

THE ALLEGORY OF THE IMAGINATION IN TOM JONES

THE ALLEGORY OF THE IMAGINATION
IN
HENRY FIELDING'S TOM JONES

By

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SCOPE AND CONTENTS: This thesis examines the allegorical aspects of Fielding's novels, and particularly of Tom Jones. According to the view presented here, Tom Jones is a psychomachy, a form of allegory in which personified psychological entities engage in a mental struggle. Squire Allworthy is an allegorical figure of reason, Sophia Western a figure of imagination, Tom Jones a figure of emotion, and Squire Western a figure of instinct. The action of the novel, culminating in the marriage of Sophia and Tom, symbolizes the reunification of the disunited elements of mind in an allegorical marriage of imagination with emotion. In connection with this view, the thesis deals at some length with Fielding's theory of the imagination.

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INTRODUCTION

Perhaps the most common charge that critics have brought against the novels of Henry Fielding has been laid against his characterization. They have argued that whatever his other contributions to the developing art of the novel, his flat and two-dimensional characters were inadequate to the task of supporting the action of a long fiction. To compensate for this deficiency, he shifted the interest away from character and towards narration and plot, and thus upset the necessary balance of the novel. Ian Watt has expressed this common view:

Tom Jones, then, would seem to exemplify a principle of considerable significance for the novel form in general: namely, that the importance of plot is in inverse proportion to that of character. This principle has an interesting corollary: the organization of the narrative into an extended and complex formal structure will tend to turn the protagonists into its passive agents, but it will offer compensatingly greater opportunities for the introduction of a variety of minor characters, whose treatment will not be hampered in the same way by the roles which they are allotted by the complications of narrative design. I

unlike
modern
Novel

In the preface to The Princess Casamassima Henry James presented a view which, despite superficial differences, is basically similar to Watt's. He wrote that the

1
This quotation, originally from Watt's Rise of the Novel, is taken from Ian Watt, "Tom Jones and Clarissa", in Ronald Paulson, ed., Fielding: A Collection of Critical Essays. (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1962), p. 114.

novelist should try to represent the bewilderment of a complex consciousness in the mind of his principal character, and that Tom Jones is "almost" possessed of such a consciousness and such a mind:

It is very true that Fielding's hero in Tom Jones is but as "finely," that is to say as intimately bewildered as a young man of great health and spirits may be when he hasn't a grain of imagination: the point to be made is, at all events that his sense of bewilderment obtains altogether on the comic, never on the tragic plane. He has so much "life" that it amounts, for the effect of comedy and application of satire, almost to his having a mind, that is to his having reactions and a full consciousness: besides which his author---he handsomely possessed of a mind---has such an amplitude of reflexion for him and round him that we see him through the mellow air of Fielding's fine old moralism, fine old humour, and fine old style, which somehow really enlarge, make every one and every thing important. 2

Although this criticism *affirms the worth of Tom Jones, it lays the emphasis* on those elements of the novel which surround Tom, which, by enclosing him, make him seem to be a centre of consciousness without really being one. The ambience of comedy, satire, and authorial comment almost amounts to his having a mind, but does not in itself constitute a mind.³ Like Ian Watt, James regarded the hero as a "passive agent" in a larger

2

Henry James, "Preface", The Princess Casamassima (London: Macmillan, 1921), I, xvii.

3

Watt, in Paulson, p. 121.

design.

Critics have often argued that the root cause of the problem lies in the neoclassical assumptions of Fielding's art. John S. Coolidge has cited one of Horace's injunctions in the Ars Poetica:⁴ "If you bring on to the stage a subject unattempted yet, and are bold enough to create a fresh character, let him remain to the end such as he was when he first appeared---consistent throughout."⁵ Characters created according to this rule have a passive quality because they cannot change their essential natures. They never exhibit the movement and change which is inherent in lifelike growth and development, but remain inert cyphers within the author's larger design. Coolidge has suggested that Horace's principle, the principle of conservation of character, is part of the heritage of the English comedy of humours, which Fielding transferred from the theatre to the novel:

It underlies the method of the English comedy of humours, in which each character is defined by a "character" of him, frequently delivered explicitly at some point in the conversation of the other dramatis personae. Writing a novel, Fielding

⁴ John S. Coolidge, "Fielding and 'Conservation of Character'", in Fielding: A Collection of Critical Essays, p. 160.

⁵ Horace, The Art of Poetry, ll. 125-127, trans. E. H. Blakeney, in Allan H. Gilbert, ed., Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1962), p. 132.

can supply the "character" of each person from his omniscient point of view, and he almost invariably does so at the person's first appearance. 6

While this technique is admirably adapted to the stage, where limitations of time impose limitations on the development of character, it is not so well suited to long works of fiction, where unlimited time allows for unlimited development.⁷ Ian Watt has emphasized the restrictions of this approach to character:

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 . . . This meant in practice that once the individual was appropriately labeled the author's only remaining duty was to see that he continued to speak and act consistently. As Aristotle put it in the Poetics, "character" is "that which reveals the moral purpose," and consequently "speeches . . . which do not make this manifest . . . are not expressive of character." Parson Supple must never cease to be supple. 8

The objections to Fielding's techniques of characterization may be briefly summarized. Because his characters are merely paradigmatic collections of unchanging characteristics, they do not possess the "full consciousness" that constitutes a mind. Because the principle of conservation of character dictates that they must remain consistently the same throughout the novel, they are incapable of ^{psychological} growth or ~~development~~. In Ian Watt's words: "The fact that Field-

6
Coolidge, in Paulson, p. 160.

7
Coolidge, in Paulson, p. 161.

8
Watt, in Paulson, pp. 107-108

ing's characters do ^{not} have a convincing inner life
 means that their possibilities of psychological develop-
 ment are very limited."⁹

Of course, there is a certain aura of propaganda about these charges. Both James and Watt have set Fielding up as a straw man according to principles that do not apply to comic literature, found him wanting in terms of these irrelevant principles, and knocked him down. James admitted as much when he wrote that Tom's bewilderment "obtains altogether on the comic, never on the tragic plane."¹⁰ Watt, in comparing Sophia's unhappy situation to Clarissa's, has discussed at length the different approaches required by comedy and tragedy:

It is probably an essential condition for the realization of Fielding's comic aim that the scene should not be rendered in all its physical and psychological detail; Fielding must temper our alarm for Sophia's fate by assuring us that we are witnessing, not real anguish, but the conventional kind of comic perplexity which serves to heighten our eventual pleasure at the happy ending, without in the meantime involving any unnecessary expenditure of tears on our part. Fielding's external and somewhat peremptory approach to his characters, in fact, would seem to be a necessary condition of the success of his main comic purpose: attention to the immediate counterpoint of misunderstanding and contradiction must not be dissipated by focussing interest on Sophia's feelings or any other tangential issue. ¹¹

⁹ Watt, in Paulson, p. 110.

¹⁰ James, p. xvii.

¹¹ Watt, in Paulson, p. 102.

Both James and Watt would have reluctantly conceded that Fielding did not have to give each character a mind such as Isabel Archer or Clarissa Harlowe possesses--he did not have to see things through the character's eyes and from the character's point of view. But although comedy requires an external approach to character, it does not require so peremptory an approach that the characters are reduced to mere cyphers in the author's design. The charges considered above *have merit* insofar as they are directed against a static quality in Fielding's characters. If we feel that his characters are mere pieces in a game of plot construction without any movement of their own, we may take these criticisms seriously. If on the other hand we feel that his characters undergo some degree of psychological development, we may reject such views.

In this thesis I shall argue that Fielding's novels embody a paradoxical solution to the problem inherent in the principle of conservation of character. As I shall attempt to prove, all the characters are both at rest and in motion, so to speak, because in all the novels, but particularly in Tom Jones, they function on two levels simultaneously. On the realistic level they are perfectly capable of psychological growth and *development*. Here

the principle of conservation of character is abandoned.

On the allegorical level, however, each character represents just one abstract idea. Here the principle of conservation of character is preserved. The character cannot change

because the idea he represents is always the same. In

Tom Jones I shall argue at length later on, Allworthy

is an allegorical figure of reason, Tom a figure of emotion,

Sophia a figure of imagination, and Western a figure of instinct.

The psychological development occurs not only within the

mind of any one of these characters, but also as a public

drama among all of the characters, each of whom represents

a single psychic element. Each event in the drama has

psychological as well as public significance. This is

a feature which Tom Jones shares with more overtly allegor-

ical works. In Pilgrim's Progress, for example, Christian

does not merely despair; he is trapped by the giant Despair

in Doubting Castle,¹² or he falls into the slough of Despond.¹³

Private psychology has become public drama. Allworthy

sends Tom forth to wander in the world not so much because

he mistakenly disapproves of his actions, but because

¹² John Bunyan, The Pilgrim's Progress and Grace Abounding, ed. J. Thorpe (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), p. 165.

¹³ Bunyan, p. 97.

reason discountenances emotion and leaves it alone and miserable without a guide. Tom pursues Sophia not only because she is the girl *whom* he loves, but because she is imagination and can reunite his emotional nature with reason.¹⁴ Thus Tom Jones has two levels of interest, the allegorical and the realistic, and requires on each of these two levels a different approach to characterization. On the allegorical level the characters are types representing abstract psychological concepts that are eternal and unchanging. An allegorical figure of reason, for example, can be nothing but reasonable, and an allegorical figure of chastity can be nothing but chaste. On the realistic level, however, the characters are individuals who, because they represent only themselves, can change and mature *realism* during the course of the novel. I shall attempt to demonstrate that, as Tom moves from adolescence to adulthood, his personality undergoes a psychological development which parallels the development in the allegorical public drama.

14

Martin C. Battestin, "Fielding's Definition of Wisdom: Some Functions of Ambiguity and Emblem in Tom Jones", English Literary History, XXXV (1968), p. 205. One should note at this point that my interpretation differs somewhat from the one put forward by Battestin, who, while holding that Tom Jones is quasi-allegorical, maintains that Sophia is identified with the prudence or prudentia of the humanist tradition, rather than with the imagination.

It is evident that Fielding was interested in the art of documentary realism, which became fashionable in the eighteenth century. His novels are in what Northrop Frye calls the low mimetic mode.¹⁵ Fielding insisted on low mimetic decorum to such an extent that he even attacked Homer and the other ancients on the grounds that their imaginations were overripe: "I should have honoured and loved Homer more had he written a true history of his own times in humble prose than those noble poems that have so justly collected the praise of all ages; for, though I read these with more admiration and astonishment, I still read Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, with more amusement and satisfaction."¹⁶ In practice, however, Fielding appears to have surrounded the realistic with allegory and satire, so that he approached it, in a manner of speaking, from two directions at once. Formal allegory is perhaps not very appropriate to the mode of realistic fiction, since it is essentially an anti-realistic form of literature; yet there is no conclusive reason why it should not be associated with the conventions of the low mimetic mode. Satire and allegory,

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See Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 34, for an explanation of the term "low mimetic". In general, it is synonymous with "realistic" when we use this word to describe the literature of ordinary men and ordinary events, as opposed to that of heroes and extraordinary events.

16

The Works of Henry Fielding, Esq., ed. Leslis Stephen, Vol. VII: The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon (London: Smith, Elder, & Co., 1882), p. 8. All the quotations and page numbers referred to in this thesis, with the exception of those from Joseph Andrews, are taken from this edition of Fielding's works.

then, as well as documentary realism, are elements in the make-up of Tom Jones. According to Ellen D. Leyburn in her book Satiric Allegory: Mirror of Man, we very often find *satire and allegory* together in the same work: "The union has, in fact, been more than occasional. Satire seems always to have had a propensity towards allegorical form. The number of satirists from Lucian to George Orwell, not to name those now writing, who have turned to allegory as a mode of expression demonstrates the strength of the affinity."¹⁷ Leyburn argues that this traditional affinity is natural because: "Both allegorist and satirist are concerned to teach."¹⁸

Furthermore, both allegorist and satirist must approach their subject through "indirection"---that is, they both must appear to say less about it than they really mean:

It is the necessity of indirection, the mask that at once hides and reveals, which more than any other artistic consideration brings satire and allegory together. The importance of indirection for imaginative communication springs from the very nature of art. If we accept the idea of art as expression, we see at once the necessity of indirection. "This is why, as literary critics well know, the use of epithets in poetry, or even in prose where expressiveness is aimed at, is a danger. If you want to express the terror which something causes, you must not give it an epithet like 'dreadful.' For that describes the emotion instead of expressing it, and your language becomes frigid, that is inexpressive, at once. A genuine poet, in his moments of genuine poetry never

17

Ellen D. Leyburn, Satiric Allegory: Mirror of Man (Archon Books, 1969), p. 8.

18

Leyburn, p. 8.

mentions by name the emotions he is expressing."¹⁹

The narrator in Tom Jones warns the readers about this quality of indirection; he warns them that they should not expect him to explain all the hidden meanings:

For though we will always lend thee proper assistance in difficult places, as we do not, like some others, expect thee to use the arts of divination to discover our meaning; yet we shall not indulge thy laziness where nothing but thy own attention is required; for thou art highly mistaken if thou dost imagine that we intended, when we began this great work, to leave thy sagacity nothing to do; so that, with out sometimes exercising this talent, thou wilt be able to travel through our pages with any pleasure or profit to thyself. (XI, ix, 140)

One cannot, of course, argue that in this paragraph Fielding intended to warn the reader to watch out for allegory, but one may say at least that his narrator has given him notice to be on the lookout for hidden meanings, which might possibly be allegorical.

Leyburn discusses some other reasons for the traditional affinity between satire and allegory which seem roughly applicable to Tom Jones. Both forms of literature seek to achieve "artistic economy," which Leyburn defines as that effect of quickened imaginative response experienced by the reader when he breaks through the surfaces of the satire and the allegory to the hidden meanings underneath.²⁰ Certain scenes in Tom Jones, as this thesis will ^{attempt to} demonstrate,

19

Leyburn, p. 8.

20

Leyburn, p. 10.

require just such a double perception of satire and allegory on the part of the reader.

Both satire and allegory avoid an explicit or overt judgement, leaving the reader free to draw his own conclusions. He must see through the surface meaning without being openly prompted by the author, who, if he were publicly to announce his satirical or allegorical intentions, would violate the decorum of these two forms.²¹ Yet paradoxically they both guide the reader towards an acceptance of the author's point of view.²² Fielding seems to have been particularly concerned that his readers should understand the implicit judgement and unexpressed point of view of his writings. He often violated the decorum of satire by sending his narrator out on stage to explain the meaning and to define the judgement. Consider, for example, the following passage, in which he takes off the satiric mask and discusses Square's virtue and Thwackum's religion:

Before I proceed farther, I shall beg leave to obviate some misconstructions into which the zeal of some few readers may lead them; for I would not willingly give offence to any, especially to men who are warm in the cause of virtue or religion.

I hope, therefore, no man will, by the grossest misunderstanding, or perversion of my meaning, misrepresent me, as endeavouring to cast any ridicule on the greatest perfections of human nature. (III, iv, 97)

Satire comes close to being a nihilistic art. While its very negations imply positive standards, it maintains its mask of detachment.²³ so that the reader often has difficulty in conceiving what those standards

21

Leyburn, p. 7.

22

Leyburn, p. 13.

23

Leyburn, p. 13.

might be. He may feel that all values are negated, like the student in freshman English who objected to A Modest Proposal because he thought that Swift wanted to eat babies. Authorial intrusions are one means of correcting such misunderstandings, but they are not of themselves sufficient. The author needs a means to present a positive thesis to counteract the negative antithesis of satire. In Tom Jones the allegory expresses the positive thesis, and the satire expresses the negative antithesis.

Jonathan Swift, in Gulliver's Travels, has provided us with an interesting example of the way in which allegory can express the positive thesis in a work of satire. Gulliver wakes up in Lilliput pinned down in an uncomfortable position by beings who are by far his inferiors in power. They torture him with *showers* of arrows and attempt to stick him in the side with spears. They drug him, load him on a wagon, and chain him in an abandoned temple, where he revives.²⁴ The whole action parallels Christ's crucifixion, His death, His descent from the cross, His entombment, and His resurrection in the sepulchre.

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Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels, ed. Philip Pinkus (Toronto: Macmillan, 1968), Bk. I, Ch. i, pp. 14-22.

One of the Lilliputians thrusts his pike up Gulliver's nose, which tickles him like a straw and causes him to sneeze. This action may be meant to remind the reader of the man who gave Christ vinegar to drink from a sponge on a reed. Although Christianity is conspicuously absent from the pages of Gulliver's Travels, the allegory on this and many other occasions manages to smuggle it in by the backdoor, providing the reader with a positive standard by which he may judge Gulliver's amusing actions.

The allegory in Tom Jones is, of course, very different from that in Gulliver's Travels. Here the allegorical thesis, which contrasts with the satiric antithesis, is concerned with the right ordering of abstract psychological entities within the human mind. If he was to succeed, Fielding had to manage to interest us in the concrete human representations of these high-level abstractions.

