

The Content Words in the Comedy *Rape upon Rape*

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I. Introduction

This comedy was written in 1730, when Fielding was twenty-three years old. Strangely enough, it has two titles: *The Coffee-House Politician, OR, THE JUSTICE Caught in his own TRAP*, and *RAPE upon RAPE; OR, THE JUSTICE Caught in his own TRAP*. In the former is added 'A COMEDY. as it is Acted at the Theatre Royal in *Lincoln's Inn-Fields*', and in the latter 'A COMEDY. As it is Acted in the Theatre in the *Hay-Market*.

The reason why the comedy has two titles is probably that: at first Fielding began to write about a coffee-house politician and finished writing it, though imperfectly, and staged it at the Theatre Royal in Lincoln's Inn-Fields, but in consequence its content was far from the author's intention of describing a coffee-house politician and chiefly went to the description of the politician's daughter, especially the daughter raped by a justice, and therefore he changed the title to 'Rape upon Rape' and after a while staged it at the Theatre in the Hay-Market. If he had first determined 'The Justice Caught in his own Trap' as the title, he would not have needed to change the title subsequently.

I don't know whether the comedy was really put on the stage and if it was, what effect it produced on the audience. Fielding wrote it at the age of 23. It is admirable that he wrote it despite his youth, because he seems worldly-wise considering his age like a man who has tasted the sweets and bitters of life.

II. The Outline of *Rape upon Rape*

Hilaret and Cloris her maid are talking of wedding and love (ACT I., SCENE I.).

Hilaret and Politic are talking of newspapers (I., II.), and that night Hilaret is gone out of the house with her maid (I., V.).

On the day of an appointment with Constant, Hilaret and Cloris get involved in a scuffle on the way and have parted from each other; Hilaret meets Ramble in the street; she is mistaken for a common whore by him, is taken in his arms, and so asks for help, houting 'a rape, a rape' (I., IX.).

Hilaret is going to charge Ramble with a rape to Constable, but, on the contrary, he says he charges her with threatening to swear a rape against him, and laying violent hands upon his person, and successfully goes away, saying that a man can have nothing to do with a modest woman, but that he must be married, or hanged for't (I., X.).

Next day Squeezum hears from Hilaret and Ramble the circumstances in which they spent the previous night (II., V.).

And he continues to hear them from her when they are alone at the house, and gradually his heart is beginning to be touched, but at that moment he hears his wife returning, so he lets Hilaret go out, telling her to be punctual at the appointed time (II., VI.).

One morning Hilaret meets Cloris by chance in the street, and is told that Captain Constant is taken up for a rape (III., I.).

In the Constable's house where Ramble is talking to Constant and Sotmore of a modest whore he has met, Hilaret runs to Constant, shouting 'My Constant!' not regarding Ramble. They embrace each other for a short time, talking of the cause of an unfortunate accident, and in the meantime Hilaret notices Ramble and says she is to thank this gentleman for help. Constant and Ramble are both amazed at her confession, and Constant gives thanks to Ramble, but Ramble pleads, 'I had just parted from this gentleman (=Constant), when I heard a young lady's voice crying out for help; upon this, making directly to the place where the noise proceeded, I found this lady (=Hilaret) in the arms of a very rude fellow, and yet a very cowardly one; for the moment I came up he quitted his hold, and was gone out of sight in the twinkling of an eye' (III., XIII.).

Hilaret appears at a tavern where Squeezum is waiting for her. She begins to talk of the story of how she was first debauched. Hearing her story, he gets excited and makes advances to her. She asks for help, shouting 'a rape, a rape!' (IV., VI.).

At that moment Sotmore comes on the scene, looks at Justice Squeezum ravishing Hilaret,

and blames him, saying 'You who are a magistrate, you who are the preserver and executor of our laws, thus to be the breaker of them! Who would have imagined that such an old withered maypole as thou art should attempt to fall on a woman? Justice never triumphs so universally as at the execution of one of her own officers.' Now Sotmore is on her side, Hilaret, wreaking her wrath, tells him not to let Squeezum escape, till they send for a constable and says, 'If there be any law for a justice, I am resolved to hang him.' Though Squeezum is harshly attacked by Sotmore and Hilaret, he has the impudence to say he is innocent, and says, 'I see I am betrayed; I am caught in my own trap' (IV., VII.).

When Constable and the assistants come on the scene, Squeezum betrays Sotmore and Hilaret, and orders Constable his conspirator and the assistants to seize Constant, Hilaret, and Sotmore and to convey the prisoners to Constable's house (IV., IX.).

When Politic and Dabble are talking at Politic's house, Faithful appears to let Politic know the strangest news of his young mistress that she is taken up for a rape, for ravishing a justice of peace. But Politic will not believe it at all, saying, 'A woman taken up for a rape—it is impossible' (V., IV.).

Squeezum calls on Justice Worthy at his house and asks him to speak for him, saying, 'we are brought to a fine pass indeed, when magistrates shall not be safe; we are like to protect others when we cannot protect ourselves. The accusing a member is accusing the body. We should stand by one another, as the lawyers do. I hope, brother, you will show me extraordinary justice.' Speaking against him, Worthy says, 'I assure you I shall do the strictest justice. It is a cursed law which exempts the maker or the executor of it from its penalty' (V., VI.).

In front of Worthy, Constant, Hilaret, Staff, Sotmore, and the others, Squeezum tried to make his friends Brazencourt and Fireball perjure themselves, but finally his plot ends in a failure and Sotmore asks Worthy to send Squeezum to prison (V., VII.).

Politic meets his unfortunate daughter Hilaret again. Worthy tried to commit Hilaret to gaol, but is surprised to find that she is Politic's daughter (V., VIII.).

Worthy declares that he charges Justice Squeezum, Constable Staff, and Quill, and at last the three villains disappear from the Scene X, the last but one (V., X.).

In the last scene Ramble is found to be Politic's son Jack, who, when young, was turned out of doors, and his sister Hilaret, who is also gone out of doors, is going to marry Captain Constant, who is Ramble's friend. Politic, who is Ramble's and Hilaret's father, cheerfully says, 'I heartily forgive you all; so let me see you all embrace one another.—This is the comfort of age, Mr. Worthy.' In this way, the event ends happily (V., *the last.*).

