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"Out of Order:"

18th-Century Perceptions of Debauchery in the Trial of Father Gerard, and Henry Fielding's Drama The Old Debauchees: or, The Jesuit Caught

This essay engages with matters of religion, that is, the order of the Jesuits in the non-Catholic imagination of one of England's most famous authors, i.e., Henry Fielding. It also addresses matters of genre (drama and satire), 18th-century depictions of sex and gender, international literary relations, as well as the literary canon as such. "Henry Fielding has been much studied, but most critics have been interested primarily in Fielding the novelist. Attention to Fielding's ten years as England's premier dramatist has been scanty and often dismissive: the plays of the 1730s have usually been seen as an awkward apprenticeship for the novels of the 1740s" (Hume 1988, vii). Forced by the Licensing Act of 1737 to stop his theatrical career, "Fielding presently achieved such success as a novelist that even his contemporaries were inclined to forget his plays" (Goggin 1952, 769).

In the first half of the 18th century, however, Fielding (1707-1754) spent his early career as one of the most prominent and productive playwrights in England, entertaining and instructing the London audiences between 1728 and 1737. Within ten years, Fielding wrote about 28 pieces for the theatre, including full-length comedies, political satires, farces, burlesques, and ballad-operas. Although his dramatic output was prolific, few of his plays are known now, and almost none performed. As quoted above, in 1737, his career was put to an end by the Licensing Act, which enabled the Lord Chamberlain to have plays censored, even up until 1968.

Critics' opinions about Fielding's plays have differed widely, some thinking time merciful in consigning them to dusty shelves, others lamenting their descent into oblivion. F.W. Bateson, in his study of English Comic Drama 1700-1750 (1963), for instance, dismisses Fielding's plays as "less mature and less profound than the novels. It goes without saying" (Bateson 1963, 117). For George Bernard Shaw, on the other hand, Fielding was "England's greatest dramatist with the single exception of Shakespeare […] produced by England between the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century" (Shaw qtd. in Goggin 1952, 770). John Loftis, in his Comedy and Society from Congreve to Fielding (1959) concedes that the comedies "scarcely deserve the oblivion that

1 1728 can be regarded as a culturally pivotal year in England, not only seeing Pope's Dunciad, but also Gay's The Beggar's Opera, which began a two-month run and spectacularly broke previous box-office records. William Hogarth's series of paintings of this play became extremely popular. On 18 May, the first edition of Pope's Dunciad took the city by storm, and Swift's Gulliver's Travels was not yet two years old. On 16 February 1728, young Henry Fielding made his first theatrical venture with the comedy Love in Several Masques at The Theatre Royal in Drury Lane.
has overtaken them but [are] pale fare alongside Tom Jones and Amelia" (136). In short, Fielding's plays seem a perfect example that scholarly emphasis has too frequently been placed on the works of the canon.

Fielding's comedies do deserve attention in their own right. His non-realistic representation of characters, his exuberant rhetoric, the rapid build-up of action, and the technique of diminishing the mighty have been equally appreciated by his audiences and readers. Fielding's novels are as topical as his plays, that is, they explore matters of current interest, and this not only in matters of politics. In his time, his plays were extremely well-received, and he quickly became one of the most famous dramatists of the time, and well beyond. With a middle-class audience, and a significant enlargement of the reading public in the 18th century, Fielding excelled most in the subgenre of topical dramatic satire, as he has his character Medley state in the opening scene of The Historical Register for the Year 1736:

Sir, my design is to ridicule the vicious and foolish Customs of the Age, and that in a fair manner, without Fear, Favour, or Ill-nature, and without Scurrility, ill Manners, or common Place. I hope to expose the reigning Follies in such a manner that Men shall laugh themselves out of them before they feel they are touch'd. (Fielding 2011, 415f.)

Fielding thus keeps to Horace's precept of "ridentem dicere verum" ["telling the truth with a smile;" my translation], which British dramatists had pursued since the time of Sir Philip Sidney.

Fielding's dramatic technique put an end to the melodramatic plays of the early 1720s. In these plays, unrealistically virtuous damsels in distress resist the seductions of rakes, who miraculously reform, for "no other reason," as Fielding ironically put it in Tom Jones "than because the Play is drawing to a Conclusion" (VIII.1). In these rather weak plays, the virtues of chastity and loyalty were glorified, and the pieces generally pandered to audiences' desire to be addressed on an emotional, rather than an intellectual level.

