HENRY FIELDING'S READER

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ABSTRACT

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This study endeavours to discover who Fielding's reader was, historically and in Fielding's view. The first parts of the thesis discuss the most recent evidence for the size and composition of the eighteenth-century reading public, and what is known about Fielding's public as revealed in publication data and contemporary criticism of the novels. We then look at Fielding's "implied reader", and the qualities of the reader whom Fielding seemed to be addressing in his fiction are explored through analysis of the reader mentioned explicitly in Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, and the one implied by certain elements of the fiction.

The last part of the thesis proposes to account for some aspects of Amelia as the result of a changed opinion on Fielding's part of what his reader was like. It will be suggested that an author's reader can affect the shape that his fiction takes.

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Introduction

The following is an historical and textual study of Fielding's reader. We will attempt to determine the characteristics of that reader based on a number of sources.

First, we will look at the historical evidence supplied by current research on academic opportunities for eighteenth-century children, concentrating on a group not previously considered able to gain an education: the poor. From what we know of the number and type of schools available, we will ascertain the extent of literacy in the period. We will also look at the evidence supplied by contemporary literary sources, in an effort to determine how widely available reading matter was in the century. This part of the study will deal primarily with methods of distribution of reading matter in general and fiction in particular. As a whole the historical overview is intended to reveal the social and regional origins of Fielding's potential readership.

The second chapter brings together what is known about Fielding's actual reader, and bases its conclusions on sales figures and, more importantly, on the contemporary criticism of the novels. Such critical commentary tells us not only who was reading the novels, but what were these readers'

expectations in regard to the novel.

Our study will then turn to Fielding's first two novels, _Joseph Andrews_ and _Tom Jones_, and will look at the assumed or "implied" reader of these works. The first chapter of this section discusses only explicit addresses to the reader, which in Fielding's work are so numerous that they provide a unique opportunity to view how Fielding envisaged his reader. The second chapter attempts to deduce what assumptions about the reader lay behind Fielding's construction of the novels' plots, their characterisation, and some aspects of Fielding's imagery and language. From these elements of Fielding's work a fairly clear picture emerges of the sort of reader to whom Fielding's fiction was addressed.

Finally, Fielding's last novel, _Amelia_, will be discussed in the light of what we discover about his real and assumed reader. It will be suggested that Fielding, in writing _Amelia_, had a somewhat different opinion of his audience, and that the different tone evident in _Amelia_ was the product of this new opinion.

I: Eighteenth Century Readership

Until recently, it was believed that readership in eighteenth-century England was quite limited both in extent and scope. Scholars such as Ian Watt and Richard Altick have attempted to prove that the reading public was composed mainly of aristocrats and a rising "middle class", although the latter term is seldom satisfactorily defined.[1] It is evident that Watt and Altick are referring to urban-based merchants, financiers, professionals, and manufacturers. Before discussing the available evidence for the size and composition of the reading public, we should look briefly at what these scholars have said, concentrating on the sources of their conclusions.

Watt's The Rise of the Novel is without question among the most influential works published on this subject. Watt seeks to account for the development of the novel as a genre in part in the growth of a middle-class reading public. He goes into some detail concerning the cost of books, and shows that purchasing volumes was beyond the financial resources of most unskilled urban and agricultural labourers.[2] Time was another inhibiting factor for working-class readers; hours of work were long, and at night candles were used sparingly. Most importantly, Watt says, academic opportunities

for poor children were not good, owing in part to hostility from wealthier classes, which expressed fear of the social chaos that might arise from working-class literacy.[3]

Altick's view is much the same. Although most of his study chronicles the spread of literacy in the nineteenth century, his introductory chapters on the earlier period discuss in some detail the factors limiting the size of the eighteenth-century reading public. He too emphasizes the prohibitive cost of books, and describes the apparent lack of literacy among poor urban and especially poor agricultural classes. As he says, "only a minority of rural families had a single literate in their midst, and few of those that did could obtain books."[4] The only literature available to those in the lower classes were chapbooks and printed ballads, Altick continues, and even copies of these forms of entertainment were difficult to obtain.[5] In his research, Altick arrived independently from Watt at the conclusion that the agricultural and urban working classes formed a relatively minor portion of the reading public.

Leo Lowenthal has also said that the middle class and aristocracy were practically speaking the only classes which read to any extent. While accepting the fact that there was a growth in the size of the reading public during the century, Lowenthal contends that only in the latter

half of the century did the lower classes begin to read in significant numbers.[6] In Literature, Popular Culture, and Society, he says that in the earlier period the spread of reading came about due to the fact that the literate were reading more.[7] Lowenthal, however, is seldom rigorous in discussing his evidence, since his generalisations are there only to provide a basis for his analysis of the relationships between literature and society.

All three scholars base their conclusions on the availability of volumes, and on earlier research done on eighteenth-century education. They do occasionally mention means other than buying books that readers had to obtain reading matter, such as libraries and cheap journals, but consider them only briefly. We will now look in more detail first at academic opportunities for the poor, and then at the many different ways literature of all types was distributed during the century. Statistics are rarely available, and those that exist tend to be unreliable; therefore, we can only make general comments on the size and composition of the reading public, and on the likely backgrounds of Fielding's readers. The most recent evidence, however, seems to show that the reading public was considerably larger than indicated by earlier scholars, and that Fielding's readership may have included members of a number of classes.

The educational system in England in the eighteenth century, as in all European countries, had its roots in religious institutions. By the eighteenth century formal education had become secularised to some degree, but in many ways elementary education retained its religious ties. Schools were often run by churches, and teachers were generally clergymen who taught in order to supplement their income. The Reformation of the sixteenth century provided an important spur to the spread of education; with its emphasis on individual reading and interpretation of the Bible, Protestantism encouraged the extension of education to classes previously not able to obtain it. Along with this general desire to spread the knowledge of reading, to make the Bible accessible to many, was sectarian rivalry. Each denomination sought to guide young minds according to its own precepts, and set up its own schools to deflect the possible influence of other denominations.[8] In all, as we will see when we look at curricula in the schools, education in the century never lost its religious flavour.

It is almost impossible to say for certain how many elementary schools there were in the country as a whole. The most important organisation setting up charity schools for the poor, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, founded in 1698, each year reported having exactly the same number of schools and students--1,329 and 23,421 respectively--

under its jurisdiction.[9] These totally unreliable figures can be compared to M. G. Jones' statistics, which show that approximately two hundred new schools were endowed in each of the first three decades of the eighteenth century.[10] Elementary schools were also fairly well distributed in the country. It appears that over half of the parishes, and all of the towns and cities, had schools. A survey taken in Yorkshire in 1743, for example, showed that 58% of the parishes had schools, and that there was an average of twenty students per school.[11] The important question is whether schools were located only in large urban centers or could be found in provincial towns and villages. R. M. Wiles, who has done a great deal of research in the provincial newspapers of the eighteenth century, found that "local newspapers carried notices of school openings and announcements of teaching positions vacant."[12] There must have been schools, then, in rural areas. Both Watt and Altick believe that attendance was erratic among poorer children in part because parents preferred to have them working in the fields or in textile mills.[13] The former may be true, but the factory system and the rise of child labour in industry was a phenomenon of the second half of the century when the Industrial Revolution began. Judging by contemporary autobiographies, which Victor Neuburg has looked at in some detail, attendance in charity schools may have been

higher and more regular than previously thought. Children may have gone to school at a much earlier age than we find today, and have attained at least some grounding in reading before they were old enough to contribute their labour.[14]

Early education was available in a number of forms, from private tutoring for wealthier students to charity schools that provided free education for the poor. Private schools, sometimes administered by former teachers or by clergymen, charged between one and three pence per week.[15] The grammar schools were originally intended to provide classical education for children who had completed their elementary training, but it is interesting to note that during the century they turned increasingly to the teaching of elementary subjects. As Richard S. Tompson shows, the percentage of grammar schools concentrating solely on classical subjects such as Latin and Greek literature declined from 87% of the total number of schools in the sixteenth century to only 11% in the eighteenth.[16] These subjects were de-emphasized in favour of elementary reading and writing and such "practical" subjects as bookkeeping and navigation. Like the elementary schools, there were grammar schools that charged fees and those that were run on a charity basis, although schools became progressively more mixed during the century as they sought to cater to a growing demand for education.

As difficult as it is to determine how many children could and did go to school, it is even more difficult to determine from what social classes they came. Tompson has collected data from three grammar schools showing the occupations of students' parents, and shows that while a large proportion of students came from the mercantile and manufacturing classes the labouring classes were also represented.[17] If Neuburg is correct in deducing the fairly good attendance at charity elementary schools, it appears that throughout the country education was indeed reaching the lower classes and to a much greater extent than either Watt or Altick believes.

That the poor in large towns and cities and in the provinces had access to education seems, then, to be clear. An entirely different question is the quality of that education, and the likelihood that students were able to learn to read. Altick says of the charity schools that "the great majority were dreadful," but a more plausible suggestion is that, in an era without national standards for education, the quality of education varied widely.[18] Teachers came from a variety of backgrounds, and many who taught in charity schools were retired women for whom teaching was their only source of income. As well, teachers could be former students, in particular former monitors who therefore had at least some teaching experience.[19] In

private schools, teachers generally had other professions, especially, as noted above, in the clergy. As a whole it is most likely that individual differences in the teachers' attitudes and levels of dedication determined the quality of education. The facilities were less than ideal, as schools were usually housed in municipal buildings, abandoned mills, or church basements. On the other hand, it seems that textbooks were widely available, if we judge by the growing importance among booksellers of the textbook publishing trade.[20]

Some statistical evidence for the effectiveness of eighteenth century education is provided by Neuburg in an appendix.[21] Although dealing with the second half of the century, the statistics are valuable as they show the percentage of "readers" among poor children in a parish in Islington. The annual register shows that in some years all the students counted could read; as Neuburg cautions, however, the standards of the examiners may not have been high. Throughout the entire period covered the population of "readers" is shown to be 75% of the total, and in the earliest entry, for 1767, "readers" account for 70% of the total. These figures may be somewhat high, but they do indicate that charity schools were to a large extent effective in spreading the knowledge of reading.

Charity schools provided a mixture of religious and

academic instruction. Their curricula were based on a view that saw education as a means towards a social end: to protect the social structure by providing the poor with Christian concepts of morality and social harmony.[22] Where reading was taught, the Bible and moralising texts were used. Education for the poor, whether in charity schools or in those grammar schools providing elementary instruction, concentrated on the reading of English. Usually, reading instruction was intended not to provide students with a means to appreciate literature, but to improve their grammar in spoken communication.[23] Most importantly for our purposes, reading was considered more important than writing for poor children. The latter skill was taught by expensive specialists only after the student had gained some proficiency in reading.[24] This fact will have implications for our subsequent discussion of current methods of determining eighteenth-century literacy, inasmuch as critics agree that the ability to write is a poor indication of an ability to read.

We have seen that there is a good likelihood most children in the eighteenth century, from whatever social background, had the opportunity to gain some formal education. Schools of varying quality existed in most areas, and where they were not free they charged rates that were not beyond the means of even the poorest families. On the

other hand, it would be absurd to say that all children took advantage of that opportunity, or that those who did were regular in their attendance. Nor, considering the low quality of formal education for the poor in terms of teachers and facilities, is it likely that the education provided was wholly successful in teaching students how to read. What does seem evident, however, is that substantial numbers of the poor in cities and in the countryside could and did go to school, and, considering the schools' emphasis on reading instruction, literacy was probably more widespread than Watt and Altick believe.

There is another form of education that, while difficult to document, must be considered as an important source of reading instruction for eighteenth-century children. Some learned to read at home, from their parents or grandparents, and the true extent of this form of education can never be known for certain.[25] Home Bible readings were common, and parents taught their children to read so that they would be able to read and understand the scriptures. If we judge solely by autobiographies, it may be that such informal education played as strong a role in inculcating a taste for reading, if not a proficiency in it, as did formal education. Lastly, we know that servants represented a good portion of the reading public, and that they sometimes received their education from their employers.[26]

Our discussion of eighteenth-century education, while necessarily brief, has shown that previous studies underestimated lower class educational opportunities. Whether from schools designed for them, or from non-institutional sources, the poor had the chance to gain some ability to read. Those scholars who say that only the middle class read novels, then, do not realise that the poor, in significant numbers, were also able to do so. Evidence for the actual use of this ability can be gleaned from an analysis of the distribution of reading material in the century, and it will be shown that Fielding's readership may have been very wide indeed.

As in the case of eighteenth-century education, efforts to determine the size of the reading public through sales of reading material are hampered by a lack of reliable statistics. Because of factors which will be dealt with in more detail later, such as the practice of reading aloud, evidence showing the distribution of books and journals gives an incomplete picture of the reading public.[27] Other factors besides changes in the size of the reading public, most notably technological advances, can affect the number of books published. Nevertheless, scholars appear to be in agreement over the fact that the demand for reading matter--books, number books, newspapers, and so forth--exceeded supply, and because of this booksellers experienced a boom

period.[28] We will look first at bookselling and distribution, and then at journals and other forms of reading matter available to eighteenth-century readers. If the current research is correct, reading, while not a universal, was a relatively widespread activity.