III. The Content Words 'Rape', 'Woman', 'Good Nature', 'Modesty', 'Love'

1. Rape

- i) In the scene where Ramble and Hilaret are talking, and in the following scene Staff and Watch join them:

RAMBLE. In short, my passion will be dallied with no longer. Do you consider I am just come on shore, that I have seen nothing but men and the clouds this half year, and a woman is as ravishing a sight to me as the returning sun to Greenland. I am none of your puisny beaus, that can look on a fine woman, like a surfeited man on an entertainment. My stomach's sharp, and you are an ortolan; and, if I do not eat you up, may salt beef be my fare for ever! (*Takes her in his arms.*)

HILARET. I'll alarm the watch.

RAMBLE. You'll be better-natured than that. At least, to encounter danger is my profession; so have at you, my little Venus—if you don't consent, I'll ravish you.

HILARET. Help there! *a rape, a rape!*

RAMBLE. Hush, hush, you call too loud, people will think you are in earnest.

HILARET. Help!—*a rape!* (ACT I., SCENE IX.)

SCENE X.

RAMBLE, HILARET, STAFF, WATCH.

STAFF. That's he there, seize him.

RAMBLE. Stand off, ye scoundrels!

STAFF. Ay, sir, you should have stood off—Do you charge this man with *a rape*, madam?

HILARET. I am frighted out of my senses—

STAFF. A plain case?—*The rape* is sufficiently proved.—What, was the devil in you, to ravish a woman in the street thus?

HILARET. Oh! dear Mr. Constable, all I desire is, that you would see me safe home.

STAFF. Never fear, madam, you shall not want evidence. (*Aside to her.*)

RAMBLE. (Nay, if I must lodge with these gentlemen, I am resolved to have your company, madam.) Mr. Constable, I charge that lady with threatening to swear *a rape* against me, and laying violent hands upon my person, whilst I was inoffensively walking along the street.

HILARET. How! villain!

RAMBLE. Ay ay, madam, you shall be made a severe example of. The laws are come to

a fine pass truly, when a sober gentleman can't walk the streets for women.

HILARET. For Heaven's sake, sir, don't believe him. (ACT I., SCENE X.)

In this scene of the comedy *Rape upon Rape*, the word 'rape' is first used. In the OED 'rape' is defined as 'The act of carrying away a person, esp. a woman, by force' and 'Violation or ravishing of a woman', but Fielding uses the word only as 'Taking or holding a person, esp. a woman, in one's arms', or as 'a frolic' from this scene through epilogue.

ii) In the scene where Staff and Squeezum are talking:

SQUEEZUM. Waht's that?

STAFF. The woman will not swear any thing against him.

SQUEEZUM. Never fear that; I'll make her swear enough for my purpose. What sort of woman is she?

STAFF. A common whore, I believe.

SQUEEZUM. The properest person in the world to swear *a rape*. A modest woman is as shy of swearing *a rape*, as a gentleman is of swearing a battery.—(ACT II., SCENE II.) Squeezum talks, comparing a modest woman with a common whore, but this common whore of whom Staff talks is the heroine Hilaret in this comedy.

iii) In the scene where Staff, Squeezum, Mrs. Squeezum, Hilaret, Ramble are talking:

STAFF. An't please your worship, here is a gentleman hath committed *a rape* last night on this young woman.

SQUEEZUM. How! *a rape!* Hath he committed *a rape* on you, child?

MRS. SQUEEZUM. This may be worth hearing. (*Aside*.)

HILARET. Sir, I have nothing to say against him. I desire you would give us both our liberty. He was a little frolicsome last night, which made me call for these people's help; and when once they had taken hold of us, they would not suffer us to go away.

SQUEEZUM. They did their duty.—The power of discharging lieth in us, and not in them.

RAMBLE. Sir.—

SQUEEZUM. Sir, I beg we may not be interrupted. Harkye, young woman, if this gentleman hath treated you in an ill manner, do not let your modesty prevent the execution of justice. Consider, you will be guilty yourself of the next offence he commits; and upon my word, by his looks, it is probable he may commit *a dozen rapes* within this week.

HILARET. I assure you he is innocent. (ACT II., SCENE IV.)

In the scene i) Hilaret shouts 'a rape' three times for help, but in this scene she speaks for Ramble; she says 'he was a little frolicsome' and that 'he is innocent', and so the word 'rape', I think, connotes 'frolicsome' and 'innocent', or 'frolic' and 'innocence'.

iv) In the same scene as above where Mrs. Squeezum and Ramble are talking:

MRS. SQUEEZUM. I hope, sir, it (=Ramble's having committed a rape on Hilaret) will only appear to have been a frolic: I must own I have been always a great enemy to force—since there are so many willing.

RAMBLE. So, I find there is no danger of *a rape* here. (*Aside.* (ACT II., SCENE IV.) Mrs. Squeezum, who is the wife of Justice Squeezum, is so favourably disposed to Ramble that she says like that, because she has already seen him through.

v) In the scene where Squeezum and Hilaret are talking:

SQUEEZUM. I see where your hesitation hangs; you are afraid of spoiling your trade.—You think severity to a customer will keep people from your house.—Pray, answer me one question—How long have you been upon the town?

HILARET. What do you mean?

SQUEEZUM. Come, come, I see you are but a novice, and I like you the better; for yours is the only business wherein people do not profit by experience.—You are very handsome—It is a pity you should continue in this abandoned state.—Give me a kiss;—Nay, be not coy to me.—I protest, you are as full of beauty as the rose is of sweetness, and I of love as its stalk is full of briars—Oh! that we were as closely joined together too.

HILARET. Why, you will commit *a rape* yourself, Mr. Justice.

SQUEEZUM. If I thought you would prove constant, I would take you into keeping: for I have not liked a woman so much these many years.

HILARET. I will humour this old villain, I am resolved. (*Aside.* (ACT II., SCENE V.) Squeezum is convinced in spite of old age that Hilaret is a new whore, so he says to her, 'you are but a novice, and I like you the better', while Hilaret says aside in spite of youth, 'I will humour this old villain, I am resolved'. What is especially noteworthy is that the word 'novice' which Squeezum says ecclesiastically means 'one who has entered a religious house, and is under probation or trial, before taking the required vows (*OED*)'. It may be meaningful that in this scene Squeezum uses the ecclesiastical word 'novice' instead of 'whore'. What is more remarkable here is that Squeezum, who is the justice and hero in this comedy, will ironically commit a rape himself.

vi) In the scene where Hilaret meets Cloris her maid by chance on the street and they are talking:

CLORIS. . . . Poor Captain Constant—

HILARET. What of him?

CLORIS. Oh! madam!

HILARET. Speak quickly, or kill me, which you please—

CLORIS. —Is taken up for *a rape*.

HILARET. How!

CLORIS. It is too true, his own servant told me.