Fielding's plays, in sharp contrast, are characterised by a satirical tone, aim at exposing follies and vices, and this not in a savage, but in a humane way. His overall tone is mildly moral, bearing none of the bitter indignation and denunciation that we find in Pope's, and even more strongly in Swift's works. As is well known from the Preface to Joseph Andrews, the follies that Fielding believed to be the sources of the ridiculous in all human action are hypocrisy and affectation. The key issue to which Fielding repeatedly returns is the need to distinguish between the inner and outer self, that is, one's public and private face.

The Old Debauchees

Fielding's drama The Old Debauchees, or the Jesuit Caught (1732) has hitherto found extremely little critical attention and invites pioneering work. As many other plays of the

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2 "A man who wrote so many plays for the London stage with [...] success would have earned a place in the history of English literature, even if he had never written anything else" (Goggin 1952, 770).

3 The most comprehensive study on the case is Choudhury (2015). Choudhury, however, exclusively focuses on the historical circumstances and the reception of the scandal in France.
time (see below), it is based on a historical event in France, i.e., the affair of an elderly clergyman and confessor, who was said to have seduced his young penitent, Catherine Cadière: “This scandal began in late 1730 when Catherine Cadière, the twenty-year-old daughter of an olive oil merchant in Toulon, accused the fifty-year-old Jesuit Jean-Baptiste Girard of shocking crimes in the confessional” (Choudhury 2015, 3). She denounced Father Girard of sexual misconduct, and of using sorcery to aid in the seduction.

As was common for priests and penitents, the relationship between Father Girard and Catherine Cadière had depended on an unwavering and mutual trust; the priest bore tremendous responsibility, because the penitent had entrusted him with her soul. Father Girard also acted as Catherine’s spiritual director who prepared her state of mind for confession through sustained dialogue. As a mark of all that trust, the priest submitted to the inviolable seal of secrecy, which prohibited him from revealing the penitent’s confession. Thus, relations of power, trust, and secrecy – central elements of confession – shaped the Girard/Cadière relationship in a manner that dramatically decreased in innocence over a few short years. As mentioned above, in the autumn of 1730, Catherine revealed a shocking story of seduction and bewitchment, and “director and penitent, once inseparable, became adversaries who could not agree on a single aspect of their former relationship” (Choudhury 2015, 47f.). Had Father Girard abused his authority as spiritual director and used the secrecy of the confession to seduce Catherine? Or had an unstable woman used the authoritative voice of the mystic to deceive her confessor in order to promote herself? Although nobody knew what had really happened, local and provincial gossip quickly developed into a national, and, indeed, international obsession. In the following months, even the French King, Louis XV (1710-1774), intervened. On January 16, 1731, he ordered the parliament of Aix-en-Provence to hear the case, in the hope of bringing the scandal to a conclusive and speedy end, and the affair became one of the most widely discussed trials in France and Europe.

As we will see below, numerous poems, engravings, images, songs, operas, and plays mushroomed around the case. What is more, the affair became a cultural flash-point, giving rise to the expression of a range of political and social views, animosities rooted in deep-seated, conflicting opinions about the Jesuits, then France’s wealthiest and most

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4 Scandals like this have a long tradition – see the story of Abelard and Heloise in the Middle Ages.
5 “A few months later, the torrid scandal became a fraught judicial conflict. […] English and German translations quickly appeared, suggesting that much of Europe was equally fascinated. Periodicals, pamphlets, songs, and other polemics circulated in cafés and taverns, taking aim at everyone from Father Girard to the judges” (Choudhury 2015, 3).
6 “From late spring to early autumn 1731, the judges or parlementaires of the court’s highest-ranking chambers, the Grand’Chambre, heard lawyers’ arguments and sifted through testimony” (Choudhury 2015, 107; original emphasis).
powerful clerical order (from the reign of Louis XIV until the Jesuits' expulsion, with one exception, all royal confessors were Jesuits), distrusted and despised by many.\(^7\)

**Reception in Literature and the Arts**

In France, "[i]n spring 1731, the first public narrative of Catherine's version appeared as the Justification de demoiselle Catherine Cadière […] the probable author was the abbé François Gastaud (d. 1732), a cleric and lawyer from Aix-en-Provence known for […] his hatred of the Jesuits." (Choudhury 2015, 58). This narrative reinforced the image of Catherine as Father Girard's victim by multiplying Girard's sins. For instance, Girard orders Catherine to drink a concoction that terminates her pregnancy after the rape. A few months later, an opéra-comique, *Le Nouveau Tarquin*, by the abbé Caveirac, was performed in August 1731.\(^8\)

