

Introduction

Henry Fielding could be regarded as a great novelist who contributes to the birth of novel in the 18th century, and of all his famous novels, Tom Jones is the greatest one which shows the originality and unique competence of Fielding. In this masterpiece, he devotedly shows his omniscience of Greek mythology and the great works of ancient predecessors such as Homer and Virgil. Therefore, as we read Tom Jones, we simultaneously read the works of other great masters. Through the novel Fielding objectively shares his philosophy, viewpoints, and belief in Christianity with the readers and gives them huge space to contemplate.

“As a work of art, Tom Jones is the most astonishing production of human ingenuity. There is not an incident ever so trifling, but advances the story, grows out of former incidents, and is connected with the whole. Such a literary *providence*, if we may use such a word, is not to be seen in any other work of fiction,” said Thackeray in 1840. Tom Jones is a panoramic commentary on England in 1745. It uses the events of the era and cleverly interweaves fictional and contemporary political history. In the same way, the whole novel interweaves both fictional and real places and people. The mixture of mythologizing, fiction, and reality is unlikely to attract many readers into thinking of all the people, places, and events of Tom Jones as having an independent existence outside the pages of the novel. But the mixture creates a

strong sense of Tom Jones as an imagined paradigm of the real world and makes it a funny, witty, and entertaining novel.

Fielding's Tom Jones is funny, witty, and entertaining, and it contains not only a lot of sexual scenes in bushes, bedrooms, and boudoirs but also serious and moralistic concepts. Tom Jones is divided into eighteen books, each of which has a prefatory discussion between its author and the reader and every six ones can be seen as a section. In every prefatory narration of Tom Jones, Fielding finely gives English novel the whole definition and extended body, and the most important rule he adopts is to depict the real world.

Books I-VI chronicle Tom's early life approximately from 1725 to 1745; during this period the events take place only in the county of Somerset and around the Allworthy's and the Western's. And the middle section of Books VII-XII, the center of the novel concentrates on the inspection of Tom's life, especially on the twelve days in 1745, which covers his journey on the road and at inns between Somerset and London after his elimination from Allworthy's house. The following section of Books XIII-XVIII takes place mainly in London and represents a distinction between the high life and the low life, such as the house of Mrs. Bellaston, Mrs. Miller's residence, the apartment of Fitzpatrick and Weston, and Tom's cell. The impressive triple divisions of the novel does demonstrate a change from the writing techniques of

other contemporary novels and a development from Fielding's earlier works.

In Tom Jones, Fielding is very concerned about the form so that he strives to construct a solid structure and organize the conduct of society and of individuals in his writing.

Thus, the presentation and the essence of the narrative are well intertwined.

Fielding closely exploits one of the highest principles of the best cook who tends to serve first plain and then fancy dishes before his guests. "In like manner we shall represent human nature at first to the keen appetite of our reader, in that more plain and simple manner in which it is found in the country, and shall hereafter hash and ragoo it with all the high French and Italian seasoning of affectation and vice which courts and cities afford." (13) By this means, Fielding truly makes his reader eager to read. In Chapter I, Book I, there are two points of interest, and the first one is Fielding's comments. As a novelist who expresses in the position of the keeper of the ordinary, he thinks that the novelist should offer some accuracy for his whole novel and its subdivisions. The second point is the announcement of his realistic intention in the beginning of Tom Jones. The variety of human nature, presented first in plain and simple country life and later in the vice and affectation of city life, is his subject, and his purpose is to follow nature and present scenes of low life and high.

In the conclusion of Chapter II, Book I, Fielding states "I intend to digress

through this whole history, as often as I see occasion, of which I am myself a better judge than any pitiful critic whatever.” (15) Here is his assumption that it is the author’s privilege to intervene in the story at his will, and to comment on his characters or their situations. In Chapter I, Book II, Fielding discussed the theory of history, as the term is used in the title, The History of Tom Jones: A Foundling. His use of the term “history” indicates the lack of clear boundaries between literary forms, and consequently various uses of such terms. The term “history” which can be called “fictitious biography,” which has the implication of verisimilitude tells such writings from the fantastic romances, which has the implication of verisimilitude. There is obviously a little burlesque and sarcasm in Fielding’s use of the term. To create characters by uncovering typical actions he ignores the long-term nothing-happening materials to his central purpose, and this method was an important contribution to the theory of the novel.

To create Tom Jones as an epic, Fielding accurately depicted the events in 1745 and further symbolized his characters as various humanities. To epitomize an era Fielding has a detailed observation of human nature and the society, so he is good at leading the reader to experience the world through his novel, giving the compact plot to make readers extremely interested in the development of the work from the first book to the last. For example, through Jones’ only forty-two-day journey, Fielding

gives the reader a sense of expansiveness in time and space to experience the journey from imprudence to maturity and wisdom. As the vivacious characters are concerned, Tom Jones represents the general countrymen and even everyman, and Sophia symbolizes wisdom. This is the compelling plot and attractive characters Fielding creates. Due to his status as a magistrate, Fielding's justice and assiduity to people and society are finely spread through his work, especially in Tom Jones. When the eighteenth-century literature is in the rage for drama and heroic romance, Fielding writes novels to give the genre legitimacy; when the contemporary is fascinated by tragedy, Fielding writes Tom Jones as a comedy to show his acceptance of his world, and when some authors presented implausible description, Fielding gives the panorama of an age and bouncy illustration of the real English life. All the above are Fielding's originality in writing.

Tom Jones can be seen as the first novel in many ways, such as one of the first novels in English, the first genuine novelistic portrait of standard English life, the first novel to depict the panorama of an age, and the first critical theory of the novel. In the eighteenth-century literary world, novel is not a legitimate genre but considered as a low art; however, with his futuristic style, as an avant-garde, Henry Fielding makes novels a literary furor at that time. Of his masterpieces, Tom Jones can be seen as the most compelling but controversial. First, Fielding claims Tom Jones as a "comic

epic poem in prose” to give the low art form legitimacy and also makes lots of ingenious movements in the comic epic. Although in ancient times Homer writes comic epics, it is lost; however, it is fortunate for Fielding to create his own comic epic without entrammels of the rules for a comic epic. He can write as he pleases and feel his way to put more novelty into his works.

While his contemporary is tending to tragedy and pessimism, Fielding writes Tom Jones as a comedy due to his optimism and assuredness of his world. Some critics despise his distinction in literature and thought, but Fielding is not anxious to defend for himself and still has confidence in his society. Besides the extraordinary attitude, his talented contrivances in writing Tom Jones makes it a substantial work, such as the prefatory narratives, miscellaneous genres of Tom Jones, ingenious arrangement of plots, and exuberant characters.

Although Tom Jones contains lots of Fielding’s originality, it has some conventional elements: the discovery of true identity, picaresque form, and good and evil human nature. Tom Jones is absolutely a novel, but Fielding calls it a “heroic, historical prosaic poem” and “prosaic-comic-epic writing.” From these definitions, he attempts to emphasize the epic genre if his novel presents the broad observation of the era. Besides the epic genre, Tom Jones is also a comedy, a romance, and even a bildungsroman, which really demonstrates Fielding’s exuberant writing skill.

The birth of Henry Fielding's Tom Jones dose push the development of English novel to the summits in the eighteenth century, and Fielding further makes the genre to achieve its consummation with his masterpiece, Tom Jones.



Chapter One

Henry Fielding :The Embryo Novel Genre and the Precursor

At first, prose fiction which is in the ancient time is a legitimate form of literature but despised by the literati, related to short tales of romantic love before the eighteenth century. But some sophists hating to be associated with the typical romance are so interested in the popular genre of the sophistic romances that fiction is elevated and draws more attention. In effect, almost writers see prose fiction as a low writing and attempt to avoid any reference to it until Henry Fielding makes it a “new province of writing”. (2.1) Novels presenting the social and cultural circumstances and thoughts of people are like histories. In the Elizabethan age, the Renaissance romance was initially detached from real life and mainly dealt with the imaginary world of beauty and strangeness. Then owing to the change of the popular taste, novels were inclined to less romantic contexts of implicit connection with real life. While the rogue story is rising, the romance is descending; idealism, chivalrous deeds, and courtly love are replaced by realistic story of lower life and satiric description of the real world, which have a great impact on Henry Fielding’s novels.

The popularity of realistic novels, which feature narratives about contemporary

life and times, is attributed to its reflection of real life and direction for manners of society and conduct of individuals. The realistic portraits of social issues and cultural circumstances, which are deeply concerned with human beings, are resonant to the contemporary readers because novels provide positive social expectations, norms, and conventions whom the readers relied on to make their decisions. Rather than the history of affairs such like wars or political policy, novels documented values and perspectives of people and provided the vivid descriptions of daily life, customs, and beliefs of all strata. The plot concentrates on the domestic, the material, and the individual daily life, and the representative heroes and heroines are of poverty and physical hardship, not of aristocracy.

Actually, the novel emphasizes more on human situations than on the pattern; that is, the readers could obtain the knowledge of their culture and history from the novels. To readers, novels represent the newest values and unpredictable ways of living, thinking, and believing. As a result, the evolution of novels is constant and broad, and even the middle-class is interested in manners and conduct so that they educate themselves through the stories of travel and adventure. More interestingly, absorbing knowledge to upgrade their social prestige, the *nouveau riche* class has a great influence on the material purpose of the English novelists of the eighteenth century. With the new readership and the new science, the greatest novels appear in

the eighteenth century.

The novel is the literary form which most completely reflects the individualist. The characters and the scenes are placed in a new literary perspective, that is, the plots were acted out by particular people in particular circumstances. Preceding literary genres has reflected the generality of their cultures to conform to traditions; for instance, past history is the foundation of the plots of epic and the authors were appreciated by literary formality. However, this traditionalism is confronted by the novel, which is unique and true to individual experience. This literary change is a rejection of universality but an emphasis on particularity. Therefore, the novel becomes a literary novelty and establishes an exceptional value on creativity.