The oldest form of book distribution was by subscription. An author would, through his printer, advertise for subscribers to a projected volume. The subscribers' names appeared in a list at the beginning of the book, and this list provides us with a clear indication of of the composition of the book's readership. The study of subscription lists has not yet been undertaken to any large extent, but some conclusions have been made by scholars such as R. M. Wiles and Pat Rogers. We have seen, for example, that earlier scholars believed that the reading public was primarily urban in nature; but Wiles has shown that subscription lists for books published in the latter half of the seventeenth and the early eighteenth century contain the names of rural residents. Unfortunately, Wiles does not say what classes these readers came from.[29] Rogers found when he analysed subscription lists in some detail that no unified reading public is evident; as he says, "if the subscription lists are any kind of guide, the public was not an entity but a sharply stratified array of separate audiences."[30] Rogers found differences in political, religious,

and class backgrounds, with readers tending to come from the same background as the author. One interesting point is that some "subscriptions" called for by printers were in fact for "number books", or books sold piecemeal at a few pence per installment. Any study of subscription publishing must take this fact into account, as not all advertisments for "subscriptions" imply the sort of limited audience seen by Rogers in the lists.[31]

Bookselling became an important industry during the eighteenth century, especially through the efforts of men such as William Strahan, Bernard Lintot, and Fielding's publisher, Andrew Millar. Bookstores were located in cities, particularly in London, as smaller towns and rural areas could not support such shops.[32] That there were few or no shops in rural England should not, however, suggest that books were not sold there. Occasionally, large book sales were held in provincial towns, and itinerant booksellers, dealing in second-hand or remainder volumes, were known to have travelled through these areas. As well, prospective buyers could order books through newspaper agents, and the books were delivered by the same men who carried the journals.[33] Volumes, then, could reach a wide cross-section of English society, and not just urban-dwellers.

Each year, about one hundred new titles were intro-

duced onto the market, and non-fiction predominated.[34] A single edition usually represented fewer than 4,000 copies, a fairly small amount even by eighteenth century standards, when the population of England was between five and a half and six million. Prices were quite high, in part because a few booksellers dominated the market and had their printers produce so few copies. Volumes in duodecimo--the standard format for novels, and Fielding's as well--cost between two and three shillings each.[35] There is no question, then, that the book-buying public was very small, but that is not to say that the book-reading public was small as well. Books were distributed cheaply through two means: libraries and the publishing of books in numbers.

The first lending library calling itself such was that of Allan Ramsay in Scotland in 1725. For some time earlier, however, churches had lent their volumes to interested parishioners.[36] One of the most important religious libraries was the Wesleyan Bookroom, founded in 1740. Like others of its kind, the Bookroom's purpose was to spread religious doctrines among those who could not afford to buy the texts.[37] Secular libraries were of two types, proprietary and nonproprietary. The former were libraries attached to book clubs and other non-profit organisations, and some were intended to spread learning throughout as much of the population as they could reach.[38] Nonproprietary libraries were

those attached to bookstores and charged far less per year in subscriptions than did proprietary libraries. Non-subscribers were permitted to borrow individual works for as low as a penny each volume. These libraries stocked mainly novels and other forms of light reading, and allowed those unable to buy volumes to become acquainted with works of fiction. Libraries could also be found in coffee-houses and spas, and in schools.[39] Personal libraries were a source of reading matter for children and servants, and provide evidence for the readership of novels. Maximillian Novak has done a survey of selected personal libraries, and shows that novels were on the shelves of aristocrats as well as of members of the middle class.[40] Thus, novels could be obtained from professional and nonprofessional libraries, and were read by many classes. Paul Kaufman has found that there were 112 lending libraries in London and 268 in the provinces during the eighteenth century.[41] In all, a reader could well acquire a copy of one of Fielding's novels without having to buy it.

The rise of libraries has certain implications for ascertaining the nature of the eighteenth-century reading public. Aside from the fact that libraries provided books to those who could not afford them, and therefore widened the potential public for novels, the fact that books were

lent for extended periods of time may indicate what leisure time was available to some readers. There is no question that wealthier readers could easily find the time to read long works of prose fiction. For the poor, on the other hand, time was probably scarce for some of the reasons outlined by Watt. It was for these readers, then, that the libraries seem to have been designed. Libraries permitted borrowing over determined periods of time in order to cater to those who read small sections of a book at one sitting. For members of the artisan and working classes, and especially servants, libraries were quite convenient.

The importance of publishing in numbers is discussed in some detail in R. M. Wiles' Serial Publication in England Before 1750. Books of all sorts, from histories and biographies to religious works, were printed a few chapters at a time, and subscribers could purchase installments at a low price.[42] According to a contemporary writing in the Grub Street Journal (26 October 1732), "This Method of Weekly Publication allures Multitudes to peruse Books into which they would otherwise never have looked."[43] The basis of number publishing was the printing of multi-volume sets of the collected works of earlier poets and playwrights.[44] In his 1957 study, Wiles collected over 380 titles that had been published in installments from the late seventeenth century to the early eighteenth century, and among them were

novels such as Marivaux's Vie de Marianne, Defoe's Madagascar, and one of the translations of Cervantes' Don Quixote.[45] A cursory look at the variety of subjects covered by number publishing reveals that many tastes were met by this form of distribution. Publishers printed up to 3,000 copies of each work, and these were sold in stores or delivered by newspaper carriers where stores were not available. Most significantly, Wiles says that all major publishers were involved in number publishing, and this fact alone indicates the role played by serialisation in the distribution of fictional and nonfictional works.[46] It is unlikely publishers would be so keen on publishing in numbers if there were not a sizeable potential market for the inexpensive installments. One important result of number publishing was that it whetted readers' appetites for more reading matter, and was probably a contributing factor in the growth of the reading public. Finally, it should be pointed out that Fielding was well aware of the practice of number publishing; in Joseph Andrews he calls publishing by numbers "an Art now brought to such Perfection, that even Dictionaries are divided and exhibited piece-meal to the Public."[47] In Tom Jones Fielding has this to say to the Muse: "By thy Advice the heavy, unread, Folio Lump, which long had dozed on the dusty Shelf, piece-mealed into Numbers, runs nimbly through the Nation."[48]

There was one form of publication designed specifically for the poor: chapbooks. Costing about a penny each, they were available from pedlars or chapmen and usually contained abridged and simplified versions of folk-tales and other types of fiction. Defoe's Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders appeared as chapbooks. There was apparently a good market for chapbooks, as some publishers, such as Cluer Dicey, specialised in printing them.[49] Also, because they were distributed by pedlars, chapbooks could probably be found almost anywhere in the country. Chapbook sales increased during the century, and so it may not be out of the question to suggest that chapbooks represent strong evidence for the existence and growth of at least a basic knowledge of reading among the poorer classes in both urban and rural areas.

So far we have looked at books available to a wide range of possible readers. Although volumes themselves were expensive, those who wished to buy works of fiction could do so either by buying the works in installments or, where these were available, in chapbook form. If one did not wish to buy the book, it was available from circulating libraries. In sum, the distribution of books was not nearly as limited as has been thought, and Fielding's works may well have found their way into the hands of readers from a wide range of backgrounds.

The other major source of reading matter consisted of journals, such as Addison and Steele's Spectator and Fielding's

own Champion, Jacobite's Journal, and the Covent Garden Journal. We know that there were numerous journals appearing in London, representing various political and personal viewpoints, some of the more famous being the Gentleman's Magazine, the Grub Street Journal, and the London Journal. The journals themselves claimed to have large circulations, and some time ago James Sutherland calculated that the major journals sold up to 10,000 copies each; this figure is no longer accepted.[50] More likely, the circulation of these journals was around 3,000 to 4,000 copies each, with average-sized journals selling about 2,000 copies each.[51] There were a great many titles, however, and it has been estimated that 50,000 copies of various journals were circulated at the beginning of the century and that by 1760 this figure had risen to 200,000.[52]

Journals were available through subscriptions or could be found in places of recreation. Coffee-houses often acted as distribution centres, or subscribed to the journals and allowed patrons to read them.[53] However, as in the case of books, distribution of journals was not limited to the cities. Journals were available in the countryside as well, as Wiles has shown. Although a large number of journals sold in provincial towns and to rural dwellers were London-based, there were journals printed in the provinces also, such as the Gloucester Journal, which was distributed over an area of 1,100 square miles in 1725.[54]

As journals were inexpensive, it is likely that cost did not deter potential readers, and in any case they could be found easily in clubs, inns, coffee-houses, and so forth.

Eighteenth-century journals contained a variety of matter, usually concentrating on news and editorial comments. Following the example of the Tatler and Spectator, whose articles of literary criticism served to a small degree to spread knowledge about literature, journals included book reviews, discussions of the theatre, and, most importantly, fiction.[55] It was not unknown for journals to print literary supplements, separate from the rest of the paper, which contained verse, stories, and novels in installments.[56] Among the novels published this way were Robinson Crusoe (in the Original London Post, 1719-20), and Pamela (in Robinson Crusoe's London Daily Evening, 1742). There is evidence that Fielding's Joseph Andrews was also published in installments, slightly altered, in the journal All Alive and Merry in 1743.[57] Most of these printings were done without the knowledge or permission of the original publishers, and it is doubtful that Fielding knew his first novel would appear this way. Nevertheless, anyone who could afford to buy the journal must be counted among Fielding's potential readers.

We might briefly mention other evidence for literacy among the urban and rural working classes. The Society

for Promoting Christian Knowledge, as well as the Wesleyans and other organisations, printed pamphlets and booklets designed to counteract the effects of popular literature (e.g., the chapbooks) and to spread their views. Moralising stories, interpretations of Biblical passages, and explanations of difficult words found in the Bible, were printed and distributed by members of these organisations.[58] Later on in the century, political pamphlets designed to mobilise the poor were also distributed. It seems highly doubtful that such organisations would print documents if there was not at least a fair degree of literacy among the poor. Neuburg also mentions as evidence the fact that the ability to read was assumed in the military, and that engravings were used on tombstones in rural areas.[59] Such evidence, however, must be received with caution; for example, there may have been literacy requirements for non-commissioned officers, who would therefore not be representative of the population as a whole.

We have concentrated until now on the actual reading of texts, but there is evidence that an ability to read may not always have been necessary. The practice of reading texts aloud, either to audiences of friends or of strangers, seems to have been quite widespread. This practice is one reason sales figures for books and journals give an incomplete picture of the number of people who were acquainted

with printed works.[60] For a penny, one could hire a reader, although among groups of friends there was probably one who could read to the others. In coffee-houses and pubs, a reader could have an audience of 10 to 20 people.[61] As well, reading aloud was done at book clubs and societies. The most intriguing possibility is that it was common during regular visits to friends' homes to have someone read aloud to the others. Some evidence for this supposition can be found in contemporary letters, such as the following, in which Fielding's work is discussed. Mary Granville Delaney, in a letter to Mrs. Dewes (18 January 1752), says, "We are reading Mr. Fielding's Amelia. Mrs. Don. and I don't like it at all; D.D. won't listen to it."[62] The letter seems to be referring to a reading circle of some sort, and the term "listen" may indicate an instance of public reading. More interesting is the exchange between Catherine Talbot and Elizabeth Carter. The former, in her letter of 14 March 1752, describes a scene in which a number of friends are reading different works to themselves. Elizabeth Carter, in commenting on the scene in her reply dated 30 March 1752, says, "In favor of the Bishop of Gloucester's cold, his reading Amelia in silence may be tolerated, but I am somewhat scandalized that since he did not read it to you, you did not read it yourself" (<u>C.H.</u>, p. 346). Carter assumes, then, that under normal circumstances the Bishop would have

read the novel to the others. If such evidence is valid, one may not be able to speak of a "reading" public without due regard to a "listening" one. The extent of oral reading in the eighteenth century has never been fully documented, and study of the practice could provide a valuable complement to research done on the reading public.

Special attention should be paid to one section of the reading public: women. Watt discusses in some detail the amount of leisure available to upper and middle class women, due in large part to the hiring of servants and the manufacturing of household necessities.[63] Without doubt, women of means spent their time reading, as evidenced by letters and private journals. As we will see when we discuss contemporary criticism of Fielding's novels, a large proportion of his readers were female. The phenomenon of women readers was not a new one in the eighteenth century; women had constituted a fairly substantial part of the reading public as early as the sixteenth century.[64] In the eighteenth century, however, they attained a new prominence, and the outpouring of fiction with female protagonists shows clearly that authors were aware of them. There were even journals intended for women, such as the Ladies' Mercury, founded in 1693. Later in the century, women were instrumental in establishing English salons, based on French models, where literature was discussed and authors were invited to speak.[65]

Women's names do not appear often on subscription lists, nor were they the major users of libraries, as recent studies have shown.[66] The latter point is understandable, if we recall that working class readers appear to have been the main users of libraries, and it is unlikely working-class women had much leisure. As a whole, however, there is no question that wealtheir women formed a major component of the reading public.

