

JOSEPH ANDREWS AND THE CONTROL OF THE POOR

CHRISTOPHER PARKES

Joseph Andrews (1742) is about the absence of charity in eighteenth-century England. Throughout the novel, Joseph is continually denied it—by characters in a stage coach who will not allow him to enter, by innkeepers like Mrs. Tow-wouse who do not want the good name of their establishments ruined by poor vagabonds, and by Lady Booby who wants to deny him a settlement in her parish. For the most part, scholars have argued that the novel imagines the solution to the absence of charity as a return to a golden age in which benevolence took care of the poor. Martin Battestin, for example, argues that Parson Adams is the novel's moral center who appears out of place in a world where charity and goodwill have eroded: "We may laugh at the parson's good-natured innocence and bookish idealism, but his honest bewilderment and shock at the great world imply a standard by which to measure the moral degeneracy of his age" (*Moral Basis* 113). In other words, if community leaders in the novel were more like the benevolent Adams, poor characters like Joseph who must wander the English countryside, would not go wanting.

However, to read Fielding's two pamphlets on the issue of the poor problem in eighteenth-century England, *An Enquiry Into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers* (1751) and *A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor* (1753), is to be struck by how little benevolism figures in his solution. While scholars see *Joseph Andrews* as arguing for a return to benevolism, the pamphlets argue for a network of county workhouses. The fact that the pamphlets appeared a decade after the novel may be reason enough for this discrepancy, but it is important to examine whether or not the arguments of the pamphlets are relevant to our understanding of the novel, given that both are concerned with the control of the poor. The purpose of this essay is to show how the novel is poised between a nation in which the benevolence of

the local patriarch is responsible for poor relief and a nation in which a larger institutional framework is responsible for poor relief. While these two views are traditionally opposed to each other—they are sometimes referred to as Whig and Tory views (see Everett)—the novel does not definitively choose one over the other. James Cruise characterizes the novel as schismatic and argues that it “sputters in its social reform” (266). This is certainly the case with its approach to poor relief. There are times when the narrative argues that benevolism is antiquated and inefficient, such as when characters like Lady Booby and Peter Pounce deny any responsibility for helping the poor, and times when it argues that benevolism is alive and well in eighteenth-century England, such as when Squire Booby arrives in the end to give Fanny her fortune and Adams his curate. While the influence of benevolism on *Joseph Andrews* has been explored by scholars, the influence of the workhouse has not (see Bender and Gladfelder). As we shall see, there are indications in the novel that a more systematic, state-run system of poor relief would be an improvement over benevolism.

While it is beyond the scope of this discussion to provide a detailed account of the complexities of poor relief in eighteenth-century England, it can be said with some certainty that as the cost of poor relief increased, the Poor Laws were used more and more by parish overseers to deny the poor charity; laws designed to control the poor and give them relief were also used to further stigmatize and marginalize them.¹ The great contribution of Fielding's two pamphlets to the poor problem issue is the way they argue for a nation that can contain the poor and keep track of them. In his *Proposal*, he observes that the great failing of the punishment of rogues and vagabonds is that the existing laws are used for expulsion, a policy at odds with the nation's demand for labor.² He expresses the need to hold onto each individual: “...if it should be the interest of a wretch in these circumstances to be banished from a country, where he must steal or starve, it is scarce the interest of the public to lose every year a great number of such able hands” (180). Punishing criminals by transporting them, hanging them, or putting them out onto the road was to throw away a valuable commodity that could be reformed and put to good use. Because of this set of problems, Fielding unveils in the *Proposal* his plan for an enormous county workhouse—one much larger than the usual parish workhouse—a building designed to hold 5000 in one place. Here, the unemployed poor are collected in one spot so that they become accessible to the employer. They are constructed as a labor pool that can be accessed at all times according to the demands of the economy. He writes, “The true reason...that the poor have not yet been well provided for, and well employed, is that they have not yet been drawn together” (173). In his scheme, out-of-work individuals are never allowed to be outside the employment and workhouse system. It is not left to the individual to get to his or her next place of employment. When a laborer's term of employment is up, he or she is to be returned to the workhouse on an exact date specified by the original employment contract (*Proposal* 158).