Dismissing formal conventions and rejecting traditional plots, the novelists insist on human experience and do not take plots from mythology, history, legend or previous works. Daniel Defoe, the first novelist, followed the-seventeenth-century tendency and presented personal histories of criminal biography, travels, and adventure. He ignores the contemporary tendency of using traditional plots and innovates a new one of focusing on individual experience to make the narrative order follow with the protagonists' motivations and impulses. In addition to the innovating plots, his novels tend to be autobiographical narratives which use the first person point of view and to relate the readers to his simple and naive characters, and

then reveal themselves with their innermost thoughts and introspections. As a realistic novelist, Defoe emphasizes not only the realistic portrayal of the *milieu* but also human manners and morality.

After Defoe, another two great novelists, Richardson and Fielding, in the eighteenth century use the same way to exploit the non-traditional plots. Samuel Richardson is distinguished for his use of epistolary form and the elaborate analysis of the feminine heart. In his masterpiece, Clarissa, he successfully exercises this epistolary method to teach the lessons of morality. With his lofty morality and domestic plots Richardson's novels seem like a protest against the realistic novels which deal with the rogue story, and his writing provides the reader the religious and virtuous favor which is different from the satire novel of his opponent, Henry Fielding. In a sense, they are literature reformers to make their rotten age aware of its vice; however, the literary methods they employ are different. While Richardson tries to teach morality by the virtuous and moral characters in his works, Fielding unveils the dark fact to expose the ugliness of evil.

Compared with Richardson, Fielding demonstrates a greater variety of social *milieu*, human characters, and daily life. He aims to represent the ridiculous real world in his satire and give unprecedented brilliant dialogues and delicate incidents. In his so-called a new kind of writing, the "comic epic in prose," follies, hypocrisy,

and affectation are the main materials, and with them Fielding contributes to English literature the perfect satiric novels. As the first great novelist in the eighteenth century, even though he writes the earlier picaresque biographies, he instills his novels more complicated plots, portrayals of human beings, and actions than the realistic novelists before. Fielding's literary creation could own to that, "He is the only one among the early novelists whose origins patrician, and the only one whose style and cultural loyalties closely tied to the tradition we sometimes call Augustan" (Cambridge Companion 120). His first two fictions, *Shamela* and *Joseph Andrews*, result from his dislike of Richardson's *Pamela*. Fielding sees Richardson's "to the Moment" narration and the way of thrusting readers into the unfamiliarity with the narrative as voyeuristic; thus, his distaste could be regarded as a resistance to the powerful animating forces in the evolution of the novel.

In his novels Fielding approaches the setting of time from a more external and traditional perspective, such as in *Tom Jones* he presents his much more selectivity than Richardson's in his handling of the time dimension.

We intend in it rather to pursue the method of those writers who profess to disclose the revolutions of countries, than to imitate the painful and voluminous historian, who, to preserve the regularity of his series, thinks himself obliged to fill up as much paper with the detail of

months and years in which nothing remarkable happened, as he employs upon those notable eras when the greatest sense have been transacted on the human stage. (90)

Fielding does not merely solidify the accepted values but redefines the conventional ideas, such as the redefinition of the traditional literary idea of the hero. Unlike Defoe and Richardson's ignorance of conventions, Fielding is a supporter of the classical tradition and the rules, and he thinks that the disordered literary taste calls for rules. When it comes to the system of classes, Fielding shows his conservative thought that every class possesses its own capacity and responsibility; thus the class fixity is important and class order is primary in the plot of Tom Jones. Tom, a foundling, could not marry Sophia. However, to make the novel a comedy and conform to Fielding's conservatism he reverses Tom's identity from an illegal bastard to a gentleman; thus their marriage is able to be accepted by the norms. The contrived happy ending is important because it confirms the complete nature of romantic comedy and reflects a stable and ordered world. Every character disorderly appears in the plot, and through the accidents and the versatile personalities they are back to the proper position.

Fielding's novels and their language are well-stylized; the credit for this achievement goes to his learning from epic and further to the experience in writing for

the theater. Robert Alert claims that "...speech and action unvented for the stage, especially the comic stage, tend to be heightened or exaggerated representations of reality, so contrived that the characteristic lines are sharper, more immediately self-revealing, than they could be in actual experience" (105-6).

Aiming to be a creating novelist, Fielding proclaims the freedom of the innovator:

For all which I shall not look on myself as accountable to any court of critical jurisdiction whatever: for as I am, in reality, the founder of a new province of writing, so I am at liberty to make what laws I please therein. And these laws, my readers, whom I consider as my subjects, are bound to believe in and to obey; with which that they may readily and cheerfully comply, I do hereby assure them that I shall principally regard their ease and advantage in all such institution.(60)

In the eighteenth century, most novelists think that art should be instructive and entertaining; Fielding achieves the requirement and, by emphasizing his art and discussing ethics, makes his reader use his rational and critical faculties instead of allowing himself to be caught up solely in the story. By relating his work with epic, Fielding makes a claim that he founds a "new Province of Writing" for the literary seriousness of the new and the novel; that is, he writes things no one has written

before. Fielding's claim shows his inclining to be a modern but not be trapped by ancient rules because his writing is not in ancient form.

With the notion of "unity," despite of some accidental and randomly-described events, the novel is well-controlled and shaped by the organized narrator; Fielding attempts to present an informative framework over the episodes so that they could be in the right place within a microcosmic and coherent literary world. From the seemingly ordering of the events, the novel definitely could be seen as a finely wrought one, and the whole narrative connects a complex but logical plan, which demonstrates a literary constitution of the external confusion and the internal clarity of human life. In fact, Tom Jones is disorderly detailed and rambles through a nonsense world. Within the random events, the narrative could be viewed as a finely designed, symmetrical and unified art craft for its significant internal coherences. For Fielding's designed coherence Ian A. Bell claims:

Pope's account of this idea of the concealed coherence of apparently incoherent experience was only one of many circulating at the time, the argument from 'Design' (as it was known) being predominant in contemporary philosophy and theology. By analogy, the comparison between the manifest confusions of the world and those of a complex literary plot was regularly employed to illustrate the immanent role of the

author/creator. (171)

To present an innovative novel the narrator plays a unique role in Tom Jones. Fielding uses a self-dramatizing narrator, a fully realized character because his literary method effects the assumption of a community of moral values between the writer and the reader. Undoubtedly, he has to reinforce his viewpoints by speaking through a witty persona. At the beginning of each book, he talks with his readers to reveal his literary intentions, manners, and tastes and shows more literary and artistic essence in plot. Fielding's role as an authorial agent and intervention into the interconnected plot and the symmetric disposition of characters in the individual chronology brings the novel to the achievement. Such a spectacular method of biography to tell Tom Jones' story, which makes Tom Jones a chronological novel, is new to the contemporary. Samuel Coleridge once applauded Fielding for his genius. "What a master of composition Fielding was! Upon my word, I think the Oedipus Tyrannus, The Alchemist, and Tom Jones, are the three most perfect plots ever planned" (792).

The author's presence as a character in *Tom Jones* possesses a signification of an absolutely power over the narrative world. The discussion of his principles and beliefs and the prefaced narrations of the author could be seen as a dense interaction between the author and the reader; also it demonstrates not only his art and wisdom

but his aim to lead the reader to read and to learn the constitution of the comic-epic genre. As a realistic narrator, his purpose is to tell the truth concerning motives, surroundings, and consequences; therefore the source of Tom Jones is the author himself. He controls the development of the novel and is able to invert the order of events. Fielding, seeming like standing outside of flow of time, returns to the earlier plot to make clear the reasons for some acts or circumstances of particular occurrences as he wants. William Ray sees the author's presence as a character as a scheme to elucidate his understanding of history and set himself as a "literary figure."

Tom Jones can be read as the story of its author's own coming to terms with history as the order that defines him. In the beginning of Tom Jones was the author. By the end of the first sentence both his relation to the story and our attitude toward him were already well on the way to being established: the story was his performance. (233-234)

Although the narrator of *Tom Jones* seems like an outsider of the characters, his motives are obvious, and his principles are expounded through dialogues. The narrator's freely interrupting into the prefaces is one of Fielding's devices to deliver his moral commentary and elaborates his believes, and his frank speaking and practical experience makes the reader trust him and accept his teaching. The author stands easily apart from the events; however, he closely gives comment on them so

that through the unique relation with the narrator the reader learns his subtle insights and solid principles. Besides, the narrator never nags the reader with his principles and acts as a tiresome moralist who keeps trying to convey his creeds; instead of solemnity, he presents his doctrine with his humor and playfulness. With his private voice the narrator successfully gives out his personal interest which does not hinge on the story, but always prevents the reader from immersing themselves in the events. In every intervention, Fielding divides his materials between ironical literary criticism and moral implication well. When he proceeds from a discourse on the comic writer to a judgment of the comic writer's subjects, he shows how differently he handles the dignity of authorship and the dignity of moral instruction. His ironic humor and scorn are the tools he uses against vice and frivolity.

Moreover, in the prefaces and the narratives of Tom Jones, Fielding emphasizes the covertly designed texture of the world and its resemblance to the created literary work.

Through the Incident will probably appear of little consequence to many of our readers, yet, trifling as it was, it had so violent an effect upon poor Jones, that we thought it our duty too relate it. In reality, there are many little circumstances too often omitted by injudicious historians, from which events of the utmost importance

arise. The world may indeed be considered as a vast machine, in which the great wheels are originally set in motion by those which are very minute, and almost imperceptible to any but the strongest eyes. (220-221)

Thus, while dealing with the paltry things in the “vast machine,” Fielding successfully turns the trivial events to the big and significant ones.

Fielding’s objective description of his characters is significant. His minor characters, humorous and shameless, are the medium to satirize hypocrisy and follies of human beings and the society. For example, Mrs. Bridget is the incarnation of the pretension and the prude, and Thwackum and Square, whose tenets are totally diametric, often debated to defend for their sanctimoniousness. Fielding undoubtedly sets the perfect example for the type of satire novel of manners. The subtle modification of characters and its refined development of plot structure makes Tom Jones the complement to *Joseph Andrew*. Even if Tom Jones is a growth of each character, its incidents and dialogues are rare in the works of the earlier picaresque novelists. With the development of complex plot and the variety of personalities of characters, mystery and suspense make the novel climactic everywhere. In addition, Fielding’s brilliant satiric novels have numerous influences on the descendent. His personal mixture of irony, hubris, and passion, and creative

grotesqueries cultivate a rival narrative mode, and this style turns Fielding into the inventor of the English comic novel.

