ve *The Tragedy of Tragedies: Or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb The Great*, he harshly satirized Walpole and his governmental corruption by making connections between the political and social events of his period.

CHAPTER TWO

AN UNDISTINGUISHED PLAYWRIGHT OF HIS AGE: HENRY FIELDING

2.1. Henry Fielding's Theatrical Development as a Political Playwright

Henry Fielding is mostly known as one of the most successful writers in his time, especially he is the owner of many famous novels that have great place in English literature, that is why, he has been much studied by his novels, but most critics have been interested in Henry Fielding's authorship, and few have focused on his plays. It is thought that he was forefront with his novels, and his career in the theatre was ignored. His commitment to theatre as a career, and the real possibility that he would build a theatre under his own direction has been almost underestimated. He was not seen as a fiery political writer, it is quite certain that Fielding has greatest talent in novels, but his gift for political plays must be an underlying point in his political career and it would be no exaggeration to say that Fielding is the most successful living and "an aspirant playwright, intent on making a career in the political theatre" (Hume, 1988: V).

To understand Henry Fielding's place in theatre, it will be better to go back to the time when he took his first step in theatre. Because of the turbulent, uncertain climate of English affairs, the turning point of his political career was the latter of 1735. Especially, some political events that took place in his time shaped his writings. The year 1735 was a series of ups and downs for Fielding, and a divide between epochs in his theatrical career. He had tried to find a formula for stage success since 1731 by avoiding politics, and showing his harmlessness to Walpole in 1732. The last days of 1736 continued successfully and foreshadowed more political aggressiveness. His real assault was implicit in the broad depiction of England as corrupt and sliding into cultural degeneracy. Thus Fielding's first publication was owing to an unexpected political event. When George I died, Sir Robert Walpole was securing his place as Prime Minister and the beginning of the reign George II coincided with Fielding's literary ambitions (Battestin, 1989: 56). These two royal events became the occasions for Fielding's reputation as a writer. So he published a pair of poems under his own

name. As a writer, he was not so imprudent as to satirize the King openly, so he was disappointed with his poems, but “he was happy when his comedy was accepted by Colley Cibber” (Battestin, 1989: 59). In 1728, Fielding first tried his hand at political journalism which is mildly satirical of the Prime Minister Sir Robert Walpole. In it, he declared both the poverty of Walpole’s taste and the riches he was getting of his country’s expense. Before the start of the new theatrical season, Fielding had drafts of two plays, *The Wedding Day* and *The Temple Beau*, ready to submit to Drury Lane, but *The Temple Beau* had not a chance there, so Fielding was obliged to resort to the theatre constructed by Thomas Odell in Goodman’s Field. It was here that Fielding’s brief but remarkable career began (Battestin, 1989: 78). Indeed, “in the view of the leading theatre historian, he was the dominant professional playwright since Dryden” (Battestin, 1989: 78).

Henry Fielding, generally known as a novelist, began his career by writing plays for the stage, and directed many political, satirical plays having very tough messages with *The Great Mogul's Company* in the Little Haymarket Theatre (Çelik, 2005: 160). This theater was founded by John Potter without permission in 1720 and 1730 and hosted Fielding’s plays. Fielding found his true element as a playwright with his play, *The Author’s Farce*, first performed at the New Theatre in the Haymarket. He provided the setting for the most of his greatest hits including *The Author’s Farce*, *Tom Thumb*, *Pasquin*, and *The Historical Register*. Especially, *The Author’s Farce* was Fielding’s first great hit as a playwright. Fielding also had another small masterpiece for production: *Tom Thumb*. It proved to be more popular by far than even *The Author’s Farce*. By using the pseudonym “Scriblerus Secundus” under which name he published *The Author’s Farce* and *Tom Thumb*, Fielding could “safely level his charge to the minister, so it was Walpole who set a pattern to the theme of moral weakness and corruption in government” (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 117). Similarly, Fielding’s other important play, *The Grub Street Opera*, span out the allegory of contemporary England, namely King George II. In it, he satirically discussed the hypocritical attitudes of members of Parliament and the royal family and their fondness for sexuality, that is, he criticized the moral corruption in this area. Furthermore, the play was considered too offensive to the authorities and was suppressed. While Fielding was making these criticisms, he often used tough, sharp language in his plays and for this reason, his plays led to prohibition. The first hint of the government’s attitude toward the play came from

Walpole's journalist Henley. In *The Hyp-Doctor* (1731), he was inspired by the event to compose verses to the Haymarket actors of *The Grub Street Opera*:

The censuring world, perhaps, may not esteem
 A satire on so scandalous a Theme
 As these stage apes, who must a Play-House chuse,
 The Villain Refugee, the whore's Rendezvous:
 So dull in ev'ry Shape, that you may see
 Sorrow turn'd Mirth, Mirth turn'd Tragedy;
 M(ullar)t's chief Business is to swear and eat,
 He'll turn Procurer for a Dish of meat,
 Else the poor hungry Ruffian must, I fear,
 Live on grey Pease and Salt for half the Year (Battestin, 1989: 118).

Henley hints plainly enough that "if the comedians at the Haymarket were chiefly the objects of the government's hatred, Fielding's play was considered to be their vehicle for scandal" (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 119). Fielding received and understood the government's message. Having made a bargain with the ministry to withdraw his play and stop his publication, Fielding was anxious to state publicly that he had not gone back on his word. The measures the government took against the Haymarket's comedians not only censured them but also prosecuted them in the King's Bench for "false, infamous, scandalous, seditious and treasonable Libels" (Battestin, 1989: 121). The only explanation for the steps taken to arrest the actors and to close their theatre was the offensive character of *The Fall of Mortimer*. Neither Fielding nor his political play was ever mentioned in this context, and Haymarket was harassed into silence. In any event, Fielding's highly successful association with the Haymarket theatre ended abruptly when *The Grub Street Opera* vanished from the stage, and was never performed before audience. Not everyone in the company suffered. The luckiest of them was Fielding himself. His new forces were not only the plays that were annoying the government. Indeed, political plays of all stripes were getting produced. For him, an extraordinary period was about to begin at the Theatre Royal that would establish his reputation as London's living playwright.

In passing years, Fielding found himself reduced to make a living by scribbling farces and burlesque for the worst of the London theatres because he was dependent on the profits from his writing for a living. Even in that situation, he presented special problems of society, especially with the plays *The Author's Farce* and *Tom Thumb*

which were among his most successful theatrical experiments, but he was too ambitious to settle for the reputation of political playwright. As his other political play *Rape Upon Rape* made clear, he was even evolving in his thoughts the conception of a new kind of regular comedy. Its aim was to expose and reform not only the follies of society but also vice and corruption at the highest levels. After the hard fate of the Haymarket, Fielding was welcomed back to the government theatre, Drury Lane. At the start of the Fielding's theatrical career, there was competition among companies. Fielding's entry into the theatre world with his first play coincides with the events that provided the boom of the 1730s. At that time, Fielding was a leading playwright in Drury Lane whose founder was Sir Richard Steele. With the death of Sir Richard Steele, the Drury Lane patent would expire, and with his death, the government was faced with a very difficult question: who should own and operate the company? So it remained closed. That theatre was certainly pro-Whig and pro-ministry, but as John Loftis rightly says, "in practice this meant that the theatre did not present plays hostile to Walpole, Drury Lane cannot be said to have actively supported Walpole or his policies" (qtd. in Hume, 1988: 113).

For Fielding, it would be easy to stage his other masterpiece, *The Modern Husband* because this play had every chance to succeed. With the play, Fielding meant to make peace with Walpole. Seemingly, he did with this play, especially with its dedication to Walpole. On surface, Fielding praised Walpole, but the dedication to Walpole has usually been thought politically important. In fact, it was written to take reader's attention on Walpole and his policies as John Hunter states: "this play can be applied to Walpole in a hostile way, perhaps the dedication is a sly trick, designed to bring Walpole to the reader's attention" (qtd. in Hume, 1988: 115). In that play, Fielding, in fact, had a purpose which was exposure and correction of a specific public evil, and it was written with the intent to reform the bad institutions of society. Because of didactic teachings, political implications of his comic powers, and daring experiment, Fielding took his most famous compliment from Bernard Shaw. To Shaw, "Fielding was the greatest dramatist, with the single exception of Shakespeare, produced by England between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century" (qtd. in Hume, 1988: 130). In short, Fielding's return to Drury Lane was a victory for him.

In his mid-twenties, he was still a playwright violating proprieties under the light of political establishment whether at the Haymarket or at the Drury Lane. As the theatrical season of 1732-3 began, he was at the peak as London's living playwright. To Martin Battestin, "few playwrights in the history of English theatre have enjoyed such popularity" (1989: 167). Thanks to it, every circumstance conspired to draw Fielding away from Walpole and the Theatre Royal. The patentees at Drury Lane, aware that they lost the battle with rebel actors, were making plans to give up the fight (Battestin, 1989: 172). Fielding's changing his side was clear when he wrote a dedication to *Don Quixote* in England, addressed to Earl of Chesterfield who infuriated Walpole by opposing Excise Bill. Thus he was now a leader of the Opposition that did not support Walpole's political and ministerial policies. Fielding's satire in the play was clear as he praised his new patron. Like Chesterfield, Fielding found the minister uncongenial master as Battestin indicates:

There among us who seem so sensible of the Danger of Wit and Humour, 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 (1989: 173).

Fielding declared his new political patriotism, he also, as an opposition satirist, revealed his obvious political implication with the play *The Craftsman* that established himself as the most prolific, the most inventive playwright.