HILARET. His servant belied him, and so do you— Show me where he is; if he be in a dungeon, I'll find him out.

CLORIS. Very generous, indeed, madam! A king should sooner visit a prisoner for treason than I a lover for *a rape*.

HILARET. It would be unpardonable in me to entertain so flagrant a belief, at the first hearing, against a man who hath given me such substantial proofs of his constancy: besides, an affair of my own makes me the more doubtful of the truth of this; but, if there appear any proof of such a fact, I will drive him for ever from my thoughts.

CLORIS. Yes, madam, Justice Squeezum will take care to have him driven another.

HILARET. Justice Squeezum! Let me hug you for that information. Now, I can almost swear he is innocent: . . . (ACT III., SCENE I.)

Hilaret, who has heard Cloris say Captain Constant is taken up for a rape, retorts, 'It is impossible; if there appear any proof of such a fact, I will drive him for ever from my thoughts, but I can swear he is innocent'. In this scene, also, Hilaret says he (=Captain Constant) is innocent. In the scene iii) she says he (=Ramble) is innocent, speaking for him, although she does really know that he has committed a rape on her. But in this case is the word 'innocent' literally innocent? Does it mean 'Free from specific wrong or guilt; that has not committed the particular offence charged or in question; not deserving of the punishment or suffering inflicted; not guilty, guiltless, unoffending' (OED)? Since Captain Constant is her lover, she may believe he is innocent, but the reader or the audience may not. Incidentally, the name 'Constant' is meaningful.

vii) In the scene where Constant, Staff, Mrrs. Staff are talking:

CONSTANT. What is the cause of his misfortune (=a very civil gentleman's)?

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 gentleman need be ashamed of; and this is 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 bound in wedlock is as good a security against *rapes*, as to be bound over to the peace is against murder.

MRS. STAFF. My husband will have his jest, I hope your honour will pardon him.
(ACT III., SCENE IV.)

Staff says, 'A rape is no dishonourable offence; no gentleman need be ashamed of rape and murder; to be bound in wedlock is as good a security against rapes, as to be bound over to the peace is against murder.' He may speak in jest and hyperbolically, but such rapes and murder may, to some extent, have been permitted in eighteenth-century Britain, although I don't know the social circumstances in those days.

viii) In the scene where Ramble is explaining to Constant how Hilaret was ravished by a certain fellow:

RAMBLE. I fancy, madam, your fright (=Hilaret's) at that time may have occasioned your foregetting some circumstances; therefore, since Captain Constant desires it, I will tell him the story.—I had just parted from this gentleman, when I heard a young lady's voice crying out for help; (I think the word Rape was mentioned, but that I cannot perfectly remember; upon this, making directly to the place where the noise proceeded, I found this lady (=Hilaret) in the arms of a very rude fellow—

HILARET. The most impudent fellow, sure, that ever was born!

RAMBLE. A very impudent fellow, and yet a very cowardly one; for the moment I came up he quitted his hold, and was gone out of sight in the twinkling of an eye. (ACT III., SCENE IX.)

We should remember what Ramble said and how he acted to Hilaret in the scene i). The very fellow has the impudence to tell the false story to Constant, so Hilaret shouts in surprise, 'The most impudent fellow, sure, that ever was born!' but she is too modest to say the truth to his face.

ix) In the scene where Hilaret is talking to Squeezum of her lover:

HILARET. At my first entrance he pretended a surprise at seeing me unexpectedly; but on my questioning him how and with what design he had conveyed himself there, he immediately threw off the cloak and confessed all: he flew to me, caught me in his arms

with the most eager raptures, and swore the most violent love and eternal constancy. I in the greatest agony of age repelled him with my utmost force; he redoubled his attacks, I slackened my resistance; he entreated, I raved; he sighed, I cried; he pressed, I swooned; he—

SQUEEZUM. Oh!—I can bear no longer, my angel! my paradise! my honeysuckle! my dove! my darling!

HILARET. What do you mean, sir?

SQUEEZUM. I mean to eat you up, to swallow you down, to squeeze you to pieces.

HILARET. Help there! *a rape, a rape!* (ACT IV., SCENE VI.)

This is the climax of the comedy in which Justice Squeezum commits a rape on a young lady. Incidentally it is meaningful that Squeezum says ‘to *squeeze* you to pieces’.

x) In the scene where Politic and Faithful are talking:

FAITHFUL. Sir, my young mistress, Miss Hilaret, will be undone, ruined, hanged, if you do not assist her; she’s taken up for *rape*.—Oh! my poor young lady! the sweetest, best-tempered lady sure that ever was born. Oh! that ever I should see the day! And can you sit here, sir, reading a parcel of damned, confounded, lying nonsense, and not go to your daughter’s assistance?

POLITIC. Sure the fellow is possessed.

FAITHFUL. Sir, your daughter is possessed—possessed by constables—she is taken up for *a rape*.

POLITIC. My daughter taken up for *a rape!*

FAITHFUL. Yes, sir; for ravishing a justice of peace.

POLITIC. Sure some accident has touched the fellow’s brain.

FAITHFUL. Ay, sir, and it would touch yours too, if you had a grain of humanity in you—Oh! that I should live to see my poor young lady in such a misfortune!

POLITIC. A woman taken up for a rape—it is impossible. (ACT V., SCENE IV.)

The relation between Hilaret and Squeezum in the scene ix) is quite the reverse in this scene. Politic is Hilaret’s father, and therefore it is natural that he should say, ‘A woman taken up for a rape—it is impossible’.

xi) In the epilogue spoken by Mrs. Younger:

At length the *dreadful hurricane* is ended,
And I and spouse are safe together landed.
For after all this mighty fuss about it,

Our play hath ended modestly without it.
 But, ladies, did not you too sympathise?
 Hey, pray, confess, do all your frowns arise
 Because so much of *Rape* and *Rape* we bawl?
 Or is it, that we have no *Rape* at all?

Indeed, our Poet, to oblige the age,
 Had brought *a dreadful scene* upon the stage:
 But I, perceiving what his Muse would drive at,
 Told him the ladies never would connive at
A downright actual Rape—unless in private.
 But notwithstanding what these poets tell us,
 Who'd think our beaus were such high-mettled fellows?

.....

'Twas a strange doctrine that Lucretia taught,
 When on herself revenged her lover's fault!
 Heathenish wretch! The pious Christian wife,
 Though ravish'd, still contents herself with life:
 So zealous from self-murder we refrain,
 We live, though sure of ravishing again.