As a creator of novel, Fielding's important achievement is in fashioning a stylized language which attains the qualities of precise reference, complexity of statement and artistic form. In the novel Fielding exquisitely uses irony, which is from the insistent decorum of his style; he engages the world of immediate experience and implies its moral and esthetic inadequacy at the same time. Through Tom Jones, Fielding continually deals with time and presented the simultaneity in art and a fact of life; thus as a narrator he is not only the master of characters but also of the time itself. The recurrence of finely balance passages of irony is one of Fielding's best styles, and the passages appears in two different forms. In one of them a character first talks grandly about a noble philosophical idea, and then Fielding unveils the hypocrisy of the character by spreading his directly opposing to his philosophy; Blifil is the best example. At the beginning of Book II, Fielding ingeniously becomes a more powerful role of "*jure divino* tyrant" of a "new Province of Writing" and presents more complex ironies and his own projections.

[F]or as I am, in reality, the Founder of a new Province of Writing, so I am at liberty to make what laws I please therein. And these laws, my readers, whom I consider as my subjects, are bound to believe in and to

obey; with which that they may readily and cheerfully comply, I do hereby assure them that I shall principally regard their ease and advantage in such institutions: for I do not, like a *jure divino* Tyrant, imagine that they are my slaves or my commodity. I am, their use, and not they for mine. Nor do I doubt, while I make their Interest the general rule of my writings, they will unanimously concur in supporting my dignity, and in rendering me all the honour I shall deserve or desire. (77-8)

To make the reader appraise his novel as a work of art, Fielding carefully instills ingenious elements into Tom Jones. He discusses the novel, literary theories, and critics in the novel, all of which are closely concerned the literary techniques in Tom Jones. Moreover, Fielding shows his craftsmanship through the chapter titles. Only reading through them could the reader refer them to not only the author and the methods of writing but also its plot, such as: “Containing five pages of paper”; “A short hint of what we can do in the sublime”; “Being the shortest chapter in this Book”; “A battle sung by the Muse in the Homeric style”; “A short chapter containing a short dialogue”; and “Containing a portion of introductory writing.” These chapter titles, funny and expected, not only keep the reader up with the tone of the novel but show the author’s direction of his wit. The effect of this device

demonstrates Fielding's uniqueness in writing a realistic work; unlike other authors who asks their reader to believe for the duration of the novel; Fielding makes the reader aware of their roles as reader and of himself as author. Hence, the reader could watch the history unfold and focus on the moral framework and the subtle workings of both the plot and the style of the novel.

In Tom Jones, Fielding develops a technique of coinciding motives with the plot. For example, Mrs. Miller's cousin, Enderson, is compelled to be a highwayman by desperate poverty, and his trying to steal Jones' property, a planned coincidence, brings Jones' act of charity. The news is passed to Allworthy's ear through Mrs. Miller; thus Allworthy is eliminating his misunderstanding of Jones. This is a catalyst Fielding created for the plot. To create a great work, Fielding designs the complicated plot for his novel; every detail and trifle are closely connected with the work and catalysts to the plot, such as Sophia's muff, the lawyer Dowling's great haste, the explanation of what passes between him and Blifil, and Black George's theft of Jones' £500 bill. The interpolated stories, characteristic of romance, thematically have something to do with the main structure, and in *Tom Jones* they are simple but functional because the simplicity is a complementarity to the fantastic complications. It is clear that Fielding intends to highlight the significance of ingenious and downplayed structure to comfort and harass the reader at the same

time.



Chapter Two

The Trinity of *Tom Jones*: Comedy, Epic, and Romance

Tom Jones as a Comedy

In The Labyrinth of the Comic, Richard Keller Simon claims Tom Jones as a comic labyrinth. “The comic mirror and the Christian mirror mirror each other, the one reflecting the wise design that is God’s order, the other the wise design is comic in this fashion...” (69) It is a well-structured, compelling, dangerous, and comic play of mockeries, jokes, and tricks. In Tom Jones, Fielding seems to go back to the old writing device of the rogue story and the adventure story; however, he goes farther into his “new province of writing,” (40) the “comic epic in prose.” (xviii) This new genre can be seen as a comic variant of the Homeric epic, and the definition of “comic” is from Fielding’s use of critical irony. With the quaint combination of comedy and seriousness, fiction and criticism, deception and revelation, and elegantly structured form and highly subjective ironic narration, Tom Jones is drastically a complex work.

It is said that Fielding’s optimism is mainly attributed to his Christianity which clings to blessings and the gospel; he despises suspicion as the sign of a bad mind and

the complicity with evil. For him prudence is a symbol of cunning selfishness and wickedness, equal to fatuity, not blamable; and trusting in God and rightness leads the lost soul back to his right path. In addition to the solid conviction in Christianity, the character of the narrator is indispensable for the comic warranty; his easy and confident tone controls the novel and disposes of calamity. When Fielding defines Tom Jones as a comedy and as belonging to “that Kind of Novels, which ... us of the comic Class,” (400) he makes rules for “Prosai-comic-epic Writing” (208) and the novel a real comic-epic. For the insistence on the consistent comic tone in an epic novel, he alternately presents sober and comic passages.

To make the comic tone more pervasive and the comic structure intricate, the comic passage contains the ironical comment on a serious statement because much humor is from irony. There is one kind of irony successfully used through the narrator; he firstly praises a character, then directly describes one element in the character, and at last reveals the flaw in that element. This is the way Fielding explores the character of Mrs. Western.

[Mrs. Western] was a lady of a different turn. She had lived about the court, and had seen the world. Hence, she had acquired all that knowledge the said world usually communicates; and was a perfect mistress of manners, customs, ceremonies, and fashions. Nor did her

erudition stop here. She had considerably improved her mind by study; she had not only read all the modern plays, operas, oratorios, poems, and romances-in all which she was a critic; but had gone through Rapin's History of England, Eachard's Roman History, and many French *Memories pour servir a l'Histoire*: to these she had added most of the political pamphlets and journals published within the last twenty years....She was, moreover, excellently well skilled in the doctrine of Amour....knowledge which she the more easily attained, as her pursuit of it was never diverted by any affairs of her own; for whether she had no inclinations, or they had never been solicited; which last is indeed very probable; ... However, as she had considered the matter scientifically, she perfectly well knew, though she had never practised them, all the arts which fine ladies use when they desire to give encouragement, or to conceal liking, with all the long appendage of smiles, ogles, glances, etc., as they are at present practised in the beau-monde. To sum the whole, no species of disguise or affection had escaped her notice; but as to the plain simple workings of honest nature, as she had never seen any such, she could know but little of them. (223)

Here we see a progression, in which Fielding compliments Mrs. Western by giving her grand knowledge to an extreme; however, he concludes with the implication that the knowledge of disguise and affection is useless for the reason that the lady has not “the plain simple workings of honest nature” (182) and that “manners, customs, ceremonies, fashion” (182) equal to “plain simple honest nature”. (182)

Since Tom Jones is based on the style of irony, Fielding presented the true ridiculousness by comparing it with the social and ethnic norms which are abided by. Fielding informs his reader

[N]ot to hastily to condemn any of the Incidents in this our History, as impertinent and foreign to our main Design, because thou dost not immediately conceive in what Manner such Incident may conduce to that Design. This Work may, indeed, be considered as a great Creation of our own. (4)

In Tom Jones each digression is related to the main design. Also, Martin Battestin declares in Province of Wit “Design is the matrix of plot in Tom Jones; it is the primary (if not the only) determining factor in the structure of the book (148).”

The narrator is a master of artifice and of deception and attempting to establish a current of laughter between himself and the reader. He not only leads the reader to mock but also mock himself. His ubiquitous paternal presence to guide us through

the book and teasing manner brings about the good-natured tone of the humorous comedy. The novel constantly mocks the reader's wit and judgment; only by understanding the mockery can the reader learn them. It is accurate to say that the comic narrative of Tom Jones contributes itself to be the best novel of the eighteenth century. The terrific mixture of masquerades, contrasts, and a demonstration of the ways of the comic novel can transform the themes of dramatic comedy and of prose satire into something more elaborate.

In the reversals of the plot, the recognitions and the distributive justice end the novel, we learn that the epic narrative is profoundly comic. Since the ironical and playful narrative is an element of the comedy, Fielding frequently instills satirical tone into the dialogues. First, he attempts to ridicule the language of fashionable society by Fellamar's rhetoric which is full of exaggeration. When the young man says to Sophia, "Could you know hale the torments which I feel, that tender bosom must pity what those eyes have caused", and this appeal is called "a strain which would be little more pleasing to the reader than it was to the lady." (251) This is typical of Fielding's humorous parody. The characters are the foundation of Fielding's comic irony; such as that Molly should manifest herself when Tom is thinking of Sophia, or that Sophia's reaction to Tom's injuries should convince her aunt that the girl loves Blifil, or that Western should attack the man who would be his son-in-law and save

the one he will soon wish to see hanged. The ironies enlarge one another and spread through the book until every character is involved.

There are many pairs of contrast between characters in Tom Jones. Tom and Blifil are the first one presented in Book III, and they were equally educated and likewise regarded. The other pair of contrast is between Thwackum and Square and demonstrates how finely Fielding distinguishes the philosopher from the divine. Here is a paragraph in Chapter IV that is often quoted, “Upon the whole, it is not religion or virtue, but the want of them, which is here exposed. Had not both utterly discarded all natural goodness of heart, they had never been represented as the objects of derision in this history.” (93) Even though these two men possessed extremely opposite beliefs, they identically diverge from true virtue. Thwackum ends up impossibly in his ridiculous and self-righteous hypocrisy; Thomas eventually learns that one’s heart would not change even if the true nature of his own humanity is revealed.

