

Notes for B.A. Part - II  
English (Hon.)

## Henry Fielding as a Dramatist and Novelist

Fielding was mostly famous for his Satires and Dramatic wit. The Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737, is said to be a direct response to Fielding's activities in the writing for theatre. The play *Bast* triggered the need for this act was the anonymously authored book named as *The Golden Rump*. Henry Fielding's Dramatic satire had set the tone. Once the act was passed, political satire on the stage performance became almost impossible to witness. It was during this time Henry Fielding took retirement from the theatre as he resumed his career in law.

However He never stopped writing political satires. *Tragedy of Tragedies*, *Tom Thumb* form part in such category.

His play *Don Quixote in England* Fielding dedicated to the opposition whig leader Lord Cheshfield.

Fielding took to novel writing in about  
1740, angered by Samuel Richardson's  
success with Pamela or Virtue Rewarded.  
His first success was with Tom Shamus,  
anonymously published. Fielding followed  
this with Joseph Andrews (1742). It was  
an original work supposedly dealing with  
Pamela's brother, Joseph. His purpose  
in this work was to make parody of that  
style of writing. His greatest work  
was The History of Tom Jones (1749), it  
was a meticulously constructed comic novel  
with the element of picaresque hell.  
In his writings every type of social life  
is represented, and through them every  
shade of moral behaviour. Fielding's  
varied style tempers the basic sentimentalism  
of these novels. However we are still  
intrigued by his writing.