Ellen Leyburn has observed:

A further problem common to satire and allegory is the degree of similarity between the truth and its representation. If they converge, we lose the sense of metaphor altogether; if they are so remote that we are more conscious of antagonism than of likeness, we feel irritation rather than pleasure. The first difficulty is peculiarly that of the creator of satiric characters. If he is not skillful in adjusting representation to reality, he gives simply another version of the medieval pictures of the Seven Deadly Sins. Some of the 17th-century characters are lifeless for this reason; and there are few readers for Edward Young's Love of Fame, in spite of the occasionally well-pointed couplets, because his Crassus, his Philander, his Narcissus, are distinguished hardly even in name from

the abstractions they represent. That this difficulty in presenting figures who stand for qualities can be surmounted is brilliantly proved by Erasmus's delineation of Folly. 25

Judging by the standard of interest, Fielding succeeded admirably in the concrete personification of abstract concepts; for Allworthy, Sophia, Tom, and Western are extremely lifelike characters, but they also represent abstract psychological entities.

25

Leyburn, p. 12.



II

ALLEGORY IN FIELDING'S NOVELS

Before proceeding to a consideration of the allegorical interpretation of Tom Jones, it is necessary to include a chapter on his other novels, for in them we find illustrations of various points which bear on the central question.

Joseph Andrews, we are told on the title page, is "Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes, Author of Don Quixote."¹ Since Don Miguel de Cervantes' prototype novel is both a satire on the more absurd accidents of allegorical romance and a vindication of its essence, one would expect to find these themes borrowed by any thoroughgoing imitator. Fielding has adopted his master's hero in Parson Adams, who, like the ingenious gentleman, views the world through tinted glasses of the imagination. Adams believes that he can apply only one viewpoint of imaginative literature---that of Aeschylus---to all men and to all situations. Thus he is ridiculous not because he is vain or hypocritical,² but because he sees

¹
Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 1. References to page numbers in the main body of my text are all from this edition of Joseph Andrews.

²
See the "Author's Preface" of Joseph Andrews for Fielding's theory of the ridiculous, pp. 10-12.

the comic events of his life from the perspective of high tragedy. Quixote, for his part, is as ruthlessly logical as Adams in applying a literary viewpoint to the events of his life. He has pushed the Christian and Platonic assumptions of allegory to absurd conclusions. If the things of this world are mere shadows of the ultimate reality, then one might be perfectly justified in mistaking windmills for giants and wenches for courtly ladies, because in terms of the ultimate reality things are not what they seem. For although a Christian Platonist need not give his assent to the first of these propositions--- need not believe that windmills are giants, he must agree to the second---in the eyes of God, each and every country wench is a Dulcinea.

Don Quixote is possessed of double vision, by means of which he sees the absurdity of this mundane world and at the same time looks beyond it to the beauty of the spiritual world. Fielding sometimes lets his reader share in Quixote's kind of double vision in his novels. From the mundane point of view, Joseph and Fanny are sensual young people, who might quickly succumb if their chastity were not guarded by the watchful Parson Adams. When Joseph asks that Fanny be allowed to ride behind him, the narrator

tells us that "Adams would not agree to it, and declared he would not trust her behind him; for that he was weaker than he imagined himself to be" (II, xvi, 148). On another occasion, Joseph and Fanny take advantage of the darkness which hides them from Adams' eyes: "Fanny, not suspicious of being overseen by Adams, gave a loose to her passion which she had never done before, and reclining her head on his bosom, threw her arm carelessly round him, and suffered him to lay his cheek close to hers" (III, ii, 161-162). From the viewpoint of spiritual allegory, however, Joseph and Fanny are not mere sensual youths, but rather are representatives of true male and female chastity. In the words of Robert Alter, "Father Abraham, the type of Christian charity, takes on the task of guiding Joseph, the type of Christian continence, on a kind of pilgrimage through a land of Christian specious [sic]."³ This quotation, with its Pilgrim's Progress imagery, seems to suggest that Alter regards Joseph and Fanny as quasi-allegorical figures as well as comic characters. When Joseph resists Lady Booby's charms, he is both less than serious and more than comic; for he is both the satirical butt of a joke and an allegorical figure of chastity.

³ Robert Alter, Fielding and the Nature of the Novel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 81.

Other characters in other Fielding novels must be perceived with this satiric and allegorical "double vision." Amelia seems almost to be allegorical. She seems to be more than just a woman in that she seems to represent more---to stand for something else:

"Thou heavenly angel, thou comfort of my soul," cried Booth, tenderly embracing her---Then starting a little from her arms, and looking with eager fondness in her eyes, he said, "let me survey thee; art thou really human, or art thou not rather an angel in human form?---O, no!" cried he, flying again into her arms, "thou art my dearest woman, my best, my beloved wife!" (X, vi, 506)

Amelia is so often called an angel in the course of the novel and is so often associated with various heavenly virtues, that the narrator must more than once remind the reader that she is merely human: "Nay, why should we conceal the secret satisfaction which the lady felt from the compliments paid to her person? since such of my readers as like her best will not be sorry to find out that she was a woman" (IV, vii, 195). While she exists on an ideal plane and seems to be something more than a woman, we are also aware of her more mundane qualities. We know that she has a broken nose, that she suffers from hysterics (III, vii, 120), and that she is given to taking a nip when she is upset (IV, vii, 194). She seems, at times,

almost to be the perfect example of a neurotic and clinging wife.⁴ For example, she enlists Booth's sympathy in her quarrel with Mrs. Atkinson by bursting into tears at his entrance like a petulant child before her mother: "The moment Amelia saw him, the tears, which had been gathering for some time burst in a torrent from her eyes, which, however, she endeavoured to conceal with her handkerchief" (X, viii, 521).

In both Joseph Andrews and Amelia, then, the reader observes a dialectic between the ideal and the anti-ideal. The positive thesis of allegory, according to which Joseph and Fanny are figures of chastity, struggles with the negative antithesis of satire, according to which they are sensual adolescents. The ideal view of Amelia, in which she is a symbol of all the heavenly virtues, conflicts with the ironic view of her, in which she is a "vapourish wife" (III, vii, 120). In the end we adopt neither the ideal thesis nor the ironic antithesis, but move beyond them to a synthesis in which we evaluate the true worth of the character. In this way Fielding has

⁴ Coolidge has argued in "Fielding and 'Conservation of Character'" that Amelia is something of a prude, and that Fielding almost denied "the validity of Amelia's hermetic kind of goodness." (Paulson, p. 174)

made use of the Quixotic double vision he borrowed from Cervantes. In Tom Jones we must exercise this double vision on such a character as Allworthy, so that while from one point of view he is the best of men and the perfect rational father of Tom, from another point of view he is the butt of a satire on excessive rationality.

While Joseph Andrews and Amelia both incline towards the allegorical mode, neither of them is an allegory in the full sense of the word. It would be difficult to find in either of them more than a very simple meaning which could be described as allegorical. In fact, Fielding could not have resorted to full-fledged allegory in either novel; for in Joseph Andrews he borrowed the satirist's amused attitude towards allegory from Cervantes, and in Amelia he aimed at documentary realism to the exclusion of everything else. While they both share allegory's double vision of the world, most of the meaning is carried on the satirical and realistic levels of these two books.

Although Joseph Andrews and Amelia are not in fact allegories, they nevertheless remind us, along with Tom Jones, of the traditional vehicles of allegory--- the romances of courtly knights and ladies written by Spenser and all the countless others.⁵ The bailiff who

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Fielding included a copy of Spenser's works in his library. See Ethel M. Thornbury, Henry Fielding's Theory of the Comic Prose Epic (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1931), p. 9. Reprinted by University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Mich., 1961.

imprisons Mr. Booth and Miss Matthews is "the governor of the enchanted castle" (IV, i, 158). The Irish peer in Tom Jones who rescues Mrs. Fitzpatrick from her boorish husband is:

indeed as bitter an enemy to the savage authority too often exercised by husbands and fathers, over the young and lovely of the other sex, as ever knight-errant was to the barbarous power of enchanters: nay, to say truth, I have often suspected that those very enchanters with which romance everywhere abounds, were in reality no other than the husbands of those days; and matrimony itself was, perhaps, the enchanted castle in which the nymphs were said to be confined. (XI, viii, 134)

The influence of romance is not confined to the occasional passage in which Fielding has made an explicit reference, however. Enchanters and enchantresses, wicked knights, and ogres are as common in Joseph Andrews, Tom Jones, and Amelia as they ever were in The Faerie Queene.⁶ In the class of enchanters are Blifil and Colonel James; in the class of enchantresses, Lady Booby, Lady Bellaston, and Miss Matthews; in that of wicked knights, Northerton and Fitzpatrick; in that of ogres, Squire Western and Colonel Bath. The knight and squire pairs, represented by such combinations as Parson Adams and Joseph, Tom and Partridge, and Sophia and Mrs. Honour, are, according to Robert Alter, borrowed from Don Quixote;⁷ but they

⁶
Morris Golden, Fielding's Moral Psychology (The University of Massachusetts Press, 1966) pp. 139-140.

⁷
Alter, p. 96.

are also found in The Faerie Queene. Fielding could have as easily obtained them from Spenser. Mrs. Heartfree in Jonathan Wild and Fanny Goodwill in Joseph Andrews are constantly called upon to defend their chastity against various assailants, so that they remind us of the invincible Britomart, who jousts with lustful knights all across the strange landscape of Spenser's romance. Thus Fielding may have appealed to his reader's knowledge of romance. Wandering knights, squires, and ladies encounter various prodigies of good and evil in all his novels. Sometimes an enchantress such as Lady Booby, Lady Bellaston, or Miss Matthews imprisons a wandering knight such as Joseph, Tom, or Booth, in her enchanted castle, her evil power keeping him for a time from the damsel he really loves. Since romance was the traditional vehicle of allegory, Fielding has prepared the way for allegory in Tom Jones by reminding the reader of romance conventions.⁸

But romance, as we shall see in what immediately follows, was not the only form of literature available to an author who wished to write allegory in the eighteenth century.

Fielding thought of his novels as "comic prose epics", and as Ethel M. Thornbury has shown in her study, Fielding's Theory of the Comic Prose Epic, he carefully constructed his novels according to the rules of the epic

8

Fielding wrote an amusing parody of the elaborate conventions of allegorical romance. See The Works of Henry Fielding, Esc. Vol. V: Articles in the Champion (December 27, 1739, and December 29, 1739), p. 251-258.

as they were understood in his time.⁹ Thornbury tells us that the authors and critics of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries generally regarded the epic as a species of allegorical writing. For example, the "Telemachus of the Archbishop of Cambray", cited approvingly by Fielding as a specimen of the prose epic in the author's preface to Joseph Andrews,¹⁰ is a work in which "Greek deities are allegorical symbols of abstract qualities."¹¹ Foremost among those who argued for an allegorical interpretation of the epic was the French priest René Le Bossu, the critic who, according to Thornbury, influenced Fielding's conception of the epic more than anyone else: "It is, indeed, evident that Fielding had studied Le Bossu with especial care."¹² He achieved an honoured place among the few critics, ancient and modern, whom Fielding told us in Tom Jones that he respected:

⁹ Thornbury, p. 7.

¹⁰ Joseph Andrews, p. 7.

¹¹ Thornbury, p. 143.

¹² Thornbury, p. 113.

I can never be understood . . . to insinuate, that there are no proper judges of writing, or to endeavour to exclude from the commonwealth of literature any of those noble critics, to whose labours the learned world are so greatly indebted. Such were Aristotle, Horace, and Longinus, among the ancients, Dacier and Bossu among the French, and some perhaps among us; who have certainly been duly authorized to execute at least a judicial authority in foro literario. (XI, i, 94)

Here is part of what Thornbury has to say about Fielding's honoured critic:

The key to the whole of the epic, according to Le Bossu . . . is the fable. The fable is an abstract summary of the moral, and may be compared, says Le Bossu, to the fables of Aesop. Thus, the fable of the Iliad is that division among leaders brings disaster to an enterprise. Having found his fable, Homer found a story which would illustrate it---the story of the wrath of Achilles. The epic begins with the beginning of that wrath and concludes with the final triumph which reconciliation among the leaders effects. Thus Achilles exists not for himself---that is, as a national hero whose deeds are absorbing---but as the means of fulfilling a didactic purpose. Hence in reading Homer, the reader must bear in mind the following ideas: "La différence la plus considérable que mon sujet me présente, entre l'éloquence des Anciens & celles des derniers Siècles, est que nôtre maniere de parler est simple, propre, & sans detour: & que celles des Anciens étoit pleine de mysteres & d'allegories. La vérité étoit ordinairement déguisée sous ces inventions ingénieuses, qui pour leur excellence portent le nom de Fables, c'est à dire de paroles."

Since the ancients thus spoke in parables rather than directly, it follows, for Le Bossu, that the "machines" [of the Gods] are allegorical. Thus:

" . . . nous avons vu que toutes ces Personnes Divines sont allégoriques." 13

13

The most important difference that my subject presents to me, between the eloquence of the ancients and that of the last centuries, is that our manner of speaking

It would not be surprising if an author who admired and studied this critic should be influenced by him to resort to allegory in his comic prose epics. Fielding lists "fable" as one of the constituent parts of the epic in the preface to Joseph Andrews.¹⁴ Perhaps we may reasonably suppose that Fielding understood the word "fable" to mean what it meant for Le Bossu---the underlying moral expressed by means of allegory.

Thornbury's observation that according to Le Bossu, the hero of the epic exists not for himself, but for a didactic purpose, is important. Le Bossu argued that Homer began with a fable, such as that disorder among princes is dangerous in war, and proceeded from there to pick a hero ~~who~~ would illustrate the fable:

is simple, literal, and straightforward: and that of the ancients was full of mysteries and allegories. The truth was ordinarily disguised under these ingenious fictions, which on account of their excellence were called fables, that is to say parables.

. . . we have seen that all these divine persons are allegorical. See Thornbury, p. 60.

14

(My translation)
Joseph Andrews p. 7.

The Odysseis was not design'd as the Iliad, to instruct all the States of Greece join'd and confederated in one Body, but for each State in particular. A State is compos'd of two parts; The Head which commands is the first and the Members which obey make up the other. There are Instructions requisite for the Govenour, and some likewise necessary for the Subjects: for him to rule well, and for them to be rul'd by him.

There are two Vertues necessary to one in Authority; Prudence to order, and Care to put in execution the orders that he has given . . .

These two Points might be easily united in one and the same man.

As 'tis necessary that Princes in the Iliad should be Choleric and Quarrelsome; So 'tis necessary in the Fable of the Odysseis that the chief Personage should be Sage, and Prudent. 15

As one can see from this discussion of the Odyssey, the hero's character is a necessary consequence of the fable that the poet chooses. The fable dictates the characterization. Moreover, the hero represents the idea of only one important passion or virtue, that passion or virtue which is connected with the theme---the wrath of Achilles, the prudence of Ulysses, the piety of Aeneas: "'Tis requisite that there should be one commanding Quality to rule the rest, and be the Soul of them, and that this appear throughout . . . This commanding Quality in Achilles is his Anger, in Ulysses the Art of Dissimulation, and in Aeneas Meekness."¹⁶ I shall argue later on that in a similar manner the characters in Tom Jonés each illustrate only one commanding

15

Rene Le Bossu, Treatise of the Epick Poem (London, 1695) in Le Bossu and Voltaire on the Epic, intro. Stuart Curran (Gainesville, Florida: Scholars Fascimiles and Reprints, 1970), pp. 23-24.

16

Le Bossu, p. 197.

quality that is connected with the theme. Thus Allworthy is reason, Tom emotion, Sophia imagination, and Western instinct.

It is not difficult to understand why the numerous critics and authors listed by Thornbury tended to regard the epic as a form of allegory, for when a goddess like Athene transforms herself into a man like Mentor in order to counsel Telemachus,¹⁷ we have trouble deciding whether the action is literal or allegorical. Does Homer mean that the goddess actually has undergone a metamorphosis, or does he mean, to put it vulgarly and prosaically, that Mentor inspired by wisdom has had a brainstorm? C. S. Lewis has shown in The Allegory of Love that in the late classical ages learned men understood this kind of action in the latter, allegorical sense.¹⁸ Once the gods had become allegorical figures of various emotions, it was an easy step to drop the pagan names and to call these powers and virtues by their common, ordinary names. Thus Minerva became wisdom, Venus love, and Mercury eloquence,¹⁹ and these psychological entities battled one another throughout late

¹⁷ Homer, The Odyssey, trans. E. V. Rieu (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin, 1965), pp. 27-28.

¹⁸ C. S. Lewis, The Allegory of Love (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), pp. 57-62.

¹⁹ Lewis, pp. 50-55, 79.

classical and medieval literature. These entities were still personified, that is, they still performed actions normally attributable only to complete human beings, but they gave up the private motives they had possessed as gods in order to take up their places as symbols in the public allegorical scheme.²⁰ Lewis has named this struggle of the allegorical powers after a late Latin poem, the Psychomachia, in which the virtues and the vices join in battle. He has remarked that:

While it is true that the bellum intestinum is the root of all allegory, it is no less true that only the crudest allegory will represent it by a pitched battle. The abstractions owe their life to the inner conflict; but when once they have come to life, the poet must fetch a compass and dispose his fiction more artfully if he is to succeed. Seneca, with his imagery of life as a journey, was nearer to the mark than Prudentius; for Seneca outlined the theme of the Pilgrim's Progress, and the Pilgrim's Progress is a better book than the Holy War. It is not hard to see why this should be so. The journey has its ups and downs, its pleasant resting-places enjoyed for a night and then abandoned, its unexpected meetings, its rumours of dangers ahead, and above all, the sense of its goal, at first far distant and dimly heard of, but growing nearer at every turn of the road. Now this represents far more truly than any combat in a champ clos the perennial strangeness, the adventurousness, and the sinuous forward movement of the inner life. 21

It is, of course, the contention of this thesis that Tom Jones is just such an allegorical journey. I shall return to the issues raised by Lewis in a moment.