Fielding's plan also calls for employment to be controlled by the state to the extent that it is illegal for employers to hire a wandering laborer without the proper documentation: "...it shall be lawful for any gentleman, farmer, artificer, or tradesman, to employ any journeyman, servant, or laborer, of any other parish or county besides his own, he having first obtained from such magistrate, minister, or churchwarden...such pass as aforesaid..." (*Proposal* 150). According to the plan, a laborer's identity must be known to the local authorities; it must be fixed inside a state system of employment and relief.

Previously, the Elizabethan workhouse or House of Correction was used for expulsion rather than containment. It operated according to the "test" method of relief, a method that became part of the Workhouse Test Act of 1723. Conditions were kept so bad inside the workhouse that no able-bodied unemployed person would want to stay. Faced with such conditions, the inmate would take to the road, meaning the parish could then absolve itself of the responsibility of paying for the welfare of a sturdy beggar.³ Richard Burn writes in his *History of the Poor Laws* (1764), that expulsion increased as the cost of poor relief rose. Parish officers kept "an extraordinary look-out, to prevent persons coming to inhabit without certificates" (211) because if such persons remained undetected in a parish for forty days they had a legal right to settlement and relief (see Marshall and S. and B. Webb). Whereas Burn describes a surveillance network based upon expulsion, Fielding imagines one based upon containment. His workhouse plan is the result of the recognition that the poor problem must be dealt with from the standpoint of an enclosed or finite system of space because, once someone is expelled, the next parish down the road will only continue the process until what was once a valuable commodity is lost forever.

Workhouses were nothing new when Fielding presents his, but his is important for its size and, in particular, for the way it moves toward the depersonalizing of relief. As Paul Slack notes, poor relief in the eighteenth century "was a matter for face-to-face management by overseers among their neighbours" (20), a matter that inevitably created much tension. Fielding's workhouse is designed to relieve this local tension by centralizing relief, by taking it out of the parish and administering it at a more disinterested, county level; it transforms the unemployed poor from a burden on the local parish into circulating commodities inside the larger labor market.⁴ Anthony Brundage, in his study of the Poor Laws, acknowledges the significance of Fielding's contribution to the poor relief arguments of the time: "Although other reformers periodically suggested the county as the natural administrative unit, most Englishmen were unwilling to countenance such a major overhaul, preferring more moderate reforms that would maintain some semblance of localism" (19).

In the *Enquiry*, Fielding is concerned with the creation of England as a set of jurisdictions. He imagines a nation in which boundary lines all connect with

each other to form a complete containment network. With such an organized landscape England will, he argues, be able to control crime more effectively by keeping watch over its populations; people will not be able to slip outside the system into unregulated or liminal space. Interestingly, he claims that such a system existed back in the time of Alfred whose laws were designed, he writes, to “prevent the concealment of thieves and robbers” (83). After the time when the English were “debauched by the example of those barbarians” (83) the Danes, whom they fought in battle, Alfred divided the space of England in order to make rogues visible to authority:

These evils were encouraged, as the historians say, by the vagabond state of the offenders, who, having no settled place of abode, upon committing any offence, shifted their quarters, and went where it was difficult to discover them. To remedy this mischief, therefore, Alfred having limited the shires or counties in a better manner than before, divided them into hundreds, and these again into tithings, decennaries, or ten families.

Over every one of these tithings or decennaries, there was a chief called a tithingman or burgh-holder, who had a power to call a court, and to try small offences.... (83)

According to Fielding, Alfred arranged the geography of England systematically by dividing it into legal jurisdictions. The limiting of the space of the nation meant that there was no place a criminal could go to escape the law. Back then, he writes, “a traveller might have openly left a sum of money safely in the fields and highways, and have found it safe and untouched a month afterwards” (85). Because the population was perfectly divided and settled within a set of lines, private property was protected. Fielding imagines that a set of jurisdictions will create new identities for people and property—identities that are determined by both a relationship to authority and a fixedness inside the administrative and institutional framework of England.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes how the European nation-states of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries moved away from the retributive institution to the rehabilitative institution; the carnival experience of old Newgate prison, for example, was replaced by the architectural efficiency of Bentham’s Panopticon. The first step in such a shift was for the nation to be imagined as an enclosed space, what Foucault calls a carceral network. According to Foucault the carceral network produces the sense that the individual is always within the bounds of the social order, that through the grid-like structures of prisons, schools, and hospitals (and the web of jurisdictions described by Fielding) the concept of liminal space—space that represents an alternative to the dominant society—is eliminated. Fielding’s writing about the poor problem, with its emphasis on containment and surveillance, is clearly part of this larger movement toward the transparent nation-state. While scholars quite rightly caution against seeing eighteenth-