Fielding, as a lover of his country, protested ministerial policies and his metamorphosis into a major enemy of the ministry between 1735 and 1736 was a sharp change of direction. Furthermore, it was a respectable deed for a satirist to satirize on the governmental corruption in Walpole's England. In return for Fielding's changing his side, Walpole found the opportunity he wanted when Fielding wrote *The Historical Register for the year 1736* (Battestin, 1989: 217). It was a kind of play that showed the age of Walpole whose moral and political weakness had set the standard in society. Especially politicians were accustomed to giving bribes. For, it was a play that would parliament in a mood to place the theatres under restraint, but Fielding proceeded with this production despite early warnings that the ministry was moving in a determined manner to control the stage. He even went forward and proposed to erect a new theatre. That started the rumors of the government's reviving the abortive Playhouse Bill of

1735. Then a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons “for more Effectual punishing Rogues and Vagabonds” (Battestin, 1989: 218). Though the Bill was dropped, its possible application to the actors of the London theatres was causing them big pain. Fielding, under the light of his political identity, went too far and responded to the authorities by publishing a pamphlet called, *Some thoughts on the present State of the Theatres, and the Consequences of an Act to destroy the Liberty of the Stage*. In it, he vehemently argued against an attempt to censor the stage or to restrict the number of the theatres to the patent houses. That would deprive society of one of the best means of propagating virtue and shaming the vicious, and also establish a stage tyranny. At this period of Fielding’s life, Walpole was the enemy, the despised corrupter of his country. Though Fielding had been promised employment in the ministry whenever he would write on Walpole’s side, he did not want to join forces like Cibber, Walpole’s gazetteers and those “Scribblers, who for hire, would write away their country’s Liberties” (Battestin, 1989: 221).

Henry Fielding was generally represented as the principal influence behind the satiric event for anti-ministerial propaganda. His successes in 1736 made the other London theatres more receptive to political satire. The indifference to the national welfare in foreign affairs and the greed and corruption constantly caused by ministry were also common themes that Fielding dealt with. For a while, he abandoned his plans to build a theatre, yet he went on attacking against the greed of the government, ministerial corruption, incompetence in foreign affairs and the theme of prime minister’s uselessness in the government. What is more, he dared to throw the masks behind which he had been mocking the minister in the pages of *The Craftsman* and for the first time in his play, *The Historical Register 1736*, with his own voice he named his enemy.

But I’m aware I shall be asked, who is this Quidam that turns the patriots into ridicule, and bribes them out of their honesty? Who but the Devil could act such a part? Is not this the light wherein he is everywhere described in Scripture, and the writings of our best Divines? Gold hath been always his favourite Bait wherewith he fisheth for sinners; and his laughing at the poor wretches he seduceth, is as diabolical an attribute as any. Indeed it is so plain who is meant by this Quidam, that he who maketh any wrong application thereof might as well mistake the Name of Thomas for John, or Old Nick for old Bob (Battestin, 1989: 212).

When it was broadcast, the ministry's patient came to a breaking point. Then the government published an attack to Fielding via Daily Gazetteer publishing a letter called *An Adventurer in Politics*. Fielding's aim was seen to make minister appear ridiculous to people and moreover, he was considered as a playwright who tried to shake the basic principles of society. In fact the government was afraid of Fielding's success in *Pasquin* as a political satire. So the government saw him as an effective tool of the Opposition (Battestin, 1989: 223). A Bill, namely Licensing Act, was ready to silence him. For the government, it would be a lesson that Fielding learned too late. As a political playwright, Fielding always reminded the public that once a censor replaced over the stage and the number of the theatres, to expose vice and folly in all types of people, especially those whose riches or power put them out of reach, would gradually become difficult. The results of it would encourage the public's vice, Fielding was also aware that unlike recent attempts to put the stage under restraints, this Bill had an excellent chance of succeeding because for Walpole, there was a piece of evidence that served the government's purpose completely. What Walpole wanted was the authority to suppress such performances as *The Beggar's Opera*, *Pasquin*, and *The Historical Register*. As it is understood, Walpole used the political devices for his own benefits, under the pretext of protecting his government from so-called false accusation; he was determined to take revenge on all such authors and players by putting restraint on the stage.

Sir Robert Walpole presented Mr. Giffard with the sum of one thousand pounds. Thus, at a very cheap rate, the ministry gained the power of hindering the stage from speaking any language that was displeasing to them: and it has been said, that the whole matter was a contrivance of Sir Robert Walpole (Battestin, 1989: 223).

At that time, the managers of the theatres holding a patent monopoly took a very dim view of new plays. Their repertory was quite conservative and even stagnant and he, as a playwright, was hindered legally by the government. Had the License Act not supervened, Fielding would almost have built a theatre and run a more permanent company of his own because Walpole needed to forge a group of members hostile to theatre, both those who objected to the licentiousness of the stage and those who simply wanted to suppress the opposition satire. Then he announced a Bill:

....a Bill is ordered into Parliament for suppressing the great number of Play Houses.....so justly complained of, and for the future no persons shall presume to act a play without first obtaining a Licence from the Lord Chamberlain of his Majesty's Household the time being, any person acting without such Licence to be deemed Vagrants and punished as such... (Hume, 1988: 243).

To Emmett Avery, Fielding simply closed the theatre but he was neither frightened into silence nor resigned (qtd. in Hume, 1988: 244). Although the question whether Licensing Act was specifically aimed at Fielding or not is not certain, an anonymous writer who writes in the *Daily Gazetteer* expressed "the Government had no thought of introducing censorship until Fielding paved the way for the supervision of the stage, by introducing on it matter quite foreign to its true object" (qtd. in Hume, 1988: 249).

The common idea in twentieth century was that Fielding's plays provoked Licensing Act. Especially the ministry was angered by *The Historical Register* because Fielding expressed "a general contempt for the rascality of politicians that is why, this play was considered as anti-ministerial propaganda which was a biting attack on Walpole" (Hume, 1988: 249). As a result, political plays became virtually impossible as the Licensing Act abruptly ended Fielding's promising career as a theatrical manager and the monopoly it created terminated any possibility of his supporting himself as a playwright for the patent theatres and Fielding had to leave the theatre but he was busy with plans for improving his theatre. All in all, the fact about English theatre was simple: it was a patent monopoly, so all other companies were to be silenced and suppressed. That would affect Fielding whose plays had strong moral and political tendencies. License Act, the imposition of censorship and the suppression of all the theatres ended Fielding's promising career as playwright and manager but it was clear that no English playwright of the eighteenth century was so dominant in his own time and this can be best summarized by Battestin's striking words. For Battestin, Fielding had "a talent for ridicule and brisk dialogue, for deft and emblematic characterization and devising absurd but expressionistic plots that have scarcely been matched in the experimental theatre" (1989: 83).

Dissatisfied every sign of ministerial restraint, Fielding produced play after play in which Walpole, and his courtiers, even the King himself, were turned to laughing stocks. He went forward and proposed to stage an improved version of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, which the government had suppressed in 1729. On the whole, Fielding

had the virtues of an irrepressible energy and fertility of inventions. His achievement was extraordinary as Robert Hume concludes that he had a few failures and rough times, but no other English playwright of the eighteenth century was so dominant in his own time, so frequently successful, or so well paid for his efforts. In other words, he breathed new life into the theatre, drawing away the mindless entertainments. Besides Hume, Professor A. H. Scouten also summarized Fielding's achievements as "The Great Mogul" (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 233). For he succeeded in part by being "a trouble maker with a series of witty, inventive satires that made laughing stocks" (Battestin, 1989: 233). Thanks to all this wit and energy that revitalized the stage, Fielding broke too many windows and pulled down too many idols. Like Fielding, many people accused Walpole of enmity to London and trade, of waging war badly. That Walpole's false greatness, his being depicted as dishonest, inept, universally hated can be better understood in this sentences: "tis better that are Man should dye, than a whole Nation perish" (Cleary, 1984: 132). It anatomized the vices and follies of the contemporary English, namely Walpole. They worshipped money, lack honesty, public spirit, and were addicted to bribery, hypocrisy. Such satire on England as degenerate was often rightly interpreted as critical of Walpole. Fielding introduced direct political satire. Unfortunately, the government excluded him from the stage, the theatres closed against him. He was a playwright, ruined by Licensing Act. Fielding expressed his lost career with his own words as such follows:

.....since I came over England, I found there hath been a law made to regulate the stage....I say this Reformation of the stage, however useful to refine our taste, hath thrown away at least ten years of my life (qtd. in Battestin, 1988: 247).

He was also an important playwright who thought of rescuing his lost career by writing political plays. His participation in the political paper wars of the 1730s remained secret. The minister was bound to silence him. The satiric and theatrical skills he acquired were considerable, but Walpole applied to most extreme methods of silencing him, namely Licensing Act which was instituted to put a stop Fielding's play-writing. Then he intended to begin a new career in 1745 as magistrate, and he entered on a new career in the law. That was the end of his career as a political playwright and he decided to go on his career by writing novels. In his plays, Fielding made it clear that the court was weak to protect powerless, poor people, and the authority used justice as they wanted. He insisted again that it was his right and duty rather than betrayal of his

country to expose a general corruption. He stressed that he ridiculed the perils of corruption and the idea that his plays damaged England in the eyes of Europe. His plays were criticized for treating government badly by threatening the very foundations of society, and exposing the present ministry ridicule before Europe. In short, the stage was no place for politics or religion. However, Fielding saw a general corruption in his country and treated corruption as the greatest of danger to the constitution and liberty. To Cleary, because corruption should relate with everything which corrupts the minds of the people, it is also a national disease (1984: 234). Thus, Fielding thought that his country was in a national disease in Walpole's England, and did his best by having a duty to expose this general corruption.

2.2. General Overview of Henry Fielding's Political Career

During Fielding's political career, he reflected on the manners and morals of society, the deceptiveness of appearances. To comprehend his political career, it must be started by recognizing that he quickly made himself a highly professional man of theatre. He was prepared to become involved in political wars. It should be born in mind that he was entirely representative of his age. He devoted his time and talents to political plays by establishing the social, intellectual and political background because it is impossible to discuss Fielding's political career without discussing the norms and nature of politics of his time. It is obvious that political satire in Fielding's plays in the late 1720s and 1730s was associated with opposition to Walpole, his corruption, and even the royal family. Naturally, his plays, references to political matters, some of which were touchy from the government point of view, provoked the Licensing Act because his views about corrupt justices were always strong and he offered one of the darkest visions of society. In *The Champion*, from its beginning, it played a role to bring down minister. The policies of minister were bribery and corruption which also comprehends the moral function of satire. Therefore he openly attacked the ministry in his letter. To the Citizens of London he exhorted the electors to resist Walpole's bribes. Especially, in his plays, hypocrisy was the characteristic of villainy.