However, in Chapter IV of Book III Fielding ironically uses a spurious contrast between Blifil and Tom: the less Blifil’s villainy is, the more radiant the goodness of Tom’s character is. Blifil is

[S]ober, discreet, and pious beyond his age; qualities which gained him the love of every one who knew him: while Tom Jones was universally

disliked; and many expressed their wonder that Mr. Allworthy would suffer such a lad to be educated with his nephew, lest the morals of the latter should be corrupted by his example. (94)

For instance, in Chapter V Blifil is the jewel of the philosopher and the divine, but Tom is the one in Bridget's eyes. The exemplar of contrast demonstrated in the novel is that between the exciting and passionate activities for the good and the ill represented by Mrs. Miller, Nightingale, Partridge, Blifil, Fellarmar, Mrs Western and Squire Western, and all the people are against the passive roles of Sophia and Tom. Thus Sophia has to continually resist Lord Fellarmar's proposal, and Tom, in the prison, is deeply passive and generally seen as an impossible one. Moreover, even though Tom is the prisoner all the time, Fellarmar's ceaseless proposing to Sophia, and Western Squire's firm insistence on Sophia's marriage to Blifil, with Fielding's belief in freedom Sophia is able to refuse the men she dislikes and marries the one she loves. "Now to force a woman into a marriage contrary to her consent or approbation is an act of such injustice and oppression that I wish the laws of our country could restrain it." (316) Because of the rewards of Tom's good nature the novel ended with a comedy.

When it comes to structure, Tom Jones is exactly a mock-epic, the protagonist starts at a position of distress but ends in bliss. Since the principle of contrast and

revelation keeps happening throughout the novel, it brings about a conclusion in which Tom obtains Sophia and Fielding obtains prestige. Andrew Wright claims in Henry Fielding: Mask and Feast :

The spectacle which is laid before the reader, so lifelike and so unlike life, so verisimilar in detail and so operatic on the whole, so elaborately and delightfully composed - this is not an imitation of nature but splendid rearrangement, a wonderful divagation from the stringencies, the bleakness, the undifferentiated dullness and beastliness of much ordinary life.(104)

Fielding's dialogue is pervasively stylized, and this is apparent in the language of his characters which shifts from self-parody to literary parody to formal comic soliloquy. What the characters say and how they say are equally stylized, and much of them is improbable by the standards of ordinary realism but comically revealing and perfectly right in context.

Owing to a wide experience of human defects, Fielding's candor and good nature spreads through his works, and his honesty makes him consider corruptions as commonplace. Tom Jones is full of Fielding's wisdom, learning and benevolence so that sentimental indulgence, scornful indignation, and the hypocrites and fools contribute to the great comedy. His comic impulse comes from his euphoric

conviction of an essential rightness in things, his satisfaction with the material world, and his sense of harmony among man, nature, and society. Therefore, even Tom Jones, a bastard, is far behind his reach for Sophia, and the requirements of comedy demand she must be his, and here comes out her rebellion against her father. The two lovers, from different backgrounds, fight against the conventional society and the respectably accepted domestic standards that Sophia is supposed to obey her father and Tom, a bastard, should go back to his original place but not of the upper class. However, Tom's positive personality and spontaneity enable him to get rid of the various predicaments.

Tom is modeled as a unique figure of the eighteenth century, the "noble savage" and the "natural man", who struggle to escape from the limitations of the materialism and the class society. Thus with Fielding's contrivances of comedy and the couple's persistence to revolutionize the conventional standard, the novel turns out to be a comedy. The compromise between the love affair and the marriage norms of the society signifies an acceptance of the world and that within Fielding's novel love and happiness, virtue and justice can be attained at the same. And all dichotomies are brought together: individual versus society, thought versus feeling, impulse versus principle.

In Tom Jones there are plenty of comical events of unpredictable changes

happening to alter the plot, such as Tom's decision to go to sea, Sophia's running away, and Squire Western's abandonment of looking for his daughter when a hunting party rides across his path. However, these surprises bring relief every time after the shift of plan so that the characters, plot and fortune meet in the comic event. R. S Crane interprets in his essay "The Concept of Plot and the Plot of *Tom Jones*":

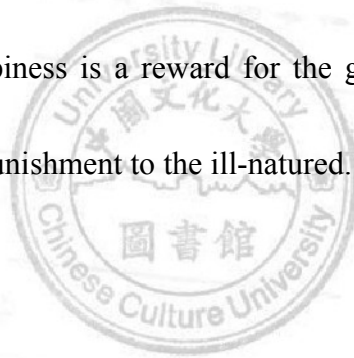
It is generally the case that whatever tends to minimize our fear in a plot that involves threats of undeserved misfortune for the sympathetic characters tends also to minimize our pity when the misfortune occurs and likewise our indignation against the doers of the evil; and fear for Tom and Sophia as they move toward the successive climaxes of their troubles is prevented from becoming a predominant emotion in the complication of *Tom Jones* chiefly by two things. The first is our perception ... that the person whose actions threaten serious consequences for the hero and heroine are all persons for whom, though in varying degrees, we are bound to feel a certain contempt [but nothing stronger: even Blifil is a bungler as a villain]...A second ground security lies in the nature of the probabilities for future action that are made evident progressively as the novel unfolds.... [We are bound to the conclusion that] since nothing irreparable has do far

happened to him [Tom], nothing ever will. (84)

Quick changes are the elements of Fielding's comedy, and each new chapter has a new situation for different characters in the similar scene for ironical contrast. In the novel shifting currents of laughter and mockery are organized and explained; the comic chaos, the paradoxical synthesis of seriousness and mirth at the end, is one of Fielding's contributions to the history of comic literature.

Patrick Reilly declares that "Tom Jones has been seen as the last joyous product of a conviction that all the essential impulses of a good man can be happily harmonized with one another, none of his innate tendencies necessarily clashing with the rest; love and honor, faith and reason, Providence and fortune, are, for the final time, made to appear complementary." (100) Fielding regards tragedy as an uncompleted comedy, a story ends too soon, and in a complete comedy he tells the whole truth and the entire story. Narrator and narrative, style and meaning, form and content are perfectly integrated, and the true believer in comedy relies on a benign providence in real life. His comedy is of certainty, and its creator is of authority because it is God's handiwork. His novel replicates God's providential plan and predict our destiny which has to be well and saves us from the statement about the inescapable human condition. With his work Fielding makes us believe in the goodness of the world; that is, his comedy is an act of faith and a decision of the will.

The happy comedy of the resolution connotes the conservatism of Tom Jones. No one has ever questioned the social convention which forbids Jones from marrying to Sophia because of his low and illegal birth. Until Jones retrieves his noble status is he allowed to be Sophia's husband. To defend the rights of the society which see foundlings inappropriate to landed estate, Fielding ended up making Jones a gentleman. The contrived happy ending is important because it confirms the complete nature of romantic comedy and reflects a stable and ordered world, which is unquestioning and unquestioned. There is no absolute difference between reward and punishment, while happiness is a reward for the good-natured, unpleasantness, instead of Providence, is a punishment to the ill-natured.



Tom Jones as an Epic

The genre of *Tom Jones* is as various as the title of Fielding who is also famous as playwright, journalist, political writer, and so on. Owing to its well-organized and abundant plot, Tom Jones can be an epic, a comedy, a romance. From its full title, The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling, it is probable to misunderstand it as a tragedy; however, with the optimism of Fielding and Tom Jones whom was modeled as an optimist, the denouement is a happy ending even though Jones experienced lots of disaster. As an epic, Fielding definitely presents the historical background of 18th-century England, and as a romance, the novel centers on the love story of Tom Jones and Sophia Western.

With his theories of the novel, expressed primarily in Joseph Andrews, Fielding attempts to give dignity and status to the new genre of the novel by relating it to the classical epic. Fielding regards his novels Joseph Andrew and Tom Jones as “comic prose epics.” He highly values the epic, and the term “comic epic” represents some specific meaning for him and the contemporaries. While telling his “comic epic in prose” from serious epic and the prose analogues, Fielding does not refer to any prototype but the Aristotelian distinction between the serious and the comic. His

distinction between the prose epic and French romance is based on a new factor, 'instruction or entertainment,' which is a question of personal value judgments. In the preface to Joseph Andrews Fielding stated that:

Now a comic romance is a comic epic poem in prose; differing from comedy, as the serious epic from tragedy: its action being more extended and comprehensive; containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters. It differs from the serious romance in its fable and action in this; that as in the one these are grave and solemn, so in the other they are light and ridiculous; it differs in its characters, by introducing persons of inferior... manners, whereas the grave romance sets the highest before us; lastly in its sentiments and diction by preserving the ludicrous instead of the sublime.

To give a definition for the novel as an epic genre, Fielding presents an extensive picture of an era and emphasizes human nature of the good and the evil, especially the latter. Like a history writer, he refers to the historical events in that time and several authentic settings to put the contemporary world on display and mostly depicts humanity of cruelty, hypocrisy, and moral degeneracy of human beings but goodness, honesty, and lofty sentiment. He uses a mock-epic tone and describes things in a

very solemn way, and in the novels we can see refined language and various speeches, particularly, irony and exaggeration.

Traditionally, the epic has the following elements: the adventure of a hero or a war as the theme; invocation to the Muse—Calliope of epic poetry; the epic question; the beginning in *medias res*; the application of stereotyped epithets; the use of epic similes; the objectivity of the narrator-poet in recounting the story, and elevated diction and episodes or books. As Tom Jones is an epic about the comic, Fielding prospects the traditional epic structure by placing it in a larger comic structure and adopts these characteristics to attain his particular purpose. The fight between Molly and villagers and her first fight with Goody Brown are written in the grand style of the epic. Like the Homeric epic which lists names of gods involved in the battle, Fielding lists the names of the villagers and treated Molly as a heroine. Besides, the invocations of the Muse occurs while he asks it to help him recount the fight as if it was very important, and the significant biographical sketches of characters are everywhere through the novel. In the characters; Fielding's adaptation of the epic structure finely develops a literary form which is well designed and controlled. Moreover, Fielding's manipulating the words in Tom Jones explains the fundamental influence of the epic on him. The function of rhythmic beat, extended simile, and formulaic recurrence in the epic are ubiquitous in the novel.