century England as anything close to all-powerful and all-seeing, this does not mean that theorists like Fielding were not trying to imagine it as such.⁵ As Hal Gladfelder notes in his analysis of the pamphlets, Fielding's obsession with the control of the poor and working classes, "barely masks a sense of ideological panic at the disorderliness of urban poverty" (165). But to be fair to Fielding, even as the poor are commodified and controlled by his workhouse scheme, they are clothed and fed; the pamphlets have an important place in the history of modern social control and in the history of the modern welfare state.

The *Proposal* also outlines the Poor Law statutes that apply to persons wandering about the countryside, statutes that can be used to better monitor the labor force. In outlining the statutes, the *Proposal* also captures quite nicely the position of Joseph Andrews as he sets out from London on his way to Lady Booby's country estate:

...it shall be lawful for any of his Majesty's subjects to seize all suspicious persons who shall be found wandering on foot, about the fields, lanes, or highways, or in the streets of any of the towns or parishes of the said county... and all labourers or servants, or persons of low degree, who, after the hour of ten in the evening shall be found harbouring in any alehouse or victualling house; and if such persons shall not give reasonable satisfaction to him or them by whom he or she is apprehended that he or she belongs to the said county...or if he or she belongs to any other county, or is then six miles distant from his own habitation, and shall not produce a pass or certificate signed by some magistrate, minister, or churchwarden...it shall be lawful for the party apprehending to confine such person till he or she can be delivered to the constable.... (149)

According to this passage, a character like Joseph should be immediately apprehended. Joseph wanders about at night, he winds up naked and penniless at alehouses, and he has no pass or certificate to validate his travels. When he hits the road as a discharged servant, he is exactly the type of person Fielding has in mind in his two pamphlets. He is exactly the type of sturdy young laborer who needs to be controlled and monitored so that he does not go to waste.

The narrative does make sure to draw attention to Joseph's violations of the Poor Laws during his travels. Contrary to the Act of Settlement, he proceeds to Lady Booby's country estate, where he hopes to reunite with Fanny and marry, "instead of proceeding to the Habitation of his Father and Mother" (48). After Lady Booby discharges him for refusing her advances, he begins an essentially illegal course of action by not returning to his parish of birth (although, as it turns out, his original parish is difficult to determine). According to the Poor Law and Fielding's own *Proposal*, Joseph is to be apprehended by the constabulary and returned to his original parish. Why then is he not apprehended? The reason is that the narrative explores an England in which the poor are neglected to such an extent that they can be lost forever;

it explores the inability of the landscape to contain the poor. In his analysis of eighteenth-century fiction and property law, Wolfram Schmidgen notes that the England of *Tom Jones* exists in an in-between state. He writes that the novel reveals that the “boundaries between the ancient and the modern are not clearly visible and the national still has not penetrated the local” (80). However, he also notes that “the distance between the feudal past and eighteenth-century institutions is eminently bridgeable...” (79). The same landscape exists in *Joseph Andrews*. When Joseph sets about wandering the English countryside he travels through an ancient, unenclosed landscape that is presided over by local patriarchs, but the novel contains key reformative moments in which an enclosed national landscape is emergent. It will be left to the end of my discussion to see whether or not the novel’s ending can effectively bridge the gap between the ancient and modern Englands I have described.

It must be noted that unenclosed landscapes and frontier spaces are vitally important to the adventure writer because without them there can be no dangerous and exciting incidents. It is for this reason that Defoe has Moll declare at the beginning of *Moll Flanders* (1722) that her unfortunate story could not have occurred if she had lived in France where orphans are

...immediately taken into the Care of the Government, and put into an Hospital call’d the *House of Orphans*, where they are Bred up, Cloath’d, Fed, Taught, and when fit to go out, are plac’d out to Trades, or to Services, so as to be well able to provide for themselves by an honest industrious Behaviour.

HAD this been the Custom in our Country, I had not been left a poor desolate Girl without Friends, without Cloaths, without Help or Helper in the World, as was my Fate. (8)

Moll indicates that her story is the result of England’s lack of control over the poor and the absence of a carceral network. Had she been under surveillance from the beginning, she could not have fallen into the criminal underworld. There is a certain generic instability in both Defoe’s and Fielding’s novels as both writers argue for the elimination of liminal spaces even as their most memorable episodes require them. Just as the local patriarch requires liminal space so that power can be maintained through the ability to cast out and exclude, so the eighteenth-century novelist requires liminal space to generate narrative interest.