Fielding was also a reformer who tried to reform the society at the most fundamental level. In this way, he alerted to the nature and prevalence of the evils that plagued the society. He presented special problems, and also much of his work was heavily political. He understood the importance of theatre as an instrument of change

and a medium for the communication of new ideas. Although politics, the unavoidable subject matter of a playwright writing in Walpole's England, proved Fielding's calamity, his political satire was what appealed to George Bernard Shaw. Fielding's mixing with conventions and traditional forms and his working social and political themes provided model for Shaw, and Shaw admired the courage and wit of the "Herculean Satyrist.....that seem'd to knock all Distinctions of Mankind on the head." He regarded Fielding a kindred spirit, as a man who understood that the playwright ought to be the legislator, unacknowledged or otherwise, of the world (qtd. in Rivero, 1989: 2).

He was certainly one of the most innovative, unafraid to experiment with dramatic forms from the most conventional to the most improbable. He did not hesitate to break old dramatic forms and to create new ones as he pleased. It was because of the fact that he understood the five-act, well-made play of the Restoration period and early eighteenth century reached a dead end both in subject and method. He sought other themes, other ways of constructing plays. As the most perceptive and far-sighted of early 18th century playwrights, he sensed that the future of the theatre lay in irregular drama and in drama of social commentary. So the social, political and aesthetic realities of 1730s wanted new approaches, new forms. To put it simply, he set out to discover new ways of constructing plays, and his aim was to revitalize traditional drama by eliminating outdated conventions. As a result of it, he was the acknowledged legislator of his own theatrical world. As Bertolt Brecht would do two centuries later in his epic theatre by relying on masks, signs, other illusion shattering techniques, Fielding aimed for an intellectual response by preventing close emotional with his play (Rivero, 1989: 50). Unfortunately, The Licensing Act of 1737 ended his experiment in irregular forms and led him to explore his serious social concerns in prose fiction because the theatre was, by law, closed to him.

Fielding despised dishonesty and corruption in public. For the same time, he was pondering one of the most urgent social problems of his age. As he contemplated the general problem they posed for society, his conviction that the poor as a class must be made to conform its ideal constitution. In his time, Fielding had seen too much of the dark side of human nature:

....but if we must on no account deprive even the lowest people of the liberty of doing what they will, and going where they will, of wandering and drunkenness, why should we deny them that liberty which is but the consequences of this: I mean that of begging and stealing, of robbing or cutting throats at their good pleasures (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 568).

Throughout Fielding's political career, the life of metropolitan justice was full of many corrupted affairs, and he confronted the worst and pitiable of human kind. There were a lot of murderers, thieves, robbers, rapists who ravished women and children. For his pains in administering justice and keeping peace in such circumstances were very difficult. Fielding, as political playwright, suffered from the heavy load of contempt attached to trading justice. His experiences of the magistracy affected his understanding of his role as a playwright. His aim was to improve the moral characters of society. The recommendations he maintained were not especially "for the rogues, felons but those who secretly undermined the stability and moral character of public." Together their total effect on society was "more destructive, pervasive and endemic" (Battestin, 1989: 470). Fielding declares "this fury after licentious and luxurious pleasures is grown to so enormous heights that it may be called the characteristic of the present age" (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 471). Battestin indicated Fielding's political situation as reflected:

Evils of a more durable kind, which rather resemble chronical than epidemic diseases; and which have so inveterate themselves in the blood of the body politic; that they are perhaps never to be totally eradicated. These it will be always the duty of the Magistrate to palliate and keep down as much as possible (1989: 471).

The century in which he lived was moving toward revolutions in both the Old and New worlds that ushered in Republican and democratic forms of the government, but Fielding distrusted such systems. He scorned "the Mob" as he called them sarcastically (Battestin, 1989: 514). The dream of orderly past faded before the reality of the metropolis in 1750, a wilderness of vice and roguery, money, the corrupter, supplanted the authority of law (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 517). The rich benefited from the public by distributing the wealth. He would expose their immoralities. He therefore confined himself to the lower classes that he called the useful members of the society. He sensed that the moral conduct of individuals, and therefore the order of society as a whole depended on appealing to the strongest of them, hope and fear to influence behavior. The reforms he proposed were more radical and made him the principal authority on the subject, namely the Court Justice, Henry Fielding.

His satire in his plays was directed against the establishment at every level even the rotten members of the government which as court justice he served. Follies of men, hypocrisy of institutions and law which were meant to preserve the social order were in fact a spreading plague for the society. As the rich corrupted the useful orders of society, Fielding contemplated the causes of this spreading disease during his whole life, also reflected it to his plays as social protest and reform. Sensing this mood and aware of the reforming motive available in Fielding's plays, Marxist critics have claimed him for the Revolution. According to Sabine Nathan, Fielding proposed a series of changes which are, in fact, a foretaste of the moral standards finally established by the victors of the Industrial Revolution. It was Fielding who made the vital step that led to the nineteenth century (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 545). So Fielding, as an important playwright, saw the imperfections of England's political, social system that was practiced on society.

Fielding's plans were remarkable for humanity. For example, he thought a Country house for correction designed to train and employ poor, also to rehabilitate those who inclined to committing crime. It is remarkable too, to attempt the rehabilitation of an entire class of people at present idle, useless, demoralized. Fielding meant to make of these people individuals who were capable of earning a living and of being constructive members of society. His plan for the management and rehabilitation of an entire derelict class of society revealed almost literally the final shape of his moral and social thought. With the political background, he quickly became a celebrated playwright. The last of years of his life were a distressing time for Fielding for many reasons such as personal, financial, political matters. In 1741, the chronic ill plagued him for the last years of his life. "There are wonders still to tell, but the rest is silence" were the last words of a man for whom writing had been a way of life and he died in 1754 (Battestin, 1989: 605).

All in all, Antony Burges described "Fielding's career as a play in four Acts" (Battestin, 1989: 257). The first act played out in the 1730s, won him fame as a playwright also as an experimental theatre manager. At every turn in his career as dramatist, journalist, novelist, and magistrate, Fielding was a great innovator watching and thinking on new ideas, and forms. Also he was man of ideas and his view of the theatre was that it had a serious purpose to make people think. As a satirist he saw

himself as the successor of Pope and Swift, signing some of his early works *Scriblerus Secundus*. Much of Fielding's work was heavily political. As a lover of his country and liberty, he despised dishonesty and corruption in public as well as private life. By employing political satire on the ministry, laughing at opposition hypocrisy as well as Walpole corruption and the absurdities of the Court, he defied authority and all his works denounced the selfish clinging to power whether it be parental, marital, sexual, financial, and political. To him, "there was only one way to be secure against Walpole, and that was by keeping his hand shut, for then Walpole's touch had no power" (qtd. in Cleary, 1984: 125). Thus, during his life span, as a great innovator, reformer and political playwright who tried to reform the society at most fundamental level, Fielding secured against Walpole by not accepting governmental corruption under the reign of Walpole. Fielding who was affected by the political and social corruption of Walpole tried to find remedies for the society by writing important plays dealing with the political and social issues of the day, and he remained as an ardent political playwright opposing to many corrupted institutions with his pen.

CHAPTER THREE

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES IN HENRY FIELDING'S THREE POLITICAL PLAYS

3.1. Rape Upon Rape

Rape Upon Rape is a play which shows Fielding's use of theatre to address specific social issues while exhibiting many features of regular drama. This play was performed and published under two titles, *Rape Upon Rape or The Justice Caught in His Own Trap*. It is "a five-act comedy opened at the Little Theatre, and it includes severe anti-ministerial and anti-court material" (Cleary, 1984: 27). It is a lively and disturbing play that marks a watershed in Fielding's development in theatre, which is his first exploratory venture into a new province of comedy. Though conceived in the conventional five-act of regular comedy, his new species of comedy differs from what he had gone before in two essential respects: its manner is more earnest, its subject is more daring. In the prologue to *Rape Upon Rape*, Fielding states that his target is not the innocuous foibles of the upper class that injure no one however ludicrous they may be, but rather something more dangerous – "Vice" that "hadh grown too great to be abus'd; / By Pow'r, defended from the Piecing Dart" (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 92). This is a comedy that is ardent and bold enough with a reforming aim in which laughter is meant to serve a social and moral purpose. To Battestin, it may have been inspired by a particular contemporary scandal that exposed all too clearly the decadence and venality of English society (1989: 92).

Rape Upon Rape is "an amalgam of social satire and intrigue comedy" (Hume, 1988: 71). Politick, the old merchant, who runs mad after news and newspapers, loves dealing with state affairs and greatly hates Turks. Also he is a humorous character, so is Sotmore who says he will turn a daughter out of doors for drinking tea. Worthy is the good justice, Quill is the clerk, and Faithful is the honest servant. Fielding sets up contrasts: Worthy is against the corrupt Justice Squeezum; Ramble is against Constant the true lover, but the central theme of the play is its satire of Politick and Squeezum (Hume, 1988: 71). The play contrasts the legal philosophies of Justice Squeezum and Justice Worthy and shows the deficiencies of a judicial system that let a convicted rapist

free. They become an emblem of the struggle in English society between those who corrupt values and those who preserve traditional values. Both Wilbur Cross and F. Homes Dudden analyze the central comic satiric underpinnings of the play. They note its satire on the greed of the courts, embodied in Justice Squeezum, eventually exposed by exemplary by Justice Worthy, and its mockery of Sir Politick Wouldbe's ruling passion for political events and the absurdities of contemporary newspapers (qtd. in Cleary, 1984: 37).

A considerable interest in politics and intention to assault on Walpole are apparent in the play. The prologue alerts any audience in 1730 that parts of *Rape Upon Rape* are likely to be applicable to Walpole. In the prologue, spoken by Mr. Paget, an actor who played Worthy, it first laments that contemporary satirists are afraid to attack the "Mighty Villain":

In ancient Greece, the Infant Muse's school,
Where Vice first felt the Pen of Ridicule,
With honest Freedom and impartial blows
The Muse attack'd each Vice as it rose:
No Grandeur could the Mighty Villain screen
From the just satyr of the comick scene:
No titles could the daring Poet cool,
Nor save the great right honourable fool (1).

Then it promises that "the Heroic muse who sings tonight.....dares the Lyon in his Den". Lyon can be interpreted as the head of government, and the phrase "Mighty Villain" as the Justice Squeezum. The gradual attempts by supporters including Fielding to depict opposition assaults as discontent from the Present Establishment had constantly been countered. It also announces Fielding's intention to particularize his satirical attacks. By announcing, it gives the brief history of origin and the decline of true satire. This prologue also hints satire on Walpole, interwoven with satire on the sins of Justice named in the title.