20

Lewis, pp. 51-52.

21

Lewis, pp. 68-69.

One of the problems that troubled seventeenth and eighteenth-century authors and critics was what to do in the modern epic with the "machines," the heavenly apparatuses of gods and goddesses, which played so large a part in the action of the ancient epic.²² Fielding stated the problem that the machines posed for a modern in the introductory chapter of Book VIII in Tom Jones:

But I have rested too long on a doctrine [that of the ancient religion of the gods] which can be of no use to a Christian writer: for as he cannot introduce into his works any of the heavenly host which make a part of his creed, so it is horrid puerility to search the heathen theology for any of those deities who have been long since dethroned from their immortality. Lord Shaftesbury observes, that nothing is more cold than the invocation of a muse by a modern; he might have added, that nothing can be more absurd. (VIII, i, 380)

A modern writer, especially a modern comic writer, cannot introduce the Christian supernatural beings into his works without risking impiety, but he likewise cannot employ the heathen deities without risking the frigidly of cliché.²³ Fielding seems to have solved the problem in the way outlined by Lewis in The Allegory of Love. Just as it was easy for late classical writers who no longer believed in the deities except as personifications of various psychological powers to drop the names of the deities

²² Thornbury, pp. 27-28.

²³ Thornbury, pp. 144.

and to let the passions themselves fight it out, so it was easy for Fielding, who knew that the critics of his time regarded the gods as allegorical figures, to drop the names of the deities while retaining the machinery in the form of personified passions. In the following passage the author has described just such a full scale psychomachy of personified passions within the mind of the Lady Booby, as she lusts after Joseph:

The removal of the object soon cooled her rage, but it had a different effect on her love: that departed with his person, but this remained lurking in her mind with his image. Restless, interrupted slumbers and confused horrible dreams were her portion the first night. In the morning, fancy painted her a more delicious scene; but to delude, not delight her: for, before she could reach the promised happiness, it vanished, and left her to curse, not bless the vision.

She started from her sleep, her imagination being all on fire with the phantom, when, her eyes accidentally glancing towards the spot where yesterday the real Joseph had stood, that little circumstance raised his idea in the liveliest colours in her memory. Each look, each word, each gesture rushed back on her mind with charms which all his coldness could not abate . . .

Reflection then hurried her farther, and told her she must see this beautiful youth no more; nay, suggested to her that she herself had dismissed him for no other fault than probably that of too violent an awe and respect for herself, and which she ought rather to have esteemed a merit, the effects of which were besides so easily and surely to have been removed; she then blamed, she cursed the hasty rashness of her temper; her fury was vented all on herself, and Joseph appeared innocent in her eyes. Her passion at length grew so violent, that it forced her on seeking relief, and now she thought of recalling him; but Pride forbade that: Pride, which soon drove all softer passions from her soul and represented to her the meanness of him she was fond of. That thought

soon began to obscure his beauties; Contempt succeeded next, and then Disdain, which presently introduced her hatred of the creature who had given her so much uneasiness. These enemies of Joseph had no sooner taken possession of her mind than they insinuated to her a thousand things in his disfavour; everything but dislike of her person; a thought which, as it would have been intolerable to bear, she checked the moment it endeavoured to arise. Revenge came now to her assistance; and she considered her dismissal of him, stript, without a character, with the utmost pleasure. She rioted in the several kinds of misery which her imagination suggested to her might be his fate; and with a smile composed of anger, mirth, and scorn, viewed him in the rags in which her fancy had drest him. (IV, i, 237-238)

In the foregoing Lady Booby is but one of the characters in a cast composed of personified passions who "hurry her," a largely passive object, back and forth on an aimless voyage. Thus, as a comic anti-pilgrim, she makes no progress towards the Promised Land: "Before she could reach the promised happiness, it vanished, and left her to curse, not bless, the vision." Her Pride fights against her passion. like a comic Achilles against a comic Hector, and drives all the lesser passions before it: "Her passion at length grew so violent, that it forced her on seeking relief, and now she thought of recalling him, but Pride forbade that: Pride soon drove all softer passions from her soul." The passions take counsel in her head like comic gods in a miniature Parnassus deciding the fate of some hero beneath them: [Pride] "represented to her the meanness of him she was fond of. That thought soon began to obscure his beauties; Contempt succeeded next, and then Disdain, which presently introduced her hatred

of the creature who had given her so much uneasiness. These enemies of Joseph had no sooner taken possession of her mind than they insinuated a thousand things in his disfavour." As a result of this counsel of comic gods and of this bellum intestinum, Lady Booby's imagination burns like a miniature Ilium: "She started from her sleep, her imagination all on fire with the phantom [of Joseph]."

This kind of internal battle is also found in Tom Jones. Black George's passions conduct a little trial over "a knotty point in the court of conscience" (VI, xiii, 294):

Black George having received the purse, set forward towards the alehouse; but in the way a thought occurred to him, whether he should not detain the money likewise. His conscience however immediately started at this suggestion, and began to upbraid him with ingratitude to his benefactor. To this his avarice answered, That his conscience should have considered the matter before, when he deprived poor Jones of his 500£. That having quietly acquiesced in what was of greater importance, it was absurd, if not downright hypocrisy, to effect any qualms at this trifle. In return to which, Conscience, like a good lawyer, attempted to distinguish between an absolute breach of trust, as here where the goods were delivered, and a bare concealment of what was found, as in the former case. Avarice presently treated this with ridicule, called it a distinction without a difference, and absolutely insisted, that when once all pretensions of honour and virtue were given up in any one instance, there was no precedent for resorting to them on a second occasion. In short, poor Conscience had certainly been defeated in the argument, had not Fear stepped in to her assistance, and very strenuously urged, that the real distinction between the two actions did not lie in the differing degrees of honour, but of safety; for the secreting the 500£ was a matter of very little hazard; whereas the detaining the sixteen guineas was liable to the utmost danger of discovery. (VI, xiii, 297-298)

Robert Alter has commented on this passage:

"Black George's inner struggle is deliberately schematized into an allegorical debate between Conscience and Avarice which is resolved by the persuasive intervention of Fear. The aim of the amusing allegory, like that of the quasi-allegorical abstractions in English neoclassical poetry, is to elucidate and generalize the particular character's moral condition."²⁴

Thus the bellum intestinum is common, in the passages sighted and elsewhere, in both Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones. As Martin Battestin has remarked: "Each of us, Fielding imagined, is perpetually engaged in a kind of psychomachy, a pitched battle in the mind between reason and a mutinous army of passions."²⁵ Fielding may have been experimenting with the possibility of allegorical "machinery" to replace the old pagan machinery of the gods, in which personifications of the passions would take the place of the old classical deities. Thus we may conclude that both satire and the epic share a common feature: both see the individual as ^{a man} driven by powers not entirely under his control, but in satire, at least

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Alter, p. 70.

²⁵

Martin C. Battestin, "Introduction", in Joseph Andrews, p. xxvii.

as practiced by Henry Fielding, these compelling powers are base and mean, while in the epic they are elevated and magical---what we call gods. Both satire and the epic view different sides of the same coin. For the former the subconscious forces of human psychology are sterile compulsions, while for the latter they are magically fertile powers of the mind. Fielding wrote:

Whoever carefully surveys his own mind, will find sufficient enemies to combat within; an army of obstinate passions that will hold him in tight play, will often force his reason to retreat; and if they are at length subdued, it will not be without much labour and resolution. 26

If one can consider the passions within the mind as the characters of a drama, one may also, by reversing one's viewpoint, consider the characters of a drama as personifications of the passions within the mind:

Those persons, indeed, who have passed any time behind the scenes of this great theatre, and are thoroughly acquainted not only with the several disguises which are there put on, but also with the fantastic and capricious behaviour of the Passions, who are the managers and directors of this theatre (for as to Reason, the patentee, he is known to be a very idle fellow, and seldom to exert himself), may most probably have learned to understand the famous nil admirari of Horace, or in the English phrase, to stare at nothing.

A single bad act no more constitutes a villain in life, than a single bad part on the stage. The passions, like the managers of a playhouse, often force men upon parts without consulting their judgement and sometimes without any regard to their talents. Thus the man, as well as the player, may condemn what he himself acts; nay it is as common to see vice sit as awkwardly on some men, as the character of Iago would on the honest face of Mr. William Mills. (VII, i, 306)

This passage, taken from the introductory chapter of Book VII of Tom Jones entitled "A Comparison between the World and the Stage", seems to indicate, to this student at least, that the work is intended to be read as an allegory. Each character is an actor who acts a passion. He becomes for a time a symbol of that passion, a personification of it, so that he combines with the other characters in the drama, representing the other passions, in the larger psychomachy of the book as a whole. What could be more natural for an author who regarded the passions as characters in little mental dramas than to regard the characters themselves as personified passions in a larger mental drama? Thus we may understand "the fantastic and capricious behaviour" of the characters in Tom Jones, for they are each of them under the management and direction of a passion, while "Reason, the patentee" seldom exerts himself.

Martin Battestin, in his introduction to Joseph Andrews, has observed that this tendency towards allegory was inherent in the practice of the English comedy of humours.

In their characterizations, they [Jonson, Hogarth, and Fielding] were less interested in a close and scrupulously detailed verisimilitude than in the typical or universal aspects, in an Aristotelian sense, of their subjects. In Dr. Johnson's Rasselas, Imlac, speaking from similar principles, insists that the poet's business is to "remark general properties and large appearances," not to "number the streaks of the tulip." Thus Ben Jonson in his "humours" comedies will make a Volpone the very incarnataion of avarice, and Hogarth's rake will sum up his own kind. With the exception of the supreme achievement of Parson Adams, who is too much himself to stand for anyone else, all the characters in Joseph Andrews illustrate Fielding's

declaration: "I describe not men, but manners; not an individual, but a species." The lustful Lady Booby, the miserly Peter Pounce, the cowardly man of courage, the impotent fop Beau Didapper, the bovine Mrs. Slipalop, the swinish Parson Trulliber, all are typical portraits taken from the rogue's gallery of human nature; Fanny and Joseph, on the other hand, are the very image of a healthy innocence and virtue . . . Looking at these characters, we may take solace in the fact that they bear no resemblance to us. But in so doing we only deceive ourselves, for what we face in them is a kind of essential symbolic truth, stripped of the distracting camouflage that normally conceals it comfortably from our eyes, a truth more real, basically, than what daily passes by the name of reality. 27

Battestin is obviously describing an allegorical method.

One might even say that Joseph Andrews is an allegory of the seven deadly sins. Among the sins that may be identified are covetousness, represented by Peter Pounce, gluttony, represented by parson Trulliber, pride, represented by Beau Didapper, and anger, represented by the cowardly man of courage. Lady Booby seems to be both lust and envy, for she lusts after Joseph and envies Fanny's possession of him. We may conclude, then, that when Fielding switched from the drama to the novel, he carried over a quasi-allegorical habit of mind from the older tradition to the new genre.

27

Battestin, "Introduction", in Joseph Andrews, pp. xx-xxi.

III

THE IMAGINATION

Since the word "imagination" will crop up again and again in what follows, one should, at this point, define this key term. In this chapter I have attempted to define it as far as possible according to the meaning which Fielding seems to have attached to it.

Perhaps the most surprising thing about Fielding's use of the term, and of its synonyms invention and fancy, is that he did not mean a creative faculty by it. He wrote in Tom Jones that "by invention, I believe, is generally understood a creative faculty, which would indeed prove most romance writers have the highest pretensions to it; whereas by invention is really meant no more (and so the word signifies) than discovery, or finding out; or to explain it at large, a quick and sagacious penetration into the true essence of all the objects of our contemplation" (IX, i, 6). As this quotation would indicate, the creative aspects of the imagination were in bad repute in Fielding's day among those intellectuals who respected John Locke. Locke had imposed grave limitations on the human mind's ability to

create.¹

But it is not in the power of the most exalted wit or enlarged understanding, by any quickness or variety of thought, to invent or frame one new simple idea in the mind, not taken^m by the ways before mentioned [that is, not taken in by one of the five senses] . . . I would have any one try to fancy any taste which had never affected his palate, or frame the idea of a scent he had never smelt: and when he can do this, I will also conclude, that a blind man hath ideas of colours, and a deaf man true distinct notions of sounds.²

Thus, according to Locke, we cannot create simple ideas.

There are, however, complex ideas, which are combinations of simple ideas, and which may be created by combining the simple ideas in an order not found in nature:

Our complex ideas of substances, being made all of them in reference to things existing without us, and intended to be representations of substances as they really are, are no farther real than as they are such combinations of simple ideas as are really united, and coexist in things without us. On the contrary, those are fantastical which are made up of such collections of simple ideas as were really never united, never were found together in any substance; v. g., a rational creature, consisting of a horse's head, joined to a body of human shape, or such as centaurs are described. ³

1

For the general influence of Locke on eighteenth-century literature, see Kenneth MacLean, John Locke and English Literature of the Eighteenth Century (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), and for Locke's influence on Fielding, see Morris Golden, Fielding's Moral Psychology (The University of Massachusetts Press, 1966).

2

John Locke, An Essay concerning Human Understanding, ed. A. S. Pringle-Pattison (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), II, ii, 2, p. 54.

3

Locke, II, xxx, 5, p.209.

In this view Bottom and Chiron are only the products of a kind of false logic within the poet's mind. It might perhaps be because of ^{this view} that Fielding, as a faithful follower of Locke,⁴ objected in Tom Jones to those artists who did not limit themselves to the existing creation: "As for elves and fairies, and other such mummery, I purposely omit the mention of them, as I should be very unwilling to confine within any bounds those surprising imaginations for whose vast capacity the limits of human nature are too narrow; whose works are to be considered as a new creation; and who have consequently just right to do what they will with their own" (VIII, i, 381). These authors who do not confine themselves to the real creation merely compose false and useless complex ideas of chimeras, centaurs, and other monsters out of the disordered simple ideas in their brains: "Truth distinguishes our writings from those idle romances which are filled with monsters, the productions, not of nature, but of distempered brains" (IV, i, 123).

Furthermore, the imagination is subject to that disease of false association of ideas that Locke thought was at the bottom of many psychological problems:

Some of our ideas have a natural correspondence and connection with one another; it is the office and excellency of our reason to trace these, and hold them together in that union and correspondence which is founded in

4

Golden demonstrates in Fielding's Moral Psychology that Fielding used a system of psychology derived from Locke's Essay in the novels.

their peculiar beings. Besides this, there is another connexion of ideas wholly owing to chance or custom: ideas that in themselves are not at all of kin, come to be so suited in some men's minds that it is very hard to separate them; they always keep in company, and one no sooner at any time comes into the understanding, but its associate appears with it; and if they are more than two which are thus united, the whole gang, always inseparable, show themselves together. 5

Fielding has given us a couple of explicit examples of such false associations of ideas. When Tom meets the king of the Gypsies, he associates the idea of power with that of dignity, although there is no necessary connection between these ideas:

He was very little distinguished in dress from his subjects, nor had he any regalia of majesty to support his dignity; and yet there seemed (as Mr. Jones said) to be somewhat in his air which denoted authority, and inspired the beholders with an idea of awe and respect; though all this was perhaps imaginary in Jones; and the truth may be, that such ideas are incident to power, and almost inseparable from it. (XII, xii, 199)

Just before the introduction of Sophia into the novel in the sublime style (IV, ii), there is a passage expressing a similar idea, in which the pomp of the sublime style is compared to the pomp that surround a stage monarch or lord mayor. The pomp of the style is connected to the idea of grandeur no more necessarily than the pomp surrounding the stage monarch or the lord mayor is connected with the idea of authority. The associations between the ideas of pomp and of authority and between the ideas

of the sublime style and of grandeur are merely conventional and customary. They exist, not in reality, but in the imaginations of men:

Thus the hero is always introduced with a flourish of drums and trumpets, in order to rouse a martial spirit in the audience, and to accomodate their ears to bombast and fustian, which Mr. Locke's blind man would not have grossly erred in likening to the sound of a trumpet
 . . . for, besides the aforesaid kettle-drums, &c., which denote the hero's approach, he is generally ushered on the stage by a large troop of half a dozen scene-shifters

To be plain, I must question whether the politician, who hath generally a good nose, hath not scented out somewhat of the utility of this practice. I am convinced that awful magistrate my lord mayor contracts a good deal of that reverence, which attends him through the year, by the several pageants which proceed his pomp. Nay, I must confess, that even I myself, who am not remarkably liable to be captivated with show, have yielded not a little to the impressions of much preceding state. When I have seen a man strutting in a procession, after others whose business hath been only to walk before him, I have conceived a higher notion of his dignity than I have felt on seeing him in a common situation. (IV, i, 124-125)

Although one idea such as pomp is oftentimes associated with another idea such as authority merely out of chance or custom, the association between them is so strong that we may sometimes mistake one for the other. We may, for example, mistake the sound of words for their meaning. Hence Tom in his "wanton fancy" and "lively imagination" (V, x, 229) mistakes the style of his drunken apostrophe to Sophia for the sentiment. He thinks, because of his high-sounding words, that he really feels the emotion of undying devotion they customarily express:

No, my Sophia, if cruel fortune separates us for ever, my soul shall doat on thee alone. The chastest constancy will I ever preserve to thy image. Though I should never have possession of thy charming person, still shalt thou have possession of my thoughts, my love, my soul. Oh! my fond heart is so wrapt in that tender bosom, that the brightest beauties would for me have no charms, nor would a hermit be colder in their embraces. (V, x, 230)

But Molly Seagrim soon wanders into the scene to prove that Tom's words are only empty sounds insofar as they are inspired by drunkenness, rather than by the ideas of faithfulness that should attach to them.