Interestingly, it was not long before numerous dramatic as well as narrative renderings of the scandal exploded onto the scene in England. My research of Eighteenth Century Collection Online has provided the following results (with brief analyses added here):

- Anonymous, 'Letter,' *Grub Street Journal* 94 (London: 21\(^{st}\) October, 1731). A short piece reporting the court verdict. Most interesting is that it is reported that three people died in the court from suffocation, such was the contemporaneous interest in the case.


- Anonymous, *A Narrative of the Case of Mrs. Mary Katharine Cadière against Father John Baptist Girard* (London: R. R., 1731). An extended narrative, speaking of "[t]he excellent Lesson it affords against the villainous and diabolical arts of the Rommish Priests, especially the Jesuits, we cannot pass over in silence" (Preface; pages unnumbered).

- Anonymous, *The Case of Mrs MARY Katharine Cadière, against the Jesuit Father John Baptist Girard. In a Memorial Presented to the Parliament of Aix* (London: J. Roberts, 1732). This monograph explicitly connects the Cadière case to a general disapproval of Jesuit priests: all readers "will see by what villainous and diabolical arts the Romish Priests but especially the Jesuits, usurp and maintain an absolute dominion over the Consciences as well as the Persons of their Devotees. […] should they for their sins be delivered up to the

\(^7\) "As a Jesuit, Father Girard "embodied all the authority of France's most powerful clerical order, which enjoyed the patronage of the king and the Church's top officials" (Choudhury 2015, 15). His penitent, Catherine Cadière, "like many devotees in Toulon and throughout France […] accepted the notion that, as a woman, she needed a spiritual director – a priest or a friar – to guide her soul to God and toward perfection. In 1728, she found that experienced spiritual mentor in Father Girard. His commitment to spiritual direction exemplified the Jesuit mission to make confession and self-examination the center of religious life" (2015, 33).

\(^8\) See Choudhury (2015, 149).
Infamations of Popery and an implicit Obedience to cunning and wicked Confessors, who will artfully worm themselves even into the secrets of their Hearts [...]."

C- (otherwise anonymous), *Tryal of Father John-Baptist Girard* (London: printed for J. Isted, T. Astley, E. Nutt, A. Dodd, and J. Jolliffe, 1732). This monograph on the case is once again notable for extending comments to the entire Jesuit order.

Henley, John, *A Lecture on High Fits of Zeal; or, Mrs. Cadiere’s Raptures. Flights Beyond the Third Heaven, What a Rapture Is, and a Religious Rapture* (London: J. Stephens, 1732?). This piece does not focus on the sexual side of the affair.

Jingle, Jeremy, *Spiritual Fornication. A Burlesque Poem. Wherein the case of Miss Cadiere and Father Girard are Merrily Display’d in Three Canto’s [sic]* (London: H. Cooke, 1732). This poem clearly others and vilifies Girard – from the start as being driven by nothing but lust. Cadière is said to have been "the object of his lust" (Canto I), is described as "young, unwary woman" (6), "the unwary Virgin" (7) whom the father seduces "to please his carnal appetite" (8). Girard is named "hypicritick sinner" (6), "compound of a goatish leacher" (6), "a subtle fox" (13), "this murderer, this vile impostor" (23), "lascivious Girard" (27). All in all, Jingle’s poem suggests that the demonic Jesuit figure is representative of his order.

Anonymous, *The Wanton Jesuit: or, Innocence Seduced. A New Ballad Opera. As it is Acted at the New Theatre in the Hay-Market*. This opera was performed on 17 March 1732, that is, a few weeks before Fielding’s *Debauchees*, and was translated from the French. "The anonymous author milks the situation for all the sexual titillation it is worth, and the results are good gutter journalism, if poor dramaturgy" (Hume 1988, 131). This dramatic rendering starts with a character testifying to the popularity of the scandal, and (as seen in other versions), Father Girard is vilified from the first line ("What Libertine Lives do Priests and Friars lead!"); 13) He starts kissing Cadière on the fifth page of the play, and is characterised by others as seducing and abusing all his devotees (17), and being "a Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" (28). Cadière is strikingly passive "I will submit myself entirely to you, and implicitly follow your Directions" (21). All in all, this Opera directs its hate not only against Father Girard but against the Order of the Jesuits as a whole, (Mob: "Down with the Jesuits, Down with the Jesuits” 47) who bribe and corrupt the judges in the trial.