But may no fears of such a fate affright
 The beauteous kind spectators of to-night!
 Safe to your husband's arms may you escape,
 And never know *that dreadful thing, a Rape!*

When we read the epilogue carefully, we find clearly two kinds of meanings of rape: the rape comically used and the rape literally used. The 'rape' on the seventh line of the first stanza has a comic meaning, and the 'rape' on the next line of the same stanza has a literal meaning. When we read the last stanza, especially, the last line, we find what Fielding means by it. Fielding's desire is probably that ladies should know that *Rape upon Rape* is a play, not a downright actual rape, and that since there is that dreadful thing, a rape, in the actual world, they might as well escape from such a thing.

2. Woman

i) In the scene where Sotmore and Ramble are talking:

SOTMORE. Why, thou wilt not leave us yet, and sneak away to some nasty little whore? A pox confound them, they have spoiled so many of my companions, and forced me to bed sober at three o'clock in the morning so often—that if the whole sex were going to the devil, I would drink a bumper to their good journey.

RAMBLE. And I would go thither along with them. The dear charming creatures! *Woman!* It is the best word that ever was invented. There's music, there's magic in it. Mark Antony knew well to lay out his money, and when he gave the world for *a woman*—he bought a lumping pennyworth. (ACT I., SCENE VII.)

It seems to me that a woman makes a man happy and at the same time unhappy. She may make him unhappy rather than happy because of the female sex.

ii) In the scene where Ramble is talking with Hilaret:

RAMBLE. In short, my passion will be dallied with no longer.
Do you consider I am just come on shore, that I have seen nothing but men and the clouds this half year, and *a woman* is as ravishing a sight to me as the returning sun to Greenland.
... (ACT I., SCENE IX.)

I don't know what figurative meaning 'the returning sun to Greenland' has, although I understand such a sun is ravishing to Ramble who has just come on shore and has seen nothing but men and the clouds for the past half year.

iii) In the scene where Constant and Ramble are talking:

CONSTANT. ... But, pray, how came you to leave the Indies, where I thought you had the same account that I went thither, that I now am here, by which I live, and for which I live, *a woman*.

CONSTANT. *A woman!*

RAMBLE. Ay, *a fine, young, rich woman!* a widow with fourscore thousand pounds in her pocket—There's a North star to steer by! (ACT III., SCENE VI.)

Ramble is a beau who always pays extraordinary attention to women and whose topics are most of them women.

iv) In the scene where Constant, Ramble, and Sotmore are talking of Ramble's wife being missing:

CONSTANT. You must not rail against the ladies, Sotmore, before Ramble; for he is a

married man.

RAMBLE. And what is better, my wife is at the bottom of the sea.

SOTMORE. And what is worse, all her effects are at the bottom of the sea with her.

CONSTANT. How!

RAMBLE. Faith! Sotmore hath spoken truth for once.—Notwithstanding my pleasantry, the lady and her fortune are both gone together; she went to the other world fourscore thousand strong; and, if there be any such thing there, I don't question but she is married again by this time.

SOTMORE. You would not take my advice. I have cautioned thee never to trust any thing on the same bottom with *a woman*. I would not ensure a ship that had *a woman* on board for double the price.—The sins of one woman are enough to draw down a judgment on a fleet.

RAMBLE. Here's a fellow, who, like a prude, makes sin a handle to his abuse.—Art thou not ashamed to mention sin—who art a cargo of iniquity? Why wilt thou fill thy venomous mouth with that of others, when thou hast such stores of thy own?

CONSTANT. What occasioned your separating?

RAMBLE. A storm, and my ill stars. I left the ship wherein she was to dine with the captain of one of our convoy, when, a sudden violent storm arising, I lost sight of her ship, and from that day have never seen or heard of her.

SOTMORE. Nor ever will—I heartily hope. Though as for the innocent chests, those I wish delivered out of the deep. But the sea knows its own good: it will be sure to keep the money, though possibly it may refund *the woman*; for *a woman will swim like a cork, and they are both* of the same value; nay, the latter is the more valuable, as it preserves our wine, which *women* often spoil.

CONSTANT. Why, Sotmore, wine is the touchstone of all merit with thee, as gold is to a stock-jobber; and thou wouldst as soon sell thy soul for a bottle, as he for a guinea.

SOTMORE. Wine, sir, is as apt a comparison to every thing that is good, as *woman* is to every thing that is bad.

CONSTANT. Fie, Sotmore! this railing against the ladies will make your company as scandalous to gentlemen as railing at religion would to a parson.

RAMBLE. Right, Constant! they are my religion, I am the high-priest of the sex.

SOTMORE. *Women* and religion! *Women* and the devil: he leaves his votaries in the

lurch, and so do they.

CONSTANT. I fancy, Ramble, this friend of ours will turn parson, one day or other—
(ACT IV., SCENE VIII.)

In the sentence ‘The sins of one woman are enough to draw down a judgement on a fleet’, the meaning of ‘judgement’ is: ‘Divine sentence or decision; *spec.* a misfortune or calamity regarded as a divine visitation or punishment, or as a token of divine displeasure’ (*OED* ‘Judgement’ 4.), so we see how sinful one woman is. Sotmore says of women, ‘women often spoil men’s wine; woman is a comparison to every thing that is bad; women leave their votaries in the lurch’. Constant says, ‘this railing against the ladies will make your company as scandalous to gentlemen as railing at religion would to a parson’. Ramble says, ‘women are my religion, I am the high-priest of the sex’. The three characters each in his way are trading pleasantries of women or ladies, and one of them Constant, I think, is characteristic of Henry Fielding as the author, but both Ramble and Sotmore may be part of his character.

3. Good Nature (and Good-natured)

i) In the scene where Constant is talking to himself:

CONSTANT. (*Alone*) I begin to be of that philosopher’s opinion, who said, that whoever will entirely consult his own happiness must be little concerned about the happiness of others. *Good nature* is Quixotism, and every Princess Micomicona will lead her deliverer into a cage. What had I to do to interpose? What harm did the misfortunes of an unknown woman bring me, that I should hazard my own happiness and reputation on her account?—But sure, to swear a rape against me for having rescued her from a ravisher is an unparalleled piece of ingratitude. (ACT III., SCENE II.)

In this comedy few characters are able to put into practice the philosopher’s opinion that whoever will entirely consult his own happiness must be little concerned about the happiness of others, or rather, most of them hazard their own happiness and reputation on account of others, because every one of them has the greater or less part of good nature.

ii) In the scene where Ramble and Constant are talking:

RAMBLE. But, Dear Billy, I hope thou hast not really committed, hey?