Judith Frank argues in her important study of the poor in eighteenth-century fiction that servants in *Joseph Andrews* are liminal figures that operate between rich and poor and “the leisure/labor divide” (167). Lady Booby’s estate is indeed a confused space where social roles are muddled and the classes not properly distinguished. Lady Booby is Joseph’s employer, his parish overseer, and his potential lover, which leads to what Frank refers to as the “eroticization of labor” (167). After she discharges Joseph for having refused her advances, Lady Booby continues throughout the narrative to use the law to punish him

and to keep him on the road. When he does eventually make it from London to her country estate, she tries to expel him again by having Lawyer Scout charge him with trespassing and the cutting of "one Hassel-Twig" (289) which he offers to Fanny as a love token. According to the Poor Laws, the cutting and gathering of wood by travelers is illegal in order to discourage squatters and gypsies from living off the land and outside settled society,⁶ but the two lovers have only cut one twig. The twig stands as an example of how the law could be used to persecute the poor by keeping them on the road and refusing them a settlement. Lawyer Scout articulates the period's reliance on the expulsion of the poor as he declares, "...I think we ought to have an Act to hang or transport half of them" (284). He also tells Lady Booby that the mere mention of her name to Justice Frolick will be enough to convict the two lovers. Joseph's position as a servant highlights the extent to which poor relief and the establishment of a settlement could become personalized. Lady Booby is hardly a disinterested bureaucrat as she uses the law to punish those who would spurn her advances.

The power of the local landowner is satirized when Lady Booby finally returns to her estate after a long absence spent in London. The poor rejoice at her arrival but the passage is loaded with irony, indicating that the power she possesses is excessive:

She entered the Parish amidst the ringing of Bells, and the Acclamations of the Poor, who were rejoiced to see their Patroness returned after so long an Absence, during which time all her Rents had been drafted to *London*, without a Shilling being spent among them, which tended not a little to their utter impoverishing; for if the Court would be severely missed in such a City as *London*, how much more must the Absence of a Person of great Fortune be felt in a little Country Village, for whose Inhabitants such a Family finds a constant Employment and Supply; and with the Offalls of whose Table the infirm, aged, and infant Poor are abundantly fed, with a Generosity which hath scarce a visible Effect on their Benefactor's Pockets? (277)

The poor it would seem are too dependent upon the scraps of Lady Booby's table. If she should be gone to London, then they are neglected completely. The country-house ideal is present in the passage as her estate forms the economic and moral center of the community, but because of the potential for neglect on her part, the passage looks in two directions; it looks back to the golden age of the country-house ideal and asks Lady Booby to be a better landlord and it looks forward to a system in which the poor will not be dependent upon landlords who are often absent.

Peter Pounce is a local patriarch who has completely abdicated responsibility for poor relief. He sees the poor as animals that can be managed simply by putting them out to pasture or by letting them loose across the nation. During his heated debate with Adams as they share a coach in book

3, he argues that any form of poor relief is completely unnecessary given the pastoral abundance of the English countryside:

How can any Man complain of Hunger...in a Country where such excellent Sallads are to be gathered in almost every Field? or of Thirst, where every River and Stream produces such delicious Potations? And as for Cold and Nakedness, they are Evils introduced by Luxury and Custom. A Man naturally wants Clothes no more than a Horse or any other Animal, and there are whole Nations who go without them.... (275)

Pounce is the kind of wealthy individual who takes no responsibility for the poor, deciding that they can fend for themselves on the wastes and commons. Like Lady Booby, he is either a character who shows the need for a better class of patriarch or a character who shows the need for taking charity out of the hands of private citizens entirely. Ultimately, the novel contains so many neglectful characters like Lady Booby and Peter Pounce and so many false philanthropists whose charitable acts come to nothing, that benevolism seems dangerously unreliable. As Mr. Wilson tells Adams, he “experienced what is worse than Poverty, or rather what is the worst Consequence of Poverty, I mean Attendance and Dependence on the Great” (215).