Perhaps we may, generally speaking, attribute some of the oddities of some of the characters to the effects of these improper associations of ideas. A clear example is Nightingale's father, of whom we are told: "As money then was always uppermost in this gentleman's thoughts; so the moment he saw a stranger within his doors, it immediately occurred to his imagination, that such stranger was either come to bring him money, or to fetch it from him" (XIV, viii, 309). Squire Western seems to be another case in as much as he has associated the idea of fox hunting with all his other ideas. Squire Allworthy seems to be yet another, for when lecturing Jenny Jones on sexual morality, he tells her that: "Love, however barbarously we corrupt and pervert its meaning, as it is a laudable, is a rational passion" (I, vii, 22). He seems, in his complex idea of love, to have associated the ideas of reason and passion, which far from having a necessary connection, are indeed almost contradictory.

But rational men like Allworthy always associate reason with every other idea with perhaps unfortunate consequences.

Thus far we have considered the disabilities of the imagination as they may have been conceived by Fielding: it could not create any new or original ideas---at least not in any sane and healthy way, and it was dangerously subject to the disease of false association of ideas. Now, however, we shall try to determine what positive attributes Fielding may have ascribed to it. He seems to have felt that the imagination is a capacity which helps us to paint the joys and sufferings of other human beings, so that we may sympathize with them. Here is a passage in which Tom instructs Nightingale on the proper employment of the imagination:

Set the alternative fairly before your eyes. On the one side, see the poor, unhappy, tender, believing girl, in the arms of her wretched mother, breathing her last. Hear her breaking heart in agonies sighing out your name; and lamenting, rather than accusing, the cruelty which weighs her down to destruction. Paint to your imagination the circumstances of her fond despairing parent, driven to madness, or, perhaps death, by the loss of her lovely daughter. View the poor, helpless, orphan infant; and when your mind hath dwelt a moment only on such ideas, consider yourself as the cause of all: the ruin of this poor, little, worthy, defenceless family. On the other side, consider yourself as relieving them from their temporary sufferings. Think with what joy, with what transports, the lovely creature will fly to your arms. See her blood returning to her pale cheeks, her fire to her languid eyes, and raptures to her tortured breast. Consider the exultations of her mother, the happiness of all. (XIV, vii, 305-306)

Nightingale gives way before the vivid images that Tom has told him to "paint to your imagination", and decides to marry Nancy. Thus for Fielding the imagination, if not the power of sympathy itself, is at least the capacity which makes sympathy possible. Tom himself experiences a crisis of loyalty similar to Nightingale's early in the novel, and here again the imagination comes to the aid of the injured party:

The idea of the lovely Molly now intruded itself before him. He had sworn eternal constancy in her arms, and she had as often vowed never to outlive his deserting her. He now saw her in all the most shocking postures of death; nay, he considered all the miseries of prostitution to which she would be liable, and of which he would be doubly the occasion; first by seducing, and then by deserting her . . . The ruin of the poor girl must, he foresaw, unavoidably attend his deserting her, and this thought stung him to the soul . . . His own good heart pleaded her cause; not as a cold venal advocate, but as one interested in the event, and which must itself deeply share in all the agonies its owner brought on another.

When this powerful advocate had sufficiently raised the pity of Jones, by painting poor Molly in all the circumstances of wretchedness; it artfully called in the assistance of another passion, and represented the girl in all the amiable colours of youth, health, and beauty: as one greatly the object of desire, and much more so, at least to a good mind, from being, at the same time, the object of compassion. (V, iii, 194-195)

If one compares the two passages cited above, one will notice three striking similarities. First, there is in both a heavy emphasis on those aspects of the imagination connected with the sense of sight. Words such as "see" and "view" are common. This use of vision words is in keeping with the eighteenth-century conception

of the imagination, at least as expounded by Addison in number 411 of The Spectator:

By the Pleasures of the Imagination or Fancy . . . I here mean such as arise from visible Objects, either when we have them actually in our View, or when we call up their Ideas into our Minds by Paintings, Statues, Descriptions, or any like Occasion. We cannot indeed have a single Image in the Fancy that did not make its first Entrance through the Sight. 6

Fielding certainly thought that we can imagine other things besides ideas arising from sight. He often asks us to imagine the emotions of others. Yet he too seems to have *conceived* of the imagination in terms of vision.

The second common feature of these two passages is that they both use metaphors drawn from the art of painting to express the idea of imagining something. In the one Tom tells Nightingale to "paint to your imagination the circumstances of her fond despairing parent". In the other Tom's good heart "raised the pity of Jones by painting poor Molly in all the circumstances of wretchedness", and "represented the girl in all the amiable colours of youth, health, and beauty". Such painting metaphors for the imagination are not uncommon in the novels. Here are two random

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Joseph Addison, The Spectator, No. 411 (June 21, 1712). Kenneth MacLean has observed ^{of} this passage: "In his papers on the 'Pleasures of the Imagination' gives the true Lockian emphasis to sensation by making imagination the reception of ideas through sight." See John Locke and English Literature of the Eighteenth Century, p. 55.

examples: from Joseph Andrews: [Lady Booby's] "fancy painted her a more delicious scene, but to delude, not delight her: for before she could reach the promised happiness, it vanished, and left her to curse, not bless, the vision" (IV, i, 237); and from Tom Jones: "In the imagination of the half-drunk clown, as he staggers through the churchyard, or rather charnelyard, to his home, fear paints the bloody hobgoblin" (X, ii, 45). The metaphorical association of the imagination with the art of painting was a traditional one, derived, in the opinion of M. H. Abrams from Plato and Horace,⁷ and was one which Fielding often exploited. From this we may conclude that Fielding associated the imagination with the art of painting--- a fairly minor, but important point; for it will help later on to identify Sophia, who is compared with many beautiful paintings (IV, ii, 126-127), as an allegorical figure of the imagination.

Returning to the two passages that have been compared above, ^{we should note that} the third common feature belonging to

⁷
M. H. Abrams, The Mirror and the Lamp (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), p. 33.

them both is that in both the imagination serves to paint a scene which has not yet occurred. Thus the imagination, creating pictures of the future, is useful for that foresight or prudentia, which, according to Professor Battestin, is one of the most important themes of Tom Jones.⁹ This too is a minor point, but one which will become significant later.

As we have seen, Fielding regarded the imagination as that power or entity in the human mind which makes sympathy possible. He often calls upon the reader's imagination to exercise its power and make sympathy possible for his characters: "If the reader's imagination doth not assist me, I shall never be able to describe the situation of these two persons when Western came into the room. Sophia tottered into her chair, where she sat disordered, pale, breathless, bursting with indignation at Lord Fellamar, affrighted, and yet more rejoiced at the arrival of her father" (XV, v, 338). In order to exercise the power of the sympathetic imagination,¹⁰ to which Fielding has appealed in the foregoing quotation---in order to imagine the emotion that another human being is feeling---one must have experienced that feeling before oneself.¹¹ "For

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"Fielding's Definition of Wisdom", pp. 189-204.

10

I am indebted to Morris Golden for the phrase "sympathetic imagination". See Fielding's Moral Psychology, p. 3.

11

Golden, pp. 44-45, 74.

friendship makes us warmly espouse the interest of others; but it is very cold to the gratification of their passions. Indeed, to feel the happiness which may result from this, it is necessary we should possess the passion ourselves" (V, iii, 193). Yet some people, either through inexperience or through incapacity, have never felt some emotions, so that they are incapable of imagining what these emotions are like, or of sympathizing with those who suffer them. In the inexperienced class we may include the many prudes and old maids in the novels, who have never experienced love; and in the incapacitated class, we may include the viciously ill-natured, who are as incapable of experiencing it as Mr. Locke's blind man:

It would be wiser to persue your business, or your pleasures (such as they are), than to throw away any more of your time in reading what you can neither taste nor comprehend. To treat of the effects of love to you must be as absurd as to discourse on colours to a man born blind; since possibly your idea of love may be as absurd as that we are told a blind man once entertained of the colour scarlet; that colour seemed to him to be very much like the sound of a trumpet: and love probably may, in your opinion, very greatly resemble a dish of soup, or a sirloin of roast beef. (VI, i, 248)

Fielding, as this quotation would indicate, had a good Lockean empiricist's view of the sympathetic imagination. The imagination cannot create simple ideas that are not brought into the mind from outside; it cannot invent new emotions, nor conceive of those which it has not already

experienced through the stimulus of the five senses. Some people, however, never get the ideas into their imaginations, either through inexperience, like the prudes, or through incapacity like the ill-natured, so that they never can imagine what another person is feeling and never can sympathize with him. The imagination is as dependent on empirical data as any other capacity of the mind. Sometimes, indeed, the author despairs of making even his good-natured readers experience any emotion which is a little bit uncommon: "To see a woman you love in distress; to be unable to relieve her, and at the same time to reflect that you have brought her into this situation, is perhaps a curse of which no imagination can represent the horrors to those who have not felt it" (VIII, xi, 436).

From the passages we have examined so far in this chapter, we may conclude that the imagination, although not a creative power, was nevertheless a very important psychological entity for Fielding. It was that faculty of the mind which allowed a human being to feel sympathy for another. Without it sympathy would be impossible, and without sympathy, charity and forgiveness would be impossible. Yet while the imagination was the foundation of all these Christian virtues, it was restricted to recreating only those emotional states which had been experienced before. To imagine what another person was feeling,

one had to have experienced his emotion oneself. To sympathize with a lover, one had to have been in love, and to sympathize with a thief one had---not to have stolen something---but at least to have been tempted. Since Allworthy has never felt temptation in any way, he cannot imagine its nature, cannot sympathize, cannot forgive, and cannot really be a good Christian; but since Tom has often felt temptation and indeed succumbed to it, he can easily imagine what it is to be tempted. By the end of the novel he is the perfect forgiving Christian. I shall return to this point later.

Having examined the powers and abilities of the imagination, I want to return to the subject of its disabilities in order that we may understand how it may fail in some circumstances to exercise these powers and abilities. As I have remarked, some people are incapable of imagining another's emotional and psychological state because they have never experienced it themselves. A perfect specimen is Aunt Western, who, like her brother, has never experienced passionate love, and therefore cannot sympathize with Sophia's experience of it:

She was moreover excellently well skilled in the doctrine of amour, and knew better than any body who and who were together; a knowledge which she the more easily attained, as her pursuit of it was never diverted by any affairs of her own; for either she had no inclinations, or they had never been solicited; which last is indeed very probable; for her masculine person, which was near six feet

high, added to her manner and learning, possibly prevented the other sex from regarding her, notwithstanding her petticoats, in the light of a woman. However, as she had considered the matter scientifically, she perfectly well knew, though she had never practiced 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, & c. as they are at present practiced in the beau monde. To sum the whole, no species of disguise or affectation 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. (VI, ii, 249-250)

Mrs. Western, never having experienced love, studies its external expressions like a scientist examining the habits of a strange animal, but since she cannot imagine anything of its internal nature, she can never sympathize with it.

Some of the other characters in the novels are disqualified from sympathy not because they are inexperienced like Mrs. Western, but because some passion is so predominant in their minds that it excludes every other feeling.¹² Lust is so predominant in Lady Booby's mind that it excludes its object, Joseph, from sympathy (IV, i). Fear so dominates Partridge's mind that it fills his imagination with ghosts and hobgoblins. He responds with full sympathy to a great imaginative work of literature like Hamlet only insofar as it tickles his predominant passion:

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Golden, p. 39.

When the scene was over Jones said, "Why, Partridge you exceed my expectations. You enjoy the play more than I conceived possible." "Nay, sir, answered Partridge, "if you are not afraid of the devil, I can't help it; but to be sure, it is natural to be surprized at such things, though I know there is nothing in them; not that it was the ghost that surprized me, neither; for I should have known that to have been only a man in a strange dress; but when I saw the little man so frightened himself, it was that which took hold of me." (XVI, v, 402)

Because Garrick's portrayal of fear strikes a sympathetic chord of passion in Partridge's being; he feels total

empathy with him; but on other occasions. when such a sympathetic chord is not vibrating, he is much less likely to be compassionate. The following quotation illustrates the difficulty that Tom and Partridge have in sharing their imaginative perceptions. As they wander at the foot of Mazard Hill, Tom says to Partridge:

"I wish I was at the top of this hill; it must certainly afford a most charming prospect, especially by this light; for the solemn gloom which the moon casts on all objects is beyond expression beautiful, especially to an imagination which is desirous of cultivating melancholy ideas"---"Very probably answered Partridge; but if the top of the hill is properest to produce melancholy thoughts, I suppose the bottom is likeliest to produce merry ones, and these I take to be much the better of the two. (VIII, x, 422)

If the imagination is that faculty which allows us to sympathize with others by creating a picture of their feelings, then imaginative literature must be the art which encourages universal sympathy by painting pictures in the imagination. The literary artist must be, above all things, a sympathetic man. Fielding invoked the aid of humanity in the introductory chapter of Book XIII of Tom Jones:

And thou, almost the constant attendant of true genius, humanity, bring all thy tender sensations. If thou hast already disposed of them all between thy Allen and thy Lyttleton, steal them a little while from their bosoms. Not without these the tender scene is painted. From these alone proceed the noble disinterested friendship, the melting love, the generous sentiment, the ardent gratitude, the soft compassion, the candid opinion; and all those strong energies of a good mind which fill the moistened eye with tears, the glowing cheeks with blood, and swell the heart with tides of grief, joy, and benevolence. (XIII, i, 219)

This, then, may have been Fielding's view of the ideal function of literature: that it should make us feel for the sufferings of men. Yet oftentimes it fails to fulfill this ideal function, and far from inspiring the auditor with compassion, actually stands between him and universal sympathy for his fellow creatures. In Joseph Andrews Fielding has juxtaposed two scenes (Book III, Chapters 10 and 11) which illustrate this point. In the first of these scenes a poet and a player discuss literature and quote beautiful love lyrics to one another, but they are so puffed up with the pride, vanity, and envy of their respective callings that they forget that they have just delivered Fanny Goodwill into the hands of the lecherous roasting squire:

"Very well," says the player, "and pray what do you think of such fellows as Quin and Delane, or that face-making puppy young Cibber, that ill-looking dog Macklin, or that saucy slut Mrs. Clive? What work would they make with your Shakespears, Otways, and Lees? How would those harmonious lines of the last come from their tongues?"

---No more; for I disdain
 All pomp when thou art by---far be the noise
 Of kings and crowns from us, whose gentle souls
 Our kinder fates have steer'd another way.
 Free as the forest birds we'll pair together
 Without rememb'ring who our fathers were:
 Fly to the arbors, grots and flow'ry meads,
 There in soft murmurs interchange our souls,
 Together drink the crystal of the stream,
 Or taste the yellow fruit which autumn yields.
 And when the golden evening calls us home,
 Wing to our drowsy nests, and sleep till morn.

. . . Hold! Hold! Hold! said the poet: "Do repeat that tender speech in the third act of my play which you made such a figure in."---"I would willingly," said the player, "but I have forgot it." (III, x, 222)

The poet and the player are able to compose and recite verses, which, like all literature, should serve to refine the imaginations of men and to teach them to feel for one another; but they have so given over their literary imaginations to their passions of pride and vanity that they have lost the imaginative power of sympathy and have quite cheerfully delivered Fanny to her fate.¹³

The scene between the poet and player is juxtaposed with a scene between Parson Adams and Joseph in which a similar failure of the sympathetic imagination occurs. Adams lectures Joseph, who is mourning for Fanny, on the vanity of immoderate grief, but his sermon is without any sympathy or compassion for Joseph's anguish. He has clogged his imagination with the rational prose of the eighteenth-century sermon, which he parrots to Joseph, and cannot see beyond his rationality of discourse to

13

Maurice Johnson, "The Poet and the Player", in his Fielding's Art of Fiction (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1969), p. 67.

the human misery that is before him. Joseph tries to explain why he must grieve by appealing to *a work* of imaginative literature:

At length Joseph burst into the following soliloquy:

Yes, I will bear my sorrows like a man,
 But I must also feel them as a man.
 I cannot but remember such things were,
 And were most dear to me.---

Adams asked him what stuff that was he repeated?--- To which he answered, they were some lines he had gotten by heart out of a play.---"Ay, there is nothing but heathenism to be learnt from plays," replied he---"I never heard of any plays fit for a Christian to read, but Cato and the Conscious Lovers; and I must own, in the latter there are some things almost solemn enough for a sermon." (III, xi, 226)

By failing to cultivate his literary imagination, Adams has divided his nature into two irreconcilable halves. The rational half of his nature is at war with the emotional half, so that while he professes total rationality, he gives way to his emotions whenever he is directly confronted with human suffering. If he cultivated his imagination by studying the full range of literature, he might unite his divided psyche, but he does not appreciate imaginative literature except for some writings of a rather elevated, serious, and tragic kind. Aeschylus and Seneca are his favourites. While the works of these poets are certainly "solemn enough for a sermon," they do not present the range of experience that is appropriate for a character in a comic novel to study. Thus Adams' imagination can only respond to certain chords of emotion

and is deaf to others. The impression of him that we carry away from the novel is one of schizophrenia. Head and heart, mind and body are hopelessly divided.