CONSTANT. What I heartily repent of, I assure you. I rescued a woman in the street, for which she was so kind to swear a rape against me; but it gives me no uneasiness equal to the pleasure I enjoy in seeing you.

RAMBLE. Ever kind and *good-natured*! (ACT III., SCENE VI.)

It is easy to understand that even Ramble, who is the high-riest of the sex, is amazed to find that Constant is ever kind and good-natured.

iii) In the scene where Ramble and Mrs. Squeezum are talking:

RAMBLE. So; my affair with my friend's mistress is happily over.—That I should not know a modest woman! But there is so great an affectation of modesty in some women of the town, and so great an affectation of impudence in some women of fashion, that it is not impossible to mistake. Now for Mrs. Justice, her business with me is not exceeding difficult to guess.

MRS. SQUEEZUM. You will think I have a vast deal of charity, captain, who am not only the solicstress of your liberty at home to my husband, but can carry my *good nature* so far as to visit you in your confinement. I cannot say but I have a generous pity for any one whom I imagine to be accused wrongfully.

RAMBLE. I am obliged to you indeed, madam, for that supposal. (ACT.III., SCENE XI.)

Mrs. Squeezum talks like a modest woman, but she is always thinking of leading Ramble into temptation at every opportunity. Incidentally, the word 'supposal' is one of the citations of *OED*, and means 'An act of supposing; something that is supposed; a supposition, hypothesis; an assumption, conjecture'.

iv) In the scene where Ramble is reading aloud a letter from Mrs. Squeezum in front of Constant:

RAMBLE. Then sir, in plain English, without either trope or figure, it is a letter from the justice's wife, with an order to the constable for my liberty. (*Reads.*

"SIR, —I was no sooner recovered of the fright which that unmannerly friend of yours occasioned, than I have performed my promise. You will find me at home: the constable hath orders by the bearer to acquit you."

Here's *good nature* for you! (*Kisses the letter.*) Thou dear wife of a damned rogue of a justice, I fly to thy arms. (ACT IV., SCENE IV.)

He is now in transports of joy to read a letter from her, feeling greatly encouraged.

v) In the scene where Squeezum is confessing in front of Worthy, Constant, Hilaret, and other characters:

SQUEEZUM. But there come the prisoners.—Brother Worthy, this is the woman

whom I accuse of this detestable fact;—the manner of it was this: I received a letter in an unknown hand, appointing me to meet at a tavern, which out of pure *good nature* I compiled with; and upon my arrival found that woman there alone, who, after a short discourse, laid hold of me, and bawled out; on which that man there entered, and both threatened me, that unless I immediately discharged that man (*points to Constant*) with another whom I had committed for notorious crimes, that the woman should swear a rape against me.—This I am ready to swear. (ACT V., SCENE VII.)

Squeezum is telling a lie, keeping his composure; the description in the scene ix) of 1. Rape is true, so the phrase ‘out of pure good nature’ he says probably means that he is not purely good-natured. Probably it is the author’s comic design.

cf. In the scene where Ramble is trying to tempt Hilaret:

RAMBLE. . . . My stomach’s sharp, and you are an ortolan; and, if I do not eat you up, may salt beef be my fare for ever!

HILARET. I’ll alarm the watch.

RAMBLE. You’ll be *better-natured* than that. . . . (ACT I., SCENE IX.)

4. Modesty

i) In the scene where Squeezum is talking of Ramble with Hilaret:

SQUEEZUM. Sir, I beg we may not be interrupted. Harkye, young woman, if this gentleman (=Ramble) hath treated you in an ill manner, do not let your *modesty* prevent the the excution of justice. Consider, you will be guilty yourself of the next offence he commits; and upon my word, by his looks, it is probable he may commit a dozen rapes within this week.

The word ‘modesty’ in this scene, I think, has a literal meaning, and it is defined in the *OED* as: ‘Womanly propriety of behaviour; scrupulous chastity of thought, speech, and conduct (in men or women); reserve or sense of shame proceeding from instinctive aversion to impure or coarse suggestions’.

ii) In the scene where Sotmore is talking to Ramble:

SOTMORE. *Modesty*, now-a-days, as often covers impudence as it doth ugliness. It is as uncertain a sign of virtue as quality is, or as fine clothes are of quality. (ACT III., SCENE VIII.)

If the word 'modesty', as Sotmore says, covers impudence, ugliness, and an uncertain sign of virtue, we must always take care not to misunderstand its contextual meaning.

iii) In the scene where Ramble is talking with Mrs. Squeezum:

RAMBLE. So; my affair with my friend's mistress is happily over.—That I should not know a modest woman! But there is so great an affectation of *modesty* in some women of the town, and so great an affectation of impudence in some women of fashion, that it is not impossible to mistake. (ACT III., SCENE XI.)

Modesty in a woman is difficult to know. Even Ramble, who ought to know women of the town and women of fashion, exclaims, 'That I should not know a modest woman!'

iv) In the scene where Worthy is talking with Isabella:

WORTHY. Sure *modesty* is quite banished from the age we live in. There was a time when virtue carried something of a divine awe with it, which no one durst attack but now the insolence of our youth is such, no woman dare walk the streets, but those who do it for bread. (ACT V., SCENE V.)

Worthy probably wants to say that modesty has the same meaning as virtue which once carried something of a divine awe with it; he longs for the good old days.

v) In the same scene as above:

WORTHY. . . .; that we, who boast as wholesome laws as any kingdom upon earth, should, by the roguery of some of their executors, lose all their benefit. I long to see the time when here, as in Holland, the traveller may walk unmolested, and carry his riches openly with him. (ACT V., SCENE V.)

In this scene there is not the word 'modesty', but we see from the context that Worthy hopes the time will come again when 'modesty' may regain its original meaning.

5. Love

i) In the scene where Hilaret and Cloris are talking:

HILARET. But suppose you had been in *love* with your husband?

CLORIS. Why so I was, madam, as long as he deserved it: but *love*, like fire, naturally goes out when it hath nothing to feed on.

HILARET. Well, if it be possible to be assured of a lover's sincerity, I think I may be assured of Constant: at least it is advisable to persuade myself of his truth whom I should love, though he wanted it:—Ah, Cloris! you may as easily remove a rock as a woman's

passion——

CLORIS. And yet it is very often built on a sandy foundation.

HILARET. *Love* is the same, whatever be its object; we as often like men for imaginary as real perfections; we all look through a prismatic glass in *love*, and whatever beauties we have once fancied we never lose the opinion of——our amorous faith is as implicit as our religious. (ACT I., SCENE I.)