Even Adams’s role as provider for the poor is fraught with difficulty. He upsets his own household when he takes care of Fanny and Joseph, and, according to his wife and daughter, he would give away the family’s money and belongings to anyone in need. They understand that his kind of charity is unworkable, that it will impoverish them all. Again, it could be argued that Adams tries to perform the work that should be done by someone much wealthier, such as Lady Booby, but his daughter also points out that her father’s charity is not practiced disinterestedly. Just as Joseph is expelled by Lady Booby because he is too handsome, so Fanny is relieved by Adams because she is pretty: “Indeed, Father, it is very hard to bring Strangers here to eat your Children’s Bread out of their Mouths.—You have kept them ever since they came home; and for any thing I see to the contrary may keep them a Month longer: Are you obliged to give her Meat, tho’f she was never so handsome? But I don’t see she is so much handsomer than other People” (322). His wife tells him that he should be responsible only for his family: “it behoved every Man to take the first Care of his Family; that he had a Wife and six Children, the maintaining and providing for whom would be Business enough for him without intermeddling in other Folks Affairs...” (306). His family understands that poor relief practiced by private citizens is problematic. It is influenced by personal feelings and calls into question the motivation of the benefactor. Even Adams’s wife, by pointing out that charity begins at home, is motivated by self-interest; she turns against Joseph and Fanny because she is afraid that by helping them she will anger Lady Booby: “She had long entertained hopes of seeing her eldest Daughter succeed Mrs *Slipslop*, and of making her second

Son an Exciseman by Lady *Booby's* Interest" (306). In *Tom Jones*, Squire Allworthy's role as village patriarch is equally complicated. The villagers believe the only reason he must be making Tom his heir is that he is secretly the boy's father. It may be that Adams and Allworthy operate on a higher plane of benevolence than more self-interested individuals, but their charity creates as much hardship in the community as it alleviates.⁷

To some extent, the failure of Adams's brand of charity is connected to his failure to navigate the English landscape. Just as he upsets the order of his household, so he upsets the "natural" order in certain ways. He does not observe the two-dimensional boundaries that create England as an integrated spatial system. For example, in book 2 when Joseph and Adams first set out together, Adams quickly loses Joseph because he has not looked back: "At length, having spun out this Thread, and being now at the Summit of a Hill, he cast his Eyes backwards, and wondered that he could not see any sign of *Joseph*" (95-96). Adams then comes to a large puddle in the middle of the road and decides he must wade through it, but in comical fashion he finds that if he had simply looked around he could have avoided the water: "...he saw no Method of passing unless by wading through, which he accordingly did up to his Middle; but was no sooner got to the other Side, than he perceived, if he had looked over the Hedge, he would have found a Foot-Path capable of conducting him without wetting his Shoes" (96). If he had been able to read the lines on the landscape—the hedges and footpaths—he would have stayed on the path and saved himself a soaking. As the scene continues, his poor navigation skills are shown to be dangerous and disruptive when he nearly brawls with a passerby after asking him where an alehouse might be found. Thinking Adams is mocking him because there is an alehouse right before him, the man becomes enraged until a friendlier traveler defuses the situation by informing him, "Friend, there is one within a Stone's-Throw; I believe you may see it before you" (96). Certainly Adams comes the closest to being the novel's moral center, but to some extent he shares the blame for the danger in which he finds himself. As a myopic traveller, he cannot seem to navigate the two-dimensional boundaries of the landscape and thus he almost receives a beating. He is the good man out of place in a corrupt world, but he is also out of place in a world that is becoming increasingly enclosed and marked out by fixed boundaries.⁸

In book 3, a prospect scene occurs that demonstrates how, unlike Adams, Joseph thinks in terms of the fixed boundaries of the landscape. Here, Fanny, Joseph, and Adams have lost their way in the dark and find themselves at the top of a hill. The prospect represents a dangerous liminal space within England's geography: "...they saw far off several Lights scattered at a small distance from each other, and at the same time found themselves on the Descent of a very steep Hill. *Adams's* Foot slipping, he instantly disappeared, which greatly frightened both *Joseph* and *Fanny*; indeed, if the Light had permitted them to see