With the above evidence in mind we may now review critically some of the work that has been done on literacy in the eighteenth century, in order to arrive at some general conclusions about the relative size of Fielding's potential reading public. One of the most important studies in this field is Lawrence Stone's article.[67] Stone has used marriage register signings in a number of parishes to determine the ability to write, and says that in rural parishes 64% of the population was literate. In towns the literate population was 74% of the total. These figures refer only to males, and when the female population is added the number of literates drops to a little over 50%.[68] Also, Stone shows that during the first half of the eighteenth century literacy rose more slowly than it had previously or was to rise later on. It does seem apparent, from the figures given by Jones regarding endowments of charity schools, that fewer schools were being opened after 1730

and that only after 1780 did the number of endowments rise.[69] With the advent of the Industrial Revolution and consequent urbanisation at mid-century, schools took some time to adjust to demographic changes. Figures based on marriage license and register signings, however, must be used with care. As we have seen, reading was given priority in schools and writing was considered unnecessary for poor children. Also, only one age group is represented, perhaps one younger than the general reading public.[70] Schofield says that "literacy" can mean anything from the ability to read fluently to being able merely to recognise one's name when it is written down, and postulates that the former proficiency and the ability to write should be about equal.[71] On the other hand, the disparity between the teaching of reading skills versus writing skills seems to have been very great, and in any case each skill requires constant practice. Judging by the evidence presented above for the availability of reading matter for the poor, it appears that agricultural and urban labourers could practise their reading skills while having little reason to write. In sum, the sort of evidence provided by the signing of one's name does not fully reveal one's ability to read.

Our conclusion must be that the reading public in the eighteenth century was quite diverse, and to some extent included members of all classes. Certainly there was not

universal or near-universal literacy; although it is impossible to know how many of the poor could and did read, it could not have been a majority. Nevertheless, the fact is that books and journals were accessible to far more people than earlier believed. Fielding's novels could have been distributed in a number of ways, and the evidence points to the likelihood that they could have reached most areas of the country in one way or another. We can only say for certain that Fielding's readership, and the readership of all novels, was larger than statistics or other forms of evidence reveal. Hence, Fielding's reader may have been an aristocrat, merchant, labourer, or not a reader at all, but an auditor.

II: Fielding's Public

Thus far we have looked at Fielding's potential readership, and we have seen that the extent of literacy and the many methods of distributing reading matter suggest that people from various backgrounds could have become familiar with Fielding's work. We will now discuss what is known about those who actually read the fiction, first in terms of numbers and then in terms of their attitudes and beliefs. Because we do not know how many may have borrowed the novels from libraries, nor whether the works were widely serialised, we can only look at publication figures to determine how many copies of the novels were sold. The attitudes of Fielding's readers will be made clear through a discussion of the critical commentary that greeted his novels during his lifetime. At all points in this latter discussion, it must be remembered that the critics represented only a small and unrepresentative part of the reading public; certainly, the general public did not share the negative views expressed by so many of the critics.

Since _Jonathan Wild_ was the only major prose work Fielding offered through subscription (it was included in the _Miscellanies_ [1743]), its sale provides the clearest picture of Fielding's readership. The subscription list contains

427 names, and supports Rogers' contention that subscribers were usually acquaintances of the author. Fully half of Fielding's subscribers were fellow members of the legal profession.[1] As well we find some of his friends from the theatre, such as David Garrick and Kitty Clive. On the whole, "the subscription list contains the names of many political acquaintances but very few literary men."[2] Because of his political writings, in journals and for the stage, Fielding made a number of enemies in his early career on whom he could not count for support. In his friends he had a basic readership which, as we will see when we discuss Fielding's "implied reader", appears to have continued to support his pursuits in fiction.

Joseph Andrews was published in 1742 by Andrew Millar. The records of the printer, Henry Woodfall, show that 1,500 copies were printed of the first edition in early 1742, while a few months later a second run of 2,000 was printed. That the novel met with immediate popularity is further evidenced by the fact that a third edition was printed in 1743 which added another 3,000 copies to the total. Another 2,000 were printed somewhat later, in 1748, and the last edition published during Fielding's lifetime, in 1750, was a run of 2,000 more copies. In all, then, 6,500 copies were printed within one year and over 10,000 during an eight-year span.[3] If we accept Wiles' calculation that a

sale of 15,000 copies in the eighteenth century was roughly equivalent to one of 100,000 copies in modern times, we can call the novel a best-seller.[4] The popularity of the novel had certainly not been foreseen, at least by Fielding, as he accepted only £200 as payment for the rights to Joseph Andrews. Copies of the book sold well in spite of the fact that it was published in two volumes at a cost of six shillings per set. Each printing was well within the maximum of 4,000 given by Altick, but the number of editions meant a substantial amount of copies over the long run.

Because of the success of Joseph Andrews, Millar was anxious to receive Tom Jones and paid Fielding £600 for the novel. All the printings done in Fielding's lifetime were during a nine-month span beginning in January, 1749. There were four runs, the first of 2,000 copies--somewhat higher than for Joseph Andrews. The second edition was of 1,500 copies, while the third and fourth were of 3,000 and 3,500 copies respectively. Without doubt, then, Tom Jones received a great deal of attention from the book-buying public. Copies of the six-volume set sold for eighteen shillings each, or, once again, three shillings per volume.

There is some disagreement over the popularity of Fielding's last novel, Amelia. Millar obviously had a great deal of confidence that Amelia would be as popular

as Fielding's earlier works, as he had William Strahan print 5,000 copies for the first edition in late 1751. De Castro says that another 3,000 copies were printed one month later, and a comment made by Samuel Johnson to Mrs. Piozzi in 1776 seems to confirm this view: _Amelia_ was "the only book, which being printed off betimes one morning, a new edition was called for before night" (_C.H._, p. 445). However, Strahan's entry is unclear, and D. S. Thomas interprets it as meaning that 3,000 copies of only two sheets (or 48 pages) were run off as corrections.[5] The latter view seems the more likely, as _Amelia_ was Fielding's least popular novel, and the second run may have followed too closely on the first to be a response to good sales. Millar's payment for the rights to _Amelia_ was 800 guineas, further evidence of his confidence. The four-volume set sold for twelve shillings.

Comments from contemporaries also reveal that Fielding's novels were quite popular. The fame of _Tom Jones_ is said by Solomon Lowe in a letter to Samuel Richardson (10 July 1749) to have "got into Holland; and I do not doubt but all Europe will ring of it" (_C.H._, p. 171). Another correspondant with Richardson, Lady Bradshaigh, wrote in November, 1749, that she was "fatigued with the name [of Tom Jones], having lately fallen into the company of several young ladies, who each had a Tom Jones in some part of the world"

(C.H., p. 183). Richardson himself calls Fielding a "fashionable author" in his reply to Lady Bradshaigh of late 1749 (C.H., p. 186).

From his days as a dramatist to his death in 1754, Fielding waged a continuous and often rancorous war with his critics. Because he relied on political patronage through much of his career, he became involved in a number of literary and political disputes. His early writings were political satires on Walpole or his ministers; *Jonathan Wild* is a novel-length satire on the "Great Man"; and the plays that prompted the government to pass the Theatrical Licensing Act of 1737, *Pasquin* (1736) and *The Historical Register* (1737), were also attacks on Walpole's ministry. Fielding published the *Champion* from 1739 to 1742, and printed essays attacking the Act (e.g., in the number for 10 December 1739) and also his political opponents (e.g., the numbers for 27 November 1739 and 15 December 1739). In the early 1740's, when Walpole's government was about to fall, the Opposition abandoned its patronage of Fielding. His constant financial problems forced him to rely on public and political patronage throughout his early days as a novelist, and his opponents' personal and political antipathies to Fielding often carried over into their judgments of his writings.

One factor that hurt Fielding's work in the eyes of

his critics is the fact that he wrote novels, a form with low status in the eighteenth century. Basing their judgments on the disreputable love stories and romances of the early eighteenth century--"novellas" or "novels" which sometimes bordered on the pornographic--contemporary critics dismissed the novel as a lesser genre.[7] The novel was attacked on moral as well as aesthetic grounds; for those who considered any form of entertainment to be mere "idleness", the novel, with its claims of realism and its very length, was seen as a greater threat than drama or poetry.[8] Such was the extreme view. Perhaps a more general one was a confusion resulting from the genre's new emphasis on realism. As Cross says, "Long fed on romances" the reading public "hardly knew just what their attitude should be towards a novel essentially true to English life and manners. For them, it lacked invention, and yet was admirable in its characters and observations covering all classes."[9] It was to this realism of setting, situation, and character that many critics reacted when judging novels as a whole, and the ambivalent attitude described by Cross can be seen in criticism of Fielding's works. On the other hand, Wolfgang Iser sees the strong emotions evident in contemporary critical commentary as stemming from judgments Fielding forces from his readers in the course of his fiction.[10] In any case, whether the commentary was based on political, moral,

aesthetic, or--most often--all three grounds, the critics expressed a remarkably diverse set of opinions.

Fielding's critics can be divided into five major categories. The first group, and the one most consistently critical of Fielding's work, was Richardson and his circle. The rivalry between the two novelists began with Fielding's anti-Pamela satire, Shamela. Richardson and Fielding wrote vastly different works from some points of view and, as will be shown later, similar works from others. Among Richardson's correspondants were Aaron Hill and his daughters Astraea and Minerva, Solomon Lowe, Dr. George Cheyne, and the Lady Bradshaigh. For the most part Richardson's friends agreed with his opinions of Fielding's work. Throughout their careers, Fielding and Richardson were rivals for the praise and support of the novel-reading public.

Fielding enjoyed somewhat better critical reactions from women readers of aristocratic and middle class backgrounds than he did from the Richardson circle. Aside from Elizabeth Carter and Catherine Talbot were Ladies Hertford, Luxborough, Bedford, and Fielding's cousin, Lady Mary Montagu. Because Fielding's two comic novels were translated into French, a third category is formed of foreign critics, most notably the translator of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones, Pierre François Guyot Desfontaines. As one might expect, Fielding's journalistic rivals formed a significant body of adverse critics, with Old England, an

Opposition paper, leading the anti-Fielding commentators. Last were the men of letters, that is, poets, novelists, and literary critics. It is unfortunate that Fielding did not gain more attention or praise from the latter group.[11] Significant commentary was made by Francis Coventry, in his anonymous pamphlet, An Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding (1751), and Samuel Johnson in his Rambler paper of 31 March 1750. The comments of these two critics will be discussed separately.

The most commonly expressed opinion of Fielding's work was that it was "low", a vague term that implied it somehow lacked the dignity appropriate to literature.[12] Although Bernard Harrison says that the term refers not to the presence of lower-class characters but to moral "lowness", clearly the social and moral elements were not so easily separated by contemporary critics.[13] Dr. George Cheyne, in a letter to Richardson dated 9 March 1742, says that Joseph Andrews "will entertain none but Porters or Watermen" (C.H., p. 118). Thomas Gray, writing to Richard West (8 April 1742), praised the characters as having "a great deal of nature, which always pleases even in her lowest shapes" (C.H., p. 119). The novel met with a similar reaction in France, where Andrew Michael Ramsay, in his letter of 1 September 1742, referred to his "disgust" (C.H., p. 122), and Pierre Desfontaines speaks of "low" characters

in the approbatory preface to his translation of the work (C.H., p. 129). According to the London Evening Post (28-30 July 1748), Joseph Andrews' "low humour" is expressed through "Footman, Country Wench, and Country Priest" (C.H., p. 145). The contemporary attitude, then, seems to have been that low social status and low morality were nearly one and the same. An explicit reference to "lowness" and its meaning, at least for one writer, can be found in a much later piece: John Cleland's 1751 review of Amelia, printed in the Monthly Review. It may be useful to reproduce Cleland's comments in full, as they give a fairly clear picture of the attitude of at least some of Fielding's readers (although, considering Cleland's own works, perhaps a somewhat biased one). Lowness appears

> where the characters are, however exact copies of nature, chosen in too low, and disgustful a range of it, and rather too often repeated, and too long dwelt upon. The humours of an inn-keeper, an inn-keeper's wife, a gaoler, a highwayman, a bailiff, a street-walker, may, no doubt, with great propriety find their place in these novels, of which the matter is taken out of common life; it would even be an absurd affectation to omit them, in compliance to a false delicacy, which calls every thing low ... But when they occur too often, when the ingredients are not sparingly mixed, they will disgust even those, who, from their distance in rank or circumstances from these subjects, may be curious to have some idea of them, and can only come at it in such descriptions.
>
> (C.H., p. 306)

The lower classes may be described, then, but discretion

must be used as to how often.