In the title, The History of Tom Jones: a Foundling, Fielding uniquely uses the term of history. The reason the work was called a history instead of a life, he explains out in Chapter one Book II:

[Y]et we intend in it rather to pursue the method of those writers, who profess to disclose the revolutions of countries, than to imitate the painful and voluminous historian, who, to preserve the regularity of his series, thinks himself obliged to fill up as much paper with the detail of months and years in which nothing remarkable happened, as he employs upon those notable eras when the greatest scenes have been transacted on the human stage...When any extraordinary scene presents itself (as we trust will often be the case), we shall not be afraid of a chasm in our history; but shall hasten on to matters of consequence, and leave such periods of time totally unobserved. (90)

Here Fielding obviously shows his disdain for Richardson's treatment of time in tracing each trivial event in the era, and simultaneously he innovates his manner to chronologically keep pace with time, which is analogous to a yearbook with all journeys of characters from the West Country to London and the Jacobite rebellion in 1745. Fielding instills the events of 1745 in the novel. There Tom Jones decides to voluntarily join the army against the rebels, and a part of his journey is a coincidence

with that of the troops in the west of England in 1745. Jacobite myth runs throughout in Tom Jones and political characters are obviously in the novel. In addition to Tom Jones, Partridge is a secret Jacobite sympathizer, and Squire Western is a completely a Jacobite, though he is an ignorant one. Hence, it is apparent that Fielding mingles fictional and real history and that the whole novel mingles fictional and real places and people. Beyond normal historians who purely pace the plot with time, Fielding even makes his imagination play over the events of the past until he could assess and express their significance. To be a veritable historian, he writes a real history book but a daily diary and emphasizes important historic events and skips the little ones in his novel.

In places Fielding indulges in mock-epic, but almost nowhere in classical epic imitation. Even though Fielding occasionally imitates the classical epic, the novel presents moral heroism with a tendency to universality. He gives the extensive treatment of time to create distance and perspective, and this features the epic. An epic, for one thing, usually starts *in medias res*, and consists, typically, of a series of narratives of past glories, all well known to the listeners. In Joseph Andrews, Fielding regards Don Quixote as “a History of the World in general”; this phrase can also explain Fielding’s intentions in Tom Jones, a panoramic novel with extensive breadth. In the one third of the novel, Fielding presents twenty characters and

speeds through twenty years, which creates generality and absolutely gives the reader a large-scale concept of time, space and characters.

In Chapter I, Book IV, "Containing Five Pages of Paper," Fielding distinguishes his novel from factual histories. "As truth distinguishes our writings from those idle romances which are filled with monsters, the productions, not of nature, but of distempered brains; and which have therefore been recommended by an eminent critic to the sole use of the pastry-cook." (155) To further distinguish his novel from factual histories Fielding refers to his use of poetic ornament. "That our work, therefore, might be in no danger of being likened to the labours of these historians, we have taken every occasion of interspersing through the whole sundry similes, descriptions, and other kind of poetical embellishments." (155) Fielding leaves the readers the judgment of how properly these ornaments are used. Even though there have been plenty of argumentations about the legitimacy of Tom Jones, to dismiss those unhistorical assumptions and defend his work as a real epic, in this chapter Fielding makes the above declaration against the stubborn idea that Tom Jones is a proxy of the epic.

Others argue that Tom Jones is nothing but a surrogate the epic, but to Fielding epic means little more than a long narrative. In theory, history is narrative, but in Fielding's theory history is used on title-pages of fictitious biographies and medieval

romances. Many previous writers and critics of fiction, especially of the seventeenth-century French romances, have assumed that an imitation of human life in narrative form should be assimilated as far as possible to the rules that have been laid down for the epic by Aristotle. Obviously, Fielding is quite independent and starts from the point of view. In his Preface to Joseph Andrews, he mentions:

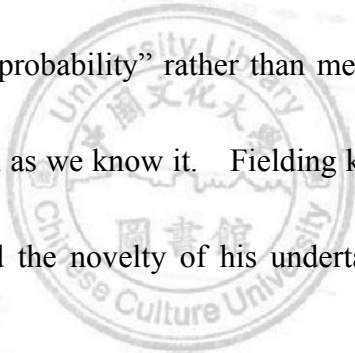
The epic, as well as the Drama, is divided into tragedy and comedy. Homer, who was the father of this species of poetry, gave us a pattern of both these, though that of the latter kind is entirely lost; which Aristotle tell us, bore the same relation to comedy which his *Iliad* and his innumerable bears to tragedy... And farther, as this poetry may be tragic or comic, I will not scruple to say it may be likewise either in verse or prose; for though it wants one particular [...]

Although Fielding casually imitates classical epics, he does not aim to follow the tradition of the classical epic-poets but the comic writers are inspired by the Spirit of Genius. As far as Fielding's independence of epic writing, James C. Evans had notes

The literary form which Fielding created is just as culturally instructive as *The Iliad* was to the Greeks. However, what is being celebrated is not the triumphs of a national military hero, but *the common man*,

represented by Tom Jones (note the extraordinary commonness of his name alone), who is a foundling. One might term Fielding's work the democratization of the epic. (87)

In defining the novel as an epic genre, Fielding emphasizes its function in presenting a broad picture of an era, but unlike the epic, the weaknesses of humanity are primarily put on display. According to Fielding, the appropriate subject of the novel is human nature which is often ridiculous rather than ghosts and fairies; for a modern writer, it is unnecessary to introduce supernatural agents. His insistence on conforming to the rules of "probability" rather than mere "possibility" is integral to the development of the novel as we know it. Fielding knows what he wants to do in prose fiction and understand the novelty of his undertaking in a way many of his predecessors have not.



Tom Jones as a Romance

In addition to the magnificent genres of comedy and epic, Tom Jones is a folk romance ended in comedy, and the comic plot and structure revolve around the moving love story of Tom Jones and Sophia Western. Apart from the love story, there is some sexuality within the plot. Fielding writes his hero as a playboy who has complicated relationships with ladies. His involvements with Molly Seagrim, Mrs. Waters and Lady Bellaston could absolutely make him a typical rake; on the other hand, he is definitely an infatuated lover of Sophia Western. Tom and Sophia, like Richardson's Clarissa, are rebels revolting against the respectably accepted domestic standards of eighteenth-century society. Unlike Clarissa, they are not passive in their struggle, and that is why Tom Jones is not a tragedy but a comedy. It is not the conventionally contrived happy ending; the confidence in human beings runs through the book so that Tom and Sophia could and would grapple with their situation and change it instead, which gains people's acceptance of Fielding's comic view of life. Tom is able to carry the positive values of Fielding's world, and in Tom the prevailing positive is spontaneity. He acts naturally; therefore, his animal spirit which has led him is forgiven.

In the basic plot of a typical Molière play, an unreasonable father attempts to forbid the marriage between his obstinate son or daughter and their true love until a reasonable character intervenes and leads to a happy ending. The agreement of Allworthy with Western to separate Tom and Sophia, a doubling of an unreasonable father, is the first mirroring device we meet in Tom Jones, and then move to the one concerning Nightingale, Nancy Miller, and Nightingale's father; then to the Molière solution in which Nightingale's uncle is the reasoning. And the next is a mirror inversion of the Molière solution, the uncle's daughter elopes with a young man he detests; then to another mirror inversion, Nightingale's father finally becomes reasonable; and at last to a mirroring back into the main Tom-Sophia plot, Allworthy is playing reasoning to Western. This is replayed again when Sophia refuses Tom, and both Allworthy and Western must plead with her to marry him. Fielding takes the multiplication of comic literary structures from the comic tradition and exploits the traditional comic symmetries of plot and characters by repeatedly mirroring each other to create the fabulous work.

Beside the romance revolving around the love story of the two lovers, the transformation of the literary genre from an epic to a medieval romance is obviously seen through Tom's series of heroic adventures to London from the band of soldiers to Mazard Hill to Upton Inn to the gypsies to London, and the incidents happening

during the journey are designedly related to the next. More interestingly, at the finale, all the events are connected and twisted to demonstrate Fielding's ingenuity in resolving complexities. The good examples are the scenes of Lady Hunt's proposal and of Partridge, which are included for the sheer delightfulness of their humor. The historical arrangement of Tom Jones chronicles the life of the hero from his obscure birth to his happy marriage; this structure is characteristic of romance, not epic.

There are a number of romantic elements in Tom Jones. First of all, Tom Jones, a very good-looking man, possesses a unique charm to impress the woman who meets him. However, he is a foundling not appropriate to Sophia so that he has to undertake the separation from her and the tough adventure. Sophia's rebellion against her father and Tom Jones' finding out his true identity turns out to be definitely essential to the happy ending romance. Also, the plot of Tom Jones obviously demonstrates its pattern of a typical romance. Tom is a handsome lad who has "naturally violent animal spirits," (246) and Sophia is a lovely lady who inappropriately falls in love with a rake but "the worthiest and best of men," (215) Blifil. Sophia's rejection comes from her strong emotional conflict which is between love and duty, and a major element in this romance.

In the late seventeenth century, romantic fabling is seen as the product of an extravagant imagination; that is, it was a romance of unrealistic quality. To tell his

romance from the previous ones, Fielding terms his romance as “comic romance” and elaborately distinguishes it from the previous serious romance. He remarked in the preface to Joseph Andrew that:

Now, a comic romance ...differs from the serious romance in its fable and action in this, that as in the one these are grave and solemn, so in the other they are light and ridiculous; it differs in its characters by introducing persons of inferior rank, and consequently of inferior manners, whereas the grave romance sets the highest before us; lately, in its sentiments and diction, by preserving the ludicrous instead of the sublime.

Actually, Fielding's naming of Tom Jones as comic romance seems very quaint and paradoxical while he combines comic realism with romance of improbable quality.

However, Fielding marvelously presents these two extremely different genres at the same time so that we see not only courtly love and romantic sublimity but also the sarcasm of the heroic adventure and the realistic panorama of low life.