In sum, all these texts clearly depict Father Girard and the Catholic Order of the Jesuits as the villainous agents in this affair.

Let us then take a closer look at Fielding’s play *The Old Debauchees* and its depiction of the Jesuits in his non-Catholic imagination. No critic, it seems, has so far taken into account that this play is not only one of Fielding’s early comedies, but – as we see it – one important voice in a broader and international cultural and literary picture.
The Play (1732)

*The Old Debauchees* is a (slightly confusing) three-act play featuring only four male and two female characters. It is based on the afore-mentioned Cadière/Girard scandal of 1731.

In his play, Fielding contrasts two (exaggerated) old debauchees: Old Laroon, an unrepentant whoremaster and mocker of the church; and Old Jourdain, a guilt-haunted sinner and gullible old fool, who would not follow his true conscience if the Church contradicted it. The latter thus proves an easy prey for Father Martin (the Girard figure), who secretly lusts after Old Jourdain's daughter, Isabel (the Cadière figure):

[Context: Old Jourdain confesses all his innumerable sins to Father Martin; see 12-13]

Old Jourdain: will no penance expiate my crimes?

Martin: It is too grievous for a single penance, go settle you r your estate on the church, and send your daughter to a nunnery, her prayers will avail more than yours. (13) Martin: Thou art a miserable wretch indeed! And it is on such miserable Wretches depends our power. That superstition which tears thy bowels, feeds ours. This nunnery is a masterpiece, let me but once shut up my dear Isabel from any other Man, and the warmth of her constitution may be my very powerful friend. (14)

Isabel, however, is engaged to a character called Young Laroon. When we see her and Father Martin for the first time, she confesses to him that she is in love with Young Laroon whom she intends to marry the next day. Father Martin, however, enjoins her to defer her marriage one week "by which time I shall have resolved within myself whether you shall marry him at all” (7) "because better things are designed for you" (7) and "great things are in agitation" (8). On his orders, Isabel is to be sent to a nunnery in order to pray her gullible father out of purgatory (Martin: "At least, your stay in purgatory will be short," 13) and, conveniently, to be available for the sexual advances of Father Martin.

In the end, Father Martin is caught by Old and Young Laroon who "have laid a Snare for him" (35) when the Jesuit visits Isabel as a 'Spirit' at night, promising her, "This night will make thee mother to a Pope" (38). He is caught, and later dumped in "a Horse pond" and tossed "dry in a Blanket" (39) for "having dishonoured your order" (39).

At first sight, Fielding may have been attempting to capitalize on the public interest in the Girard/Cadière scandal, but when we take a closer look at the play, we see that it presents much more than its dramatic predecessors. Fielding's play is a complex mixture of standard farce, contrasting two exaggerated and libertine father figures (Old Laroon and Old Jourdain), and a fascinating portrait of an independent young lady, Isabel (see below), as well as an invective against the Catholic Church (see below). All

9 All references are to Fielding (1780).
10 Old Laroon tells us that Old Jourdain "was wicked as long as he could be so" (3). The sins of Jourdain's youth range from common adultery to robbery and beating, denunciation of religion, and the administration of false justice – in short, the sins of a young rake.
11 Isabel tells him that in her plot to reveal Father Martin, Jourdain shall witness all and believe his own eyes and ears, to which he responds, "Against the Church, Heaven forbid" (36).
12 Old Laroon: "No one is secure of a woman till he is in Bed with her" (10) and "I have had two women lawfully and two thousand unlawfully, and never was in Love in my life" (11).
in all, it is social and political satire, a play of libertinism, a proto-feminist play, and a play about religious controversies.13

When we first take a closer look at Martin and Isabel, that is, the Jesuit priest and his penitent, it becomes evident that Fielding did not simply follow his predecessors in their black-and-white contrast of vice and virtue, with the Jesuit Father Girard as the villain, and the penitent Catherine as his innocent victim, but created a much more subtle and multi-layered play.