The play opens with a disruption of order. Hilaret, the daughter of Sir Politick, is making preparations to leave her father's house and elope with Constant. Politick interrupts the conversation between Hilaret and her maid Cloris. He interprets his conflict with his daughter in terms of their reading habits. They cannot agree because she reads romances. She, in turn, thinks his father neglects his parental duties due to his

political obsession. His idea to govern a woman is greater than to govern a kingdom. He has rather seen his daughter a politician than a woman of quality. He does not mind his own business instead of public as public affairs have great importance than his daughter. Thus he is not aware of the fact that his daughter has gone out of the house. The political gossip between Sir Politick and Dabble refers to England's problems with Spain over possession of Gibraltar and the possibilities of peace and war. The whole scene and epilogue focus on the same diplomatic questions of the Treaty of Seville, signed by English, France and Spain. Furthermore, Walpole's sinking fund is laughed when Wouldbe says building a machine to transport ships over the Isthmus of Suez would be possible as it follows:

You are deceived, very much deceived: but some fool hath put this into your Head. You may live to see me one of the greatest Men in England. Did I not say at the Siege of Gibraltar, that within one three years, we should see whether we should have Peace or no. and yet I am an Ignoramus; I know nothing I warrant you; I had better have continued a Merchant no doubt: but then what had become of my Projects? Where had been all those twenty different Schemes which have now ready to lay before the Parliament, greatly for my own honour and the interest of my country? Harkye, I have contrived a Method to pay off the Debts of the Nation, without a Penny of Money (I. ii).

Sir Politick lives in terror of invasion of England by Turks and he says that the "Turks give him much greater uneasiness than Don Carlos can" (I. iv). Also He cares more about the supposed illness of Dauphin than the elopement of his daughter. He thinks "the loss of twenty daughters would not balance the recovery of the Dauphin" (I.vi) He recommends that Hilaret read political newspaper and this play shows antics of Politic, a quixotic character who reads, rereads, and misreads newspapers and forgets (Rivero, 1989: 77).

Politick's daughter Hilaret, tries to elope with Constant, but she meets with Ramble in the street, and is taken for a whore. Although Hilaret tries to convince him that she is a woman of quality, Ramble wants Hilaret to come to a tavern, but she understands his aim, and she tries to undermine by promising to meet him at a tavern, but Ramble does not fall into this play. Ramble thinks if she does not consent, he will ravish her. Then he assaults her, she cries rape and they are both taken by the watch and come before Justice Squeezum. Squeezum's discussion with Quill begins with a reference to the justice's protection of bawdy houses which means Walpole's apparent

protection of Charteris. For Squeezum, Mother Bilkum refuses to pay Squeezum's demands, she believes that she can bypass her old protector and bribe a jury herself:

Squeezum: Did Mother Bilkum refuse to pay my Demans, say you?

Quill: yes, Sir; She says she does not value your Worship's Protection of a Farthing, for that she can bribe two juries a year to acquit her in Hick's- Hall for half of the Money which she hath paid you with these three months.

Squeezum: very fine! I shall shew her that I understand something of Juries, as well as herself. Quill, make Memorandum against Mother Bilkum's trial, that we may remember to have the Pannel No 3. They are a set of good man and true, and hearken to no Evidence but mine.

Quill: Sir, Mr. Snap the Bailiff's Follower hath set up a Shop, and a Freeholder. He hopes your worship will put him into a Pannel on the first Vacancy.

Squeezum: Minute him down for No 2. I think half of the Pannel are Bailiffs Followers. Thank Heaven, the Laws have not excluded those Butchers.

Quill: No, Sir, the Law forbids Butchers to be Jurymen, but does not forbid jurymen to be Butchers (II. ii).

Justice Squeezum is a depraved character. He extorts protection money from madams, manipulates juries dishonestly, and gives gamesters licences that exempt them from gaming-house raids. He sees every criminal brought before him as a payer of bribe. While he is successful in the world of corrupt court jurisdiction, he suffers when his wife appears or when he steps back into the domestic world. He is under the yoke of matrimonial tyranny. Especially Cloris's statement about "the rights of a wronged wife" may have been interpreted as a hit at Walpole's notorious family difficulties: "for it hath been ever my opinion that a Husband, like a courtier, who is above doing the duties of his Office, should keep a Deputy" (I. i). Squeezum is frightened only by his wife who blackmails large sums of him by threatening exposure:

...whenever I ask for a trifle, you object my extravagance, I'll be reveng'd, I will blow you up, I will discover all your midnight intrigues III Houses, your bribing Juries, your snacking Fees, your whole train of Rogueries (II. iii).

Staff says that if Hilaret is woman of virtue, Ramble will be hanged but if she is not, she will be whipped. As Hilaret wants her liberty, she has nothing to say against Ramble, but Squeezum questions her and wants her to swear to convict Ramble so that Squeezum can get money from Ramble in return for his discharge. Those who have Squeezum's worship license, namely who bribe him are discharged whatever they do.

Staff: I fancy he is some great man; for he talk French, sings Italian, and swears English

Squeezum: Is he rich?

Staff: I believe not, for we cannot get a Farthing out of him.

Squeezum: A certain sign that he is. Deep pockets are like deep streams, and Money, like Water, never runs faster than in the Shallows.

Staff: Then there is another misfortune too.

Squeezum: What is that?

Staff: the woman will not swear anything against him.

Squeezum: never fear that, I will make her swear for my purpose (II. ii).

Meanwhile, Ramble and Mrs. Squeezum vows each other. Mrs. Squeezum thinks that if Ramble ravished her, she would certainly forgive him because she likes him. Also her husband uses his wife to persuade Ramble. Due to his supposing that Hilaret is a whore, he tries to persuade her to perjure:

Squeezum: come come, Child, you had better tahe Oath, tho' you are not altogether so sure. Justice should be rigorous. It is better for the publick that ten innocent people should suffer, than that one Guilty should escape, and it becomes every good person to sacrifice their Conscience the Benefit of the Publick (II. v).

Squeezum even gives her money "Let thy silence. I will be a verb active, you shall be very passive" (II. v). He examines Hilaret in private and offers to take her into keeping, pointing out the advantages of his position: "you are as safe with a Justice in England, as a Priest abroad; Gravity is the best Cloak for Sin, in all Countries" (II. v). Meanwhile, Mrs. Squeezem is doing her best to get herself into bed with Ramble, but he is kept under custody until he accepts to bribe Squeezum. Ramble is determined to revenge from Squeezum by using his wife.

Squeezum, however, is not the only plotter in the play. The action of the play consists of several clashes of plots all of which fail. Hilaret's plot to elope with Constant ends badly. She finds herself in Ramble's plot. Meanwhile, Constant, who quitted the service of East India Company and came over to England with Sotmore, is seized on a mistaken charge of rape while he is trying to rescue Worthy's sister Isabella who then turns out to be Ramble's lost wife. When he is kept under custody, Staff gives him some advice about rape. He utters as follows:

Staff: A rape, Captain, a Rape- no dishonourable offence- I would not have brought any Scoundrels into your Honour's Company: but Rape and Murder no Gentlemen needed be ashamed of: and this an honest brother-Ravisher- I have ravished Women myself

formerly: but a wife blunts a Man's edge. When once you are married, you will leave off Ravishing, I warrant you- to be wound in wedlock is as good as security against Rapes, as to be bound over to the Peace is against Murther (III. iv).

Ramble and Constant meet and they talk about their past. Ramble settled Indies when his father turned him out of doors. He was admitted to East India Company, he changed his name so that his father could not find him. Also his father thought that his son was hanged long ago. However, Ramble got a rich man's money and wife after he died. While they were turning back to England, he lost the sight of his wife, Isabella, in a violent storm. He thought that the lady and her fortune were gone together. Then, he had never seen or heard of her. After Ramble tells his story, he learns that Hilaret is the lover of Constant, so he lies and says that he rescued Hilaret from a ravisher. The central action of the play, the most important plot, is to catch the corrupt Justice Squeezum in his own trap. To expose Squeezum, Hilaret and her friends make a plan. Additionally, Ramble will have his liberty by means of Mrs. Squeezum. He has a plan, an intrigue with rich Justice's wife. When he is taken up for the next rape, he will bribe Squeezum with his own money. Squeezum himself has another plot hidden under his legal robe. He is suspicious that his wife is plotting against him and it is her evidence that convicts him at the end. Squeezum wishes to discover her in adultery and thereby take advantage of the law against cuckoldom (IV. i). He thinks his wife will ruin him by bribing her to hold her tongue. For Squeezum, it is not enough that a man knows himself to be cuckold; the world must know it too. On the other hand, Hilaret, Constant and Ramble try to expose Squeezum's plots, so a letter reaches appointing him to meet with Hilaret at a tavern. When they meet, he vows Hilaret at the tavern, he reaches the ridiculous situation:

Give me a kiss for that.—Thou shall find me a young lover, a vigorous young lover too. Hit me a slap in the face, do. Bow –wow! Bow-wow! I will eat up your Cloaths. Come, what will you drink? White or red? Women love White best.....Come, let us hear the story how you were first debauched. Come – that I may put it down in my history at home. I have the history of all the Women's ruin them I ever lay with, and I call it, The History of my own Times (IV. vi).

Squeezum wants her to tell everything again, and then he cannot bear and tries to rape her. Fortunately, Sotmore rescues her and says:

Sotmore: Fie upon you, Mr. Squeezum! You are a Magistrate, you who are the Preserves and Executor of our laws, thus to be the breaker of them!

Squeezum: Can't you accuse me?

Hilaret:If there be any Law for a Justice, I am resolved to hang him.

Sotmore:Justice never triumphs universally as at the execution of one of her own officers.

Squeezum: I see I am betrayed, I am caught in my own trap. There is but one way to escape, which is the way I have opened to others. I see, Madam, your design is to extort money from me. I am too well acquainted with the laws to contend: I hope you will be reasonable, for I am poor, very poor, I assure you: it is not for Men of my Honesty to be rich (IV. vii).

Sotmore persuades Squeezum to write a letter so that Ramble and Constant could be discharged. However, Squeezum does not keep his promise and accuses them of conspiring to swear against Hilaret. She is in a difficult situation, will be hanged if her father, Politick who thinks his country is dearer than his daughter, does not assist her. Later, Hilaret is taken for rape. As it is impossible for Politick a woman taken up for a rape, he decides to help his daughter.