The charge of "lowness" was repeated in reactions to Tom Jones. The Gentleman's Magazine worried in its March, 1749, issue that "the loose images in these pieces perhaps invite to vice more than the contrast figures alarm us into virtue" (C.H., p. 161). Fielding's journalistic arch-rival, Old England, attacked such aspects of the novel as "the Figure which Mrs. Waters made in her Deshabille at the Inn, and the manner she revelled away the Night in the Embraces of her Gallant" (C.H., p. 167) and a year later criticised Fielding for the novel's "Lewdness" (C.H., p. 236). Richardson's circle reacted somewhat differently from the way he had hoped; Hill's daughters reported to Richardson that they had liked the book, but expressed reservations about its "bold shocking Pictures" in their letter of 27 July 1749 (C.H., p. 173). Richardson had yet to read the novel, but in his reply to the Hills dated 4 August 1749 he complained about Tom Jones' illegitimacy, and said, "I had Reason to think the Author intended for his Second View (His first, to fill his Pocket, by accomodating it to the reigning Taste) in writing it, to whiten a vicious Character, and to make morality bend to his Practices" (C.H., p. 174). Robert Goadby, a printer and little-known author, wrote a parody of the dedication to Tom Jones in the preface to his An Apology for the Life of

Mr. Bampfylde Moore Carew, Commonly Call'd the King of the Beggars (1751). Goadby refers to Jones as a "hir'd Stallion to a lascivious old Woman," and attacks the lack of decency in Tom's exploits with Molly, Mrs. Waters, and Lady Bellaston (C.H., p. 252).

Old England, the Gentleman's Magazine reported in April, 1750, published an article saying the "French have shewn wisdom by suppressing that book, which to our shame was greedily swallowed here (though wrote against)."[14] Samuel Richardson seems to have heard a rumour to the same effect, as he asks J.B. de Freval (21 January 1751), "Is it true, that France had virtue enough to refuse a license for such a profligate performance?" (C.H., p. 238). De Freval's reply was, "I am sorry to say it but you do my countrymen more honour than they truly deserve in surmising that they had virtue enough to refuse a license to Tom Jones." He went on to say, "I think it a profligate performance upon your pronouncing it such, for I have never read the piece, though much extolled ... considering how things go on, I don't believe there is now a book dissolute enough to be refused admittance among us."[15] Another foreign critic, Friedrich Melchior, Baron Grimm, said in 1750, "The low details of the work may please the English, but they are overridingly displeasing to our ladies" (C.H., p. 229). Even outside of England, then, Fielding faced criticism

for the "lowness" of his novel.

The majority of the praise accorded Fielding's first two novels dealt with his characterisation. Parson Adams was Fielding's most well-liked character, particularly among men of letters and their correspondants. Thomas Gray's letter of 8 April 1742 includes the comment that "Parson Adams is perfectly well" (*C.H.*, p. 119), and Charles Macklin, in the Prologue to his play, *The Wedding Day* (1744), says of Adams, "He in Spight of Critics, can make your Readers laugh" (*C.H.*, p. 125). William Shenstone, in discussing *Tom Jones* in a letter to Lady Henrietta Luxborough (22 March 1749), called Adams "an *original* ... unattempted before, & yet so natural y^t most people seem'd to know ye Man" (*C.H.*, p. 159). In her reply, Lady Luxborough agreed with him about Adams (*C.H.*, p. 160). Shenstone's comments are surprising in light of his earlier letter to Richard Graves of 1742, where he referred to "the whole tedious character of Parson Adams" (*C.H.*, p. 121). Clearly, Adams' character stuck in Shenstone's mind in spite of his initial reaction. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, once again, was anything but laudatory as it called Adams a "fool" in its June, 1749, number (*C.H.*, p. 178). In anticipation of such comments, the journal *The Student* praised Adams' simplicity in its issue of 20 January 1750: "I know not what may be the opinion of others, but to me, his innocent ignorance of

this world and its ways, demonstrates him not to have been a child of it" (C.H., p. 218). Such praise was given in France as well; Desfontaines, in his preface, calls Adams "an admirable man. His is a genuine character, drawn from nature ... Such faith! such piety! such erudition! such philosophy! But at the same time what simplicity of manners, what ignorance of the world! I nearly said what a fool, this sensible man!" (C.H., p. 129).

As we have seen, most of the comments about Tom Jones were attacks on his morality. In spite of comments such as the one made by Thomas Birch in his letter to the Earl of Orrery (19 January 1748) praising the novel's "strong and lively painting of characters" (C.H., p. 144), most of the reaction was negative. The Gentleman's Magazine, in the June, 1749, article mentioned above, called Tom a "rake" (C.H., p. 178), and Robert Goadby, as we have seen, wrote at great length against Tom's "adventures". Lady Montagu, according to Lady Louisa Stuart, considered Tom "a scoundrel" (C.H., p. 359). In some cases, correspondants compared the characterisation of Tom Jones unfavourably with that of Joseph Andrews. For example, Shenstone's 1749 letter, quoted earlier, says of the later novel, "I see no character yet y^t is near so striking as Mr. Abraham Adams" (C.H., p. 159).

An interesting aspect of the critical commentary about Fielding's novels is the disagreement over how "natural"

they were. Joseph Andrews was attacked in Shenstone's 1742 letter as "unnatural," while Elizabeth Carter, in her 1 January 1743 letter to Catherine Talbot, said that the novel "contains such a surprizing variety of nature, wit, morality, and good sense" (C.H., p. 123). She expressed a similar sentiment about Tom Jones: "Fielding's book is the most natural representation of what passes in the world, and of the bizarreries which arise from the mixture of good and bad, which makes up the composition of most folks" (C.H., p. 169). Praise of the "natural" aspects of Tom Jones appears also in a poem published in the Gentleman's Magazine (August, 1749), written by Thomas Cawthorn and called "To Henry Fielding, Esq., On reading his inimitable history of Tom Jones":

> Sick of her fools, great Nature broke the jest,
> And Truth held out each character to test,
> When Genius spoke: Let Fielding take the pen!
> Life dropt her mask, and all mankind were men.
> (C.H., p. 180)

The plot of Tom Jones is discussed in a review of the French translation in the Gentleman's Magazine for March, 1750: "The public has not for a long time been entertain'd with a piece where ... the incidents [are] more artfully prepared, or more naturally arising one out of another" (C.H., p. 226). Finally, the Ladies' Magazine, in its 20 April-4 May 1751 issue printed a poem entitled, "On the incomparable

History of Tom Jones", which reads, in part:

> Hail! happy Fielding, who with glorious ease
> Can'st Nature paint, and paint her still to please.
> Nature throughout the drama plays her part,
> Behind the curtain lurks assisting art.
> (C.H., p. 274)

If we take the term "nature" to mean "realism" or "fidelity to truth", it becomes apparent how ambivalent current attitudes were towards realistic fiction. Fiction ought to be "natural" but not dwell on "low" life or actions like Tom's sexual escapades.

The humour of Fielding's works is given due praise by most who mentioned it. Joseph Andrews was compared to Scarron's Roman Comique by Desfontaines in 1743 (C.H., p. 126). In his preface, "Lettre d'une Dame Anglcise ... ", he says, "The author is Mr. Fielding ... who is at his best mainly in the comic scene" (C.H., p. 128). As seen above, Catherine Talbot's 1743 letter and Charles Macklin's Prologue expressed positive views of Fielding's humour. An unknown correspondant wrote to Richardson on 30 June 1749 that Fielding "has I believe a Fund of humour which will never be exhausted" (C.H., p. 170). The poem from the Ladies' Magazine contains two lines which read, "Each humourous incident is finely hit, / With justness, symmetry of parts, and wit" (C.H., p. 274).

As can be expected, less positive sentiments were expressed by Richardson, who seemed to consider Tom Jones

frivolous in comparison to "such a grave story as Clarissa," as he said in his 12 July 1749 letter to Aaron Hill (C.H., p. 171). Hill's daughters could not accept the combination of humour and attempts at morality among authors: "tell us Dear Sir, are we in the right; or no, when we presume to own it as our Notion, that however well-meant such a Motive may have been, the Execution of it must be found distasteful? For we can't help thinking that a mind fram'd for Virtue courts and serves her with too much Respect, to join in throwing a Fool's Coat upon her" (C.H., p. 173). The humour was enjoyed by a captain in the British army, Lewis Thomas, as can be seen from his letter dated 3 April 1749: "Character, Painting, Reflexion, Humour, excellent each in its Kind, in short I found every thing there, You said I should find" (C.H., p. 162). By contrast, Shenstone initially considered Joseph Andrews to be not only "unnatural" but "unhumourous" as well (C.H., p. 121). The predominance of more positive attitudes, however, indicates that much of the popularity Fielding's work enjoyed was based on the humour that readers found so entertaining.

In discussing the rise of libraries in the eighteenth century, we raised the possibility that readers with less leisure available to them formed at least one segment of the reading public. Some of the commentary about Fielding's novels, such as Elizabeth Carter's opinion noted earlier,

praised the variety that was to be found in the works. The London Magazine, in an unsigned article called "Plan of a Late celebrated Novel", printed in its February, 1749, issue, reported that Tom Jones, "like all such good compositions, consists of a principal history, and a great many episodes or incidents; all which arise naturally from the subject, and contribute towards carrying on the chief plot or design. Through the whole, the reader's attention is always kept awake by some new surprizing accident" (C.H., p. 148). Contemporaries seemed, then, to have enjoyed works with a unifying element but a great deal of variety as well. Perhaps here, too, we are seeing evidence of a readership that did not have the time to read a great deal at one sitting; readers appreciated episodic works that allowed one to read short portions at a time.

What is most noteworthy about the contemporary criticism of Fielding is that in spite of his moral goals, as set out throughout his fiction and explicitly in the dedication to Tom Jones, few commentators discuss this aspect of his work. Thomas Birch's letter of 20 December 1748, referring to Tom Jones, says, "I am told by my friends, who have seen it, that it is not destitute of the instructive and pathetic" (C.H., p. 147). After discussing the satiric targets of Joseph Andrews, Elizabeth Carter, in her letter to Talbot of 1 January 1743, expresses her surprise at the charges

of immorality levelled at the novel:

> It must surely be a marvellous wrongheadedness and perplexity of understanding that can make one consider this complete satire as a very immoral thing, and of the most dangerous tendency, and yet I have met with some people who treat it in the most outrageous manner.
>
> (C.H., p. 123)

The "Plan of a Late celebrated Novel" ends its sketch of the plot of Tom Jones by saying the novel has "a most just distribution of rewards and punishments, according to the merits of all the persons that had any considerable spare [sic] in it" (C.H., p. 154). Lady Luxborough wrote in her letter to Shenstone dated 23 March 1749 that "If Mr. Fielding and Mr. Hogarth could abate the vanity of the world by shewing us its faults so plainly, they would do more than the greatest divines had yet been capable of" (C.H., p. 160), and Captain Thomas says that he would prefer to be the author of Tom Jones that of "five Folio Volumes of sermons" (C.H., p. 162). Dr. John Hill, in his pamphlet The History of a Woman of Quality (1751), says, "every Incident had its peculiar Moral or Instruction couch'd under it, inspiring to something laudable, or cautioning against some Foible" (C.H., p. 283). The French were a bit more sensitive to the morality of the novels. Desfontaines' review of Joseph Andrews includes the comment that it "carries a hundred particulars worth the attention of

the gravest person" (C.H., p. 127). Elie C. Freron's review of Tom Jones (6 July 1751) notes the moral contrast set up between Tom and Blifil, which shows "the difference is great between the faults that too much candour makes degenerate into imprudences, and those that proceed solely from a false and tainted heart" (C.H., p. 280). There are other scattered mentions of the moral element in Fielding's work, but the majority of critics, either from real "disgust" at the low passages or from personal spite, considered his fiction immoral.

The best literary criticism written during Fielding's lifetime were Francis Coventry's pamphlet and Johnson's essay. Although both were written near the end of Fielding's career as a novelist, they reveal clearly certain contemporary attitudes towards Fielding's work.