In *The Old Debauchees*, the heroine, Isabel, is by no means (as we saw in all the previous versions) a weak and subservient character, but a clever and quick-witted young lady, who just keeps within the pale of virtue: When she is asked by her friend Beatrice, who is about to enter a convent, what a woman of sense could see in worldly living, Isabel replies: "Oh! Ten thousand pretty things! Equipage, Cards, Musick, Plays, Balls, Flattery, Visits, and, that prettiest thing of all pretty things, a pretty Fellow" (2). We also see her as operating cleverly and freely under the domestic social restraints as a young marriageable lady. For instance, she replies to her father, "Pappa! Do you think your putting me into Purgatory in this World will save you from Purgatory in the next? If you have any Sins you must repent them yourself" (14).

In her encounters with Father Martin, she is by no means shy and passive, as can be demonstrated by the following examples:

(Example 1)

Martin: You don't know what you are design'd for.
Isabel: No, but I know what I'm not design'd for. (22)

(Example 2)

Martin: Did you never see me in your Sleep?
Isabel: 'I never dream of a Priest, I assure you.' (22)

(Example 3)

Martin: Great things are design'd for you, very great things are designed for you.
Isabel: Hum! I begin to guess what is design'd for me. … I'll try this reverend Gentleman his own way. [Aside] (23)

And even her confessor is not sure about her true self:

Martin (solus) Was this a suspicion of Laroon's or am I betrayed? I begin to fear. I'll act with caution, for I am not able yet to discover whether this Girl be of prodigious Simplicity or Cunning. How vain is Policy, when the little Arts of a Woman are superior to the Wisdom of a Conclave. A priest may cheat mankind, but a woman would cheat the devil. (25)

When Father Martin pursues her, she is clever enough to realise what is happening and plans her own trap. Isabel and her future husband Young Laroon set up their own plot against the clergyman. In her sharp-witted and cunning art, Isabel outsmarts her confessor and traps him, by pretending that she has seen a spirit (28) which "behaved just like Mr. Laroon" (29), kissing and embracing her passionately.

13 In general, Fielding wrote within an explicitly Christian religious framework. His engagement with religion was thoughtful. "In the end, Fielding's theology […] was amenable to neither all-encompassing systematization nor outright rejection" (Rosengarten 2000, 10).
Isabel: I still behaved as you commended me, very passive.
Martin: Oh! The Devil, the Devil! Was ever Man so caught. And did you never apprehend it to be Mr. Laroon himself?
Isabel: Heaven forbide, I should have suffered Mr. Laroon in those Familiarities, which you ordered me to allow the Spirit.
Martin: I am caught indeed. Damn’d drivelling idiot. (29)

All in all,
Isabel, the heroine will not allow her father and the Church to ruin her. Isabel is active not only in controlling her own life, but also in enjoying the world around her. When she announces, at her crucial first introduction in the play, 'But this I am positive, till the World is weary of me, I shall never be weary of the World' (2) she demonstrates an attractiveness of women who are free to have a role in the world and, further, are not frowned upon for enjoying it. (Potter 1999, 53)

Isabel's autonomous self-determination is not made an object of satire in Fielding's play, but rather testifies to an advanced image of independent women Fielding displays here. As in his novels, Fielding grants moral autonomy to women in The Old Debauchees. "Sound understanding and moral independence define Fielding's image of the ideal woman. [...] In such a frame, he does claim women's right to think for themselves, speak up and even make an actual choice in matrimonial affairs" (Leduc 2008, 281). As a second female presence, Beatrice, despite her initial appearance of conventionality, also shows powerful independence of thought and is not mocked it. Each of these women decides her fate for her own reasons. Unlike his predecessors, Fielding created female characters who are intelligent and active, and who do not allow themselves to be subjugated by their patriarchal surroundings.