While Justice Squeezum thinks that the age is corrupt, and he is a part of it, Justice Worthy, an honest and reliable man, thinks the past on which “there was a time when virtue carried something of a divine Awe with it, which no one durst attack” (V. v). Squeezum, as a corrupt Justice, complains about a rape against him, and he wants Justice Worthy to protect him by stating that “we should stand by one another, as the Lawyers do. I hope, Brother, you will shew me extraordinary justice, and I assure you, should any affair of yours come before me, my partiality shall lean on your side” (V. v). Next, he finds witnesses, Brazen and Fire, that express Hilaret's whoring, but Politick comes and rescues his daughter. Also Mrs. Squeezum accuses her husband of bribing and of using law for his personal benefits. In the end, Ramble turns out to be Politick's long estranged son. The happy ending is that Constant got Hilaret, Ramble recovers both Isabella and her fortune. The play begins with the introduction of Squeezum and ends with the moral perspective of Worthy.

Fielding chose the subject of rape because it was a common topic in his period. He then uses the historical events to address the real source of problem. Thus the meaning of rape includes all violations of human freedom. He argues that laws must be properly enforced. The play has political implications with its original title explicitly alluding to the most notorious rape case of the day. An English Professor, “Bertand

Goldgar points out that the allusion rape brings the notorious Charteris case to mind” (Rivero, 1989: 77). Rape was much in the news in 1730 as a result of two cases that embarrassed the government. As Goldgar noted, in 1729, Colonel Francis Charteris, as a sensualist and unprincipled tool of the ministry, had been convicted of raping his maidservant and he was committed to Newgate and required to pay a heavy fine, but Charteris was rich and close to Walpole. Fielding reminded his audience in the Prologue that Walpole was notorious for screening his creatures from punishment. So Charteris had received King’s pardon. The stunning example of the influence of money was clear and he was ready to lead astray more young women with impunity. As a reference to this event, Dabble remembers “to have seen in some newspaper a story not very different from this” (V. iv), which is the trial and conviction of Colonel Francis Charteris called “Rapemaster General of Great Britain” and associate of the prime minister (qtd. in Rivero, 1989: 77). By referring to this event, the play wittily exposes the flaws in a legal system that lets a convicted rapist go free.

The other case was a Church of Dean, appointed by English authorities, was condemned for raping a young girl. Thus, Fielding’s emphasis on rape stirred political depths. There are references to topical matters especially some of them touchy from the government’s point of view. Fielding harshly alludes to Charteris’s pardon in Worthy’s lament that “... Golden sands too often clog the wheels of Justice, and obstruct her course: the very Riches which were the greatest Evidence of his villany, have too often declared the Guilty innocent; and gold hath been found to cut Halter surer than sharpest steel” (V. v). The audience can identify specifically with Colonel Charteris, but, as Goldgar observed, Fielding did not need to expose Colonel Charteris on the stage by name “given the atmosphere in the spring of 1730.....there can be little doubt that audiences at the Haymarketwould have immediately connected the play with the Charteris affair” (qtd. in Rivero, 1989: 79). The satiric object does not appear on stage because Fielding can rely on the audience to make the right connections.

As a social and political panorama, politicians are occupied with the usual business of bribes and taxes. They divert themselves at mindless and extravagant entertainments. In London, the demands on justice were greater. Some men of inferior rank needed it, but men of superior rank used it to make a living. Such men whom Fielding characterized in Squeezum in this play have a reputation for abusing their

authority. Politick's sacrifice of his daughter's interests and of his career as merchant in favor of his preoccupation with state affairs finds a parallel in the judicial system, namely Justice Squeezum. Squeezum is a man who uses his public office to gratify his private vices. When private vices do not turn into public benefits, the proper ordering of society cannot be achieved by legal means. So Squeezum cannot achieve the order of society, and his badness has influence on every member of society. He uses the law for his personal benefits. Squeezum is presented with humour, but he is a villain. Squeezum's similes repeat the difference between high and low: "Well, sir, if you cannot pay for your transgressions like the rich, you must suffer for them like the poor" (II. vi). He is an example of power as the prologue says "vice clothed with power."

Fielding, a political playwright, wanted a country where law and order prevailed, and where the individual citizen understood his obligation to the state as a whole. Like Justice Worthy in the play, he would increasingly "long to see the time here, as in Holland, the Traveler may walk unmolested, and carry his riches openly with him" (V. v). He wanted this kind of safety that had been achieved by Dutch labours although they worked much cheaper than the English. In contrast to licentiousness of the English press, he admired the severity with which the Dutch prohibited Libels against their governors. As Worthy observes, England boasts "as wholesome laws as any kingdom upon the earth" (V. v). The problem is that they are being executed by rogues like Squeezum who adulterate wholesome laws to line their own pockets (Rivero, 1989: 84). The emphasis is on the proper execution of existing laws. It is an issue that became the subject of public debate after the pardon of Colonel Charteris. For Squeezum, laws do not constitute a single, absolute system, contained and meaningful in itself. In fact, they might not even exist in terms of his own mercenary system of values. He sees social structures and rules as a game. For him, if a person knows the rules by not abiding them like honest people, but to control them, he can use them for his evil purposes. His view of justice is captured not only in his rape of language as he redefines the word protection to suit his evil purposes. To satirize both Walpole and judicial inequity, it is uttered in the play as follows:

The laws are turnpikes, only made to stop People who walk on foot, and not to interrupt those who drive through them in their Coaches. The laws are like a Game at Loo, where a blaze of court Cards is always secure, and the knaves are the safest cards in the pack (II. ii).

As the topical connections recede into the background, the phrase “rape upon rape” is a metaphor for the abuses of power Walpole and his minions. As a general idea to maintain law and order, the existence of government and ruling class is important, but in the play, these people who hold the power in their hands, consciously, fear the victims with unjust social relations instead of practising laws for every person and protecting them. Fielding’s invocation of the “Heroic Muse” suggests that his conception of regular comedy is changing because his conception of the relationship between the playwright and his audience is also changing. He begins to see the five-act comedy as the potential means for serious discussion of social issues. He introduces this new element to regular comedy by returning to older dramatic forms by following the example of Greeks, particularly Aristophanes. To Fielding, Aristophanes was “a man who exerted his Genius in the Service of his Country. He attack’d and expos’d its Enemies and Betrayers with a Boldness and Integrity, which must endear his Memory to every True and Sincere Patriot” (qtd. in Rivero, 1989: 79).

To sum up, like Shaw at the end of nineteenth century, Fielding transforms the subject matter of the well-made play because, like Shaw, Fielding thought that the playhouse can become a public forum for political and social dialogue, a powerful instrument of moral reformation (qtd. in Rivero, 1989: 80). So he introduces the new while he is preserving the old. The play shows many features of regular comedy such as love plot, humorous characters like Politick and Sotmore, mistaken identities and discoveries, and the like (Rivero, 1989: 80). As Fielding’s aim is to make traditional forms contemporary, he uses characters who behave in different ways in the same situation. Furthermore, he presents contrastive groupings and splits his stage to illustrate different responses. Yet these features are arranged differently. Instead of using love and marriage as the main theme of his plot, he constructs his play around the concept of law. The last words of the play are spoken by not reunited lovers but by Justice Worthy. He passes judgment on the actions of Justice Squeezum and pronounces sentences, having observed that Sotmore’s excessive fondness for the wine is a “bestly pleasure”, not the “humour” of an honest man, as Ramble would have it (V. vi). A rape can only be realized in a society where the vice is punished and excessive behavior moderated. When looked under the light of social and political concerns, injustice practices will only stop when people live in a just society in which all people are equal.

3.2. The Modern Husband

The Modern Husband, in the five-act comedic forms, is a social comedy that reveals the corruption in the society with its darkest features. It is the anatomy of London society that offers one of the darkest comic visions. As John Loftis points out, “Fielding breaks sharply with the Restoration stereotypes” (Hume, 1988: 122). This play differs from Fielding’s previous regular drama in its serious portrayal of vice. The play shows that the vice, Lord Richly reflecting the darker theme of the play, is real and a powerful threat to the balance of society. Virtue still triumphs at the end after struggling with a most formidable enemy. Its most effective weapon is not laughter but Mrs. Bellamant’s love for her adulterous husband. By reforming the bad institutions of society by means of a sobering ridicule, the play’s form focuses on a villain and his plots, it, explicitly, attacks on certain types of illicit activity, but the center is a group, Mr. and Mrs. Modern and Lord Richly, and closely linked with them, the unfortunate Bellamants. The center of attention is no longer courting lovers but a married couple and the model. Richly’s abuse of and disdain for women is clear. Lady Charlotte is self-absorbed; Emilia is passive, and Mrs. Modern, though highly sexually available, is almost entirely controlled by her avaricious husband. Thus, *The Modern Husband* is Fielding’s most serious attempt at social commentary in the five-act comedic forms with situations, characters and social states.

To start with, Mrs. Modern, concerned with appearances, and an avid player of card games, supports herself and her husband, Mr. Modern, by having relationship with rich lords and cheating at cards, and they have run out of money because Mr. Modern, as her husband says, does not manage Lord Richly right. Mr. and Mrs. Bellamant, other couple, are happily married, except for the fact that they are running out of money, and Mr. Bellamant is being managed by Mrs. Modern. Lord Richly suggests Mr. Modern that he believes in the virtue of Mrs. Modern “as firmly....as thou dost thyself,” and implies that Bellamant is a “prudent” and “dangerous man” who may well be pursuing Mrs. Modern’s virtue (I.ix). When Lord Richly tries of Mrs. Modern and finds an attraction elsewhere, and when she loses at cards, Mr. Modern encourages her to help Richly to secure his new woman, the virtuous wife of Mr. Bellamant:

Mrs. Modern: Have I not given you up my Virtue?

Lord Richly: And have I not paid for your virtue, Madam? I am sure, I am 1500 pounds out of pocket, which in my way of counting, is fourteen more than any Woman's Virtue is worth; in short, our Amour is at an end, for I am in pursuit of another Mistress (II. ix).

Mr. Bellamant is an adulterer and his son is a wasteful fop; only Mrs. Bellamant is "an unmixed character of virtue" (Paulson, 2000: 57). Lord Richly is the central knave who exploits the folly of his clients, the Moderns and all other characters, with single exception of Mrs. Bellamant. He is the figure of the great man of wealth, power, and patronage who uses his power to seduce and discard the wives of less fortunate men. Furthermore, virtue is nothing for him as he utters:

Mrs. Modern:All Vertue to be only pride, Caprice, and the Fear of Shame.