In summary of the conclusions of this chapter, one should remember the following points. The imagination is a power of the mind which can create an entirely new image only by the improper combination of simple ideas, as in the case of Locke's centaur. Hence, if it creates something new, it is likely to be a useless monster, the production of a distempered brain. However, it can recreate pictures of what it has already experienced; it can recreate the emotions we have experienced in the past and apply the picture it paints of them to the emotional and psychological states of others. Thus the imagination is the essential link of sympathy between human beings, and imaginative literature is the art which cultivates that link. This eighteenth-century definition of "imagination" is the one which I think is most relevant to the discussion in the chapters that follow.

IV

ALLWORTHY AND TOM: REASON AND EMOTION

In Joseph Andrews, as we have seen, Fielding diagnosed the symptoms of disunity in Parson Adam's mind and found that he was suffering from a split personality. He is ridiculous because he cannot connect reason, emotion, imagination, and instinct within a single unified consciousness. In Tom Jones the disassociation of the mind's elements is more severe. Reason, imagination, emotion, and instinct are no longer even part of one disunited mind; rather they have become distinct personifications independent of any controlling consciousness except the author's. Allworthy, Sophia, Tom, and Western are so divided from each other that they fall asunder and must pursue each other across England in an allegorical quest for psychic unity.

Squire Allworthy, as was mentioned in the introduction, is an allegorical figure of reason. He seldom appears in the novel in a situation which does not require him to exhibit his reasoning powers. Usually, as befits his position as justice of the peace, he conducts a real or mock trial of one of the other characters. The scene at the beginning of the novel where Allworthy finds the infant Tom in his bed is one such mock trial, with Mrs.

Wilkins in the role of prosecutor:

There were some strokes in this [Mrs Wilkins'] speech which perhaps would have offended Mr. Allworthy, had he strictly attended to it; but he had now got one of his fingers into the infant's hands, which, by its gentle pressure, seeming to implore his assistance, had certainly outpleaded the eloquence of Mrs. Deborah, had it been ten times greater than it was." (I, iii, 11)

This scene, ~~the~~ first of many in which Tom inspires Allworthy to temper justice with mercy, is a little allegory on the right ordering of emotion and reason in the human mind. Justice Allworthy must render judgement on the case before him, and the sympathetic imagination comes to the aid of his reason. He is "eager in contemplating the beauty of innocence, appearing in those lively colours with which infancy and sleep always display it" (I, iii, 9). With the phrase "lively colours". Fielding has begun to develop the metaphors drawn from the art of painting with which he has associated the imagination throughout Tom Jones. The imagination, as has been demonstrated, is a faculty by means of which we can "paint" the moral and emotional states of others. If we do not employ it sympathetically, we may, like Mrs. Wilkins, turn it into a reflector of our own vanity. When Allworthy calls her to attend to the newly discovered infant, the narrator tells us that:

"Out of respect to him, and regard to decency, she had spent many minutes in adjusting her hair at the looking-glass, notwithstanding all the hurry in which she had been summoned by the servant, and though her master, for ought she knew, lay expiring in an apoplexy or in some other fit" (I, iii, 9). Mrs. Wilkins has so distorted her imagination by her (apparently sexual) fantasizing about Mr. Allworthy that she holds the mirror of the imagination not up to nature, but to her own egotistical vanity.

Allworthy, as justice and judge, is associated with judgement and reason. As A. E. Dyson has observed, his speeches move with the "rhythms of thought," while Tom's move with the "rhythms of feeling."¹ He is the great advocate and exemplar of the rational virtue of prudence,² the character who tells Tom that: "I am convinced, my child, that you have much goodness, generosity, and honour in your temper: if you will add prudence and religion to these, you must be happy; for the three former qualities, I admit, make you worthy of happiness, but they are the latter only which can put you in possession of it" (V, vii, 217). Martin Battestin, in his consideration

¹
A. E. Dyson, "Satire and Comic Irony in Tom Jones", in Henry Fielding: Tom Jones: A Casebook ed. Neil Compton (London: Macmillan, 1970), p. 190.

²
Golden, p. 61.

of the allegorical aspects of Tom Jones, has discussed this virtue of prudence at length:

Prudentia in the Christian humanist tradition is practical wisdom---the chief of the four cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude. According to Cicero, who was principally responsible for its meaning during the period in question, prudence is essentially the ability to distinguish between good and evil. It is a rational faculty, therefore, which depends on the proper functioning of memory, intelligence, and foresight: memory enabling us to recall what has happened, so that we may learn from experience; intelligence enabling us to discern the truth of circumstances as they really are; and foresight enabling us, on the basis of past knowledge and with the aid of penetrating judgement, to estimate the future consequences of present actions and events. Prudence is, in other words, the perspicacity of moral vision which alone permits us to perceive the truth behind appearances and to proceed from the known to the obscure; it implies, furthermore, the power to choose between good and evil and to determine the proper and effective means of achieving one and avoiding the other. ³

Allworthy, in his conduct of the trial of Jenny Jones, provides the reader with a textbook example of this complex virtue at work. He uses his "perspicacity of moral vision" to discover "the truth behind the appearances" of Jenny's actions:

For as no private resentment should ever influence a magistrate, I will be so far from considering your having deposited the infant in my house as an aggravation of your offence, that I will suppose, in your favour, this to have proceeded from a natural affection to your child; since you might have some hopes to see it thus better provided for, than was in the power of yourself or its wicked father, to provide for it. I should indeed have been highly offended with you, had you exposed the little wretch in the manner of some inhuman mothers, who seem no less to have abandoned their humanity, than to have parted with their chastity. (I, vii, 20-21)

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Battestin, "Fielding's Definition of Wisdom", p. 191.

Thus Allworthy, his "intelligence enabling him to discern the truth of circumstances as they really are", distinguishes between the apparent immorality of abandoning the baby and the real humanity that led Jenny to place it in his bed. He goes on to consider the probable consequences of her actions, his "foresight enabling him, on the basis of past knowledge and with the aid of penetrating judgement, to estimate the consequences of present actions and events":

"For by it you are rendered infamous, and driven, like lepers of old, out of society; at least from the society of all but wicked and reprobate persons; for no others will associate with you.

"If you have fortunes, you are hereby rendered incapable of enjoying them; if you have none, you are disabled from acquiring any, nay almost of procuring your sustenance; for no persons of character will receive you into their houses. Thus you are often driven by necessity itself into a state of shame and misery, which unavoidably ends in the destruction of both body and soul. (I, vii, 21)

The only two pronounced features of Allworthy's character, then, are justice and prudence, and he seldom exemplifies any other quality but these two virtues. He is, of course, also a good and benevolent man, but these elements in his character do not detract from his two other essential qualities. Fielding has restricted and limited his character in the manner of allegory until he has become a symbol for an abstraction---until he has become what Sheldon Sacks calls a "walking concept".⁴

⁴ Sheldon Sacks, Fiction and the Shape of Belief (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), pp. 163-192.

Thus, in this respect he is both more and less than the fully developed character usually found in low mimetic fiction. He is less than such a fully developed character in that he almost never appears before our eyes in any other capacity than as an exemplar of justice and prudence. He is never passionate, never eccentric, and never despairing. Yet he is more than such a fully developed character in that he represents more. Lacking human peculiarities, he is a symbol of an abstraction that is universal rather than particular. His outstanding quality, both as magistrate and as prudent man, may be summed up by the single word "judgement." As Robert Alter has observed, "Fielding is generally concerned with judgement, a fact attested to by the recurrent allusions and structural analogies in his two comic novels to actual trial procedure."⁵

Critics have often objected to Allworthy, calling him a lifeless paragon. Perhaps they have sensed that Fielding has severely delimited his character and allowed him to represent no more than one or two abstract ideas. Thus the critic may feel that Allworthy does not present life in the round. He is flat and lifeless because he does not exhibit the range of expression that the critic

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Alter, p. 64.

has learned to expect from a character in a novel. However, if a critic argues this, he merely displays his prejudices; for he must decide not whether Allworthy is like the characters in other novels, but whether he successfully performs the task that Fielding has assigned to him. Allworthy's task in the novel is to be the butt of a satire against reason. If he were not an allegorical figure of reason, he would not present a precise enough target for this satire. The reader might feel that the satire was directed not against the target of his rationality, but against the whole personality of the man. He might feel that the author aimed to attack not just the abuses of reason, but goodness in general. Hence the allegory prevents the satire from becoming indiscriminately abusive. Since each character is an allegorical representation of one quality, the satire can only be directed against that particular quality. One must be simultaneously aware of both the allegory and the satire to understand the novel.

While Allworthy represents the admirable qualities of justice and prudence, he seems singularly incapable of applying these virtues in his judicial proceedings. Robert Alter has pointed out in Fielding and the Nature of the Novel that Allworthy is often quite incompetent as a magistrate: "One of the squire's ^{principal} responsibilities, after all, and one of the main causal elements in the

plot, is the role he plays as justice of the peace, but twice we are explicitly informed that he has been acting in contradiction of the law, in excess of his authority."⁶ Allworthy condemns Partridge on the evidence of his wife, contrary to the common law, and commits Molly to Bridewell without having a proper charge against her.⁷ He represents justice, but in such excess that his justice becomes a dangerous passion instead of a rational virtue:

Yet was this affection of Mrs. Bliful to Tom, and the preference which she too visibly gave him to her own son, of the utmost disadvantage to that youth. For such was the compassion that inhabited Mr. Allworthy's mind, that nothing but the steel of justice could ever subdue it. To be unfortunate in any respect was sufficient, if there was no demerit to counterpoise it, to turn the scale of the good man's pity, and to engage his friendship, and his benefaction.

When therefore he plainly saw Master Bliful was absolutely detested (for that he was) by his own mother, he began, on that account only, to look with an eye of compassion upon him; and what the effects of compassion are, in good and benevolent minds, I need not explain to most of my readers. (III, vii, 109-110)

In this ironic passage we have the first of many indications that Allworthy puts unreasonable practical limits on compassion.⁸ His compassion is so conditional, so subordinate to "the steel of justice", that it only operates

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Alter, p. 85.

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Alter, p. 86.

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Dyson, p. 189.

"if there was no demerit to counterpoise it". Allworthy, as we shall see, refuses to forgive demerits---refuses to practice the ultimate Christian virtue of forgiveness.

Allworthy's reason is certainly to some degree defective, but it is not clear to what cause we may attribute the flaw. Perhaps Robert Alter has provided us with a clue when he observes: "It is a revealing fact that Allworthy's mistaken judgements are connected with sexual activities deemed criminal, for there is nothing in the world of Tom Jones that he is more crucially out of touch with than its abundant and exuberant sexuality."⁹ Allworthy apparently has no idea of what constitutes human passion. He reads Jenny Jones a lecture on the subject of love which clearly shows how ignorant he is on this matter:

"How base and mean must that woman be, how void of that dignity of mind, and decent pride, without which we are not worthy of the name of human creatures, who can bear to level herself with the lowest animal, and to sacrifice all that is great and noble in her, all her heavenly part, to an appetite which she hath in common with the vilest branch of creation! For no woman, sure, will plead the passion of love for an excuse. This would be to own herself the mere tool and bubble of the man. Love, however barbarously we may corrupt and pervert its meaning, as it is a laudable, is a rational passion."(I vii, 22)

A brief comparison of this passage with the famous chapter "Of Love" (VI, i) will show how wrong-headed Allworthy's preaching is. There the narrator tells us "that this

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Alter, p. 86.

love for which I am an advocate, though it satisfies itself in a much more delicate manner, doth nevertheless seek its own satisfaction as much as the grossest of all our appetites" (VI, i, 246). Thus the author defines love as an appetite, rather than as a rational desire, and connects it more closely with the instincts, "the grossest of all our appetites", rather than with reason. However laudable love may be, one does not feel that the author defined it with Allworthy as a "rational passion." Allworthy had misdefined love. Perhaps we may discover the root cause of his misdefinition in the Lockean psychology which, Morris Golden has shown in Fielding's Moral Psychology, Fielding employed throughout his novels. In Locke's view all ideas within the mind come ultimately from experience. Since Allworthy has never, even apparently in his marriage, been passionate without being reasonable, he has no idea of what such an irrational state is like, cannot imagine it, and cannot sympathize with it. When Allworthy, for example, condemns Tom for his affair with Molly, the narrator tells us that: "Allworthy was sufficiently offended by this transgression of Jones; for notwithstanding the assertion of Mr. Western, it is certain this worthy man never indulged himself in any loose pleasures with women, and greatly condemned the

vice of incontinence in others" (IV, xi, 164), Allworthy's lack of experience is syntactically prior to his unforgiving temper in this sentence, a fact which may suggest to the reader that experience is prior to sympathy and forgiveness in the human mind.

Allworthy may be compared to that noble but un-fallen Houyhnhnm who finds it difficult to understand what Gulliver may mean by the word "lying." He eventually obtains an intellectual understanding of it and defines it as "saying the Thing which was not,"¹⁰ but unfortunately he never achieves Gulliver's ~~own~~ ^{imaginative} understanding of the word. The Houyhnhnm can only infer what it means; Gulliver can conceive of its meaning in his imagination. Similarly, Allworthy can only define love as what it has been in his own experience, a rational passion, but cannot imagine it or sympathize with it from Tom's irrational point of view. Robert Alter has written of Allworthy:

When Allworthy dismisses the act of love as "a short, trivial, contemptible pleasure," Fielding would obviously subscribe to the first and probably even the second epithet, at least in an attempt to place sex in perspective within his large system of values, but the author of Tom Jones, however Christian we may make him, would surely not assent very readily to the contemptibility of a pleasure in which he could imagine such shared delight, such healthy

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Gulliver's Travels, p. 230

naturalness, even when taken promiscuously. Or, to put it another way, though Fielding might actually agree that a true Christian, thinking of the spiritual pleasures which are his greatest fulfillment, would hold the merely carnal ones in contempt, the moralizing attitude of "contemptible" in context, the deficiency of the sympathetic imagination reflected in Allworthy's use of the word, are the stale distillations of preacher's ink, devoid of the juices of human experience. 11

Perhaps, generally speaking, it is because of this "deficiency of the sympathetic imagination" that Allworthy is somewhat blind to the vices of Square's virtue and Thwackum's religion. Since his imagination is not stocked with the ideas that would make his reason really effective, he cannot imagine the ultimate consequences that would follow if these men were allowed to apply their systems to the world. As A. E. Dyson has remarked, Mr. Allworthy "has all the warmth and benevolence we could desire, but he is still very much on their [Thwackum's and Square's] side."¹² Reason, unaided by imagination, runs out of control and inevitably adopts such mutually contradictory positions as Allworthy supports by his patronage of the philosopher and the Calvinist. Reason, the allegory of Tom Jones seems to suggest, is impotent

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Alter, p. 87.

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Dyson, p. 187.

without imagination.¹³

Mr. Allworthy, then, is the rational element in the divided psyche of the eighteenth-century mind. Tom is the corresponding emotional element. He represents all those spontaneously good, but irrational passions which for Fielding constituted human nature. His bravery, his generosity, and his love are not rational, for they all leap forth into the battle of his life without a moment's thought on his mind's part for the consequences. "Tom's 'mind'", Dorothy Van Ghent has remarked, "indeed, does not seem to operate very frequently at all."¹⁴ While

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The conclusion of Dyson's argument is similar to mine: "Mr. Allworthy's failure of judgement is clearly one of the main strands in the moral texture of the whole, and what it indicates is Fielding's profound mistrust of Reason in ethics" (p. 188). I cannot agree with him, however, that Fielding wanted us, like D. H. Lawrence, to abandon reason in favour of intuition: "What he does suggest, and the whole comic purpose reinforces this, is that true virtue can never be discovered by rule of thumb. To discern it we need a certain added sense, an intuition almost, of the kind which D. H. Lawrence no doubt had in mind when he said he could 'smell people's souls'" (p. 186)

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Dorothy Van Ghent, "On Tom Jones", in Henry Fielding: Tom Jones: A Casebook, p. 75.

Tom has a rational element in his make-up and very occasionally reasons about his obligations, his emotions so easily overpower his reason that it is lost in a sea of tender compulsions. For example, when Tom reasons about his obligations to Molly, the narrator tells us that "when the genius of poor Molly seemed triumphant, the love of Sophia towards him, which now appeared no longer dubious, rushed upon his mind, and bore away every obstacle before it" (V, v, 199). Thus Tom's reasonings, far from detracting from his function as a symbol of emotion, by their very impotency contribute to the impression we have of him as a totally emotional, irrational creature. The spontaneous readiness of his emotional responses is good since it inspires Tom to rush instantly to the rescue of damsels in distress, but it is also bad because it can lead him as quickly into serious trouble.