The love Cloris thinks of is different from that Hilaret thinks of. Cloris thinks, it seems to me, love is relative and fragile, while Hilaret thinks love is enduring and absolute, because Cloris says a rock, that is, love, is very often built on a sandy foundation; Hilaret says love is the same, needless to say, as a rock.

ii) In the scene where Ramble is talking with Sotmore:

RAMBLE. Wine is only the prologue to *love*: it only serves to raise our expectations. The bottle is but a passport to the bed of pleasure. Brutes drink to quench their appetites—but lovers to inflame them. (ACT I., SCENE VII.)

This is what Ramble, the high-priest of the sex, wants to emphasize.

iii) In the scene where Hilaret and Squeezum are talking:

HILARET. . . . My father was a country parson, and gave all his children a good education. He taught his daughters to write and read himself.

SQUEEZUM. What, have you sisters, then?

HILARET. Alack-a-day, sir! sixteen of us, and all in the same way of business.

SQUEEZUM. Ay, this it is to teach daughters to write. I would as soon put a sword into the hands of a madman, as a pen into those of a woman; for a pen in the hand of a woman is as sure an instrument of propagation, as a sword in that of a madman is of destruction. (*Aside.*)—Sure, my dear, the spirit of *love* must run very strongly in the blood of your whole family. (ACT II., SCENE V.)

From the context this love is a religious feeling and an affectionate and tender devotion.

IV. Proverbial Expressions

1) POLITIC. Ay, there it goes, tick tack, tick tack, like the pendulum of a clock. What mischief are you (=Cloris and Hilaret) hatching, hey?—*It is impossible that two women should be together without producing mischief.*

CLORIS. I always thought *a man and woman the more likely to produce mischief:*

and yet I think them the properer company. (ACT I., SCENE II.)

- 2) POLITIC. I do not believe the head of Cardinal Fleury can be more perplexed than mine is with this girl (=Hilaret). *To govern yourself is greater than to govern a kingdom*, said an old philosopher: and *to govern a woman is greater than to govern twenty kingdoms*. (ACT I., SCENE II.)

- 3) POLITIC. . . .—*A newspaper would be a more profitable entertainment for you (=Hilaret) than a romance*. (ACT I., SCENE II.)

The expression of 'a woman' or 'women' instead of 'you' is more proverbial.

- 4) SOTMORE. Before I go into a tavern again with a man who will sneak away after the first bottle, may I be cursed with the odious sight of a pint as long as I live: or become member of a city club, where men drink out of thimbles, that *the fancy may be heightened by the wine, about the same time that the understanding is improved by the conversation*: . . . (ACT I., SCENE VII.)

'The fancy is heightened by the wine, about the same time that the understanding is improved by the conversation' is more proverbial.

- 5) RAMBLE. Truly, honest No1, *when a man's reason begins to stagger I think him the properest company for the women*: . . . (ACT I., SCENE VII.)

'When a man's reason begins to stagger he is the properest company for the women' is more proverbial.

- 6) SOTMORE. Now thou art an honest fellow—and thou shalt toast whomsoever thou pleasest—We'll bumper up her health, till thou dost enjoy her in imagination. *To a warm imagination there is no bawd like a bottle*. It shall throw into your arms the soberest spite of her art. Nay, thou shalt increase her charms more than her art: and, when thou art surfeited with the luscious pleasure, wake coolly the next morning without any wife by your side, or any fear of children. (ACT I., SCENE VII.)

- 7) RAMBLE. *Guilt will ever discover itself*. (ACT I., SCENE X.)

- 8) SQUEEZUM. Ay, poor fellows! We must all take our chance, Quill. *The man who would live in this world must not fear the next*. The chance of peace is doubtful as that of war; and *they who will make their fortunes at home, should entertain no more dread of the bench, than a soldier should of the field*. . . . (ACT II., SCENE I.)

- 9) SQUEEZUM. Never fear a lawyer in lace.—*The lawyer that sets out in lace always ends in rags*. (ACT II., SCENE II.)

- 10) SQUEEZUM. A certain sign that he is *Deep pockets are like deep streams; and money, like water, never runs faster than in the shallows.* (ACT II., SCENE II.)
- 11) SQUEEZUM. Never fear that; I'll make her swear enough for my purpose. What sort of woman is she?
- STAFF. A common whore, I believe.
- SQUEEZUM. The properest person in the world to swear a rape. *A modest woman is as shy of swearing a rape, as a gentleman is of swearing a battery.* . . . (ACT II., SCENE II.)
- 12) SQUEEZUM. Come, come, child, you had better take the oath, though you are not altogether so sure. Justice should be rigorous. *It is better for the public that ten innocent people should suffer, than that one guilty should escape: and it becomes every good person to sacrifice their conscience to the benefit of the public.*
- HILARET. Would you persuade me to perjure myself?
- SQUEEZUM. By no means. Not for the world. Perjury indeed! Do you think I do not know what perjury is better than you? He did attempt to ravish you, you own; very well. *He that attempts to do you an injury, hath done it in his heart.* Besides, a woman may be ravished, ay, and many a woman hath been ravished, ay, and men been hanged for it—when she hath not certainly known she hath been ravished. (ACT II., SCENE V.)
- 13) SQUEEZUM. My pretty nosegay (=Hilaret), you will find me vastly preferable to idle young rakehells. Besides, you are safe with me. You are as safe with a justice in England, as a priest abroad; *gravity is the best cloak for sin in all countries.*—(ACT II., SCENE V.)
- 14) SQUEEZUM. It is indeed a ticklish point, and it were advisable to make it up as soon as possible. *The first loss is always the least.* It is better to wet your coat than your skin, and to run home when the clouds begin to drop, than in the middle of the storm. In short, it were better to give a brace of hundred pounds to make up the matter now than to venture the consequence. I am heartily concerned to see gentlemen in such a misfortune. I am sorry the age is so corrupt. Really I expect to see some grievous and heavy judgment fall on the nation. *We are as bad as ever Sodom and Gomorrah were;* and I wish we may not be as miserable. (ACT II., SCENE VII.)
- 15) RAMBLE. Faith, sir, you mistake. I know a great many gentlemen not worth three farthings. *He that resolves to be honest cannot resolve not to be poor.*
- SQUEEZUM. A gentleman, and poor; sir, they are contradictions. *A man may as well be a scholar without learning, as a gentleman without riches.* . . . (ACT II., SCENE VII.)