Coventry's pamphlet begins stressing the need for impartiality in criticism.[16] He defends himself as being more objective than previous critics had been by saying he has never met Fielding, and, considering the personal bias that coloured the comments of many of Fielding's critics, it is understandable that Coventry felt the need to make such a defense (E., p. 12). Coventry admires the "natural" events and characters found in Fielding's fiction, contrasting them with what is found in romances: "For crystal Palaces and winged Horses, we find homely Cots and ambling Nags;

and instead of Impossibility, what we experience every Day" (E., p. 16). In a novel, the characters "must be exactly copied from Nature" (E., p. 17). In somewhat the same vein, Coventry defends Fielding's use of "low" characters by saying that one cannot use the same criteria in judging plays and fiction, as the latter may contain characters who "often fall below the Dignity of the Stage" (E., p. 29). He in fact praises Fielding's "thorough Insight into Low-life" (E., p. 29). On the other hand, Coventry cannot accept Fielding's "low" scenes: "there ought not to be a Line in them which should cause the modestest Lady a single Blush in the Perusal. This Delicacy of Stile and Sentiment has been quite neglected in some Dialogues between the wanton Lady Booby and most innocent Joseph Andrews" (E., p. 42). Coventry goes on to say, "Lewdness is too mean a Branch of Humour (if indeed it is a Branch of Humour) for a Man of Mr. Fielding's Sense to have recourse to" (E., p. 42). Otherwise, Coventry considers Fielding's humour not only acceptable but necessary for the novel form, and this only because Fielding has said that it is necessary: he says that among the laws Fielding established for the genre "is, that thro' the whole Humour must diffuse itself" (E., p. 17). The humour may come from a heightening of style "to ridicule the Bombast and Fustian, which obtain'd so much in the

Romances" (E., p. 19).

From Coventry's essay we again can see the attitude that "daily life" should be presented with discretion, and that some aspects of reality should not be treated with humour. Coventry is somewhat more liberal than other critics we have seen in terms of the inclusion of "low" characters, but one gets the impression that, since Coventry considers the novel to have been "Founded" by Fielding, anything Fielding does short of the immoral is appropriate to the form.

Johnson also speaks of the novel in terms of its realism, and praises the fact that such works "exhibit Life in its true State, diversified only by the Accidents that daily happen in the World, and influenced by those Passions and Qualities which are really to be found in conversing with Mankind" (C.H., p. 230). Johnson acknowledges that to write realistic novels requires "that Experience which can never be attained by solitary Diligence, but must arise from general Converse, and accurate Observation of the living World" (C.H., p. 231). The danger of such works, however, lies in their realism as well:

> when an Adventurer is levelled with the rest of the World, and acts in such Scenes of the universal Drama, as may be the Lot of any other Man, young Spectators fix their Eyes upon him with closer Attention ... Care ought

> to be taken that ... the best Examples only should be exhibited ...
>
> (C.H., p. 232)

Johnson says that "It is justly considered as the greatest Excellency of Art, to imitate Nature" but not when such imitation might incite readers to vice: "many Characters ought never to be drawn" (C.H., p. 232). A disguised reference to Fielding follows:

> Many writers for the sake of following Nature, so mingle good and bad Qualities in their principal Personages, that they are both equally conspicuous; and as we accompany them through their Adventures with Delight, and are led by Degrees to interest ourselves in their Favour, we lose the Abhorrence of their Faults.
>
> (C.H., p. 233)

The mixture of qualities, then, is more to be feared than the presentation of vice alone: "Vice, for Vice is necessary to be shewn, should always disgust; nor should the Graces of Gaiety, or the Dignity of Courage, be so united with it, as to reconcile it to the Mind" (C.H., p. 234). Once again we find a critic attacking the combination of lightheartedness and poor morals.[17]

Johnson's later remarks, recorded in Boswell's Life of Johnson and reprinted in Paulson and Lockwood as No. 172, appear intemperate to say the least. He calls Fielding a "blockhead" and compares him unfavourably to Richardson. We must keep in mind, however, that Johnson's comments may indicate a desire more to praise his friend Richardson than

to give rational judgments of Fielding. Clearly, Johnson preferred Richardson's fiction on aesthetic and moral grounds, but the emotions evident in the outburst noted above reveal that there was a personal side to his criticism. As Robert Moore shows, there was much in Fielding's fiction that should have appealed to Johnson.[18]

From the contemporary criticism of Fielding's fiction we gain a fairly good sense of what some portions of his readership thought about his novels. Criticisms such as the pamphlet by "Orbilius", An Examen of the History of Tom Jones, have not been mentioned because they are too obviously personal attacks and contribute little in the way of valid criticisms. Richardson's viewpoints, however, are different from such comments only in degree; personal rivalry appears to colour his aesthetic judgments severely. The range of comments from those without personal grudges reveal that Fielding's critics shared a number of assumptions, such as the desire not to have levity mixed with serious moral questions, but they also expressed greatly varied opinions about a number of matters. His readers ranged from aristocrats to army captains, who often enjoyed his humour and memorable characters, but as a whole ignored the underlying morality of his fiction. As Frank Kermode says, Fielding's readers appreciated the technique, but not the "lowness", of his novels.[19]

III: The Implied Reader 1

Our historical study has shown that Fielding's readership was heterogeneous both in background and opinion. It is now necessary to look at Fielding's reader from a different point of view: Fielding's perceptions of him. Because there are so few references to his readership in Fielding's private writings we can only gain an insight into how he viewed his reader through his fiction and published journals. We will therefore be looking at his assumed or "implied" reader, and what makes this type of study somewhat easier is the fact that Fielding is constantly addressing his reader. Before going into some detail about what the "reader" thus addressed is like, we should review the concept of the implied reader.

The theory of the implied reader is a relatively new one, and its major proponents are John Preston, Wayne C. Booth, and Wolfgang Iser. Briefly, the theory is that just as there is a distinction between the author and the "implied author" or "narrator", there is one between the actual reader and the "reader" addressed, explicitly or not, in the fiction. In an early article on the subject, Walker Gibson differentiates between "readers" and what he calls "mock readers".[1] A "mock reader" is the reader

established by the fiction, and is a role we as actual readers take on as we read the work. Gibson postulates that our reaction to a work depends to a large extent on whether we accept the role set out for us. If a work of fiction asks a reasonably intelligent reader to take on a role he cannot, the work is unsuccessful. The distinction between readers and mock readers, however, can never be complete since, as Wayne Booth points out, we always bring our own beliefs and personalities to the reading experience.[2] There can never be complete objectivity in either the narrator or the reader, just as no fiction is without its "rhetoric" or calculated effect on the reader.[3]

Wolfgang Iser takes a somewhat different approach, saying that part of the nature of realistic fiction is that it forces readers to take part in establishing the meaning of the text. Because of its seeming objectivity, such fiction requires the reader to act as a sort of judge; "From the given material he must construct his own conception of reality and hence the meaning of the text."[4] John Preston sees a conscious effort among eighteenth-century novelists to give the reader a great deal to do. For example, much of the dramatic irony in Tom Jones depends on our memory, as facts revealed later on in the work have implications for what we read quite innocently earlier.[5] The full force of the irony, then, comes about through the

reader's growing understanding of the work as a whole. Like Iser, Preston emphasizes the reader's role as judge: "The reader has his responsibility ... he must try to judge well."[6] For all these critics the reader's role is essential, either as an audience for whom the author must shape his work or, after the fact, to take part in establishing the text's ultimate meaning.

Actually, Fielding is often quite explicit about our role as judge of what takes place in the novel. In Joseph Andrews the narrator seems to play with our understanding of the story, such as in Bk. I, Ch. xi, where he says he will reveal the scene "by small Degrees," and then explains the motive behind Joseph's haste in leaving town after his dismissal by Lady Booby (J.A., p. 48). Tom Jones contains many more passages in which the reader is called upon to act as a judge not only of what takes place in the story but of the characters themselves. Mrs. Wilkins' reaction to seeing Mr. Allworthy in his shirt is said to cause laughter in some readers, but "my graver Reader, when he considers the Time of Night, the Summons from her Bed, and the Situation in which she found her Master, will highly justify and applaud her Conduct" (T.J., Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 40). Later, after Fielding offers his negative portraits of Thwackum and Square, he says that Thwackum did not appear "to Mr. Allworthy in the same Light

as he doth to him [i.e. the reader] in this History" and to those who "condemn the Wisdom or Penetration of Mr. Allworthy, I shall not scruple to say, that they make a very bad and ungrateful Use of that Knowledge which we have communicated to them" (Bk. III, Ch. v; p. 135). In sum, as Iser and Preston say, Fielding provides the facts and his reader must come to the proper conclusion.

The narrators of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones seek to establish close ties with the reader, so that the explicit addresses seem friendly rather than manipulative.[7] One of the most important roles of Fielding's narrators is to distance the reader emotionally from certain scenes, in order to ensure a "comic response to scenes which in themselves are not necessarily comic, or which are even potentially serious."[8] Good examples of this effect can be found in the fight scenes, where mock-heroic diction is employed to keep us from worrying too greatly about the potagonists involved (e.g., the fight with the dogs in J.A., Bk. III, Ch. vi; p. 242). The ironic tone is a rhetorical device, then, to give the reader the impression that he and the narrator share the vantage point of observers of the action.

Some of the explicit addresses enhance distinctly the impression that the narrator and the reader maintain a close relationship.[9] For example, in Joseph Andrews the

narrator calls the reader "my good Reader" a number of times (e.g., Bk. II, Ch. ii; p. 92, Bk. II, Ch. vii; p. 130, and Bk. IV, Ch. vii; p. 299), and in Tom Jones he is referred to as "my friend" (Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 38, Bk. I, Ch. v; p. 44, and Bk. IV, Ch. ii; p. 156). When we discuss the explicit addresses that characterise the reader, we should keep in mind that such addresses are made to seem less intrusive because of the fact that Fielding has so carefully rendered us companions of his.

Two aspects of the narrator should be discussed briefly. First, some of the explicit addresses reveal that Fielding felt the need to deflect possible criticism, and to justify himself as a writer of fiction.[10] Considering the critical reaction to Joseph Andrews, especially the fact that many commentators worried about the portrayal of evil and the immorality evident to them in the novel, it is interesting to note that the narrator of Tom Jones is concerned about being misunderstood. For example, he says, "while I am discovering the Rocks on which Innocence and Goodness often split, I may not be misunderstood to recommend the very means to my worthy Readers, by which I intend to shew them they will be undone" (Bk. III, Ch. vii; p. 142). We are told, a little later, that the characters of Thwackum and Square are not meant to be insults to 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" (Bk. III, Ch. iv; p. 128). Fielding therefore wishes to ensure that his true meaning will not be misconstrued as it had been in Joseph Andrews, where, as we have seen, the portrayal of vice was seen as nearly an incitement to it. The narrator wishes to avoid insulting his reader not only morally but intellectually as well; he considers it "needless", for instance, to go into great detail about Sophia's personality: to do so would be "a Kind of tacit Affront to our Reader's Understanding" (Bk. IV, Ch. ii; p. 157). Such considerations for the proper response from the reader, and the wish not to underestimate his "Understanding", reveal further Fielding's desire to remain on friendly terms with the reader. In fact, some critics have seen this relationship as constituting almost a subplot of the novels.[11]

It may be objected that one cannot equate the "narrator" with Fielding himself, and that the direct addresses do not necessarily indicate Fielding's opinions of the reader. Arthur Sherbo has done a close textual study of the narrators and has found that, from various references to themselves and to what they are familiar with, the narrators of both novels reveal themselves to be much like Fielding. As Miller says, Fielding intended "the contemporary reader to identify the narrator of Tom Jones with the [actual] Henry

Fielding."[13] Part of the reason is that the narrator is given no distinct character separate from the author such as we find in Swift's work.[14] It may be that in Fielding's case the distinction between author and narrator does not apply. Aside from the obvious fact that, like all fiction writers, the narrator pretends that it is a true story, his voice is so close to Fielding's it is difficult to separate them.[15] As Battestin shows, Fielding's relationship to his story is like that of God to the world in general, so that what we read is always consciously controlled by Fielding.[16] In our subsequent discussion of the narrator's addresses to the reader, then, modern cautions against identifying the author with his narrator do not apply to Fielding.

One point should be stressed about the addresses: most often they are ironic, although they do imply certain assumptions on Fielding's part. For example, when Fielding calls his reader "sagacious", he is being ironic in that it takes little "sagacity" to understand what is really happening in some scenes. The implication is that we do indeed understand and require only hints to guide us. We must always keep in mind, then, that such words as "sagacious" must be read with care and that they should not be taken on a literal level.

A certain amount of worldly sophistication is assumed

of the implied reader. Such knowledge is sometimes necessary in order to grasp what the narrator is trying to convey. After Parson Adams asks Parson Trulliber for a loan, for example, the latter reacts in a way the narrator can only describe by asking the reader to imagine various situations involving doctors, tradsmen, and so forth (J.A., Bk. II, Ch. xiv; pp. 165-66). Once these situations are mentioned, Fielding implies, no more need be said. Somewhat later, when Adams and Joseph are disputing over who should walk and who should ride, the narrator says, "Perhaps, Reader, thou hast seen a Contest between two Gentlemen, or two Ladies quickly decided, tho' they have both asserted they would not eat such a nice Morsel, and each insisted on the other's accepting it; but in reality both were very desirous to swallow it themselves" (Bk. III, Ch. xii; p. 272). The reader is expected to smile knowingly, then, based on his past experiences. At the same time, Fielding is making a comment about "polite" society.