Allworthy needs Tom in order to release his rational nature through emotion, but Tom needs Allworthy in order to restrain his emotional nature with reason. There are a couple of little allegorical scenes in the first part of the novel which illustrate these points. Tom takes Allworthy to see Black George's family in order to show him the consequences of a rational justice which is not tempered by emotional sympathy:

[Tom] slyly drew him [Mr. Allworthy] to the habitation of Black George; where the family of the poor wretch, namely his wife and children, were found in all the misery with which cold, hunger, and nakedness, can effect human creatures; for as to the money they had received from Jones, former debts had consumed the whole.

Such a scene as this could not fail of affecting the heart of Mr. Allworthy. He immediately gave the mother a couple of guineas, with which he bid her clothe her children . . .

On their return home Tom made use of all his eloquence to display the wretchedness of these people, and the penitence of Black George himself; and in this he succeeded so well, that Mr. Allworthy said, he thought the man had suffered enough for what was past; that he would forgive him, and think of some means of providing for him and his family. (III, ix, 116)

It is important to notice that this scene is an allegory. More precisely, it is a psychomachy, the form of allegory which presents private psychology as a public debate between personifications of the elements of the mind. Although Mr. Allworthy undergoes a change of heart within his own mind, the voice of conscience that he listens to there is external---it is Tom's voice. The interaction between reason and emotion is a matter of public drama rather than of private psychology.

We also learn that if Tom is naturally given to compassion for the sufferings of others, he does not extend his compassion so far as to forgive his enemies. He tells Allworthy that he intends to exact due revenge on Thwackum for all the beatings he has suffered at the tutor's hands:

As for that tyrannical rascal, he would never make him any other answer than with a cudgel, with which he hoped soon to be able to pay him for all his barbarities.

Mr. Allworthy very severely reprimanded the lad for his indecent and disrespectful expressions concerning ~~his master~~ his master, but much more for his avowing an intention of revenge. He threatened him with an entire loss of his favour, if ever he heard such another word from his mouth; for he said he would never support or befriend a reprobate. By these and the like declarations, he extorted some compunction from Tom, in which that youth was not over-sincere; for he really meditated some return for all the smarting favours he had received at the hands of the pedagogue. (III, vii, 112)

This scene shows both Tom and Allworthy in unfavourable lights. Tom's emotional nature is not sufficiently Christian of itself to turn the other cheek. Allworthy's rational nature cannot sympathize with any natural passion such as the desire for revenge which is inconsistent with its own high standards. Thus Allworthy's reason drives Tom's emotion into hypocrisy. Once again the scene, depicting the private dialogue between reason and emotion as a public debate, is allegorical. The reader feels, throughout the first third of the novel, that Tom and Allworthy are divided against themselves. Allworthy does not arrive on the scene until Tom has got himself into some scrape, and even then he only appears to pronounce a heavy, rationalistic judgement. He is not a very good father to Tom, for he does not sympathize with him except when he behaves as he himself would.

Since Tom is the lover in the novel, one should consider what effects being raised in an environment where love is defined as a rational passion has had on his nature. The author has provided a standard by which we may judge

his actions in this area in the chapter entitled "Of Love" (VI, i). He begins by remarking that "what is commonly called love, namely, the desire of satisfying a voracious appetite with a certain quantity of delicate white human flesh, is by no means that passion for which I here contend" (VI, i, 246). He distinguishes this voracious appetite from another, higher appetite, which "though it satisfies itself in a much more delicate manner, doth nevertheless seek its own satisfaction as much as the grossest of our appetites" (VI, i, 246). This more delicate passion, he tells us, is identical with benevolence: "There is in some (I believe in many) human breasts a kind of benevolent disposition, which is gratified by contributing to the happiness of others. That in this gratification alone, as in friendship, in parental and in filial affection, as indeed in general philanthropy, there is great and exquisite delight" (VI, i, 247). Furthermore, this benevolent passion sometimes calls in the aid of the carnal appetite: "This love, when it operates towards one of a different sex, is very apt, towards its complete gratification, to call in the aid of that hunger which I have mentioned above; and which it is so far from abating, that it heightens all its delights to a degree scarce imaginable by those who have never been susceptible of

any other emotions than what have proceeded from appetite alone" (VI, i, 246).

At first sight there would appear to be a contradiction in Fielding's argument here. While both the lower and the higher passions seek their own gratification, they may be distinguished as selfish and unselfish passions, for the first finds its gratification in the happiness of the self, while the second finds its gratification in the happiness of another. How, one may ask, can a selfish passion heighten the delight of an unselfish passion, since in logic it should, being contradictory, diminish it? Yet Fielding does not represent the heightening of delight merely as a matter of the addition of the two passions; rather the metaphor is one of multiplication in that the delight of the benevolent passion is heightened "to a degree scarce imaginable by those who have never been susceptible of any other emotions than what have proceeded from appetite alone." Fielding's argument only makes sense if we take it in this way: one cannot gratify the unselfish benevolent disposition by gratifying one's own selfish carnal appetite, but one can certainly gratify it by gratifying the carnal appetite in another human being. The lover feels happy because he knows he has made the beloved happy by fulfilling the beloved's

sexual desires. Thus the delights of the benevolent disposition are multiplied because the benevolent disposition has an opportunity of making another human being completely happy. Presumably this rule also applies to the beloved, who delights on her part in satisfying her lover's carnal desires. Thus, by being concerned with the other, rather than with the self, both the lover and the beloved mutually multiply the happiness of love, carnally as well as spiritually, for each other.

If this interpretation of the argument is right, and in logic it seems to be the only sensible one, then Fielding has presented in this chapter a view of love which demands complete imaginative sympathy for the beloved on the part of the lover. He must be totally sympathetic to all his beloved's desires, including her carnal appetite, and must seek to gratify those desires. But it is precisely this kind of imaginative sympathy which Tom lacks in the first third of the novel. Raised by a foster father who defines love in rationalistic terms, he cannot conceive that it might be something other than a rational passion for a woman. Thus he idealizes Molly absurdly, but does not really sympathize with her:

In the conduct of this matter, I say, Molly so well played her part, that Jones attributed the conquest entirely to himself, and considered the young woman as one who had yielded to the violent attacks of his passion. He likewise imputed her yielding to the ungovernable force of her love towards him; and this the reader will allow to have been a very natural and probable supposition, as we have more than once mentioned the uncommon comeliness of his person: and indeed he was one of the handsomest young fellows in the world. (IV, vi, 145)

Tom's view of the situation is totally distorted. He

ascribes all the love to Molly, and all the passion to himself. He thinks that she succumbed to him not out of sexual ardour, but out of altruistic love. Such idealization may seem harmless, but it is neither real sympathy nor real compassion, for it implies that any woman who does not measure up to its ridiculous standards is a prostitute. When Tom discovers that Molly is not what he thought her to be, he abandons her immediately:

"And, Molly, do you be faithful to your new friend, and I will not only forgive your infidelity to me, but will do you all the service I can." So saying, he took a hasty leave, and slipping down the ladder, retired with much expedition. (V, v, 206)

This speech contains some very fine sentiments, but it strikes the reader as a little Pecksniffian, considering the speed with which Jones changes his attitude towards Molly and the speed with which he makes his escape. Idealization of a passion is wrong, Fielding seems to have tried to tell us, because it excludes the unideal aspects of that passion from our sympathy.

Tom also idealizes Sophia, and here he is closer to the truth than he was with Molly; yet he still sometimes excludes himself from full imaginative participation in her nature by elevating her to the level of an impossible ideal. In the following *apostrophe* to her he is obviously more in love with the ideal image of the girl than with

the girl herself.

"Was I but possessed of thee, one only suit of rags thy whole estate, is there a man on earth whom I would envy! How contemptible would the brightest Circassian beauty, drest in all the jewels of the Indies, appear to my eyes? But why do I mention another woman? Could I think my eyes capable of looking at any other with tenderness, these hands should tear them from my head. No, my Sophia, if cruel fortune separates us for ever, my soul shall doat on thee alone. The chastest constancy will I ever preserve to thy image. Though I should never have possession of thy charming person, still shalt thou alone have possession of my thoughts, my love, my soul. Oh! my fond heart is so wrapt in that tender bosom, that the brightest beauties would for me have no charms, nor would a hermit be colder in their embraces. Sophia, Sophia, alone shall be mine. What raptures are in that name! (V, x, 230)

Tom vows fidelity to the impossible image of an ideal, not to the true image of the girl herself. However, one may say in his defence that Tom is somewhat drunk so that "his wanton fancy roved unbounded over all her beauties" (V, x, 229). The sober Tom, by way of contrast, is tenderly tongue-tied whenever he visits his Sophia.

WESTERN AND SOPHIA: INSTINCT AND IMAGINATION

During the first third of Tom Jones, the part of the novel located in and around two country houses, the reader learns that each of these houses is divided against itself. Allworthy and Tom, Western and Sophia live on their respective estates in apparent harmony, but they are really separated from one another by mental barriers, and their interactions are empty and unfruitful. We saw in the last chapter that the division between the residents of one of these houses might represent the quarrel between reason and emotion. In this chapter we shall consider the division between the residents of the other of these houses as an allegorical quarrel between instinct and imagination.

Squire Western represents the base, animal instincts that are one part of the composition of human nature. As befits his role, he is not entirely a man at all, but seems to have achieved total emotional and imaginative identification with two common varieties of canine creature, so that he sometimes imagines himself to be a dog and sometimes a fox, depending on whether he is in a belligerent or paranoid mood:

Mr. Western having finished his holloa, and taken a little breath, began to lament, in very pathetic terms, the extreme, the unfortunate condition of men, who are, says he, always whipt in by the humours of some d--n'd bitch or other. I think I was hard run enough by your mother for one man; but after giving her a dodge, her's another b---- follows me upon the foil; but curse my jacket if I will be run down in this manner by any o'um. (VII, iv, 315)

Squire Western is an extreme example of the type of character who, like Don Quixote or Toby Shandy, has been so long mounted on his hobby-horse that he has achieved total imaginative identification with his role. He even seems to suffer from the appropriate canine occupational disease: "the froth bursting forth from his lips the moment they were uncorked" (XVII, iii, 437). He has so distorted his imagination that he has lost ordinary human sympathy, and almost loves his dogs and horses more than his own daughter. Yet he sometimes shows more insight into human affairs from his animal perspective than more rational men. For example, he understands clearly that, underneath all their social pretensions his city cousins are a "kennel of hoop-petticoat b-----s" (XVII, iii, 433).¹

While Mr. Western often symbolizes the more comic aspects of the animal instincts of human beings, he has his darker side too. Perhaps it is not too anachronistic to suggest that the narrator hints at a dubious subconscious motive in the following passage:

¹ Alter, p. 93, and Johnson, pp. 125-129, comment on Western's animal delusions.

Western beheld the deplorable condition of his daughter with no more contrition or remorse, than the turnkey of Newgate feels at viewing the agonies of a tender wife, when taking her last farewell of her condemned husband . . . Or, to hit the case still more nearly, he felt the same compunction with a bawd, when some poor innocent, whom she hath ensnared into her hands, falls into fits at the first proposal of what is called seeing company. Indeed this resemblance would be exact, was it not that the bawd hath an interest in what she doth, and the father, though perhaps he may blindly think otherwise, can, in reality, have none in urging his daughter to almost an equal prostitution. (XVI, ii, 388)

Human instinct, unmollified by reason, imagination, and emotion is at best stubborn and at worst merciless.

Even if one does not wish to regard the foregoing passage as darkly psychological, hinting at a vicarious incestuous motive for Western's actions, one may safely conclude that it has an allegorical meaning. Instinct, represented by Western, is driven by base passions like a bawd and attempts to force the imagination, represented by Sophia, into a sterile marriage with lust. Indeed, her would-be fiancé, Blifil, is little more than a personification of all the dark, sadistic passions that hide beneath the fair exterior of human nature. But imagination can sometimes rescue instinct from these miserable compulsions and lead it away from its animal self-enclosure into full humanity.² Sophia, as a practitioner of the imaginative art of music, tries to help Western to escape from himself

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See the chapter, "Self-Enclosure in the Novels", in Golden, Fielding's Moral Psychology, pp. 42-75.

and in the process influences him towards humane, charitable actions:

It was Mr. Western's custom every afternoon, as soon as he was drunk, to hear his daughter play on the harpsicord; for he was a great lover of music, and perhaps, had he lived in town, might have passed for a connoisseur; for he always excepted against the finest compositions of Mr. Handel. He never relished any music but what was light and airy; and indeed his most favourite tunes were Old Sir Simon the King, St. George he was for England, Bobbing Joan, and some others.

His daughter, though she was a perfect mistress of music, and would never willingly have played any but Handel's, was so devoted to her father's pleasure, that she learnt all those tunes to oblige him. However, she would now and then endeavour to lead him into her own taste; and when he required the repetition of his ballads, would answer with a "nay, dear Sir;" and would often beg him to suffer her to play something else.

This evening, however, when the gentleman was retired from his bottle, she played all his favourites three times over without any solicitation. This so pleased the good squire, that he started from his couch, gave his daughter a kiss, and swore her hand was greatly improved. She took this opportunity to execute her promise to Tom; in which she succeeded so well, that the squire declared, if she would give him t'other bout of Old Sir Simon, he would give the gamekeeper his deputation the next morning. Sir Simon was played again and again, till the charms of the music soothed Mr. Western to sleep. (IV, v, 140)

Music hath charms to sooth the savage beast to sleep,
but first it inspires him with an uncommon degree of
compassion for Black George and his family. Thus the
imaginative arts cultivate sympathy and compassion,
the humane qualities of humanity, and lead men out of
barbarism into civilization.

Sophia, in her capacity as a musician, is something of an artist, and as such she manages to relieve the sterility

of the family situations in the first third of the book. Her skill on the harpsichord stimulates the imaginations of all those around her. Mrs. Honour tells Sophia that:

"One day, as your ladyship was playing on the harpsicord to my master, Mr. Jones was sitting in the next room, and methought he looked melancholy. La! says I, Mr. Jones, what's the matter? a penny for your thoughts, says I. Why, hussy, says he, starting up from a dream, what can I be thinking of, when that angel your mistress is playing? And then squeezing me by the hand, Oh! Mrs. Honour, says he, how happy will that man be!---and then he sighed. (IV, xiv, 178)

One may conclude from all this that Sophia, as a performer of an imaginative art, is associated with the imagination. But one must have better evidence than that which has been presented so far if one wishes to move from association to identification---if one wishes to claim not merely that Sophia is associated with the imagination, but that she is identified with it. Professor Battestin, who also has argued that Tom Jones is an allegory, has proposed an entirely different identification for Sophia from the one offered here. He has argued that, as her name suggests, she is identified with sophia, that higher wisdom which one can achieve only by first acquiring prudentia or practical wisdom.³ Battestin has defined this prudentia, which is the first step to sophia, as "the perspicacity of moral vision which alone

³ Battestin, "Fielding's Definition of Wisdom", pp. 204-205.

permits us to perceive the truth behind appearances and to proceed from the known to the obscure".⁴ He has written that "the primary function of prudence is to distinguish the essential characters of things".⁵ It is interesting to compare Battestin's definition of prudentia to Fielding's definition of invention: "By invention is really meant no more (and so the word signifies) than discovery, or finding out; or to explain it at large, a quick and sagacious penetration into the true essence of all the objects of our contemplation" (IX, i, 6). Battestin's definition of prudentia is remarkably similar to Fielding's definition of invention in that both of *these* faculties see beyond appearances to the essences of things. While one should not push this point very far, it is possible that Fielding identified the idea of prudentia with the idea of invention or imagination. Both allow us to see behind appearances with a "quick and sagacious penetration" to true essences.

According to Battestin, prudentia "depends on the proper functioning of memory, intelligence, and foresight: memory enabling us to recall what has happened, so that we may learn from experience; intelligence enabling us to discern the truth of circumstances as they really are; and foresight enabling us, on the basis of past knowledge and with the aid of a penetrating judgement, to estimate the future consequences of present actions and events."⁶

⁴ Battestin, "Fielding's Definition of Wisdom", p. 191.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

Now these three elements of the mind: memory, intelligence, and foresight, were intimately related to the imagination as Fielding seems to have conceived it. As was demonstrated in Chapter III, the imagination depends upon memory, for without the memory of certain emotional experiences, we have no ideas of them and cannot imagine what they are like. The imagination also depends upon intelligence, or more properly is itself a form of intelligence. It helps us "to discern the truth of circumstances as they really are", because its intelligent penetration allows us to create a sympathetic picture of another person's mind and to discover the moral essence of that mind. It gives us foresight, for as we saw with regard to a couple of examples in Chapter III, it allows us to conceive of events that have not yet occurred. Tom paints the future consequences of abandoning Nancy in Nightingale's imagination and imagines the consequences of abandoning Molly in his own. Since the imagination, as Fielding seems to have understood it, was so closely related to memory, intelligence, and foresight, he may have seen it as the great source of practical wisdom and prudence in the human mind and may have in effect identified it with prudence. This explanation may account for the similarity noted between his definition of invention and Battestin's

definition of prudentia. I shall try to prove in Chapter VI that only when Tom achieves an imaginative insight into evil does he become moral in the sense implied by prudentia.