- 16) POLITIC. Indeed, neighbour Worthy, you cannot imagine half the troubles, without having undergone them. *Matrimony baulks our expectations every way; and our children as seldom prove comforts to us as our wives.* . . . (ACT II., SCENE XI.)
- 17) POLITIC. . . .—the justest apprehensions may be styled dreams—but let me tell you, sir, *men betray their own ignorance, often, in attacking that of other men.* (ACT II., SCENE XI.)
- 18) RAMBLE. Why, I should sooner have suspected ermine or lawn-sleeves. But I see *gravity and hypocrisy are inseparable.* . . . (ACT III., SCENE V.)
- 19) STAFF. . . .—and let me assure you, *the more you drink, the less you will lament your misfortune.* (ACT III., SCENE V.)
- 20) SOTMORE. . . .—By all the pleasures of drinking, madam, I like you more than your whole sex put together. *There is no honesty in man or woman that will not drink. Honesty is tried in wine, as gold is in the fire.* . . . (ACT III., SCENE XIII.)
- 21) SOTMORE. —If I had a daughter that drank tea, I would turn her out of doors. *The reason that men are honester than women is, their liquors are stronger.* . . . (ACT III., SCENE XIII.)
- 22) SQUEEZUM. But there must be a discovery first. It is not enough that a man knows himself to be a cuckold; the world must know it too. *He that will keep his horns in his pocket must keep his wife in his bosom.* Therefore, Quill, as it is in your power to observe my wife, I assure you a very handsome reward on her conviction: for I begin to find, that if I do not discover her, she will shortly discover me, or ruin me by bribing her to hold her tongue. *It is not a little gold will make a gag for a woman.* (ACT IV., SCENE I.)
- 23) SQUEEZUM. Well—But now let me have the history—Where did your amour begin?—at church, I warrant you. *More amours begin at church than end there.* . . . (ACT IV., SCENE VI.)
- 24) HILARET. Oh! he swore a thousand fond things: that his love should last as long as his life: that his whole happiness depended on me—and a vast deal of that nature.
- SQUEEZUM. Ay, ay, just as I have done myself. I find *whoring is as methodical as the law.* (ACT IV., SCENE VI.)
- 25) SQUEEZUM. May or June?—*Women and cherries are commonly gathered in the same month.*
- HILARET. I was fatigued with walking in the garden, and retired to an arbour to repose

myself: guess what was my surprise when I found the dear perfidious had conveyed himself thither before me.

SQUEEZUM. A sly dog! My old way again. *An ambush is as useful in love as war.*
(ACT IV., SCENE VI.)

26) HILARET. Let a woman alone for a plot, Mr. Sotmore.

SOTMORE. Ay, madam, a woman that will drink a bumper. *Wine is the fountain of thought:* and

*The more we drink,
The more we think.*

It is a question with me, whether wine hath done more good, or physic harm, in the world: I would have every apothecary's shop in the town turned into a tavern.

HILARET. I am afraid, *the more you have of the one, the more you will require of the other.*

SOTMORE. It is their drugs that debauch our wine: *Wine in itself is as innocent as water, and physic poisons both.* (ACT IV., SCENE VII.)

In the third instance, 'the more wine you have, the more physic you will require' is more proverbial.

27) SOTMORE. And do not I know that we have no such Athenian law among us? We punish drunkenness, as well as other sins, only in the lower sort. Drink, like the game, was intended for gentlemen—*and no one should get drunk who cannot go home in a coach*—
... (ACT IV., SCENE VII.)

28) ISABELLA. And yet our laws, brother Worthy, are as rigorous as those of other countries, and as well executed.

WORTHY. That I wish they were; but *golden sands too often clog the wheels of justice, and obstruct her course: the very riches*, which were the greatest evidence of his villainy, *have too often declared the guilty innocent; and gold hath been found to cut a halter surer than the sharpest steel.* (ACT V., SCENE V.)

In the second instance, 'the very riches too often declare the guilty innocent; and gold is found to cut a halter surer than the sharpest steel' is more proverbial.

29) ISABELLA. Well, I am resolved to take care how I venture a step again after it is dark: I find *the sun is the only guard to us women*; for, however chaste the moon may be in herself, she takes but very little care of ours. (ACT V., SCENE V.)

- 30) POLITIC. . . . , if you should set your heart on my daughter, I do not believe I shall do any thing to break it.

RAMBLE. Nay, sir, *there is no hour like the present*; this hour hath proved lucky to your family . . . (ACT V., SCENE *the last*.)

- 31) WORTHY. . . . To-morrow, I will proceed to take all possible measures to your receiving satisfaction for your injuries, and making public example of so great a villain: for *the crimes of a magistrate give the greatest sanction to sin*.

No reverence that church or state attends

Whose laws the priest or magistrate offends. (ACT V., SCENE *the last*.)

We have seen some 40 proverbial expressions, of which Squeezum says 17; Sotmore 9; Politic 7; Ramble 4; Worthy 2; Cloris, Staff, Hilaret, Isabella each 1. Persons who have had much life experience, such as Squeezum, remark more like a proverb.

V. The Characters of Squeezum, Ramble, Constant, Hilaret

1) The Character of Squeezum

- i) In the scene where Squeezum is talking to Hilaret:

SQUEEZUM. What think you, could you be constant to a *vigorous, healthy, middle-aged* man, hey! (ACT II., SCENE V.)

- ii) In the same scene as above:

SQUEEZUM. You shall do—You shall do nothing; I will do. I will be a verb *active*, and you shall be a verb *passive*.

HILARET. I wish you be not of the neuter gender. (ACT II., SCENE V.)

- iii) In the same scene as above:

SQUEEZUM. But hark, I hear my wife returning.—Leave word with my clear where I shall send to you—I will be the *kindest* of keepers, *very constant*, and *very liberal*.--

HILARET. Two charming qualities in a lover! (ACT II., SCENE V.)

- iv) In the scene where Squeezum is talking to himself:

SQUEEZUM. (*Solus*.) Go thy way for a charming girl! Now if I can get her at this wild fellow's expense, I shall have performed the part of a *shrewd* justice; for I would make others pay for my sins as well as their own. . . . (ACT II., SCENE VI.)

- v) In the scene where Ramble is talking ironically to Squeezum:

RAMBLE. Come, honest Mr. Constable, Mr. *Nocturnal* Justice, let me go any where from this fellow—The night hath chosen a *better* justice than the day. (ACT II., SCENE

VIII.)

vi) In the scene where Faithful is talking of Squeezum to Politic:

FAITHFUL. They may swear it though for all that—I know her to be as modest a good young lady as any in the kingdom; but what will not a set of rogues swear. Sir, I lived with Squeezum before I lived with you; and know him to be as *great a villain* as any in the kingdom. . . . (ACT V., SCENE VI.)

vii) In the scene where Mrs. Squeezum is talking of her husband Squeezum to Worthy:

MRS. SQUEEZUM. You Mr. Worthy, I am sure will pity one who hath the misfortune to be married to a man *who is as much a scandal to the commission he bears*, as you are an honour to it; my conscience hath been too long burdened with conniving at his rogueries. He, sir, he alone is *guilty*, and every one who he hath accused is innocent. (ACT V., SCENE IX.)