Tom Jones contains many examples of the assumption of certain types of knowledge enjoyed by the reader. The narrator says Mrs. Wilkins' shock at seeing Mr. Allworthy will not surprise readers: "It will not be wondered at, that a Creature, who had so strict a Regard to Decency in her own Person, should be shocked at the least Deviation from it in another" (Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 39). After All-

worthy's lecture on Captain Blifil's secret marriage to Bridget, we are told, "The Reader, from what hath been said, may imagine that the Reconciliation (if indeed it could be so called) was only Matter of Form" (Bk. I, Ch. xiii; p. 72). Again, Mrs. Partridge's testimony against her husband, as "the Reader will, I believe, bear Witness for him, had greatly exceeded the Truth" (Bk. II, Ch. iv; p. 90). The reader is intelligent enough to know why Square is silent after he learns that Allworthy will recover from his illness (Bk. V, Ch. x; p. 254) and why Jones assumes that Molly is in love with him (Bk. III, Ch. vi; p. 175). In many cases, however, the information we are supposed to have already is given to us, as in the case of the "Reconciliation" above. With mild irony, then, Fielding tells us what we should have guessed ourselves.

Among Fielding's readers are those with such insight into human emotions that descriptions are unnecessary. In Tom Jones, when Allworthy learns that his sister prefers Tom to Blifil, he shows compassion towards the latter, "and what the Effects of Compassion are in good and benevolent Minds, I need not here explain to most of my Readers" (Bk. III, Ch. vii; p. 140). At this point we should look briefly at the term "benevolent" as it was used in the eighteenth century, in order to understand what lay behind Fielding's assumptions in these passages. For Latitudinarian thinkers,

and for such philosophers as Joseph Butler and David Hume, benevolence is one of man's "affections" or passions. Any man who denies his benevolent impulse, by ignoring it or claiming that it does not exist (as Thomas Hobbes claimed that all actions are motivated by self-interest), is denying an essential part of his humanity.[17] Doing good for others, through charitable acts, and feeling sympathetically towards others are expressions of a part of one's being that some retain and some have corrupted by circumstances. Characters like Allworthy and Tom are motivated by benevolent dispositions, although, as we will see later, the latter must learn to restrain his other passionate impulses.

The reader's ability to feel emotions is evident in the narrator's certainty that, after his description of Sophia, "many of our Readers will probably be in Love too before we part" (Bk. III, Ch. x; p. 149). During the first long conversation between Tom and Sophia, the narrator says of Sophia's sensations, "the Reader's Heart (if he or she have any) will better represent [them] than I can" (Bk. IV, Ch. v; p. 169). One description is said to be bound "to give both me and my Reader pain" (Bk. IV, Ch. viii; p. 183), and there is a scene "which with Sorrow we relate, and with Sorrow, doubtless will it be read" (Bk. V, Ch. x; p. 225).

On the other hand, there are readers about whom the

narrator cannot be certain, or who are incapable of sympathy. The parenthetical remark about "the Reader's Heart" quoted above expresses some doubt, and in the scene in which Sophia decides to leave her father the narrator says of her distress: "Most of my Readers will suggest it easily to themselves, and the few who cannot, would not understand the picture, or at least would deny it to be natural, if ever so well drawn" (Bk. IV, Ch. xiv; p. 208). Similarly, in Joseph Andrews, after Joseph and Fanny find each other at an inn, the narrator asks his reader if he can imagine Joseph's reaction. "If thou can'st not," he says, "wave that Meditation to behold his Happiness, when clasping her in his Arms, he found Life and Blood returning to her cheeks" (J.A., Bk. II, Ch. xii; pp. 154-55). Adams' joy on learning that his son has not in fact drowned is such that "if thou can'st not conceive an Idea within, I will not vainly endeavour to assist thee" (Bk. IV, Ch. ix; p. 310). Fielding is quite explicit here that those without benevolent feelings can in no way be shown what positive emotions are like. Hard-hearted people, or those who have never been in love, are mentioned at various places in Joseph Andrews (e.g., Bk. II, Ch. xiii; p. 160, and Book III, Ch. xii; p. 270). Tom's feelings for Sophia are so strong the narrator says, "such kind of Lovers will make a very inconsiderable Part of our Readers" (T.J., Bk. VIII, Ch. iii; p. 411).

The apparent contradiction between the examples from Bk. IV, Ch. xiv, and Bk. VIII, Ch. iii, above as to whether most readers are able to feel strong emotions is due to rhetorical needs. Fielding gains sympathy from his readers by telling them they need not be given long descriptions of emotions he is sure they are familiar with, but wishes to make Tom's emotions so distinctly strong that no one can match them in intensity. For the most part, however, the reader's knowledge of the heart and mind are vital to Fielding's narrator, who says, after a long discourse on family relationships, that such a detailed discussion "is a Favour rarely to be expected in the Course of my Work. Indeed I shall seldom or never so indulge him, unless in such Instances as this, where nothing but the Inspiration with which we Writers are gifted, can possibly enable any one to make the Discovery" (Bk. I, Ch. v; p. 47). It is up to the "sagacious" reader (see <u>Tom Jones</u>, Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 38, and Bk. V, Ch. x; p. 258) to determine Fielding's meaning.

In spite of this presumed reliance on the reader's knowledge of human nature, Fielding still gives us long discourses on family obedience, as in the passage above, and the weaknesses of philosophers, as in <u>Tom Jones</u> Bk. V, Ch. v (p. 230). In <u>Joseph Andrews</u>, a lawyer's actions similarly lead to an account of lawyers in general (Bk. IV,

Ch. iii; p. 286). Fielding's confidence in his reader, then, is not complete.

A number of other characteristics of Fielding's "good Reader" can be deduced, particularly his impatience to know. The "curious Reader" is addressed at least five times in Joseph Andrews (Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 20, Ch. ix; p. 45, Ch. xi; p. 49, Bk. II, Ch. iii; p. 93, and Ch. xiii; p. 156). In some of these cases the reader is presumed to be anxious about the protagonists' situation or curious about the backgrounds of certain facts, such as why Fanny and Joseph had never written to each other (Bk. I, Ch. xi; p. 49). The narrator apologises for asking a great deal of the reader's patience after his digression concerning high and low life (Bk. II, Ch. xiii; p. 158), and while switching from the scene in which Joseph and Adams are left bound to the bed in order to present a conversation between the Poet and the Player (Bk. III, Ch. x; pp. 259 and 264, and Ch. xii; p. 267). The narrator also asks the reader to be patient while, for example, telling us about the law (Bk. II, Ch. vi; p. 100), and delaying to inform us of Patridge's innocence or guilt (Bk. II, Ch. vi; p. 101) or tell us directly about Captain Blifil's ultimate fate (Bk. II, Ch. viii; p. 109).

At a number of points the narrator implies that his reader is easily tired or bored. We are not given the details of Lady Booby's thoughts after her rejection by Joseph; these are affairs "which, if we had no better Matter for

our Reader, we would give him" (J.A., Bk. I, Ch. vii; p. 34). When Adams finds Joseph at the Tow-wouses' inn the narrator does not tell us about "a Discourse which chiefly turned on the relation of Matters already well known to the Reader" (Bk. I, Ch. xiv; p. 64). The narrator says of one chat between Joseph and Fanny: "as possibly, it would not be very entertaining to the Reader, we shall hasten to the Morning" (Bk. II, Ch. xiii; pp. 159-60), and we are not given the compliments bestowed on Fanny by the Squire and his companions "as they had not any thing new or uncommon in them" (Bk. III, Ch. vi; p. 243). The narrator avoids repeating himself and presenting uninteresting dialogues (e.g., Bk. III, Ch. viii; p. 253, and Bk. IV, Ch. v; p. 291). Similarly, the narrator of Tom Jones seeks to maintain the pace of the action by not going into great detail about Captain Blifil's courtship of Bridget (T.J., Bk. I, Ch. xii; p. 68), or that of Sophia by the younger Blifil (Bk. VII, Ch. vi; p. 344). He passes over the discussion that occurs after Allworthy's illness has begun to abate because it contains "but little Entertainment.. As we presume, therefore, only to convey this last to the Reader," he continues, "we shall pass by whatever was said" (Bk. V, Ch. ix; p. 255). Although entertainment is not really the narrator's only concern, it is clear that Fielding wished his fiction to maintain a high degree of activity.

The references to "female Readers" indicate that Fielding knew women formed an important part of his readership. In the very first chapter of Joseph Andrews, the narrator discusses previous "biographies" and says he does not need to repeat what "the Female Readers are taught by the Memoirs of Mrs. Andrews" (Bk. I, Ch. i; p. 19). The example set by Joseph is intended in part for women readers, who are requested not to judge Lady Booby too severely (Bk. I, Ch. viii; p. 38). Fanny's shyness "will recommend her Character to all our Female Readers" (Bk. II, Ch. x; p. 144). Finally, women are exhorted "to consider your Weakness, and the many Occasions on which the strength of a Man may be useful to you" (Bk. III, Ch. ii; p. 194). In Tom Jones, after Sophia misses seeing Jones in the garden because of her excessive concern for her appearance, the narrator calls the event a "most unfortunate Accident, from which my fair Readers will not fail to draw a very wholesome Lesson." He continues, "And here I strictly forbid all Male Critics to intermeddle with a Circumstance, which I have recounted only for the Sake of the Ladies, and upon which they only are at Liberty to comment" (Bk. VI, Ch. vi; p. 293). Some time later, the narrator assures his "fair Readers", ironically of course, that Mrs. Waters, after her escape from Ensign Northerton, "had so well covered herself ... that her Regard to Decency was not in

the least violated by the Presence of so many Men as were now in the Room" (Bk. IX, Ch. iv; p. 505). References to both male and female readers include the example from Tom Jones above concerning male critics, the parenthetical remark about the reader's heart in Joseph Andrews (Bk. II, Ch. xv; p. 169), and references to "married Persons" in Tom Jones (Bk. II, Ch. ii; p. 81, and Bk. II, Ch. vii; p. 106).

An entire passage is directed at young readers (T.J., Bk. III, Ch. vii; p. 141), as Fielding informs them of the need for prudence. In both novels, as well, the narrator takes into account his reader's desire for what is "natural" as opposed to what is "miraculous". During Adams' and Joseph's struggle with the dogs, for example, the narrator says, "Diana (the Reader may believe it or not, as he pleases) interposed" (J.A., Bk. III, Ch. vi; p. 242). After a short passage in Tom Jones during which Cupid appears, the narrator says, "we scorn to deceive our Reader, or to vindicate the Character of our Heroine, by ascribing her Actions to supernatural Impulse" (Bk. VII, Ch. ix; pp. 360-61). The mock-epic use of supernatural "machinery" ensures a proper response to scenes involving self-conscious emotional displays.

At two points in Tom Jones, the narrator--and probably Fielding himself--admits that he simply does not know what his reader wants or expects. Because he cannot be sure of

a proper response to Allworthy's treatment of Jenny Jones, he says: "as we cannot possibly divine what Complexion our Reader may be of ... we think proper to give him a very early Intimation, that Mr. Allworthy was, and will hereafter appear to be, absolutely innocent of any criminal Intention whatever" (Bk. I, Ch. ix; p. 59). Fielding is quite explicit that he does not know his actual reader very well: "Reader, it is impossible we should know what Sort of Person thou wilt be: For, perhaps, thou may'st be as learned in Human Nature as Shakespear himself was, and, perhaps, thou may'st be no wiser than some of his Editors" (Bk. X, Ch. i; p. 523).

Aside from references to the general reader, Fielding includes addresses to his critics.[18] Most can be found in the prefatory chapters, but occasionally these responses to the critics occur in the midst of the action. In Joseph Andrews the responses appear to be limited to the first chapter of each book and to the chapter headings. A good example of the latter is the heading for Bk. IV, Ch. viii: "A Discourse which happened between Mr. Adams, Mrs. Adams, Joseph, and Fanny; with some Behaviour of Mr. Adams, which will be called by some few Readers, very low, absurd, and unnatural" (p. 306). As he did in Jonathan Wild, he turns the critics' terms back on them by using them to describe scenes of marital and parental affection. If we consider

the reactions to Joseph Andrews and the plays, we can well understand why Tom Jones contains so many more responses to the critics. It is not necessary to go into great detail about the prefatory chapters, as they are almost exclusively reserved for attacks on the "reptile Critics" (see Bk. X, Ch. i) or anticipations of such attacks on him. In one of the chapter headings, the narrator expresses ironically the fear that his description of Tom will "lower his Character in the Estimation of those Men of Wit and Gallantry, who approve the Heroes in most of our modern Comedies" (T.J., Bk. IV, Ch. vi; p. 171).