Chapter Three

Moralism in Realistic *Tom Jones*

Andrew Wright made a statement on realistic writing:

The spectacle which is laid before the reader, so lifelike and so unlike life, so verisimilar in detail and so operatic on the whole, so elaborately and delightfully composed - this is not an imitation of nature but splendid rearrangement, a wonderful divagation from the stringencies, the bleakness, the undifferentiated dullness and beastliness of much ordinary life.(104)

Under the right conditions of the time and in the literary and social situation, the novel, a new literary form, rose in the eighteenth century, and its unique characteristic of realism clearly made a distinction between it and previous fiction. The term realism is related with the French school of Realist; however, in some sarcastic controversies, it comes down to the low and immoral subjects because it portrays low life like the fabliau and the picaresque tale. If the novel is realistic just for the description of low life, it would only be a new romance. Nevertheless, Tom Jones aims at portraying the varieties of human experience and the realistic life, and the realism of the novels

of Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding are closely associated with the fact that Moll Flanders is a thief, Pamela a hypocrite, and Tom Jones a bastard. Moreover, the realism of today's novel, which appeared in the modern and intellectual period, is different and dismissed from the universal one in the Middle Ages, and it is innovating and anti-traditional.

To be a true realist, Fielding declares that his aim is to present the reality and insists on the attitude which is distinct from other previous writers while working on Tom Jones. He claims:

Teach me, which to thee is no difficult task, to know mankind better than they know themselves. Remove that mist which dims the intellects of mortals, and causes them to adore men for their art, or to detest them for their cunning, in deceiving others, when they are, in reality, the objects only of ridicule, for deceiving themselves. Strip off the thin disguise of wisdom from self-conceit, of plenty from avarice, and of glory from ambition. (485)

In the vast background of the era, Fielding unveils the hypocrisy, avarice, and ambition of the variety of typical characters with complicated relationships and contradiction. Tom Jones embraces the panorama of eighteenth-century life in British society: the daily life of the landowners, countries, cities, inns, theaters, bazaars, courts, jails, counting houses, and upper-class salons, etc. Besides, it also includes the characters of different strata from the noble to the lowest-class such as thieves,

gangsters, and pirates.

The class fixity is important in the plot of Tom Jones, as every class possesses its own capacity and responsibility. Tom is a foundling, undoubtedly; he cannot marry Sophia. However, to make the novel a comedy, Fielding reverses the lot to alter Tom's illegitimacy into the gentry, and their marriage can be accepted by the norms. In Tom Jones, class order is primary. Every character appears at random in the plot, and through the accidents and the versatile personalities they are back to the proper position.

Fielding's dialogue is pervasively stylized, and this was apparent in the language his characters speak, which shifts from self-parody to literary parody to formal comic soliloquy. What the characters say and how they say are stylized, and much of them is improbable by the standards of ordinary realism but comically revealing and perfectly right in context. In Chapter I, Book VII, A Comparison between the World and the Stage, Fielding makes an interesting comment on the dramatic element.

The world hath been often compared to the theater; and many grave writers, as well as the poets, have considered human life as a great drama, resembling in almost every particular, those scenical representations which Thespis is first reported to have invented, and which have been since received with so much approbation and delight in all polite countries. (312)

This comparison has become so common "that some words proper to the theater, and

which were at first metaphorically applied to the world, are now indiscriminately and literally spoken of both.” (312) Fielding does not give further explanation of the application of stage and scene to both life and the stage because the public is more interested in hissing the playwrights or actors who have finely imitated life.

Since Tom Jones demonstrates Fielding’s creative attitude toward the realism. He insists on illustrating the folks who possibly exist in the real life and intentionally portrayed true human nature. Fielding’s characters are too similar to the ones whom we meet in daily life; however, as a writer of realism, his aspiration is to extremely reveal but dilute or veil the reality, which is what the writers of the realism are eager for. In The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding Ian Watt stated that “The constitution of the particles themselves_the characters_is not modified in the process, but the plot serves to reveal something much more important_the fact that all human particles are subject to an ultimate invisible force which exists in the universe whether they are there to show it or not.” (271) Fielding did not believe in the perfectionism of humanity, but instead he believes that humanity is a mixture of goodness and badness. He depicts not only good in his characters but weakness and even vice, and the molding of Tom Jones finely incarnates this feature.

It is said that behind Tom Jones is Fielding’s own youth; therefore, with his

vigorous nature and untrammelled youth, Fielding tells truly a man's growth from his lax boyhood to mature adulthood, the various humanity all he knows, and the consequences of people's misdeeds. All that he is concerned with is the description of a definite and very real type of young man; the young man whose passions and whose selfish necessities sometimes seem stronger than anything else in him. Fielding insists on describing facts. Hence in the first chapter of Book I of *Tom Jones* he mentioned, "The provision, then, which we have here made is no other than *Human Nature* (52)", which makes us accept his intelligence and judgment. He uses the past tense in historical time to present it as a history but a life of Tom Jones. Moreover, he models the role of the narrator to describe a lot of truth, and those trivial things in Tom's life are the most revolutionary ones in comic literary history. With his dramatic version of himself Fielding is getting intimate with the reader and comes up with a kind of comic analogue of the true believer's reliance on a benign providence in real life. Andrew Wright makes a comment on this:

The History of Tom Jones is history in a very special sense. Morally it is true. But it is true because it is a fiction. The realism of technique designedly gives ways to, indeed paves the way to, what becomes a masquerade. This is true to see life spectacularly is to be generous about human motive."(58)

In a fictional world in which no character is both wise and good, the author keeps reminding us of what human life ought to be and might be.

Through a narrative explanation of some particular dramatic moments during the wandering adventures of the hero, Tom Jones can be placed as mid-eighteenth-century comic examination of the contemporary social world and its values. This is actually due to that

Some have considered the larger part of mankind in the light of actors, as personating characters no more their own, and to which in fact they have no better title, than the player hath to be in earnest thought the king or emperor whom he represents. Thus the hypocrite may be said to be a player; and indeed the Greeks called them both by one and the same name.(313)

Fielding's dramatic conception of life and the novel is attributed to his experience in writing, and familiarity with the classical drama and his critics.

Owing to a wide experience of human defects, Fielding's candor and good nature spread throughout his works, and his honesty makes him consider corruptions as commonplace; however, the most unique achievement of Fielding's novel is to teach good morals. He creates Tom as a good sympathetic man who feels happiness and sadness of others as his own, such as the poor highwayman and Mrs. Miller. Fielding

who do show the reader an extensive familiarity with human foolishness and crime. And this panorama of vice and corruption on every social level and on every religion is essential to his novel. Fielding writes Tom Jones in a really realistic way. The story of the protagonist is the life of everyone everywhere. He says, “As we determined, when we first sat down to write this history, to flatter no men, but to guide our pen throughout by the directions of truth, we are obliged to bring our hero on the stage in a much more disadvantage manner than we could wish. . . .” (126)

The topic of the sarcasm epic is about the campaign between the goodness and badness. Tom Jones, Sophia, and Allworthy are symbolic of kindness and virtue; Blifil and Lady Bellaston are of evil and materialism. In Tom Jones, Jones and Sophia struggle against Blifil, a capitalist and exploiter, for their marriage, freedom, and happiness, which uncovers the decayed British capitalism class and digs at the hypocrites and philistines of English society. The opposite of Allworthy is Western, the stereotype of the conservative squires of eighteenth-century England. He is rude, stubborn, fierce, and imperious to others and even his wife and daughter. At first obedient Sophia is the pearl in his palm; however, when she disobeyed his order and resists marrying Blifil, snobbish Western suppresses her and deprives her freedom with an autocratic manner. When it comes to his attitude to his wife, it is more unendurable. This is how Fielding describes the relationship between him and his wife:

He very seldom swore at her (perhaps not above once a week) and never beat her; she had not the least occasion for jealousy, and was perfect mistress of her time; for she was never interrupted by her

husband, who was engaged all the morning in his field exercises, and all the evening with bottle companions...These, however, were the only seasons when Mr Western saw his wife; for when he repaired to her bed, he was generally so drunk that he could not see; and in the sporting season he always rose from her before it was light. (324)

Blifil is good at being a capricious and cunning dissembler. He always behaves modestly and politely in front of the senior. Ostensibly, what he acts seems derived from good motivation but actually from selfishness and jealousy. He is pretentious and gives every effort to please Thwackum and Squar; moreover, he shows more filial obedience for Mr. Allworthy. He regards Tom Jones as not only an eyesore but an irreconcilable enemy of his love for Sophia and inheritance. Therefore, he turns Jones' mistakes to his account to promote himself and attack Jones in front of his uncle and teachers. After Jones is exiled from home, Blifil beguiles his uncle of his whole trust and made advances to the villains to solid his place as a legal heir to the Allworthy and marry Sophia.

Through the novel, Blifil is the criminal attributed to Jones' adversities both in public and private. He instigates his uncle to expel Tom Jones from home and seizes his mother's posthumous papers to conceal Tom Jones' real identity. He seeks all the means to doom Tom Jones to the death and even colludes with the attorney and bribed goons just for pocketing all of Allworth's property. Therefore, when his plots are exposed, he despairingly casts himself on the bed drown in tears which are not of contrition but "these tears were such as the frightened thief sheds in his cart, and are indeed the effects of that concern which the most savage natures are seldom deficient in feeling for themselves." (1935) When he knows that he is not able to deny his guilt, "but, finding at last the evidence too strong against him, he betook himself at

last to confession. He then asked pardon of his brother in the most vehement manner, prostrated himself on the ground, and kissed his feet; in short he was now as remarkably mean as he had been before remarkably wicked.” (1935) Reasonably Blifil is supposed to return of a prodigal son after the grievous lesson, whereas, he does not rectify his errors sincerely; to him, charity cannot elevate him. Thus, after his intrigue was brought to light, he begins to develop his new life. He moves to one of the northern counties, about 200 miles distant from London and lived upon L200 a-year from Allworthy and Jones to “purchase a seat in the next parliament from a neighbouring borough, which he has bargained for with an attorney there. He was also lately turned Methodist, in hopes of marrying a very rich widow of that sect, whose estate lies in that part of the kingdom.” (1961)

Blifil, the stereotype of the villain, is greedy and addicted to fame and wealth but unpleasant, and through it the novel declaims against the contemporary morals and civilization. Ambition, wealth, and fame are the whole of Blifil’s life, and he is jealous of Tom’s relationship with Sophia because he also wants to marry her, not for her beauty and his love to her but for her huge inheritance. In addition to Blifil, Fielding describes plenty of pseudo-saints and coarse vulgarians. He not only sharply satirizes but also unveils Blifil’s ambition, Square’s evil soul, Mrs. Bellaston’s deceitful chasity, and George’s ungratefulness. Fielding also presents diverse personages, including beggars, cheaters, politicians, soldiers, and farmers, and through these images he expresses his hatred to the rotten contemporary British and the selfish developing Capitalism. It is Fielding’s extreme critic and revelation so

that Tom Jones can be an epochal masterpiece of the Realism.