If Sophia is the higher wisdom that is the object which prudence or practical wisdom seeks to achieve, she is also the "image" that is the object of Tom's imagination. Indeed, he sometimes uses this term with reference to her:

"The chastest constancy will I ever preserve to thy image" (V, x, 230). Tom swears that it is her image that will keep him faithful to her:

"Don't believe me upon my word; I have a better security, a pledge for my constancy, which it is impossible to see and to doubt." "What is that?" said Sophia, a little surprised. "I will show you, my charming angel," cries Jones, seizing her hand, and carrying her to the glass. There, behold it there in that lovely figure, in that face, that shape, those eyes, that mind which shines through these eyes; can the man who shall be in possession of these be inconstant? Impossible! my Sophia; they would fix a Dorimant, a Lord Rochester. You could not doubt it, if you could see yourself with any eyes but your own. Sophia blushed, and half smiled; but forcing again her brow into a frown---"If I am to judge," said she, "of the future by the past, my image will no more remain in your heart when I am out of your sight, than it will in this glass when I am out of the room." "By heaven, by all that is sacred!" said Jones, "it never was out of my heart." (XVIII, xii, 534)

Sophia, as image and object of the imagination, often stands before a mirror in the course of the novel. Her image is, as it were, reflected to the reader by the mirror of the imagination. Professor Battestin has commented on the frequent use of a mirror as an allegorical emblem:

Twice during the novel Fielding symbolically dramatizes the distinction he wishes his readers to make between the girl Sophy Western and her "Idea"---that is, in a Platonic sense, the mental image or form of that essential spiritual Beauty of which his heroine's lovely face is but an imperfect manifestation. As Socrates had regretted that mortal eyes were able to behold only the shadow of sophia, reflected as in a glass darkly, so Fielding uses the conventional emblem of the mirror to dramatize the nature of his allegory, to demonstrate that what is ultimately important about Sophia is not her physical charms, but her spiritual reality. The use of the mirror as an emblem of the mind's powers to conceptualize and abstract was common among iconographers. "The Glass," writes a commentator upon Ripa's emblems, "wherein we see no real Images, is a Resemblance of our Intellect, wherein we phancy many Ideas of Things that are not seen;" or it "denotes Abstraction, that is to say, by Accidents which the Sense comprehends; the Understanding comes to know their Nature, as we, by seeing the accidental Forms of Things in a Glass, consider their Essence." 7

Professor Battestin may have in mind here that old saw about art which tells us that it holds the mirror up to nature. M. H. Abrams, in The Mirror and the Lamp, has discussed the Platonic origins of this saying, which was a commonplace of criticism in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He has written that:

In elucidating his conception of poetry in the Republic, Plato himself first referred to images in a mirror, then to the work of a painter, and finally applied the distinctions drawn from both these illustrations to define the mimetic character of poetry. The progression is significant. The mirror as an analogue for poetry suffers from the conspicuous defect that its images are fleeting. Before the invention of photography the product of a painter was the best available instance

7

Battestin "Fielding's Definition of Wisdom", p. 208
 Professor Battestin's footnote: "See Isaac Fuller and Peirce Tempest, Iconologia: or, Moral Emblems, by Caesar Ripa (1709), Figures 229 and 269, folios 57 and 67."

of something which captures and retains a likeness. A picture, therefore, while itself a work of art was a useful adjunct to the mirror for clarifying the less obvious mimetic quality of an art like poetry, which reflects the visible world indirectly, by the significance of its words. 8

According to Abrams the parallel between painting and poetry was popularized by Plutarch and Horace, and thus became a commonplace of literary criticism between the middle of the sixteenth and the middle of the eighteenth centuries. Hence, by associating Sophia with a mirror image and, as we shall see, with many beautiful paintings, Fielding associates her with traditional metaphors for imaginative art---metaphors that most of his cultivated readers would recognize.⁹

Sophia draws Tom's attention to the fleeting nature of the mirror images of art, mentioned in the Abrams quotation, when she tells him: "If I am to judge . . . of the future by the past; my image will no more remain in your heart when I am out of your sight, than it will in this glass when I am out of the room" (XVIII, xii, 534). Tom reassures her that her image will not disappear like that in a mirror because it is permanently before him: "By heaven, by all that is sacred! . . . it never was out of my heart." Sophia's image is in fact as permanent as the images of the painter.

When Fielding introduces her into the novel,

8
Abrams, p. 33.

9
Ibid.

he associates her with the music of Handel and compares her to beautiful works of visual art:¹⁰

You feathered choristers of nature, whose sweetest notes not even Handel can excel, tune your melodious throats to celebrate her appearance. From love proceeds your music, and to love it returns. Awaken therefore that gentle passion in every swain: for lo! adorned with all the charms in which nature can array her; bedecked with beauty, youth, sprightliness, innocence, modesty, and tenderness, breathing sweetness from her rosy lips, and darting brightness from her sparkling eyes, the lovely Sophia comes.

Reader, perhaps thou hast seen the statue of the Venus de Medicis. Perhaps, too, thou hast seen the gallery of beauties at Hampton-Court.

Yet it is possible, my friend, that thou mayest have seen all these without being able to form an exact idea of Sophia: for she did not exactly resemble any of them. She was most like the picture of Lady Ranelagh: and I have heard, more still to the famous Duchess of Mazarine: but most of all, she resembled one whose image never can depart from my breast, and whom if thou dost remember, thou hast then, my friend, an adequate idea of Sophia. (IV, ii, 126-127).

Sophia is a permanent image like a beautiful statue or a beautiful painting, or like the image of the wife that was, as it were, painted on the author's heart. Thus, by associating Sophia with the metaphors of the mirror and of the art of painting that were the Platonic and Horatian similes for the imaginative arts, Fielding may perhaps have meant to emphasize her allegorical role as a figure of the imagination. The reader will remember that the eighteenth century laid heavy emphasis on the

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Battestin, "Fielding's Definition of Wisdom", pp. 206-207.

visual aspects of the imagination, and since Sophia is most often compared to some object of sight, whether a statue or an image in a mirror, the idea we have of her corresponds to the eighteenth-century idea of the imagination, which held that it was dependent on objects of vision.

She, like Handel's music or that of the birds, "awaken[s] the gentle passion in every swain" and leads him into full humanity. The imagination serves to allow one to escape from one's own passions into human sympathy. We have seen this with regard to Western, and we see it again in the following passage with regard to Tom. As with Western, it is Sophia who through the imagination serves to bring Tom out of his base passion of pride and into the real world:

[Tom] resolved rather to quit Sophia, than to pursue her to her ruin.

It is difficult for any who have not felt it, to conceive the glowing warmth which filled his breast on the first contemplation of this victory over his passion. Pride flattered him so agreeably, that his mind perhaps enjoyed perfect happiness; but this was only momentary: Sophia soon returned to his imagination, and allayed the joy of his triumph with no less bitter pangs than a good-natured general must feel, when he surveys the bleeding heaps, at the price of whose blood he hath purchased his laurels; for thousands of tender ideas lay murdered before our conqueror. (VI, xii, 290)

If Sophia is the image that is the object of Tom's imagination, Tom is the image that is the object of her own:

As Lady Bellaston had acquainted her that she should not be at home till late, Sophia, expecting to find no one in the room, came hastily in, and went directly to a glass which almost fronted her, without once looking towards the upper end of the room, where the statue of Jones now stood motionless.---In this glass it was, after contemplating her own lovely face, that she first discovered the said statue; when instantly turning about, she perceived the reality of the vision: upon which she gave a violent scream, and scarce preserved herself from fainting, till Jones was able to move to her, and support her in his arms.

To paint the looks or thoughts of either of these lovers is beyond my power. As their sensations, from their mutual silence, may be judged to have been too big for their own utterance, it cannot be supposed that I should be able to express them: and the misfortune is, that few of my readers have been enough in love, to feel by their own hearts what past at this time in theirs. (XIII, xi, 263)

Sophia, regarding Tom in the mirror of the imagination, sees him an analogous to a work of art, a statue. He is like a statue in that he is a permanent rather than a fleeting image for her. Because the visual artist cannot portray the inward emotion that he wishes to express, but can represent only the outward forms and appearances of his statue, he must rely on the imaginations of the observers to conceive of the inward emotion that lies behind the outward form. Similarly, because Tom can express his inward emotion only by his outward actions and appearances, he must hope that Sophia will use her imagination to conceive of the inward emotion that underlies these external actions and appearances. The narrator's situation is also like that of the visual artist. To paint

the looks or thoughts of his lovers is beyond his power so that like the sculptor or painter he must rely on the portrayal of the outward form of the action in order to express the inward emotion. He can only hope that his reader's imaginations are experienced enough to conceive of these emotions.

The mirror of the imagination, then, is a reflector of emotion. In the following quotation, the moon becomes an imaginative mirror, reflecting thoughts back and forth between lovers: "At length Jones made a full stop, and turning about, cries, "Who knows, Partridge, but the loveliest creature in the universe may have her eyes now fixed on that very moon, which I behold this instant!" (VIII, ix, 418). The moon is one of those tokens which, like Sophia's pet bird, or her muff, or her pocketbook, serves as a reflector of emotion between separated lovers.

From all the evidence presented so far in this chapter, it seems reasonable to identify Sophia as an allegorical figure of the sympathetic imagination. She is certainly possessed of more of this quality than any other character in the book. Even Tom, the representative of emotion, distorts the images of others somewhat in his imagination. He idealizes Molly and later Sophia so that he does not imagine their minds as they truly are and cannot fully sympathize with them. But Sophia for her part never idealizes Tom. She is not particularly shocked by his various sexual escapades:

In reality, Sophia was much more offended at the freedoms which she thought (and not without good reason) he had taken with her name and character, than at any freedoms, in which, under his present circumstances, he had indulged himself with the person of another woman; and to say truth, I believe Honour could never have prevailed on her to leave Upton without her seeing Jones, had it not been for those two strong instances of a levity in his behaviour, so void of respect, and indeed so highly inconsistent with any degree of love and tenderness in great and delicate minds. (XII, viii, 182)

Sophia is indeed so far from being angry with Jones for his various affairs that she sympathizes with his confusion when Molly's pregnancy is discovered (IV, x, 160). While she can sympathize with his human frailties, she cannot accept any want of compassion on his part which would lead him to besmirch her name, for that would indicate that his own sympathetic imagination was deficient.

In the following dialogue, Sophia tries to make Tom understand that in idealizing her he had distorted her image. He tells her that her image:

"never was out of my heart. The delicacy of your sex cannot conceive the grossness of ours, nor how little one sort of amour has to do with the heart." "I will never marry a man," replied Sophia, very gravely, "who shall not learn refinement enough to be as incapable as I am myself of making such a distinction." (XVIII, xii, 534)

Tom's protestations in this passage are rather hypocritical. He tells her in effect that while his heart remained true to her, other parts of him did not.¹¹ At the root of

¹¹

I owe the idea that Tom's words are hypocritical here to Dr. B. N. Rosenblood.

this hypocrisy is the pernicious distinction between the carnal and idealized loves, which causes Tom to regard one sort of woman as beneath ordinary humanity and another sort as above it. Since he does not regard either sort as the normal human mixture of flesh and spirit, he cannot sympathize with either because he always emphasizes but one aspect of their dual natures, either the carnal aspect or the spiritual, and thus distorts their true images. Therefore Sophia insists that she too is an ordinary woman composed of both flesh and spirit, who does not make distinctions between the spiritual and carnal loves, and that unless Tom learns to regard her as such an ordinary woman, she will not marry him.

Earlier in this thesis I argued that Fielding believed in total imaginative sympathy for the beloved on the part of the lover. The lover must sympathize not only with the beloved's more noble passions, but even with his selfish carnal desires. By these standards, Sophia, who is absolutely sympathetic to both the aspects of Tom's nature, is the perfect lover.

VI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOM'S CHARACTER

Implied by the allegorical method of Tom Jones is the requirement that the characters should remain consistent to the end. Allworthy, representing reason, must remain reasonable, and Tom, representing emotion, must remain emotional. The principle of conservation of character, therefore, is a methodological necessity of allegory. Allworthy, the figure of reason, and Tom, the figure of emotion, are divided from one another because they both lack imagination, but they cannot acquire it through any internal development within their characters which would violate their eternal allegorical essences. These must remain unchanging. One way that they gain the imagination is through an act in the public drama. They marry it (at least Tom does), and this public act, the wedding of Sophia and Tom, symbolizes the new unity of mind which they have achieved. However, while the principle of conservation of character is a necessity on the allegorical level, it is not a necessity on the realistic level. While the characters must maintain a certain consistency in keeping with their roles in the allegory, they are free within these limits to change and develop. Thus Tom always remains emotional, but at the same time he matures quite a lot and in a specific direction. In this

chapter I will keep the promise I made in the introduction and outline this private character development, which parallels the development of the public allegorical drama.

While Fielding made charity the common test of his Christian heroes, there is a degree of charity which even the most good-natured of them sometimes fail to equal. This most difficult test of faith is the obligation to forgive one's enemies:

That as good-nature, which is the chief if not only quality in the mind of man in the least tending that way, doth not forbid the avenging an injury, Christianity hath taught us something beyond what the religion of nature and philosophy could arrive at; and consequently, that it is not as old as the creation, nor is revelation useless with regard to morality, if it had taught us no more than this excellent doctrine, which, if generally followed, would make mankind much happier, as well as better than they are.¹

Even so good-natured a man as Allworthy protests when Tom forgives Black George, telling him that:

"You carry this forgiving temper too far. Such mistaken mercy is not only weakness, but borders on injustice, and is very pernicious to society, as it encourages vice. The dishonesty of this fellow, I might, perhaps, have pardoned, but never his ingratitude. And give me leave to say, when we suffer any temptation to atone for dishonesty itself, we are as candid and merciful as we ought to be; and so far I confess I have gone; for I have often pitied the fate of a highwayman, when I have been on the grand jury, and have more than once applied to the judge on the behalf of such as have had any mitigating circumstances in their case; but when dishonesty is attended with any blacker crime, such as cruelty, murder, ingratitude or the like, compassion and forgiveness then become faults. I am convinced the fellow is a villain, and he shall be punished; at least as far as I can punish him."(XVIII, xi, 530)

¹
The Works of Henry Fielding, Esq., Vol. V: Articles in The Champion (March 27, 1740), pp. 387-388.

By confusing his secular duty to punish criminals with his Christian duty to forgive them, Allworthy quibbles about what is an absolute religious obligation. At least one critic, Morris Golden, has taken Allworthy's statement to be Fielding's and has argued that Fielding did not believe in Christian forgiveness of sin. He has written:

Though the basic disposition of the good man is benevolent--- a corollary of his necessary religious feelings---nonetheless the right use of reason teaches him to protect himself and society against evil where he sees it. Thus Allworthy insists that Blifful does not deserve the kindness which the equally well-disposed though less reasonable Tom urges: "yet do not flatter him with any hopes of my forgiveness; for I shall never forgive villainy farther than my religion obliges me, and that extends not either to our bounty or our conversation" (XVIII, xi). He also condemns Tom's readiness to forgive Black George's dishonesty and ingratitude. . . . As all his social pamphlets show, both from his analytical observation of life and by training as lawyer and magistrate, Fielding refused to fall into the trap of easy and universal benevolism; he insisted that evil was a reality and not an illusion, and that it had to be dealt with severely. Only the exercise of reason--- which involves the assessment of how life develops in society---can guide the responsible judge. 2

Yet to read Fielding in this way would be almost to identify his beliefs with those satirized by Dr. Harrison in Amelia. In response to a young clergyman who believes that the commandment of universal love "is only to heap coals of fire upon their heads" (IX, viii, 453), Harrison observes that:

The commentator you mention, I think, tells us that love is not here to be taken in the strict sense, so as to signify the complacency of the heart; you may hate your enemies as God's enemies; and seek due revenge of them for His honour; and for your own sakes too, you may seek moderate satisfaction of them; but then you are to love them with a love consistent with these things---that is to say, in plainer words, you are to love them and hate them, and bless and curse, and do them good and mischief. (IX, viii, 454)

In contrast to Allworthy, who does not believe that charity to criminals extends to our bounty, Harrison insists on the absolute meaning of the biblical text without regard for worldly considerations:

No man who understands what it is to love, and to bless, and to do good can mistake the meaning. But if they required comment, the Scripture itself affords enow. If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing. They do not, indeed, want the comments of men, who, when they cannot bend their minds to the obedience of Scripture, are desirous to wrest Scripture to a compliance with their own inclinations. (IX, vii, 454)

While he makes an allowance for those who are obliged by duty to punish criminals, Harrison leaves no doubt that this secular duty is distinct from religious duty, and he warns against those like Allworthy, who would confuse them:

Indeed as an enemy merely, and from a spirit of revenge, he cannot, and he ought not to prosecute him; but as an offender against the laws of his country, he may, and it is his duty to do so; is there any spirit of revenge in the magistrates or officers of justice, when they punish criminals? Why do such, ordinarily I mean, concern themselves in inflicting punishments, but because it is their duty? and why may not a private man deliver an offender into the hands of justice, from the same laudable motive? (IX, viii, 455)

If we cannot regard Allworthy as one of those who would punish criminals out of a spirit of revenge, we can see that his forgiveness is much more conditional than Harrison's.