it, they scarce would have refrained laughing to see the Parson rolling down the Hill..." (193-94). His fall down the hill represents the upsetting of patriarchal authority (see Everett). He falls because he is an old-style patriarch, but Joseph carries Fanny down easily, leading the narrator to warn his female readers, "Learn hence, my fair Countrywomen, to consider your own Weakness, and the many Occasions on which the strength of a Man may be useful to you..." (194). Joseph is physically strong certainly but his strength lies mainly in his ability to read the landscape. He is shown in this scene to be acquainted with the two-dimensional map of the nation when, after they have descended the hill, the travelers encounter a river. Just as he does in the puddle scene, Adams worries that they will have to swim across it, but Joseph who thinks in terms of map space tells him, "if they walked along its Banks, they might be certain of soon finding a Bridge, especially as by the number of Lights they might be assured a Parish was near" (194). He leads them out of the common field they are crossing and uses the infrastructure of the landscape to bring them back to civilization. While the patriarch figure falls from his hill and cannot navigate the two-dimensional structures of the landscape, Joseph keeps them oriented and gets them to a settlement. His awareness of his position within the nation's network of lines becomes the means of his rescue from the liminality of England's geography and represents his principal attribute as a hero. A similar scene occurs at the beginning of book 9 of *Tom Jones* where Tom stands at the top of Mazard Hill and traces his way back to Somersetshire which he has left behind. Unlike the Man of the Hill who has dropped out of society to live on the wastes, Tom remains connected to the social network no matter what scrapes and misfortunes befall him.

The dangerous nature of the undisciplined landscape is felt the most when Fanny is off the road and attacked in the bushes. Fortunately and coincidentally, Adams is present to save Fanny from her attacker, but when the case comes before the magistrate, both are taken for rogues because they look less respectable than the attacker who puts on a humble guise and tells the court, "Gentlemen,...you are luckily come to the Assistance of a poor Traveller, who would otherwise have been robbed and murdered by this vile Man and Woman, who led me hither out of my way from the High-Road, and both falling on me, have used me as you see" (141). That Fanny and Adams are in the bushes in the first place means that the magistrate doubts their identities. Adams's identity as a clergyman suddenly becomes unfixed as the magistrate, thinking the Aeschylus is "Ciphers" (148), labels him a spy. As a private citizen who must make up for the lack of a disciplined landscape, Adams falls into liminal geography and his identity becomes unfixed; he becomes unknown to authority.

The novel indicates that with an identity that is known to authority comes protection and security. Its pattern of lost property, in which objects and people return to their rightful owners because they have identifiable marks, can be

seen as a model for the transparent nation-state. Early on in the novel when Joseph is robbed by highwaymen and left in a ditch, he loses a little piece of gold. He is able to reclaim the gold because it is marked. It is a "little piece of broken Gold, which had a Ribband tied to it, and which he could swear to amongst all the Hoards of the richest Men in the Universe" (64). Joseph gets the gold back because it is identifiable in the eyes of the law. Likewise, he is returned to his real father, Mr. Wilson, because he has the strawberry birthmark. Wilson "no sooner saw the Mark, than abandoning himself to the most extravagant Rapture of Passion, he embraced *Joseph*, with inexpressible Extasy, and cried out in Tears of Joy, *I have discovered my Son, I have him again in my Arms*" (339). While the strawberry birthmark is not exactly an identity card or government number, it points the way to a modern nation-state in which every citizen's identity is fixed inside a state bureaucracy.

Ultimately, Joseph conforms to the Act of Settlement when he ends up back in the parish of his parents and settles next to his father, Mr. Wilson. The ending reminds the reader that Fanny and Joseph have been rescued and redeemed as valuable resources:

Mr. Booby hath with unprecedented Generosity given *Fanny* a Fortune of two thousand Pound, which *Joseph* hath laid out in a little Estate in the same Parish with his Father, which he now occupies, (his Father having stock'd it for him;) and *Fanny* presides, with most excellent Management in his Dairy; where, however, she is not at present very able to bustle much, being, as Mr. *Wilson* informs me in his last Letter, extremely big with her first Child. (343-44)

The narrative is complete when they are settled within their proper county, when they are properly employed, and when they are reconnected to their proper family network. Joseph is comfortably settled but he has had to survive in a world that at every opportunity has tried to keep him out on the road and marginalized. The law can be obeyed finally but only because of good luck and coincidence and Joseph's map reading ability, not because authority figures have realized the need to control and protect the poor.