When we now take a closer look at Father Martin, we do find examples of the negative image we have seen in so many contemporary texts:

Young Laroon: Perdition seize the Villain, may all the Torments of twenty Inquisitions wrack his Soul [...]. (10)
Martin: Oh! that we had but an Inquisition in France. Burning four or five hundred such Fellows in a Morning would be the best way of deterring others. Religion loves to warm it self at the Fire of a Heretick. (25)
Martin: You are to believe what the Church tells you, and no more. (34)

However, that most of the anti-papist speeches are put in the mouth of the buffoon Old Laroon who is by no means a character with whom audiences would identify:

Old Laroon: Why you see a very honest Neighbour of ours, that has try’d to deliver you out of the Claws of a roguish Priest… (39)
Old Laroon: ‘Hurrath! Hurrath! The Priest is caught, the Priest is Caught. (44)

Fielding, it seems, does not end by simply criticizing Father Martin’s vices, but rather by widening his criticism to a more general socio-political message:

Jourdain: Alas! How do we know what we believe without the Church? Why I thought I saw Mr. Laroon and his Son to-day, when I saw neither. Alack-a-day, Child, the Church often contradicts our Senses. But you owe these wicked Thoughts to your Education in
England, that vile heretical Country, where every Man believes what Religion he pleases, and most believe none. (36; original emphasis)

Furthermore, Fielding chooses to extend his social satire to other instances, such as Lawyers:

Isabel: Act your part well, and we shall not want his own weapons against him. […] Let us sufficiently convict him, and leave his punishment to the law.
Young Laroon: And I know too well what will be the Consequence of that. There seems to be a combination between Priests and Lawyers; the Lawyers are to save the priests from Punishment for their Rogueries in this World, and the Priests the Lawyers in the next. (27-28)

Thus, in contrast to all other renderings of the Girard/Cadière affair, Fielding's principal design in The Old Debauchees was not to expose Catholic clergy in one fell, damming sweep, and the Girard/Cadière scandal provided only the intellectual seed for his play. Fielding's Jesuit priest is just one imperfect character among many others, and he does not expose the individual priest but the manner of corruption and hypocrisy of the Roman Catholic Church and society as a whole. In his play, Fielding demonstrates the validity of religious doubt and the folly of blind faith in social doctrine, and his broad target is the social and moral environment of his time, within which religion is only one area to be attacked and undermined.

Conclusion

Though time has somewhat withered Fielding's plays, there is a great degree of wit and ingenuity in them to entitle them to a place in the chronicle of the British stage. Being in my opinion by no means inferior to his novels, Fielding's comedies expose human affection, vanity, hypocrisy, and political duplicity. The reason why Fielding's plays have faded from literary as well as stage history may – paradoxically – largely be the reason for their success in their time, that is, their topicality. As we have seen with reference to The Old Debauchees, in 18th-century England, Fielding could take in recent national as well as international events, but over the years and centuries, the full flavour of a satirical stage play demands an audience who are able to share the contexts and who can grasp the reference almost before it is given.

From a critical point of view, The Old Debauchees had been dismissed since its initial appearance in 1732. Fielding took up the Girard/Cadière scandal which had fascinated Europe. In his play, he throws a very different light on the affair and the two protagonists than all other renderings had done. In his depiction of the Cadière figure, that is, Isabel, Fielding acknowledges a woman's intellectual as well as moral emancipation. By advocating this major change in perspective, Fielding provides a new approach to the Girard/Cadière affair. With Fielding's depiction of Father Martin, an anti-papist tone to the play cannot be denied. The Jesuit is characterised as full of lust, sloth, lies, and deceit, as well as abusing the Christian doctrines of forgiveness and tolerance. And yet, Fielding opens up a new dimension, going beyond other renderings of the scandal, by attacking not only the Jesuit priest, but also the falseness and hypocrisy around him. The two father figures, Old Laroon and Old Jourdain, are debauchees and confirmed sinners as well so that Fielding does not present a simple contrast between
virtue (Isabel) and vice (Martin), as other authors had done. In Fielding's play, most of
the protagonists who might be victims of the priest's abuse of his privileged position
are no characters we would sympathise with, but they are imperfect human beings. The
plot simply highlights Father Martin's machinations slightly more than the other char-
acters' imperfections.

No doubt, Fielding in his comedy attacks the hypocrisy of the wealthy Catholic
Church but also that of other people, such as lawyers and others who pretend to be what
they are not in order to hurt others and profit for themselves. The dominant idea of the
play, it seems, is that the villain is finally exposed to his own villainy, expressed by
Father Martin's "I am caught indeed" (20). In Fielding's play, Father Martin is only one
among many others in a world that is by no means perfect, but shows the folly of blind
faith as well as the manner of corruption and hypocrisy of society as a whole. The
dramatist Henry Fielding uses the Jesuit priest as one example, but not the exclusive
one, thus displaying a much more balanced and multi-layered play than any other the
Girard/Cadière affair produced in England and France.

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