Standing in the way of compassion for criminals, on which Harrison insists as a religious duty, is the good man's innocent incomprehension of evil. As has been argued above, Fielding seems to have believed that benevolence and compassion depend on imaginative sympathy for the sufferer. Therefore compassion of the righteous for the unrighteous is impossible because imaginative sympathy of good for evil is impossible. The good cannot use their imaginations to feel what the evil feel. Allworthy cannot sympathize with Blifil because he cannot use his imagination to get inside Blifil's mind. Being good, he cannot see things from Blifil's evil point of view. He is as ignorant as Blifil of the ultimate moral facts and as blinded by his own nature to a universal sympathy with mankind. Golden discusses this "self-enclosure" in his excellent study,

Fielding's Moral Psychology:

In Tom Jones, Fielding is more concerned to show the variety of ways in which people may be oriented by their idiosyncrasies to understand the world around them. Exhibiting the diversity of human character, he frequently argues that many people do not have certain passions or motivations, and therefore cannot recognize them in others. Some, like Bliful or Thwackum, cannot understand charity as a motive to action, because they lack any trace of it. For the same reason, some, like Tom, cannot at first recognize evil; and some, like the Man of the Hill, are so overwhelmed to discover malice that they are twisted far past a reasonable mental balance, seeing depravity everywhere where

they had earlier not seen it at all.³

Golden argues that Fielding employs a Lockean psychology throughout his novels. The word "charity" is meaningless to Blifil because he lacks an idea to attach to the word, and the word "evil" is meaningless to Tom because he also lacks its corresponding idea.⁴ Until Tom achieves a full understanding of the word "evil," his imagination is impotent because, as Locke would say, it lacks an idea to correspond to the word. Thus he cannot imaginatively combine the idea of evil with other ideas in order to create a picture of Blifil's mind. He cannot understand Blifil, and he cannot sympathize with him.

At best, unfallen characters like Allworthy or like Tom in the first half of the novel achieve only an intellectual understanding of evil, but because they lack an imaginative understanding, are still apt to fall victim to the machinations of the unrighteous. An intellectual understanding of evil is fairly easy to achieve. Both Sophia and Tom become intellectually aware of Blifil's ill-nature while they are still children. Sophia understands it from the day he maliciously releases her pet bird: And certain it is, that from this day Sophia began to have some little kindness for Tom Jones, and no little

³ Golden, pp. 73-74.

⁴ Golden, pp. 11-12.

aversion for his companion. . . To say the truth, Sophia, when very young, discerned that Tom, though an idle, thoughtless rattling rascal, was nobody's enemy but his own; and that Master Blifil, though a prudent, discreet, sober young gentleman, was at the same time strongly attached to the interest only of one single person, and who that single person was, the reader will be able to divine without any assistance of ours. (IV, v, 136)

Tom, who is not as bright as Sophia, takes longer to discover Blifil's villainy, but he still discovers his selfishness quite early. In the following passage he recounts the history of his feeling towards *him* :

"He hath the cunning of the devil himself, and you might live with him many years without discovering him. I was bred up with him from my infancy, and we were hardly ever asunder; but it is very lately only, that I discovered half the villainy which is in him. I own I never greatly liked him. I thought he wanted that generosity of spirit, which is the sure foundation of all that is great and noble in human nature. I saw a selfishness in him long ago which I despised; but it is lately, very lately, that I have found him capable of the basest and blackest designs." (XII, x, 188)

Fielding distinguished between two degrees of insight into evil. The first of these is "that quick-sighted penetration, whose hawk's eyes no symptom of evil can escape" (XI, x, 142). This insight is the unholy sympathy between malevolent men, which "as it proceeds from the heart of the observer, so it dives into the heart of the observed." There is however a second degree of insight, which is "indeed, no other than the faculty of seeing what is before your eyes, and of drawing conclusions from what you see. The former of these is unavoidable by those

who have any eyes, and the later is perhaps no less certain and necessary a consequence of our having any brains. This is altogether as bitter an enemy to guilt as the former is to innocence" (XI, x, 142). The second degree of insight is in the possession of all the good characters throughout most of the novel, but it does not seem to be a very secure guard of their innocence. To be such a guard it would have to be combined with imaginative insight into evil, which, unfortunately, can only be obtained at the expense of the very innocence it should protect. Tom is corrupted so that he may obtain such an imaginative insight----so that through his fall, he may obtain an understanding of evil from the inside and emerge from his experience as the perfect forgiving Christian.

Critics have in general been fairly easy on Tom's sins, but if one considers his affair with Lady Bellaston in a certain light, it seems pretty black. He originally grants her favours in the hopes of obtaining an interview with Sophia:

It would be tedious to give the particular conversation, which consisted of very common and ordinary occurrences, and which lasted from two till six o'clock in the morning. It is sufficient to mention all of it that is anywise material to this history. And this was a promise that the lady would endeavour to find out Sophia, and in a few days bring him to an interview with her, on condition that he would take his leave of her. When this was thoroughly settled, and a second meeting in the evening appointed at the same place, they separated. (XIII, vii, 250)

The contractual nature of the affair, which is exploitative on both sides, is emphasized by the use of the legalistic words "condition" and "settled." The gentleman has more than one ulterior motive and does not act out of pure good nature as he did before. He needs the money that Lady Bellaston gives him. While Tom sees Lady Bellaston's aged unattractiveness as:

discouragements on the one side, he felt his obligations full as strongly on the other; nor did he less plainly discern the ardent passion whence these obligations proceeded, the extreme violence of which if he failed to equal, he well knew the lady would think him ungrateful; and, what is worse, he would have thought himself so. He knew the tacit consideration upon which all her favours were conferred; and as his necessity obliged him to accept them, so his honour, he concluded, forced him to pay the price. This therefore he resolved to do, whatever misery it cost him, and to devote himself to her, from the great principle of justice by which the laws of some countries oblige a debtor, who is no otherwise capable of discharging his debt, to become the slave of his creditor. (XIII, ix, 257)

This passage is an excellent example of Fielding's ironic technique of presenting the motives and rationalizations of his characters. Although the passage is ostensibly from Tom's point of view, it ^{perhaps} manages to suggest that Lady Bellaston's sexual ardour **compensates** Tom for her unattractiveness. In one sentence Fielding placed Tom's financial necessity before his honour in the syntax, thus implying that it is prior to his honour in his mind. Golden has pointed out that Fielding hated the perversion of love "by which a badly disposed or

indifferent person may turn others into machines for his own pleasures."⁵ If Tom, remaining grateful to Lady Bellaston, does not turn her into a machine for his own pleasures, he certainly turns her into a machine that advances his own interests. Tom, in his affair with her, is self-deluded and hypocritical. because he justifies self-interest in terms of honour. Furthermore, as I pointed out earlier, he is guilty of some hypocrisy towards Sophia. When he tells her that in all his affairs her image was never out of his heart (XVIII, xii, 534), he engages in hypocritical quibbling, for his words imply that the rest of him was unfaithful.

Because Tom shares in Blifil's sin of hypocrisy, although in a lesser degree and in a different context, he can for this very reason forgive him. Participating to some degree in Blifil's ill-nature and understanding to some extent his motives, he feels imaginative sympathy for his brother. Unlike Allworthy he possesses the Lockean ideas which are necessary to imagination, understanding, and sympathy. Similarly, because he has been tempted by poverty to receive money from Lady Bellaston, he can understand Black George and plead for him: "Consider, sir, what a temptation to a man who has tasted such bitter distress it must be to have a sum in his possession, which must put him and his family beyond any future

⁵ Golden, p. 58.

possibility of suffering the like" (XVIII, xi, 530). The Tom we see at the end of the novel has indeed changed, for we remember that the beginning of it he was unable to forgive Thwackum's brutalities (III, viii). Indeed, Tom is not merely a better Christian but a more effective one. His success in the Nightingale-Miller negotiations is due to the fact that, being somewhat of a rake himself, he can sympathize with Nightingale's position.

The History of a Foundling follows Tom's progress from innocence through experience to higher innocence. Knowledge of evil from the inside is apparently a necessary precondition to the development of the forgiving temper of the Christian. However, while Tom could sin and suffer only a fortunate fall, Sophia and Amelia, in the age of the double standard, ^{of sexual morality} could not. John S. Coolidge, in his article "Fielding and 'Conservation of Character'", discusses the problem:

The temptation of Amelia presents the same kind of difficulty as that of Eve [in *Paradise Lost*]. Precisely because she is innocent, she should not perceive "the least inward hint" of any evil. The theme is one which keeps turning up in Fielding. Heartfree, Parson Adams, Allworthy, Sophia, and Amelia play the changes of the idea that innocence and suspicion are incompatible. It is a companion theme to that of the incompatibility of good nature and prudence. If both themes seem psychologically unconvincing---curiously arbitrary problems to form the main focus of a major writer's work---it is because it is not in strictly psychological terms that their real significance is to be understood. They are redactions in Augustan terms of the great, recurrent question of the relation of evil to good. For Tom Jones to acquire prudence, or for Amelia to see through the designs of a tempter who diabolically couches his appeal in terms of all that is good---

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B. N. Rosenblood, unpublished article, "Fielding's Allegory: The Nature of Narrative Faith".

generosity and justice, affection for children, and so forth---would imply knowledge of evil in themselves. Can such knowledge be part of essential goodness? Can good admit the participation of evil without ceasing to be essentially itself? But in a world where evil exists, can good preserve itself without that participation of evil? ⁷

To Coolidge's questions may be added a more radical one: Can good be called good until it has forgiven evil? If my interpretation of Tom Jones is correct, this question must be answered in the negative. Sophia and Amelia, as symbols of feminine virtue, must learn the meaning of evil and forgive it, but they cannot do anything really immoral. By listening to the confessions of their fallen sisters, by participating vicariously and passively in evil, they gain the necessary understanding of its nature.⁸ Sophia listens to Mrs. Fitzpatrick's story, which parallels her own in many respects, and tells her "Indeed, Harriet, I pity you from my soul!" (XI, vi, 128). Amelia, realizing that her own innocence is in danger, takes Mrs. Bennet's confession so much to heart that she nearly faints away (VII, ii, 307). Each heroine learns that since virtue is easily corrupted, her own innocence is not saintly but providential.

The stories told by these ladies illustrate the purpose of all story telling, which serves to give the

⁷
Coolidge, pp. 168-169.

⁸
Rosenblood.

listener "a quick and sagacious penetration into the true essence of all the objects of our contemplation" (IX, i, 6). Offering herself as a "moral sacrifice", the story teller helps her innocent listener to understand evil without participating in it actively. The novelist is another story teller who offers "moral sacrifices" to his readers in order that they may achieve "a quick and sagacious penetration" into the nature of evil.⁹

⁹
Rosenblood.

VII

CONCLUSION

I hope the preceding six chapters have presented the evidence necessary to prove the following conclusion: Tom Jones is an allegory---more specifically, a psychomachy, in which personified psychological entities engage in a struggle which represents the struggle within the human soul. For those who find such a conclusion *diminishes the scope* of Tom Jones, here is C. S. Lewis's defense of the psychomachy from The Allegory of Love:

To be thus conscious of the divided will is necessarily to turn the mind in upon itself. Whether it is the introspection which reveals the division, or whether the division, having first revealed itself in the experience of actual moral failure, provokes the introspection, need not here be decided. Whatever the causal order may be, it is plain that to fight against 'Temptation' is also to explore the inner world; and it is scarcely less plain that to do so is to be already on the verge of allegory. We cannot speak, perhaps we can hardly think, of an 'inner conflict' without a metaphor; and every metaphor is an allegory in little. And as the conflict becomes more and more important, it is inevitable that these metaphors should expand and coalesce, and finally turn into the fully-fledged allegorical poem. It would be a misunderstanding to suggest that there is another and better way of representing that inner world, and that we have found it in the novel and drama. The gaze turned inward with a moral purpose does not discover character. No man is a 'character' to himself, and least of all while he thinks of good and evil. Character is what he has to produce; within he finds only the raw material, the passions and emotions which contend for mastery. The unitary 'soul' or 'personality' which interests the novelist is for him merely the arena in which the combatants meet: it is the combatants --- those 'accidents occurring in a substance'---that he must attend. 1

1
Lewis, pp. 60-61.

Thus it was natural for Fielding, who habitually regarded the minds of his characters as the arenas in which the passions fought, to expand these metaphors of the bellum intestinum into a fully-fledged allegorical novel.

Besides those affinities between allegory and satire mentioned by Ellen D. Leyburn,² there are practical reasons why they both should be found in the same work. Allegory limits the destructiveness of satire. By limiting the function of each of his characters to that of an allegorical symbol of a quality, the author can direct his satire against the one particular quality, rather than against the person. Thus the satire is directed against Allworthy as a figure of impotent reason, rather than against Allworthy as a good man. Furthermore, allegory provides a means ---perhaps the only means---of presenting a positive thesis in a work of satire, which by its very nature is anti-thetical, negative, and even nihilistic. Finally, allegory allows the complicated turnings of an elaborate plot to take on symbolic meaning. In general, the plot of Tom Jones symbolizes first the falling-apart of the dis-united elements of the human mind and then their reunification through the imagination.

While allegory requires "conservation of character" as part of its methodology in order to preserve the allegorical meanings of the various characters unchanged, it does not require this consistency to be so rigid as to preclude any character development. Thus Tom's character changes within limits.

2

See the introduction of this thesis for some of Leyburn's remarks.

Fielding seems to have regarded the imagination as one of the most important elements in the human psyche. He conceived of it in surprisingly prosaic eighteenth-century terms. For him it was little more than the power of putting together ideas already received by the senses into pictures which were true only insofar as they accurately resembled the things that been observed.³ Hence it was a mimetic power, in as much as he thought it should be used to imitate realistically what existed in nature; but it was not a creative power, for it could not legitimately ^{create} anything that did not exist in nature. Yet nevertheless it was an essential power of the human mind because it supplied reason with the ideas on which reason worked. Without imagination, reason would be useless. Moreover, the imagination allowed each man to create a picture of another man's mind in order to discover its emotional and moral states. Thus it was essential to sympathy, for it allowed one to conceive of the emotions another person was feeling; and it was essential to prudence, for it allowed one to conceive of the moral cast of another person's mind. To do these two things one had to have experienced the emotional and moral states oneself, because without experience one could not imagine them.

The philosophical moral of Tom Jones may be summed up as follows. Reason, without the ideas of the imagination to work with, is worthless. Allworthy's experience is

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Kenneth MacLean, in John Locke and English Literature of the Eighteenth Century, has written that the men of that period defined the imagination as "sense at second hand". p. 56.

limited, so that it has not taught him certain ideas. His imagination is empty, lacking the ideas of irrational passion and of sin. Therefore he cannot sympathize with certain people because he never felt what they feel, and he cannot prudently guard himself against them because he cannot conceive of the evil cast of their minds. But Tom, who has experienced irrational passion and sin, can sympathize with these people and forgive them; yet at the same time he can protect himself against them. Therefore Fielding presents us with the paradox that only the fallen man can be truly religious because only he has the imaginative capacity to forgive sinners. If this interpretation seems rather dry and philosophical, the reader will remember that Le Bossu argued for just such a dry and philosophical moral as the "fable" of the epic.⁴

Fielding resembled his romantic heirs in the stress he laid on the importance of the imagination. But he would probably have disapproved of their more luxuriant writings on the grounds that these, being creative rather than mimetic, were the "productions of distempered brains".⁵

He seems to have laid especial emphasis on the forgiveness of sins as the distinguishing mark of the true Christian. This is a point which I think critics

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See chapter II of this thesis.

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Tom Jones, IV, i, 123. Fielding is like Blake in his habit of personifying psychological entities. See Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry (Princeton University Press, 1969).

have not sufficiently noted. Even good-nature "doth not forbid the avenging an injury".⁶ Yet both Tom Jones and Amelia end with the heroes pensioning off the villains. These acts of charity, being among the last acts mentioned in the two novels, have very prominent positions and therefore must have considerable significance.

In the interpretation presented in this thesis, then, Tom Jones is an allegorical novel, in which the main characters, Allworthy, Sophia, Tom, and Western, stand for reason, imagination, emotion, and instinct. As befits her symbolic role, Sophia is the only character who possesses the quality of sympathetic imagination at the beginning of the novel, but by the end she has managed to share it through her subtle influence with the other characters and to reunite them in a new harmony. Perhaps Fielding was thinking of her⁷ and of the powers of the imagination that she symbolized when he wrote "an example is a kind of picture, in which Virtue becomes as it were an object of sight, and strikes us with an idea of that loveliness which Plato asserts there is in her naked charms."⁸ The author of this thesis hopes that this interpretation of the characters of the novel will throw some light on "the great, useful, and uncommon doctrine, which it is the purpose of . . . [Tom Jones] to inculcate" (XII, ix, 182-183).

⁶
The Works of Henry Fielding, Esq., Vol. V: Articles in the Champion (March, 27, 1740), p. 387.

⁷
 Battestin, "Fielding's Definition of Wisdom", pp. 204-205.

⁸
 "Dedication", Tom Jones, p. cxii.

VIII

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