In the text of the novel itself, Fielding makes direct or thinly disguised responses to the critics. At the end of Bk. IX, Ch. ii, the narrator affirms his right to digress whenever he wishes; in such matters, he is "a better Judge than any pitiful Critic whatever" (p. 37). A little later on, after he employs a simile, he explains what he means because, "as the great Beauty of the Simile may possibly sleep these hundred Years, till some future Commentator shall take this Work in Hand, I think proper to lend the Reader a little Assistance" (Bk. I, Ch. vi; p. 47). The most direct attack on the critics appears in Bk. VI, Ch. iii, where a digression is introduced "in Defiance of all the barking Critics in the World" (p. 282). The narrator also seeks to deflect future criticism of seemingly irrational

behaviour on the part of one of the characters by offering a partial explanation "not with any View of pretending to account for so odd a Behaviour, but lest some Critic should hereafter plume himself on discovering it" (Bk. VII, Ch. xii; p. 377).

A common theme of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones is that of reputation, and we might see this theme as a form of response to the critics.[19] The "town" is nearly a distinct character in the two novels, and usually the opinions it expresses are wrong. Gossippers believe that Lady Booby and Joseph are having an affair, as do Lady Booby's servants (J.A., Bk. I, Ch. iv; p. 28 and Ch. ix; p. 43). Fielding's character was defamed by his opponents because of personal and political rivalries, and the same occurs to the gentleman about whom Adams hears. The gentleman had mediated a dispute between two men, and the loser in the decision describes him to Adams in wholly negative terms. When he learns the truth, Adams exclaims, "'God forbid! ... that Men should arrive at such a Pitch of Wickedness, to be-lye the Character of their Neighbour from a little private Affection, or what is infinitely worse, a private Spite" (Bk. II, Ch. iii; p. 99). The "town" takes on an even more important role in Tom Jones, and we are given its uninformed opinions of Allworthy's handling of Jenny Jones's case (Bk. I, Ch. ix; p. 58, and

Bk. II, Ch. iv; p. 88), Patridge's presumed guilt (Bk. II, Ch. vi; p. 103), and Allworthy's treatment of Tom and Blifil (Bk. III, Ch. v; p. 133, and Bk. VI, Ch. xi; p. 311). From what we know of Fielding's own treatment at the hands of critics, or, more often, slanderers, we can assume quite safely that these attacks on gossip and the power of reputation are part of his general answer to his enemies.

The significance of what we have seen is that Fielding was, understandably, sensitive to critical commentary. Throughout Tom Jones he "displays a heightened consciousness of the importance of Opinion,"[20] and while he shows, as we have seen, that opinion is seldom correct, it must be taken into account. As we learn in the passage directed at young readers,

> It is not enough that your Designs, nay that your Actions are intrinsically good, you must take Care they shall appear so. If your Inside be never so beautiful, you must preserve a fair Outside also. This must be constantly looked to, or Malice and Envy will take Care to blacken it so, that the Sagacity and Goodness of an Allworthy will not be able to see through it.
> (T.J., Bk. III, Ch. vii; p. 141)

Clearly, then, Fielding was concerned about his own reputation, and as we will see later on it seems certain he reacted to preserve it.

IV: The Implied Reader 2

Until now, we have limited our consideration of the implied reader to actual addresses to that reader. Of more significance, however, are those aspects of the novels which indicate certain assumptions about the reader, and we will now endeavour to determine what those assumptions are. We will then review what has been said in this and in the previous chapter, and arrive at some conclusions about how Fielding viewed his reader.

An important element in all Augustan literature is the use of literary allusions, although as the eighteenth century went on this element was given less and less emphasis.[1] Fielding wrote novels--in many ways, as the term itself suggests, a new genre--but considered himself an Augustan and based much of his literary theory on such writers as Alexander Pope.[2] As Iser says, throughout his fiction "Fielding calls to mind a whole repertoire of familiar literary 'genres', so that these allusions will arouse particular expectations from which his novel proceeds to diverge."[3] Much of Fielding's art depends, therefore, on the assumption that his reader will be familiar with those various genres.

Because Fielding calls his two major novels "comic

epics in prose," many critics have placed undue emphasis on the term "epic".[4] Valuable work has been done showing the parallels between Fielding's fiction and the classical epics; but it must be pointed out that when Fielding uses the term, he does not always refer to such works as the Odyssey and the Aeneid. To a large extent, for Fielding "epic" means "unified narrative".[5] The term is also used by Fielding to add status to his fiction; because the novel was considered a lesser genre, as we have seen, he put the form in the epic tradition.[6] There are elements of the classical epic evident in Fielding's work, and they should be discussed first; but other narrative traditions play as important if not a more important role than the classical one in the shaping of Fielding's novels.

The basis of the epic, as a number of critics have said, is its presentation of general as opposed to particular truths.[7] Fielding, in an oft-quoted phrase, wishes to show "not Men, but Manners, not an Individual, but a Species" (J.A., Bk. III, Ch. 1; p. 189). Fielding's satire is directed at the follies of all men, and the parsons, doctors, lawyers, and so forth who are satirised are types rather than identifiable personages (as, for example, Jonathan Wild in Fielding's work can be identified as Walpole).[8] Major characters are well-developed and individualised, but, as we will see in more detail later, their

experiences are not important in themselves but in the general moral truths we derive from reading about them.

The novels have certain epic structural elements, and Fielding is therefore assuming that his reader will be able to detect the parallels. For example, the interpolated stories of Wilson in Joseph Andrews and the "Man of the Hill" in Tom Jones recall epic story-telling such as we find in the Odyssey (Bks. IX-XII). Also, the division of the work into chapters is based on the Homeric books, as Fielding states explicitly in the first chapter of Book II of Joseph Andrews (pp. 90-91), and his entire discussion in that chapter presupposes some knowledge on the reader's part of the epic tradition. More importantly, Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones both essentially involve journeys, just as the epic journey or quest is the main unifying element of classical epics. Fielding's views on epic structure are expressed in his preface to his sister Sarah's novel, David Simple (1744), where he distinguishes between unity in the Iliad and the Odyssey. In the former, the action "is entire and uniform; in the Odyssey, is rather a series of actions, all tending to produce one great end."[9] The reader is meant to take Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones as epics in the mold of the Odyssey.

The aspect of Fielding's first two novels that serves

more than any other to give them their epic sense is the mock-epic imagery. The humour of the fight scenes in particular rests on such imagery. After invoking the muse "who presidest over Biography" the narrator of Joseph Andrews relates the fight with the dogs as an epic battle (Bk. III, Ch. i; p. 238). Epic epithets such as "the quick-scenting Dogs," descriptions of the weapons such as Joseph's "Cudgel of mighty Strength," and the catalogue of dogs' names provide epic height to a ludicrous scene (Bk. III, Ch. i; pp. 239-41). In passages throughout the novel we find mention of ancient gods and goddesses; for example, we are expected to know the names Cupid (Bk. I, Ch. vii; p. 36), Hesperus (Bk. I, Ch. viii; p. 37), Aurora (Bk. I, Ch. xii; p. 55), Narcissus and Pygmalion (Bk. II, Ch. xii; p. 152), and Scylla and Charybdis (Bk. II, Ch. xvii; p. 181). Through the use of personification, as of the morning (Bk. III, Ch. iv; p. 225) and fame (Bk. I, Ch. v; p. 28), and various kinds of similes, the style is heightened where a mock-epic effect is desired. A similar technique is used in Tom Jones, where a list of classical allusions employed would include references to Venus (Bk. I, Ch. viii; p. 56, and Bk. V, Ch. xi; p. 259), Helen and Penelope (Bk. IV, Ch. xiv; p. 202), and Orpheus (Bk. IX, Ch. ii; p. 499). The narrator of Tom Jones mentions ancient writers and philosophers such as Aristotle (Bk. IV, Ch. xiv; p. 202) and Ovid (Bk.

IX, Ch. v; p. 511), and, as in *Joseph Andrews*, heightens the style through the use of similes. A wide range of classical knowledge, then, is assumed of the reader of both novels.

The reader is also expected to recognise certain aspects of Fielding's most immediate narrative source, the high romance of the seventeenth century, in his novels. He is assumed to be aware of works like *Amadis de Gaul* and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and particularly the comic romances they spawned. As Fielding states on the title page of *Joseph Andrews*, he is writing in imitation of *Don Quixote*, a work that uses the romance tradition the way mock-epics use the epic tradition: with due concern for form, but all the while undercutting the form through the treatment of subject matter.

Actually, there is a problem of terminology here. When early novelists attacked the "romance", they were not always referring to the high romance of the seventeenth century but at times to the popular erotic "novels" and "romances" of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[10] When they did speak of high romance they attacked its excesses, such as (in Coventry's terms) its "Bombast and Fustian." Many romances merited praise for the morality that infused them, however.[11] Arthur L. Cooke has done a study showing a similarity of goals among

romance writers and Fielding, especially in terms of the need for morality, probability in stories, and essentially believable characters.[12] As Cooke points out, both Fielding and the romance writers had as their narrative models the classical and modern epics, among the latter being Fenelon's Telemaque.[13] The confusion is increased when we find Fielding saying in the Dedication to Tom Jones that had George Lyttelton helped him write the novel, he too would have been "a Romance Writer" (T.J., p. 4).

Our only conclusion can be that, as a number of critics have suggested, Fielding uses the terms "romance" and "epic" interchangeably when he wants to speak of narratives as a whole. He refers to the specific genres at times made clear by the context; where he wishes to stress the contrast between the realism of his fiction and the lack of realism among earlier authors, as in Joseph Andrews, Bk. III, Ch. i (p. 187), he talks about the "romance" and the "modern Novel" as genres. His novels are "epics" in that he uses a general narrative structure based on the classics, as we have seen, even if he does not employ their supernatural machinery. In all, the epic provided the basis for the romance, the romance for the comic or mock-romance, and the latter for Fielding's fiction. Those who find romance elements in Fielding's work are correct, but sometimes forget that he is writing the comic type, not the serious,

and uses those elements at times for comic effect.[14]

The episodic plot, and the journey, are seen by critics emphasising the romance elements of the novels as attributes of the Christian romance. Henry K. Miller and Aubrey Williams stress that the hero of a Christian romance undergoes a series of tests of faith, and that similarly Joseph and Tom are tested in their travels.[15] In fact, the unity of a romance "would reside in what the author aims at in the creation of his actions rather than in the causal mechanism by which he connects them."[16] Because Tom learns prudence through his adventures, his actions are unified by that fact and we watch his progress in maturing.

One aspect of Fielding's plotting that has received a great deal of attention is his use of coincidences. Few now would dismiss the use of chance meetings as merely an easy way to advance the plot, but at times critics take the matter too seriously. Williams and Melvyn New consider the coincidences, and especially the "happy endings", as the expression of a Christian world view which involves the concept of Providence, and that since this idea permeates the romances it has found its way into Fielding's work.[17] (Neither critic, it should be stressed, implies that Fielding only derived this concept from his narrative sources.) This may be true, but perhaps more important is the fact that comic effects require improbable events

at times, and some of the humour in Fielding's fiction comes from surprise and fortuitous events.

Miller goes into some detail about the idea that characters in Tom Jones recall romantic heroes and heroines. Joseph and Tom are indeed comic romantic heroes. Tom in particular, with his own Sancho Panza, Partridge, recalls Don Quixote, and he and Joseph are in love with idealised heroines. The minor characters are types rather than fully developed individuals, an attribute of romances according to Miller.[18] The same could be said, however, of minor characters in any art form. Fielding and the romance writers agreed that characters should act as moral exemplars, although none should be paragons of virtue.[19] When reading Fielding's novels, then, his reader is expected to recognise the characters from their more serious counterparts in the romance.

We have glanced at the romance background of Fielding's work because contemporary readers of fiction would have been familiar with high or low romances, and the allusions inherent in the plot and characterisation depend on such familiarity. The other major literary genre recalled by Fielding's work is the drama, as one might expect considering Fielding's own dramatic background. The scenes, characters, and language in some cases have their roots in stage conventions, as Fielding attempts to manipulate his reader's

responses by techniques familiar to them.