Lord Richly: Vertue, like the Ghost in Hamlet, is and here, there, everywhere, and nowhere at all; its Appearance is as imaginary as that of a Ghost; and they are much the same sort of people, who are in love with one, afraid of the other. It is a Ghost which hath seldom haunted me, but I have had the power of laying it (IV. ii).

Mr. Modern has also a plan to trap Lord Richly and Mrs. Modern. Thus, he will get money by proving that he is cuckold. His wife, Mrs. Modern has also a sexual relationship with Mr. Bellamant, so Mr. and Mrs. Bellamant's marriage is threatened by Mr. Bellamant's covert affair with Mrs. Modern. Lord Richly uses Mrs. Modern to have Mrs. Bellamant. In return for money, Mrs. Modern accepts to help Richly, but she has also a plan about Richly. She will make Mr. Bellamant suspicious about his wife affair with Richly. Mrs. Modern wants Mr. Bellamant to bring his wife as she tells him that she is voluntary to meet her. She also hints that Richly likes his wife. In the play, characters generally play Quadrille that is a game for four players, for two partners against two partners, and therefore, it is not proper for a successful seduction. However, Picquet is one-on-one play and Richly loves playing Picquet. By defeating Mrs. Modern at Picquet, he manages to persuade her a meeting between Mrs. Bellamant and him. In order to ensure his success at meeting, he plays picquet with Mrs. Bellamant and loses six parties designedly. This is his method to seduce women:

Lord Richly: And if some of them do not open the gates for me, the Devils in it: I have succeeded often by leaving Money in a Lady's Hands; she spends it, is unable to pay, and then I, by Virtue of my Mortgage, immediately enter upon the Premises (IV. ii).

Mrs. Bellamant understands Richly's design and decides not to see him again, but Richly has left a hundred pound note with her. Lord Richly reports that Mrs. Bellamant, whom he has allowed to beat him at cards, accepts his over payment "with the same Reluctancy that a lawyer or physician would a double fee or a court-priest a plurality" (IV. ii). His skill at playing game does not help him this time because Mrs. Bellamant is faithful to her husband. It is the same hundred pounds that brings about the discovery of Mr. Bellamant's infidelity. When he sees this note in his own house, he is suspicious about his wife, and then he asks many questions to his wife about the possibility that he is cuckold. However, he is the one who commits adultery and is then forgiven. His ideas summarize the abject situation of the society:

Mr. Bellamant: It is a stock- jobbing age, ev'ry thing has its price; marriage is Traffick throughout; as most of us bargain to be Husbands, so some of us bargain to be Cuckolds; and he wou'd be as much laught at, who preferr'd his love to his interest, at this end of the Town, as he who preferr'd his honesty to his interest at the other (II. viii).

Although Mrs. Modern has a plot on her mind, Lord Richly and Mrs. Modern are interrupted in their plotting by the arrival of Mr. Modern, Richly swears, "Pox on him, a husband, like the fool in a play, is of no use but to cause confusion" (III. iii). It is Mr. Bellamant's fortune that his wife forgives him. Mr. Modern is also a cuckold, he is determined to benefit from the laws, and he says "I shall the strictest satisfaction which the law will give me" (IV. ix). That is to say, cuckolds and unfaithful wives exist in the world and by appearing in the theatre, most of them mirror people and their manners. To Professor Charles Woods, there is nothing in the English theatre quite like this until "the dramatic program of the author of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*" (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 130).

The play's romantic couples, Emilia and Mr. Gaywit, have not been yet married; they will do as soon as they discover their love for each other and clear up their monetary difficulties. Gaywit, the nephew of Richly, values good nature; it is listed as one of primary qualities that attract him to Emilia, and his own good nature leads him to use the knowledge gained from his past to help those caught up in the scandal of the play. He refuses to "take advantage of the misfortunes of any; but surely not of the woman I love" (V. vii). He also enables himself to keep his inheritance as he marries

Emilia, the woman he desires. He thus maintains the individualistic, powerful romantic hero. They have a chance to come together when Captain Bellamant, Mr. Bellamant's son, and his lover Lady Charlotte, the daughter of Richly who is supposed to marry Mr. Gaywit have no choice but to marry as they "think alike.....act alike....and are very much alike in the face" (V. ii).

As the representation of modern vice, namely Richly is not only an immoral rogue, but also he is a corrupted man corrupting people around him. At the center of power structure is Lord Richly, who exploits a society of equally corrupt types:

Captain Merit:there is a fellow no-that Fellow's father was pimp; his mother, she tun'd Bawd; and his sister, turn'd whore; you see the consequence: how happy is that country, where pimping and whoring are esteemed publick services, and where Grandeur, and the Gallows lie on the same road (I. viii).

His behavior illustrates one of the political skills that infuriated his enemies. He has learned to corrupt and control his suppliants and to promise to help, not to perform it. Additionally, he promises everyone for something, even Merit, but he never delivers. This recalls the satire of Walpole, ironically called as a great man who preferred to use the promises as bribes. Richly corrupts husbands as the ministers corrupt electors. Mr. Bellamant who resists the temptation of a place in exchange for his wife's and his own honour can be commented as symbol of political purity and opposition against Lord Richly's corruption. Gaywit summarizes, Richly "is arrived at a happy way of regarding all the rest of mankind as his tenants, and thinks, because he possesses more than they, he is entitled to whatever they possess" (II. vi). He manipulates women with large sums of money left for small gambling debts, and he controls men with promises of preferment and interest. Richly's power is his money. He tells Mrs. Modern bluntly that "money shall always be the humble servant of my pleasures; and it is the interest of man of fortune to keep up the price of beauty, that they may have it more among themselves" (IV. ii).

While Gaywit's comments express primarily desire, Richly demonstrates the psychological and economic colonization of the disempowered by those still guided by the old need to prove control and dominance: "You know, Harry, you have my consent to possess all the women in town, except those few that I am particular with: provided

you fall not foul on mine, you may board and plunder what vessels you please... Then the principal thing to be considered is her cargo. To marry a woman merely for her person is buying an empty vessel: and a woman is a vessel which a man will grow cursed weary of in a long voyage” (V. vii). Richly’s abuse of women, the general understanding of women as property as manifested in the process of criminal conversation charge is also attacked. Criminal conversation was a charge under which the lovers’ adulterous wives could be sued for damages resulting from the appropriation of the feminine property of another man and for the public shame of the cuckold. Trials were public, and having eventually this procedure became almost necessary as a prerequisite to having a private divorce bill approved in Parliament (Potter, 1999: 66). If a husband proves his wife’s adultery, he can sue for his wife. This reminds the audience Theophilus Cibber’s suit against William Sloper in 1738. Like Fielding’s Mr. Modern, he first sold his wife’s sexual favours to her lover, and he attempted to increase his profits with a crime conversation action. Then he found himself frustrated by witnesses who could confirm to his conspiracy in the adultery.

As stated in the prologue, it is a realistic representation of a willing cuckold and his willing wife to pay their gambling debts. His main plot was taken an incident in real life, the notorious case of Lord Abergavenny which came trial in 1730. Having laid a trap for his wife and her lover, he brought an action for criminal conversation against the man and was awarded for his damages of £ 10,000 (Battestin, 1989: 130). It is said that, unlike Mrs. Modern who is incapable of shame, Lord’s wife died of grief before the trial. One purpose of this play is the exposure and correction not just of private folly but a public evil. To Charles Woods, “this public evil is state of affairs that enable a man to take money from his wife’s adultery without loss of social prestige” (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 130). This procedure was practiced in English legal system until 1857 when Parliament at last put an end to actions for criminal conversation. The play achieves its realism by representing real people, real human situations. There are some sins of the court, for example, as George II kept several mistresses who seem to have almost the same social standing, as the Queen, and Walpole lived openly with Molly Skerit while his wife played mistress to Lord Hervey:

Col. Courtly: I hope you have brought your family to town; a Parliament-man shou’d always bring his wife with him, that if he does not serve the puvlick, she may.

Lord Richly: Now I think Familiarity with the Wife of a senator shou'd be made a Breach of Privilige (I. ix).

However, Fielding does this by constantly by reminding the audience they are watching a play. He depicts sordid social facts, and it is something that will not attempted against until Ibsen's drama of social realism (qtd. in Rivero, 1989: 122). As far as Fielding is concerned, his audience will be aware that they are watching a play. Thus the audience will be less likely to identify with the action and more tend to attempt to think about the action. In the play the fourth wall never entirely disappears because "Fielding, like Brecht, believes that the drama is realistic when it calls attention to its own theatricality" (qtd. in Rivero, 1989: 123). His characters are constantly playing card games. With every reference to card games, the audience is reminded that it is looking at players: players of card games, players of marital games.

Charles Woods suggests, "parallels to Shaw and Ibsen, that play should be judged as a comedy of social purpose as the subject matter is seriously presented" (qtd. in Rivero, 1989: 123). The injustices encouraged by unequal laws are also the topic explored in this play. It deals with the practice, encouraged by the Criminal Conduct Laws, of selling one's wife for personal interest. It is a law that enables a man to collect damages for his wife's adultery. This play anticipates Ibsen with its depiction of ugly social fact. Fielding's play, as Ibsen's drama, shows characters struggling to develop, to be themselves and thus struggling to be free. His personal concern is the physical, economic, social constraints on individual freedom. He examines characters who are threatened by social conventions which appealed both outside and inside. Women are also imprisoned. She is tied down by marriage. She accepts her domestic situation, however, does not consider it limiting since she has a higher station and greater freedom than her social position world at one time have permitted. By defining the merits of the good man and woman in the context of marriage, this play also announces the serious social commentary:

Mr. Modern: In short, Madam, you shall not drive a separate Trade at my Expence. Your person is mine, I bought it lawfully in the Church, and unless I am to profit by the Disposal, I shall keep it all for my own Use.

Mrs. Modern: this insolence is not to be born.

Mr. Modern: Have I not winked at all you're your intrigues? Have I not pretended Business, to leave you and your Gallants together? Have I not been the most obsequious, servant?

Mrs. Modern: My vices-call it obedience to a husband's will. Can you deny that you have yourself persuaded me to undertaking? Can you forget the arguments you used to convinced me that Virtue was the lightest of Bubbles (IV. i).