Squeezum often speaks well of himself, but others think ill of him. Mrs. Squeezum, who always ought to be on the side of her husband, says, ‘He alone is guilty, and every one whom he hath accused is innocent’, but he would say he alone is innocent, and that every one whom he hath accused is guilty. In short, he has a variety of qualities between ‘a shrewd justice’ in one extreme and ‘a great villain’ in the other.

2) The Character of Ramble

i) In the scene where Ramble and Hilaret are talking:

HILARET. Ha! who’s that? who are you, sir?

RAMBLE. *A cavalier, madam, a knight-errant rambling about the world in quest of adventures. To plunder windows and ravish virgins; to lessen the number of bullies, and increase that of cuckolds*, are the obligations of my profession. (ACT I., SCENE IX.)

ii) In the same scene as above:

HILARET. I’ll alarm the watch.

RAMBLE. You’ll be better-natured than that. *At least, to encounter danger* is my profession; . . . (ACT I., SCENE IX.)

iii) In the scene where Mrs. Squeezum and Ramble are talking:

MRS. SQUEEZUM. . . . Wherefore do you imagine I ventured myself alone with you this morning?

RAMBLE. From your great humanity, madam.

MRS. SQUEEZUM. Alas, sir! it was to try whether you were really the man you were reported to be; and I am certain I found you as inoffensive, quiet, civil, well-bred a gentle-

man, as any virtuous woman could have wished. *Your behaviour was so modest* that I could *never* imagine it possible you should have been guilty of a rape. No overgrown alderman of sixty, or taper beau of six and twenty, could have been more *innocent* company. (ACT III., SCENE XI.)

iv) In the scene where Constant and Ramble are talking:

CONSTANT. I think you have been vastly careless in neglecting him (=an old father) so long.

RAMBLE. *'Tis as I have acted in all affairs of life; my thoughts have ever succeeded my actions: the consequence hath caused me to reflect when it was too late. I never reasoned on what I should do, but what I had done; as if my reason had her eyes behind, and could only see backwards.* (ACT IV., SCENE III.)

Though Ramble says he is a cavalier and a knight-errant *rambling* about the world in quest of adventures are only those related to 'widows', 'virgins', 'bullies', and 'cuckolds'. What he says may sound adventurous, but he is anything but a gentleman, and yet Mrs. Squeezum says, 'I am certain I found you as *inoffensive, quiet, civil, well-bread a gentleman*, as any virtuous woman could have wished'. It is not easy to understand literally that he is such a gentleman, although I think she says so hyperbolically. In the scene iii), Ramble is described as a man who never sees the future and one who lives on the past, as if his reason had her eyes behind, and could only see backwards.

3) The Character of Constant

In the scene where Cloris is talking of Constant to Hilaret:

CLORIS. If I have any judgment in mankind, and I am sure I have had some experience in them, your passion could have been no where better fixed: Captain Constant hath all the qualities any woman can desire. He hath youth, beauty, vigour, gallantry, constancy, and, as Mr. Cowley says, a long &c.

Since Cloris says Captain Constant hath all the qualities any woman can desire, there is no room for my comment; one question I would like to ask her is: 'A long what?' I wonder what she really wants to say.

4) The Character of Hilaret

In the scene where Sotmore and Ramble are talking of Hilaret:

SOTMORE. . . . Show me the whore; I'll be revenged on her and the whole sex. If thou art hanged for ravishing her, I'll be hanged for murdering her. Describe the little mischief to me. Is she tall, short, black, brown, fair? In what form hath the devil disguised himself?

RAMBLE. In a very beautiful one, I assure you: she hath the finest shape that ever was beheld, genteel to a miracle; then the brightest eyes that ever glanced on a lover, the prettiest little mouth, and lips as red as a cherry; and for her breasts, not snow, marble, lilies, alabaster, ivory, can come up to their whiteness; but their little, pretty, firm, round form, no art can imitate, no thought conceive—Oh! Sotmore, I could die ten thousand millions of times upon them—(ACT III., SCENE VIII.)

The imaginative reader would understand fully how beautiful Hilaret is.

VI. Conclusion

What does Fielding mean by *Rape upon Rape*? I want to answer that he means by it at least three things: 1) good nature, 2) ‘forgive and forget’, and 3) life (or to live).

First of all, in Act II Scene XII, Fielding lets Worthy say: ‘I recollect the dawnings of this political humour to have appeared when we were at the Bath together; but it has risen finely in these ten years. What an enthusiasm must it have arrived to, when it could make him forget the loss of his only daughter! The greatest part of mankind labour under one delirium or other: and Don Quixote differed from the rest, not in madness, but the species of it. The covetous, the prodigal, the superstitious, the libertine, and the coffee-house politician, are all Quixotes in their several ways.

That man alone from madness free, we find,
Who, by no wild unruly passion blind,
To reason give the conduct of his mind.’

and Constant says: ‘Good nature is Quixotizm’ (ACT III, SCENE II). All these lines seem to me to be all Fielding wants to say about the characters in this comedy. Squeezum, Constable, and the assistants play the parts of villains on the outside and all of them seem to have good nature on the inside. All of them are not perfect villains.

Secondly, it seems to me that in writing this comedy Fielding had in mind the proverb which says ‘Forgive and forget’, although it does not appear here; because Politic says in Act V Scene *the last*, ‘I heartily *forgive* you all: so let me see you all embrace one another’, and Ramble says in the same scene, ‘I should soon have *forgotten* that loss in having Isabella’. In 1740, when he was 33 years old, ten years after he had written this play, he became a justice of the peace. He was so well-disposed by nature that he must not only have judged criminals but have forgiven them and have forgotten them.

Last, he must have had a strong consciousness of life (or to live) rather than death (or to

die), because Mrs. Younger says in epilogue:

“Twas a strange doctrine that Lucretia taught,
When on herself revenged her lover’s fault!
Heathenish wretch! The pious Christian wife,
Though ravish’d, still contents herself with *life*:
So zealous from self-murder we refrain,
We *live*, though sure of ravishing again.’

These three intentions of Fielding’s are not necessarily the same as my theme of this essay, but they are the same as my personal views.

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