Fielding's prefatory chapters are concerned with literature and moralism, and such an arrangement makes him a contrast to Richardson. Fielding transforms his novel into a "sociable literary form" and leads the reader into a world of the fictional characters and his favorite poets and moralists. Apparently, besides bringing the great narrative technique to the genre of novel, he further gives an ingenious wisdom about human affairs which play on the deeds and the characters of his novel. Through Tom Jones, the reader is getting intimate with every topic of human interest. Frederic T. Blanchard argued that there is no fable like Tom Jones, "such artful states of suspense, such beautiful turns of surprise, such unexpected incidents, and such sudden discoveries, sometimes apparently embarrassing, but always promising the catastrophe, and eventually promoting the completion of the whole." (161) Tom Jones is always guided to stand in the right place, even though he is into a big trouble, he coexists with the moral and the literary rightness.

The protagonist, Tom Jones, is a passionate and sincere, loyal, generous, and righteous lad. He often goes hunting with the hire labor, George and gives all the prey to him for living; as George was unemployed by Allworthy and has difficulty in livelihood, Jones sold his pony, which Allworthy gives him, to relieve George. For Sophia's safety and happiness, he protects her regardless of his own life; to save

Molly from being humiliated, he struggles against gangsters without hesitation. He builds a happy family for Nancy who is discarded by her frivolous lover, and he even generously forgives poor and broken Anderson, a robber, whose wife and daughter are very ill. These events indicate that Tom Jones is selfless, brave, and compassionate.

Jones greatly respects Allworthy. When he is blamed by Allworthy for his absurdity, his attitude shows a lot of penitence and sincerity; even when Allworthy hears some slander and forces him out of home, he only detests his own mistakes and never doubts about Allworthy's benignancy to him. Although Allworthy is unknown about reward and punishment, he is still a squire who is generous, upright, and father-like. Fielding believes that a virtuous person is easily deceived by fraud; thus, in Tom Jones Allworthy is fooled very often and once hexed by the sanctimonious cheaters, Blifil and Watcom. He treats the good as the bad, expels Jones from home, and places all his hope on Blifil. However, he penetrates Blifil's intrigues in the end and mended his ways. As a bastard, he bears with all the suffering, including being abusively lashed by snobbish tutors and insultingly bullied by Blifil. However, when it is beyond forbearance, he comes forward and conflicts with them to struggle against and punish the evil for justice.

Each character interestingly belongs to actions of any unique individual, which explains Fielding's treatment of individualization. Ian Watt makes comments on

this:

Fielding's primary objectives in the portrayal of character are clear but limited: to assign them to their proper category by giving as few diagnostic features as are necessary for the task. Such was his conception of invention or creation: a quick and sagacious penetration into the true essence of all the objects of our contemplation. (21)

Through Tom Jones Fielding makes his characters unveil the moral manners, such as Allworthy and Tom; they both are general and representative of their moral manners and social species. With the character Tom Jones, Fielding introduces a new kind of fictional hero, a good hearted, well intentioned, and generous young man with ordinary human weakness, one who yields to temptation with women and makes errors in judgment.

In each incident of being tempted, Tom is always portrayed as a victim. Aggressive Miss Waters' seduction is described as "the fair conqueror" uses her "whole artillery of love" (481) to overcome Tom Jones. Fielding does not wholly blame Tom Jones' immoral behavior and even makes the reader believe that it is Tom's passion not his nature that lead him to fall in the temptation. Although Tom is not exactly virtuous, for Fielding he is basically a good youngster; for Sophia gives him her true love regardless of her father's rejection.

Fielding believes that personal qualities are more important than social status, and his admiration for Tom Jones with awesome characteristics is disclosed through Sophia's description of Tom. "So brave, and yet so gentle; so witty, yet so inoffensive; so humane, so civil, so genteel, so handsome. What signifies his being base born, when compared with such qualifications as these?" (236) Nevertheless, as presenting this kind of behaviors of Jones, he emphasizes the substance of sense of the present world at the same time. Tom is not a perfect example of morality. Tom is tempted and fails to resist and is seduced by Molly Seagrim. Tom Jones is thoughtless of relationships and unable to control his lust and desire. His love for Sophia is true only when he is rational, but when he is impetuous in emotions and has no rationalities, Jones does not think of the loyalty to Sophia and behaves in an immoral manner. He always becomes the sacrificial lamb to hussies and absurdly betrays to Sophia. Fielding claims that his principle is to truly and boldly depict people and all their physiological needs. Also, Fielding does not make Jones totally passive and blameless and intends to cover and plead for his ridiculous manners result from impulsive emotion.

Fielding's point of human nature is impressive. He sees every human being as not good from birth, just as Blifil, or as selfish and ambitious, such as Black George. He presents his perception of innate human nature in "An Essay on the Knowledge of

the Characters of Men”

This original Difference will, I think, alone account for that very early and strong Inclination to Good or Evil, which distinguishes different Dispositions in Children, in their first Infancy; in the most uninformed savages, who can be thought to have altered their natures by no rules, nor artfully acquired habits; and lastly, in persons, who, from the same education, &c. might be thought to have directed nature the same way... so manifest and extreme a difference of inclination or character, that almost obliges us, I think, to acknowledge some unacquired, original distinction, in the nature or soul of one man, from that of another.”(404)

Fielding thinks each human being has his or her own innate nature of good or bad, even if they accept the same education, their inclinations of personalities will be affected by their passions.

In his writing, Fielding does not intend to create any good or evil characters but the ones of the reality, such as Tom Jones who is simple and makes mistakes at times. He aims to teach moral lessons by this picaresque novel, in which he offers his readers plenty of chances to evaluate the characters and insights into human nature, the essence of the novel. The characters in this novel are superficial and shallow;

however, Fielding exactly depicts the people of the eighteenth century. None is extremely perfect or evil; each is the combination of good and bad. Tom Jones is basically a good man, energetic and honest. Even though sexual addition is irresistible to him, his flaw is mended by his goodwill. Arnold Kettle applauds that:

[H]e is fundamentally confident that the problem of human society, that is to say, his society, can and will be solved by humane feelings and right reason. It is this broad and tolerant confidence which gives *Tom Jones* its particular tone and which also alienates those critics who feel less confident in social man than Fielding, whose optimism they mistake for insensitiveness. (76)

Fielding has a positive attitude toward his society. Even someone makes errors because of his or her carelessness, which does not mean the one is definitely evil, and whose mistakes could be made up by his or her virtue.

Through the character of Tom Jones, Fielding discloses one of his distinguished moral aspects; that is, noble birth means less than and is not the certain ingredient of the noble mind. In this novel many characters spring from the noble class, whereas they are dishonest, selfish, evil, and hypocritical, such as Lord Fellamar, who attempts to rape Sophie; Lady Bellaston, who tries to trap Tom when she finds she is not attractive to him, and Blifil, the most cursed character, plays a lot of cunning tricks to

make Tom expelled many times. On the other hand, there are many kind and generous characters not of nobility, such as Mrs. Nightingale and Partridge. Apparently, good birth cannot ensure good morality, and one who owns good morality must possess a noble heart. Tom Jones is the best example. Before his true identity is revealed, he is a foundling and a bastard of low birth. He sometimes makes errors and can not control his lust to sleep with women; also, he has been convicted of robbery and theft for many times simply because of his impulse. However, he is innately a high-minded gentleman. The robbery of the orchard and stealing is attributed to his kindness to help poor Black George. Ignoring legal justice, Tom does not accuse the highwayman of stealing, but he gives all his money to the criminal whose wife and children are in famine instead. Therefore, no matter how immoral and careless Tom Jones is, his generosity, compassion, and selflessness keeps him away from the wrong doings and guarantees his happiness in the end.

There are pairs of characters in contrast. The first one is Blifil and Tom. Hypocritical and practical Blifil is a character of different nature from that of Tom Jones; he only cares about his own interest. The second one is Sophia and her father, Squire Western. Sophia, a virtuous girl, possesses very lovely personality. On the other hand, Squire Western is the most violent character. All he loves is alcohol, and he is vulgar, emotional, and uncontrolled. Fielding's treatment of his characters is

always very impressive.

Blifil does not get what he wants, neither is he consigned to any desperate future. None of the ill-natured characters is executed and reproached to poverty; instead they lived on in character. For instance, Thwackum continues to make “many fruitless Attempts to regain the Confidence of Allworthy, or to ingratiate himself with Jones, both of whom he flattered to their Faces and abused behind their Backs”(405) and Blifil receives £300 a year, which is enough for a comfortable life.