Fielding's dedication of *The Modern Husband* to Sir Robert Walpole has usually been seen politically important. It requires an occasion to consider Fielding's attitude towards Walpole. Ironically, it is followed by references in the play to great man like Richly. Fielding offers in his prologue a standard aim "to divert, instruct, and mend mankind" (Potter, 1999: 62). It serves moral ends of Fielding's serious social satire. Fielding states his determination to show modern vice and to draw the society as vicious as it is. As a serious and harsh satire, he chooses Mr. and Mrs. Modern who live on her immoral earnings by means of Lord Richly. Epilogue is almost moralist, emphasizing the play's commentary on the hypocrisy of privileging reputation over deed, and concluding with "Thus each extreme is for instruction meant/ and Ever was the stage's true intent/ to give reward a virtue, vice its punishment." Fielding's own epilogue offers that Mrs. Modern has merely been caught living up to the values of the town. Fielding's satire is harshest when directed at Mr. Modern's attempt to procure money by procuring his wife. The satire on the Moderns also opposes the idea of marriage as a financial institution or social stepping stone. He uses his wife solely as a tool of greed. He tells her wife:

Mrs. Modern:in a civiliz'd Nation, There are no laws against Duns (I. ii)

Mr. Modern: Pooh, you will have enough to gild it; never fear of your reputation, while you are rich- for Gold in this world covers as many sins, as Charity in the next. So that get a great deal, and give away a little, and your secure Happiness in both. Besides, in this case, all the scandal falls on the Husband.

Mr. Modern:you will find that Wealth has a surer interest to introduce Roquery into Company, than Vertue to introduce Poverty (I. iv).

As a result, *The Modern Husband* is a social comedy that reveals the corruption in the society with its darkest features by using Richly, as the representation vice, and Mrs. Bellamant as virtue. With the power of money, Richly thinks that he has right to do everything, and ignores virtue. He represents Walpole who has unexampled power based on bribery and vast expenditures of money. Fielding, by giving two opposing characters, tries to attract attention of the audience, and wants them to look at events

from satirical perspectives; thus, he aims to prevent the audience from identifying themselves with the events and characters. By means of characters, he harshly satirizes the law that allows a husband to sue for his wife when he proves his wife's adultery with her lover, as in the example of the Moderns. That is, the law, meant to preserve the social order, is in fact a spreading plague for the society. So Fielding shows the follies of men, hypocrisy of institutions in his play *The Modern Husband*.

3.3. The Tragedy of Tragedies: Or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great

Tom Thumb, two-act farce, appeared in two versions in 1730, and then was performed and published with additional scenes with a new preface, prologue, and epilogue. Sheridan Baker observes that "Fielding's veiled aspersions of Walpole as the great Man of his *Tom Thumb* is accepted as his first political satire on the stage" (qtd. in Cleary, 1984: 35). To start with, the play depicts a day on which, as Doodle tells Noodle, the sun "shines like a Beau in a new Birth-Day Suit" and "all nature...grins for joy" and on which "the mighty Tom Thumb victorious comes" to King's court by defeating the giants (I. i). As a reward for his heroic deeds, the king promises to give him his daughter, Huncamunca. In this scene, Fielding means to satirize Walpole and the Court, even Princess Anne and the deformity of her future husband the Prince of Orange. This act arouses the jealousy of the queen and Grizzle, who conspire to prevent this hated match. In the first edition, Doodle and Noodle talk about Tom Thumb who conquers the giants although he is a little hero in size. He is also seen as preserver of kingdom by royal family, especially by the Queen who is in love with Tom. She soliloquizes in Act I, scene VI, on the emptiness of life without virtue, namely Tom:

Queen: I can't live without my virtue, or without Tom Thumb. Then let me weight them in two equal sales, in this scale put my virtue, that, Tom Thumb. Alas! Tom Thumb is heavier than my virtue. But hold- perhaps I may be left a Widow: This match prevented, them Tom Thumb is mine.

In the second scene of Act II, a Bailiff who is insolent to Tom is killed by him. He casually kills the Bailiff who attempted to arrest Noodle for a debt to his tailor and has insulted his friend Noodle. This Bailiff scene can be commented as Walpole's trouble with city merchants.

Bailiff: oh my good Follower! When I reflect
 On the big hopes I once had entertain'd,
 To see the Law, as some devouring Wolf,
 Eat up the Land,-'till like a garrison,
 Its whole provision's gone.-Lawyers were forc'd,
 For want of food, to feed on one another.
 But oh! Fall'n hope. The law will be reduc'd
 Again to reason, whence it first arose (II. i).

Then news arrives to court and it is about Tom who is supposed to be dead. As both versions of the play target from silly courtiers to bad physicians, it depicts the learned debate between two physicians who attempt to diagnosis the cause of Tom Thumb's unexpected death. They misuse language deliberately to mask their ignorance. They are shattered by the news that he is still alive and a traitor is discovered who designs to kill Tom with poison. Fortunately, he is alive and Tom and Huncamunca will marry. It is wedding day, and the king announces: "open the prisons, set the wretched frees, and bid our treasures disburse six pounds to pay their depts..." (II. ix). When he announces these sentences, there comes news that Tom is swallowed by a cow. He changes his announcement and tells:

King: Shut up again the prisons, bid my treasurer
 Not give three Farthings out- hang all the Culprits,
 Guilty or not-no matter- ravish Virgins,
 Go bid the school masters whip all their boys;
 Let lawyers, Parsons and the Physicians loose,
 To rob, impose on, and to kill the world (II. x).

After Tom's death, the ghost of him comes but his ghost is killed by Grizzle, later Huncamunca kills Grizzle, Doodle kills Huncamunca and so on. In the end, all characters kill one another.

For Wilbur Cross, *Tom Thumb the Great*, besides being a burlesque of current tragedy, was a hit at Sir Robert Walpole, the Great Man, as he was called in irony by his enemies because "Fielding reduced the Prime Minister to a pigmy, to the delight of the audience, making the little man more powerful than men, giants and the gods combined, then throwing doubt upon his claims to have killed the giants at all" (qtd. in Cleary, 1984: 34). Another critic, F. Hommes Dudden, by evaluating two versions of the play,

maintained that all versions of play should be taken as satiric of Walpole and he declared that the audience has seen the hero as a false great man:

In the literature of the Opposition of this appellation was constantly applied to Walpole: the mere mention of ‘Great Man’ in any kind of public utterance was sufficient to direct attention to Walpole. When Fielding, therefore, brought upon stage a personage styled. ‘The Great’ a contemporary audience would immediately suspect that an allusion to Walpole was intended. When, further, this ‘great’ personage was represented as the most famous man in the kingdom, a pillar of the state, a friend of the King, favoured by the Queen, acclaimed by the Court party, hated and feared and plotted against by the Opposition (Lord Grizzle)- when his name was associated with ‘peace and safety’ (Walpole’s declared policy) and with fox-hunting (Walpole’s favourite sport) – the suspicions of the audience would be deepened into practical certainty (qtd. in Cleary, 1984: 34).

In the play, as Dudden mentions, there are references to fox-hunting, Walpole’s favourite pastime, and to peace and safety, the main foreign policy of Walpole; the Queen favours Tom, and sees him as the preserver of Kingdom, as Caroline favoured Walpole. Loftis’ brief remark is on *Tom Thumb* of 1730 in *The Politics of Drama in Augustan England*: “Tom Thumb the great, the giant killer, the upholder of peace, the favourite of the Queen, the successful lover-could all of this be innocent of innuendo?” (qtd. in Cleary, 1984: 35).

In the second edition, Fielding expanded the brief scenes of three acts by adding several characters and complicating relationship among them. The play introduces its characters. King Arthur is husband to Queen Dollalola whom he stands a little fear. That reminds the audience Queen Caroline’s influence over George II but he is very fond of and is in love with Glumdalca who is a captive queen. The king, free of love entanglements in the first version, falls prey to the charms of Glumdalca while she, in turn, pines for Tom Thumb and becomes rival of the queen and Huncamunca as Glumdalca loves Tom. Queen Dollalola is made fall in love with Tom.

Queen: oh! Happy states of Giantism-where husbands like Mushrooms grow, whilst hapless we are forc’d to be content, nay, happy though with one (I. iii).

In the second scene, King refuses to discuss business, and declares that the present must be dedicated to pleasure. Queen’s honor is involved through her infidelity to the King and Huncamunca’s through her division of affection between her two suitors: Tom, a

little hero but has a great soul, and Lord Grizzle having a passion for the princess. She is equally in love with Tom. She is desirous to be married to them both. However, Huncamunca solves her conflict by deciding to marry both Tom and Grizzle. As she tells the latter:

My ample heart for more than one has room,
A maid like me, Heaven form'd at least for two,
I married him, and now I will marry you (II. x).

As for jealousy, everyone in the play appears to be jealous of everyone else. Throughout the play, the war is kept close at hand. At the opening of Act I, Tom returns from glorious foreign conquests and is received by the Royal court as a conquering hero. In Act III, Grizzle threatens a general destruction after a civil war. Grizzle's protestation is that Tom shall never marry Huncamunca, his vow of destruction when they are united at the end of Act III. The competition between Tom and Grizzle is played up. Grizzle, without a love interest in the earlier edition, now views with Tom Thumb for the affection for Huncamunca, so that his jealousy no longer stems from only court intrigue but from a noble cause. A heavier irony is reserved for the minister's conniving adversaries, the leaders of the Opposition, represented by Lord Grizzle.

Grizzle: Draw all your Swords, for Liberty we fight, and Liberty the Mustard is of life.

Tom Thumb: are you the Man whom menfam'd Grizzle name?

Grizzle: are you the much more fam'd Tom Thumb?

Tom Thumb: The same

Grizzle: come on, our worth upon ourselves we will prove, for Liberty I fight (III. ix).

Fielding inserts into his new script a prophetic part, and in this supernatural scene, Merlin foretells Tom Thumb's fatal end, so that when the fatal end comes, neither the hero nor the audience are taken by surprise. He consoles the hero for his woeful destiny by saying that his life will become the subject of the play we are now watching:

See from a far a theatre arise;
There, Ages, yet unborn, shall tribute pay
To the heroic Actions of this Day:
Then Buskin Tragedy at length shall choose
Thy name the best supporter of her Muse (III. viii).