Joseph's new estate may appear to be a liminal space much like the one he inhabited as a servant—one between rich and poor and between leisure and labor, to use Frank's terms—because here he is both a farm laborer and an estate owner with a two-thousand pound fortune. His liminal position in Lady Booby's household argued against upward mobility; it argued against the idea that servants should personalize their relationships with the rich in order to gain preferment. Joseph's estate, however, is not the confused space that Lady Booby's was because the favors given to Joseph and Fanny come from within their own enclosed family network. Squire Booby does not give them charity at all because, as it turns out, Fanny is actually Pamela's sister. Joseph and Fanny move up the social ladder because the squire takes responsibility for them and

shares the family fortune. It is right then for families to take responsibility for each other; what is not right, according to the novel, is when responsibility for the poor is left to random favoritism. Joseph and Fanny have been elevated to settled laborers by remaining inside the boundaries of the settled world and they have been elevated to estate owners by family relations. Their settlement does not disrupt the local community. The community can have no reason to be jealous or to dispute their new status. Joseph's estate represents a clear articulation of the role of public and private networks in poor relief. The state and the family are responsible for relief; village patriarchs, local parsons, and venal innkeepers are not. The estate eliminates the liminal space occupied by the servant that allows him or her to achieve upward mobility and escape labor only through personal entanglements.

Benevolism is still at work in the novel's ending, however, when Squire Booby rewards the wandering peddler, the character who reveals the true parentage of Joseph and Fanny and who saves Adams's son from drowning. Because of the peddler's information, the squire rewards him by setting him up as an "Excise-man; a Trust which he discharges with such Justice, that he is greatly beloved in his Neighbourhood" (344). Mrs. Adams once hoped that her second son would be made an exciseman by Lady Booby, but here the wandering peddler is made a local exciseman. His appointment supports benevolism as the peddler achieves upward mobility because a patriarch prefers him. Unlike Joseph who is given a private estate by a family member, the peddler is given a public office by a wealthy patron. If the development of a carceral network signals a lessening of the power of the landed patriarch then the squire's final benevolent act draws the narrative to a close with a conservative gesture that reinforces the power of the patriarch to either include or exclude. It must be noted, however, that the peddler is transformed by the squire's benevolence from a liminal character into a modern bureaucrat. In other parts of the novel this kind of favoritism produces envy and resentment but there is none directed toward the peddler by the local community. Although we cannot know for certain why his brand of justice makes him so beloved in the neighborhood, we can guess that as someone who is not originally from the area, he is not subject to the personal entanglements that make Lady Booby and Parson Adams imperfect parish officers. We can also guess that the community understands his merit and the debt that is owed to him by the three families he has helped unselfishly. If Mrs. Adams's second son had been appointed to such a position by Lady Booby, there would have been, perhaps, much jealousy and public outcry. In the end, benevolism fixes the peddler's identity inside the enclosed world as a liminal figure is made an administrator. The squire may use his personal preference to reward the peddler but his benevolence operates according to containment rather than expulsion and, in this way, the role of the patriarch is transformed into one that operates more bureaucratically. It is not that the novel has been waiting for the good man with deep pockets to relieve

the poor. Rather, it has been waiting for responsible citizens to understand the nation's need to keep track of the poor, to keep them enclosed within a disciplined landscape. The novel's final act of benevolence does contain within it, as I have indicated, great potential for social disruption and because of this potential it represents an unstable bridge from the feudal past to the institutional future.

Joseph Andrews tends, therefore, toward the structures and mechanisms we find in Fielding's workhouse scheme. I have argued that Fielding brings the novel form into a close relationship with the structures of the modern nation-state. In its engagement with the poor relief problem, his novel sorts out responsibility for relief and articulates the social conditions under which England as a collection of disconnected, almost feudal communities can be transformed into a modern bureaucratic state. But just as there is an instability built into the novel's closing scene so there is an instability built into its form. To be an exciting adventure story it must remain poised between enclosed and unenclosed space, between the unimproved wastes of England and the functional landscape of the commercial trade network. The modern England it imagines must remain embedded in the narrative in a state of becoming.

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY, CANADA

NOTES

¹ See Brundage, Dean, Himmelfarb, and Slack. Still valuable are S. and B. Webb and Marshall; Burn is a valuable resource from the eighteenth century. See Nicholls for specific Poor Law statutes.

² The idea that there was a high demand for labor in the middle of the eighteenth century is debatable. Fielding indicates in the *Enquiry* that manufacturing is not at full capacity but he believes there is enough work to employ every poor person (59). Schmidgen notes that Fielding does not call for new laws to be enacted: "Fielding did not demand new laws to cure the social ill of 'wandering,' but advocated the strict enforcement of old laws" (79-80).