The exemplar of contrast demonstrated in the novel is that between the exciting and passionate activities for good and ill represented by Mrs. Miller, Nightingale, Partridge, Blifil, Fellarmar, Mrs Western and Squire Western, and all the people against the passive roles of Sophia and Tom. Thus Sophia has to continually resist Lord Fellarmar’s proposal, and Tom, in the gatehouse, is deeply passive and generally seen as an impossible one. Moreover, even though Tom was the prison all the time, Fellarmar’s ceaseless proposing to Sophia, and Western Squire’s firm insistence in Sophia’s marriage to Blifil, with Fielding’s belief in freedom Sophia is able to refuse the men she dislikes and marries the one she loves. “Now to force a woman into a marriage contrary to her consent or approbation is an act of such injustice and oppression that I wish the laws of our country could restrain it.” (451) Because of the rewards of Tom’s good nature the novel ends with a comedy. The happy comedy

of the resolution connotes the conservatism of Tom Jones. No one has ever questioned about the social convention which forbids Jones from marrying to Sophia because of his low and illegal birth. Until Jones retrieved his noble status, he was allowed to be Sophia's husband. To defend the rights of the society which sees foundlings inappropriate to landed estate, Fielding ends up making Jones a gentleman. The contrived happy ending is important because it confirms the complete nature of romantic comedy and reflects a stable and ordered world, which is unquestionable.

Tom Jones contains a strong moral perception which is presented in various ways. One of Fielding's main concerns is about marriage. It is commendable to see love as the cornerstone of marriage in the Capitalistic society of eighteenth-century Britain. In Fielding's mind, Allworth is the most amiable of the good and the happiness of society, the prestige of his country, and the glory of humanity. The most approving was Allworth's discourse on marriage:

I have always thought love the only foundation of happiness in a married state, as it can only produce that high and tender friendship which should always be the cement of this union; and, in my opinion, all those marriages which are contracted from other motives are greatly criminal; they are a profanation of a most holy ceremony, and

generally end in disquiet and misery: for surely we may call it a profanation to convert this most sacred institution into a wicked sacrifice to lust or avarice ; and what better can be said of those matches to which men are introduced merely by the consideration of a beautiful person or a great fortune. (56)

Although his opinion mainly condemns marriage for reasons of lust, Fielding more commonly condemns marriage for reasons of financial gain or social elevation.

Sophia's happy marriage was contrasted with her parent's. Mrs. Western married to Squire Western for fortune was treated as a servant by her husband. "He very seldom swore at her perhaps not above once a week and never beat her."(278)

Another unhappy marriage is between Bridget and Blifil. Blifil is married to Bridget only for the inheritance of Allworthy and does not treat her as his dear wife but as a domestic utility. However, Blifil dies prematurely and never gets the inheritance.

Here Fielding proves that a couple married not for love would end up sorrowfully.

Fielding's escape from the roughness of exhaustive realism contributed Tom Jones to another kind of realism, which was essential to society and morality. Essentially, the novel demands the contemporary society to process revolution and to call forth the new moral norm extremely emphasized by repeated restatement. Henry

Fielding did not focus on a certain class or someone's ideal but on the explanation of the norms. Thus, he endowed Tom Jones with the ideal to criticize the hypocrisy culture of the aristocrat and applaud the morals of the Enlightenment.

To conclude, it would seem that Fielding's basic moral messages remained the same throughout his works. His central idea is that marriage should always be for love, and this remains unchanged throughout his works. He also proclaims the benefits of chastity, but appears to attach less importance to this as his work progresses, and begins to believe repentance to be more important. He appeared to become more tolerant of people's weaknesses and more willing to accept that people are sometimes ruled by their passions, which cause them to act in a way contrary to their basic moral code. Overall, Fielding conveys his moral messages in a subtle, entertaining and mainly consistent manner.

Conclusion

Fielding is the founder of English Realistic novel and one of the greatest writers. During his short lifespan of forty-seven years, he had written over twenty plays and created magnificent satire literature inherited from Aristotle, Cervantes, Moliere, and Swift. His works not only glorified satire literature but also deeply influenced the Realism novelists in the nineteenth century, such as Dickenson and Blake. The novel had been illegitimate until Henry Fielding forthrightly wrote his novels to truly present the world and portrait human nature. By his concern about social, moral, and literary issues he made Tom Jones a successful history not only of Jones but of the 18th-century England. With his accurate observation of humanity he had every character possess vivid personality to represent the variety of human nature, such as Jones' goodness and imprudence, Allworth's benevolence, Blifil's cunning. Because of Henry Fielding's splendid Tom Jones, the reader can attain a broader horizon of the world of literature. Fielding thoroughly observed the world and declaimed against the corruptive eighteenth-century capitalists with incisive words. He applauded the good and denounced the evil; he had compassion for the persecuted and detested the roistering exploiter. To sum up, he was a writer of justice and action and had confidence in the future of human beings.

As the founder of the eighteenth-century English novel and Tom Jones, Henry

Fielding dedicated himself to writing for the consummation of English literature. His warm assiduity of his people and society and his optimism intersperse through his novel, and it is indispensable to those who defy the world and attempt to demolish themselves and someone else. Tom Jones' experience of life from abundance, to depression, finally to satisfaction, and change from imprudence to maturity is able to inculcate the stray people. Besides his extraordinary writing techniques, Fielding also instills modern thinking to write Sophia as a heroine of modern feminism to pursue her true love regardless of her father's resistance and class discrimination. Fielding's sagaciousness and futuristic point of view in writing undoubtedly perpetuate his great position in the literary world.

Henry Fielding is always good at grappling a felicitous rhythm of his works to achieve moderation, neither too ostentatious, nor too narrow-minded. He is famous as the greatest creator of the English novel because he instills the new genre plenty of novelty which is not acceptable to some contemporaries; nevertheless, his edge of originality makes him somebody in the literary world. Arnold Kettle in his critical essay of Tom Jones says that as a tentative and experimental book it is very different from Jonathan Wilde's. Though Henry Fielding was self-confident to easily handle his hero's role and master plot construction, he always feels his way, moving from one plane of narrative to another, and tentatively explores the possibilities of his

milieu. And the immediate impression is the opposite of tentative, hence as numerous critics says, Fielding is an expert in controlling the situation.

The consummation of the novel is not its exploration of character and of personal relations but the emphasis on the author's skillfully contrived revelation of an external and deterministic scheme. The hero's characters is of minor importance compared with the consequences of his past actions, which are themselves the result of a destiny made long before his birth. In Tom Jones he also wrote that "liberality of spirits" was a personality which he had rarely seen in men of low birth and education. The class fixity is an essential part of Tom Jones; therefore, the ultimate task of Fielding's plot is to unite the lovers without subverting the basis of the social order. And this could only be done by revealing that Jones is genteel.

It is also said that more basic to the impression of assuredness is the nature of Fielding's philosophy, skeptical but optimistic. It is rather an attitude of mind, an acceptance of certain standards and approaches than a philosophy in the academic sense. Fielding is very sure of his world and confident that the problems of human society could be solved by right reason; therefore, Kettle thought that it was the broad and tolerant confidence which gives Tom Jones its peculiar tone and which also alienates those critics who feel less confident in social man and mistake Fielding's

optimism for insensitiveness. Therefore, Fielding's unique comic epic, Tom Jones, is not alien but distinguished from the contemporary tragedies.

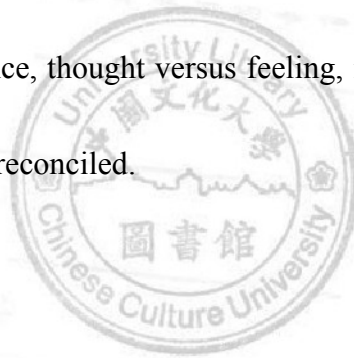
Henry Fielding's position as a writer of prose fiction in the eighteenth century is almost identical to that of sophists in ancient times. Prose fiction in ancient times does not constitute a legitimate form of literature, and the typical romance is a genre with which they are almost ashamed to be associated. The English literary critic of the early eighteenth century also tended to regard prose fiction as a legitimate form of literature, and prose fiction is widely regarded as a low writing by which the booksellers pander to the reading public. However, Fielding begins to dignify this genre by giving a neo-classical legitimacy to his fiction and emphasizing the distinction between his work and heroic romance. Actually, Fielding is not the first one to claim in founding a "new province of writing"; even Richardson also claims to have initiated a new species of writing. Fielding has tried to distinguish his works and those of previous writers of fiction. He argues that to the composition of novels and romances, nothing is necessary but paper, pens, and ink, with the manual capacity of using them. The qualifications he lists as necessary for the writing of his kind of fiction include genius, a good share of learning, conversation, and a good heart, capable of feeling.

In addition, the most original and memorable element of Tom Jones is the

narrative voice informing the action and discoursing on the philosophy of writing to the reader in the introductory chapters. Fielding's implied author demonstrates a very paternal attitude towards both his readers and his characters, displaying a humorous tolerance to all, but ruling over them implacably. He aims to control the reader's response through the urbane, tolerant presence of the figure of the omniscient author, a polished and rational gentleman who emerges as the true moral focus in the novel, so the reading experience is enriched by the analysis of the all-knowing narrator. On the other hand, the wry narrative voice accounts for various comic effects which Fielding achieves in this remarkable novel; it is often the detached description which transforms a melodramatic situation into a comic one.

Since Henry Fielding's performance in comedy is superb, and the contemporary used to compare him with his great rival, Samuel Richardson. Those who claim that Fielding is inferior to Richardson just prefer tragedy and pessimism to comedy and optimism. Actually, such criticism is from the scorn for his comic impulse, euphoric conviction of an underlying rightness in things, satisfaction with the material world, a sense of an ultimate harmony among man, nature and society. However, Lady Mary Wortley Montagu applauds Fielding for his being at home in the world, defense for man and advocacy for existence. Therefore, Fielding makes Tom Jones comic and a fortune's child, and Sophia must be his bride regardless of the marriage conventions

of the eighteenth-century England. The reconciliation of the love affair with the marriage rules of his society signifies a wholly joyful acceptance of the world as a place where love and happiness, virtue and justice can all be simultaneously achieved. Tom Jones has been seen as a joyous product of a conviction that all the essential impulses of a good man can be happily harmonized with one others, none of his innate tendencies clashing with the rest; love and honor, faith and reason, Providence and fortune are made to appear complementary. Harmony will soon be shattered in the emergence of a series of necessary oppositions: individual versus society, religion versus science, thought versus feeling, impulse versus principle. In Fielding all dichotomies are reconciled.



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