Fielding reserved the most significant part for the closing scenes of his new play, in which he substituted the ghost of Gaffar Thumb for that of illustrious son. This eliminated the second killing of Tom Thumb as in the first edition. London flocked to see *Tom Thumb* not because the play was recognized as a serious call for theatrical reform but because it was a tragedy that made them laugh. In fact, Fielding deconstructed tragedy by focusing on the pleasure of the town. As soon as Fielding decides to focus on only one of the pleasures of the town, he discovers that what makes “modern Tragedy” so ridiculous and dramatically inept is it has ceased to be pure tragedy and become mixed with “farce” (qtd. in Rivero, 1989: 56). For him, a playwright must recognize when a dramatic form has become exhausted, when the tradition needs to be revitalized with new ideas. All Fielding had to do was to take basic elements of contemporary tragedy. In this respect, *Tom Thumb* may be commented as Fielding’s deconstructive commentary on “modern Tragedy” (Rivero, 1989: 57). As Fielding well understood, it is impossible to grasp the absurdity of something we sympathize or identify with. He thus set out to prevent identification by disrupting the theatrical illusion, and he would do it by presenting the conventions of “modern Tragedy” in a new context.

Consequently, the play, *The Tragedy of Tragedies: Or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*, a burlesque satire with its new conception of modern Tragedy, deals with the corrupted sides of the Royal family. As uttered in Act II, scene X, the king is in love, the queen is drunk. It is worth to note that virtue is nothing for them and they dedicate themselves to pleasures. As a representation of Walpole and the court, Tom, small in size, does heroic deeds like Walpole but is swallowed by a cow. Unlike Tom, Lord Grizzle represents the opposition. So both versions of the play satirize silly courtiers, bad physicians, under Walpole’s government. Fielding could level his charge to the minister, so it is Walpole who shows the theme of moral weakness and corruption in the government.

CONCLUSION

Theatre has been one of the most important issues which some authorities paid attention to and attached a great importance on plays for almost every period of the history because of the fact that stage sometimes hosted many political and social plays that reflected their periods. Many authorities used them as tools for their personal benefits by preventing the society from understanding the reality behind appearances as theatre and politics were side by side. None of the playwrights wanted to write political plays that revealed the follies and corruption of the government at highest level. Therefore, most playwrights did not want to bother any group with the utterances they would express and take their reactions; at the same time, the obligation to conform to the pointed prohibitions left them in a difficult situation while they were writing their plays. However, Henry Fielding accepted the main reason for Licensing Act, did not hesitate to touch political themes. He used theatre as a means for propaganda; his aim was to provide the audience to think critically and to question the social environment around them. Namely, Fielding's aim was to awake consciousness by handling political and social issues and to present the corruption of his period.

During the first half of the 18th century, as prime minister, Sir Robert Walpole dominated English political life. He was active using and controlling press as he did not want to be criticized for his deeds. Furthermore, he was not a man of literature; instead, he attached importance to governmental deeds. As he was indifferent to theatres, many playwrights like Fielding began writing political plays with their political identities. At these years there was the assault going on against theatres because Walpole began to be disturbed by plays under the reign of George II. So he took a step to censor these plays. It resulted in Fielding's exclusion from the stage by the Licensing Act of 1737. As a prime minister, he was harshly criticized especially "after 1728 political allusion became bold and often hostile, occasionally to the King himself and much more often to the King's first Minister" (Loftis, 1963: 94). Although Fielding was hindered legally by the government, he never gave up exposing and reforming the follies of the society as he set the rottenness of the government with money, bribery, hypocrisy, and corruption. His success and theatrical system in London led him eventually to take upon himself the

profitable role of manager as well as playwright. When the theatre closed to him in 1737, he turned to law.

As an active reformer, Fielding obviously satirized the minister and his policies in his play *Rape upon Rape*. Especially, it revealed total corruption of the judicial system by showing the deficiencies and the corrupted side of the Justice Squeezum who used the authority for his personal benefits. For Squeezum, representing the justice for people, law was applicable just for the rich. Having a lot of money was enough for a person to be discharged if he could be a guilty person. Fielding's other play *Tom Thumb* satirized on the Court and the minister, as well as the opposition. Also he satirized the royal family. With the motif of great man, Fielding implicitly connected Tom with Walpole. The general outline was apparent in a contemporary Walpole ballad: "Good people draw near/ And a tale you shall hear/ A story concerning one Robin/ Who, from not worth a groat/ A vast fortune has got/ By politicks, Bubbles, and Jobbing" (Paulson, 2000: 51). Finally, in *The Modern Husband*, he criticized the criminal conversation that allowed a husband to sue for his wife when he proved that he was cuckolded. So he got money for his damages even if the adultery was false. In this play, Lord Richly was a corrupted character who used his power to abuse women and their husbands.

As above-mentioned, in the first years of 18th century, theatre was exposed to a harsh criticism and assault and Henry fielding, a political playwright who colored his plays with his satire ability, made an important liveliness on the stages by mentioning the tumultuous events of his period in his plays, especially *Rape upon Rape*, *The Modern Husband*, and *The Tragedy of Tragedies: Or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*. During his literary career he wrote many plays of various sorts such as regular comedies, farces, satirical pieces and burlesques. By far the most interesting of these plays are the satires and burlesques. Fielding stated the social and moral conventions in a satirical and critical way in such a way that the society can easily understand what they mean. He wrote to improve something that already exists in the nature of society. His gaining importance was due to his plays touching the untouched social issues and portraying them as explicitly as possible before the audience because the theatre was directed to the society. To Aaron Hill, Fielding was "one of the greatest Genius's in his way, that this, perhaps any Age or Nation produced" (qtd. in Battestin, 1989: 531).

As a result, this thesis focused on Henry Fielding as a political playwright, and related his political career with his plays *Rape upon Rape*, *The Modern Husband*, and *The Tragedy of Tragedies: Or, the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*. The main aim of this thesis is to analyze Fielding's political playwriting under the light of political theatre and his political plays dealing with the corruption of the Royal family by referring to electoral abusiveness, bribery, the inferior behaviours of state officers, the existence of political dishonesty, and the corrupted side of authorities in Fielding's own period. It can be said that Fielding had a few failures and rough times throughout his active political career but as an English political playwright, he wrote many important political plays that had great importance in English literature. Because his success was great, he was first known as a political and successful playwright although he is now remembered for his later contributions to the emerging genre of the novel. Thus it will be no exaggeration to say that Fielding is one of the most important political playwrights whose effect is too difficult to be denied in the century he lived.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, M. H. (ed.), (1993). *The Norton Anthology of English Literature—Volume I: From the Middle Ages to the Romantic Age*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co. Inc.
- Battestin, M. C., Battestin, R. H., (1989). *Henry Fielding: A life*, Routledge, London; New York.
- Battestin, M. C. (2000). *A Henry Fielding Companion*, Greenwood Press, London.
- Campbell, J. (1995). *Natural Masques: Gender and Identity in Fielding's Plays and Novels*, Stanford University Press. Standford, California.
- Cleary, T. R. (1940). *Henry Fielding: Political Writer*, Wilfrid Laurier University Press. Waterloo, Ontario, Canada.
- Çelik, Yavuz. (2005). *Toplumsal ve Tarihsel Boyutlarıyla İngiliz Tiyatrosunda Sansür*, (Yayınlanmamış Doktora Tezi), Erzurum, Atatürk University.
- Fielding, H. (2004). *The Modern Husband*, Kessinger Publishing.
- Fielding, H. (2004). *Love in Several Masques*, Kessinger Publishing.
- Fielding, H. (2004). *Rape Upon Rape Or The Justice Caught In His Own Trap, A Comedy*, Kessinger Publishing.
- Harper, H. H. (2005). *The Genius of Henry Fielding*, The Bibliophile Society, Boston.
- Hillhouse, J. T. (ed.), (1918). *The Tragedy of Tragedies; or, The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great*, Yale University Press.
- Hume, R. D. (1988). *Henry Fielding and The London Theatre 1728-1737*, Oxford University Press, USA.
- Innes, C.D. (1972). *Erwin Piscator's Political Theatre*, Cambridge University Press, USA.
- Kuritz, P. (1988). *The Making of Theatre History*, Prentice Hall PTR, London.
- Langford, Paul. (1989). *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783*, Oxford, Oxford UP.
- Lawrence, F. (2006). *The Life of Henry Fielding: With Notices of His Writings, His Times, and His Contemporaries*, Arthur Hall, Virtue, & CO, Paternoster RO, London.

- Loftis, John. (1963). *The Politics of Drama in Augustan England*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Loftis, John. A. H. Scouten, et al. (1976). *The Revels History of Drama in English Volume V. 1660-1750*. London, Methuen & Co Ltd.
- McCrea, B. (1981). *Henry Fielding and the Politics of Mid-Eighteenth-century England*, University of Georgia Press.
- Paulson, R. (2000). *The Life of Henry Fielding*, Blackwell, Malden, USA.
- Piscator, E. (1980). *The Political Theatre*, translated by Hugh Rorrison. London: Methuen.
- Potter, T. (1999). *Honest Sins: Georgian Libertinism & the Plays & Novels of Henry Fielding*, McGill-Queen's University Press, London.
- Reitan, E. A. (2010). *An Age of Achievement: Politics and Culture in 18th England*, iUniverse, United States of America.
- Rivero, A. J., (ed.), (1998). *Critical Essays on Henry Fielding*, G.K. Hall, Prentice Hall Inter New York: London.
- Rivero, A. J. (1989). *The Plays of Henry Fielding: A Critical Study of His Dramatic Career*, University of Virginia Press, United States of America.
- Samuel, R., MacCol, E., Cosgrove, S. (1985). *Theatres of the Left 1880-1985*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, Boston, Melbourne, Henley.
- Smart, J. (2003). *Twentieth Century British Drama*, Cambridge Press, United Kingdom.
- Uglow, J. (1995). *Henry Fielding*, Northcote House Publishers Ltd, United Kingdom.
- Willet, John. (1986). *The Theatre of Erwin Piscator: Half A Century of Politics in The Theatre*, Methuen London Ltd, London.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name and Surname : Sevda KAPLAN

Mother's Name : Perihan

Father's Name : Veli

Birth Place and Date : Denizli/ 28.02.1983

B. A. : Pamukkale University
Faculty of Science and Letters
Department of English Language and Literature

Graduation Date : 2008

Work Place and Position : Ağrı İbrahim Çeçen University
Instructor