³ Brundage notes that "an 'offer of the house' would function as a self-acting test of destitution" (12). Refusal of the house would identify the person as not destitute and therefore not in need of relief.

⁴ Schmidgen argues that the concept of commodity circulation in eighteenth-century economics has been over-emphasized by scholars. According to him, in the writings of Fielding and Defoe commodities are still thought to be deeply embedded in local communities. While his point is well-taken, Fielding sees the need in his pamphlets to remove the unemployed poor to the more disinterested county level.

⁵ Linebaugh emphasizes what he calls "excarceration"—the ability of heroic criminal figures like Jack Sheppard to escape authority.

⁶ The actual statute is 18 Eliz.c.7. The statute is carried on to 6 Geo.I.c.16. See Nicholls 2: 7.

⁷ Schmidgen sees Allworthy's Paradise Hall as an ideal social model (92). Allworthy's estate, however, is rather outmoded given that its lord is described as one who is "charitable to the Poor, i.e. to those who had rather beg than work" (1: 38). Everett writes of Allworthy's estate, "there is little sense of a cultivated benevolence diffusing well-being through a large circle of influence" (29).

⁸ The enclosure movement was responsible for increased unemployment, particularly in the last half of the century. Rural laborers were less in demand and took to the road looking for work. Enclosure is not, however, at odds with Fielding's plans. His workhouse scheme, if implemented, would collect these laborers and train them for other kinds of work. For Fielding, enclosure of the landscape must work together with the enclosure of the poor.

WORKS CITED

- Battestin, Martin. *The Moral Basis of Fielding's Art: A Study of Joseph Andrews*. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1959.
- Bender, John. *Imagining the Penitentiary: Fiction and the Architecture of the Mind in Eighteenth-Century England*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1987.
- Brundage, Anthony. *The English Poor Laws, 1700-1930*. Social History in Perspective. Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002.
- Burn, Richard. *The History of the Poor Laws*. 1764. Clifton: A. M. Kelley, 1973.
- Cruise, James. "Fielding, Authority, and the New Commercialism in *Joseph Andrews*." *ELH* 54 (1987): 253-96.
- Defoe, Daniel. *Moll Flanders*. Ed. G. A. Starr. Oxford English Novels. London: Oxford UP, 1971.
- Dean, Mitchell. *The Constitution of Poverty: Toward a Genealogy of Liberal Governance*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Everett, Nigel. *The Tory View of Landscape*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1994.
- Fielding, Henry. "An Enquiry into the Late Increase of Robbers." 1751. Ed. William Ernest Henley. *The Complete Works of Henry Fielding: Legal Writing*. Vol. 13. London: Frank Cass, 1967. 5-127.
- . "A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provision for the Poor." 1753. Ed. William Ernest Henley. *The Complete Works of Henry Fielding: Legal Writing*. Vol. 13. London: Frank Cass, 1967. 131-94.
- . *Joseph Andrews*. 1742. Ed. Martin Battestin. Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1967.
- . *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*. 2 vols. 1749. Ed. Fredson Bowers. Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan UP, 1975.
- Foucault, Michel. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon, 1975.
- Frank, Judith. *Common Ground: Eighteenth-Century English Satiric Fiction and the Poor*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 1997.
- Gladfelder, Hal. *Criminality and Narrative in Eighteenth-Century England: Beyond the Law*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2001.
- Himmelfarb, Gertrude. *The Idea of Poverty: England in the Early Industrial Age*. New York: Knopf, 1984.
- Linebaugh, Peter. *The London Hanged: Crime and Civil Society in the Eighteenth Century*. 2nd ed. London: Verso, 2003.
- Marshall, Dorothy. *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Social and Administrative History*. 1926. New York: A. M. Kelley, 1969.
- Nicholls, Sir George. *A History of the English Poor Law*. 1854. Reprints of Economic Classics. 2 vols. New York: A. M. Kelley, 1967.
- Schmidgen, Wolfram. *Eighteenth-Century Fiction and the Law of Property*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002.
- Slack, Paul. *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782*. New Studies in Economic and Social History. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990.
- Webb, Sidney and Beatrice. *English Poor Law History. Part I: The Old Poor Law*. London: Longmans Green, 1927.

Copyright of *Studies in the Novel* is the property of University of North Texas and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.