The minor characters and some of the major ones are stock characters; and most, because they are governed by what can be called a "ruling passion", seem to belong to the tradition of the "comedy of humours". The minor characters seldom develop, but are established at the beginning and act according to our expectations. As in Fielding's own plays, the "humourous" characters often provide comic relief while we are concerned for the lovers involved in the "main plot".[20] Stock characters with whom Fielding's reader might have been familiar are the mercenary inn-keeper, the impious parson, and the unattractive and sometimes lecherous maidservant. The description of Mrs. Slipslop, for example, suggests less a human being than a type figure:

> She was not at this time remarkably handsome; being very short, and rather too corpulent in Body, and somewhat red, with the Addition of Pimples in the Face. Her Nose was likewise rather too large, and her Eyes too little; nor did she resemble a Cow so much in her Breath, as in two brown Globes which she carried before her; one of her Legs was also a little shorter than the other, which occasioned her to limp as she walked.
>
> (J.A., Bk. I, Ch. vi; p. 32)

The dialogue at times is more conventional than natural, as stylised language is used to turn the scenes into melodrama. After asking Joseph about whether he is in love,

she says,

> "I am convinced that you are no Stranger to that Passion; Come Joey," says she, "tell me truly, who is the happy Girl whose Eyes have made a Conquest of you? ... Indeed you handsome Fellows, like handsome Women, are very long and difficult in fixing: but yet you shall never persuade me that your Heart is so unsusceptible of Affection; I rather impute what you say to your Secrecy, a very commendable Quality."
>
> (J.A., Bk. I, Ch. v; p. 29)

The dialogue between Tom and Sophia in Bk. VI, Ch. viii, like the one later in Bk. XVIII, is also highly stylised:

> "O my Sophia, what means this dreadful Sight!" --She looked softly at him for a Moment before she spoke, and then said, "Mr. Jones, for Heaven's sake, how came you here? Leave me, I beseech you, this Moment." "Do not," says he, "impose so harsh a Command upon me--my Heart bleeds faster than those Lips. O Sophia, how easily could I drain my Veins to preserve one Drop of that dear Blood."
>
> (T.J., p. 298)

Passages like these appear to be based on set pieces from the stage, and the impression is heightened by the use of such stock reactions as fainting and falling on one's knees.[21] In fact, we can see instances where Fielding will "set the scene" by introducing the characters and describing the setting, and then having the actions commence. Most of the inn scenes conform to this pattern.

Frederick Bissell sees Fielding's first, or prefatory, chapters as rendering him a "chorus" of sorts for Tom Jones.

Fielding sometimes introduces the action that will take place in the ensuing chapters, and gives opinions about the characters and events.[22] There are in fact explicit references in the novel to the work as a play, the best example being in the prefatory chapter to Bk. VII. After the scene in which Black George steals Tom's money, we are said to react as would the audience at a play. We are told by the nature of this chapter, actually, that Fielding considered his readers to be as diverse in background and opinion as those who attend plays (T.J., p. 326), and accordingly anticipated a wide range of judgments of George's actions. Fielding tells us, "A single bad Act no more constitutes a Villain in Life, than a single bad Part on the Stage" (T.J., p. 328). Thus, from the explicit references in the novels, and in the manner we are presented scenes and characters, it becomes evident that Fielding expected his readers to be familiar with dramatic conventions and react accordingly.

Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones are called "histories", and they therefore seem to fall into the same category as much of the literature being published during the eighteenth century. "History", or "fictional biography" as it was often defined, was a term used to render novels acceptable to the reading public. As Altick says, "because the reading of history was recommended as perfectly safe and useful, it

was possible to take up with a clear conscience any book, however fantastic, that had the word 'history' displayed on its title page."[23] The very titles of the novels, then, reveal something about how Fielding viewed his public, as he feared he would be less likely to receive serious attention without the inclusion of the word "history". In an article by William J. Farrell, we learn that Fielding's "familiar style" was common in the biographies and autobiographies of the day.[24] Fielding's "talkativeness" would have been a familiar technique to contemporary readers, one that added to, rather than diminished, the sense of realism. As with the romance and epic, Fielding is using a well-known generic model for humourous purposes. While insisting on the "truth" of the novels he asks us to compare them to "real" biographies. In Joseph Andrews he points out that although it is fiction, the work contains more truth than, for example, the autobiography of Colley Cibber (Bk. I, Ch. i; p. 19).

The reader, then, is assumed to be familiar with a number of different genres, and the humour often depends on a contrast between what the genre should be like, and what Fielding makes of it. Specific works of literature as well as genres are recalled throughout the two novels. Joseph Andrews depends, of course, on its reader's knowledge of Pamela. The humour of Joseph's chastity rests on what

we know of his sister, and is heightened by the fact that, at least in Fielding's mind, his virtue is more sincere than Pamela's had been. In fact, the plots of both novels are similar, as has been shown by Douglas Brooks,[25] and the characters of Lady Booby and Mrs. Slipslop recall those of Mr. B. and Mrs. Jewkes. Parody of Pamela, then, is an important part of Joseph Andrews' total effect, which in that sense relies on a reader's knowledge of the original.

Shakespeare's plays are referred to occasionally in Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones. Falstaff is mentioned in the former novel (Bk. II, Ch. xiv; p. 162), and the Italian traveller Adams and Joseph meet confuses Othello and Macbeth (Bk. II, Ch. v; p. 121)--a joke only someone with knowledge of the plays could appreciate. Square is said to have been discovered behind an "arras" in Molly's room, thus recalling Polonius' discovery in Hamlet (T.J., Bk. V, Ch. v; p. 232), and Partridge's comments while attending a performance of that play reveal a lack of the sort of knowledge Fielding presumes his reader enjoys (T.J., Bk. XVI, Ch. v; pp. 853-57). Also, after Tom recovers from the blow he receives at the hands of Northerton, he walks about in a condition such "that the bloody Banquo was not worthy to be compared to him" (Bk. VII, Ch. xiv; p. 388). Milton appears as well; when Tom is banished from the aptly-named Paradise Hall he is said to be like Adam,

for whom "The World, as Milton phrases it, lay all before him" (Bk. VII, Ch. ii; p. 331). While Jones and Patridge are travelling during the night Tom quotes "some Passages from Milton, who hath certainly excelled all other Poets in his Description of the heavenly Luminaries" (Bk. VIII, Ch. ix; p. 436). There are also references to Butler's Hudibras (Bk. IV, Ch. viii; p. 178) and to Joseph Addison (Bk. VIII, Ch. ix; p. 436). These passages would only have been included if Fielding felt his readers, or at least some of them, knew the works and authors being quoted.

In some ways the novels also recall Biblical characters and events. The names of the characters in Joseph Andrews are for the most part simply descriptive, but Joseph's and Adams' names are meant to recall the Biblical Joseph, Abraham, and Adam. Joseph's scene with Lady Booby is similar to the Biblical Joseph's rejection of Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:7-20), while Adams, like his namesakes, is a patriarchal figure in the novel. As Battestin points out, both Abraham and the parson emphasis faith through good works, a doctrine that is the cornerstone of Fielding's own moral outlook.[26] Tom Jones has been seen as a "prodigal son", and we have already alluded to the Christian basis of his adventures.[27]

Actually, the novels are in many ways fictionalised sermons; scenes serve as illustrations of the moralisa-

tions that follow. In the "Author's Preface" to Joseph Andrews, Fielding speaks of the power of examples in teaching others (J.A., p. 5). Joseph's confrontation with Lady Booby is followed by moralising offered as part of his consciousness: he "entered himself into an Ejaculation on the numberless Calamities which attended Beauty, and the Misfortune it was to be handsomer than one's Neighbours" (Bk. I, Ch. x; p. 46). We are given near-sermons on the inability of "Riches, or Honours, or Pleasures" to provide happiness (Bk. I, Ch. xiii; p. 58), the many forms that vanity takes (Bk. I, Ch. xv; p. 69), and the strength of habit (Bk. IV, Ch. vii; p. 299). Adams discussions with Parsons Barnabas and Trulliber serve to illustrate false religious doctrines (Bk. I, Ch. xvii; pp. 82-84, and Bk. II, Ch. xiv; pp. 165-68). In Tom Jones Allworthy does much of the sermonising (e.g., Bk. I, Ch. vii), but the narrator himself speaks about love (Bk. I, Ch. xi; p. 65), friendship (Bk. II, Ch. vii; p. 107), and so forth. In this respect, the novels are like moral writings, sermons, and the Bible itself.

Earlier we indicated that some degree of classical knowledge is expected of the reader, but that idea should be qualified by one point. Every time a Latin quotation is used by the narrator in Tom Jones, with the exception of legal terms, it is followed by a translation (see, for

example, Bk. II, Ch. iv; p. 84, Bk. II, Ch. viii; p. 109, Bk. III, Ch. ii; p. 120, and Bk. IV, Ch. x; p. 188). At one point, for an especially long quotation from the *Aeneid*, Fielding uses Dryden's translation (Bk. V, Ch. iv; p. 226). Perhaps Fielding felt that such translations were necessary for a sizeable part of his audience, one that read novels but did not have a classical education.

It must be said, then, that Fielding expects his reader to be reasonably well-read. His use of epic, romance, and dramatic traditions, as well as allusions to other literary forms and specific works, reveal that he not only relied on other narrative models but based much of his effect on the assumption of his reader's familiarity with them.

We will now review some of the other attributes of Fielding's reader that are implied by the fiction. We have already seen that Fielding requires his reader to act as a judge of the action and the characters, but on a more literal level there are passages that seem to be intended for his friends in the legal profession. Only readers with some knowledge of the law would appreciate the humour of the efforts of Joseph's two doctors to act like lawyers using "the *Attorney's Pocket-Companion*" (*J.A.*, Bk. I, Ch. xv; p. 68). Fielding uses the legal phrase "*e contra, totis viribus*" in describing one doctor's opinion (p. 69).

In Tom Jones, Mr. Allworthy's "examination" of Partridge is related in the style of a court reporter (Bk. II, Ch. vi; p. 98). Later, after it is learned that Tom has sold his horse to help the Seagrims, Fielding says that his "Readers will be much abler Advocates for poor Jones" than either Thwackum or Square (Bk. III, Ch. viii; p. 144). The exaggerated seriousness of Allworthy's lawyer in discussing the incident involving Sophia's bird is intended to satirise those members of the profession whose only real knowledge of the law is of its terminology (Bk. IV, Ch. iv; p. 164). Finally, the narrator's attitude towards Allworthy's sentencing of Molly to the house of correction is expressed in the terms of one judge examining another: "as his Intention was truly upright, he ought to be excused in Foro Conscientiae, since so many arbitrary Acts are daily committed by Magistrates, who have not this Excuse to plead for themselves" (Bk. IV, Ch. xi; p. 192). In part, his gibes at the legal and medical professions are based on a desire to prevent the debasement of language through improper and mechanical usage.[28]

Occasionally we get the impression that Fielding is addressing city readers, as when, for example, he explains certain rural terms, such as sportsmen's language (J.A., Bk. III, Ch. vi; p. 238), and the word "Rutting" (T.J., Bk. V, Ch. xi; p. 259). Also, in maintaining his image as

a man who has travelled and is speaking to those who will be able to, the narrator recommends an inn in Gloucester (T.J., Bk. VIII, Ch. viii; p. 430). A certain degree of military knowledge is helpful in understanding some of the similes in both novels. As the Squire's men come to kidnap Fanny, "they discovered the Enemy drawn up three deep" (J.A., Bk. III, Ch. ix; p. 257). The narrator of Tom Jones describes the confrontation between a doctor and a disease in military terms: "by giving Time to the latter, we often suffer him to fortify and entrench himself, like a French Army" (Bk. V, Ch. vii; p. 240). A similar, and somewhat lengthy, example can be found a bit further on (Bk. V, Ch. viii; p. 249). The fight scenes are, of course, treated as battle scenes, and at the end of the one between Tom and Blifil "A Truce ... was at length agreed on, by the Mediation of the Neutral Parties" (Bk. V, Ch. ix; p. 254). Finally, knowledge of Hogarth's art is necessary in order to know what Bridget, Mrs. Partridge, and Thwackum look like (Bk. I, Ch. xi; p. 66, Bk. II, Ch. iii; p. 82, and Bk. III, Ch. vi; p. 138), while that of Kneller's and Lely's portraits will give one some idea of Sophia's beauty (Bk. IV, Ch. ii; p. 156).

Fielding's irony has been discussed at great length by a number of commentators, and it is generally agreed that Fielding's tone is more "benevolent" than that of

either Swift or Pope. We will review what has been said about Fielding's irony, because his technique has implications for his view of his reader, and we will begin by discussing briefly the moral basis behind the satire.

Earlier critics believed that Fielding was a Shaftesburyan optimist in regard to human nature, but now it is understood that his attitude about man's basic goodness or depravity is much more complicated. He did not share the wholly negative view of Swift or Pope, but felt that each man has the potential for good or evil. The tendency to evil can be called a "ruling passion", a blinding impulse to act a certain way. One must learn how to be good, although critics have disagreed as to whether a moral education can achieve this. C. R. Kropf has concluded that no consistent attitude towards the power of instruction can be found in Fielding's early fiction.[29] In fact, the attaining of moral rightness is for Fielding an act of the will; we must choose to be good, and a moral upbringing serves only as a guide to proper action that we choose to follow or ignore. Tom and Blifil come from the same background, but one chooses to become prudent while the other chooses to let his greed overtake him. In judging whether a man is good or not, it is his actions that count. It is how we act towards others in our social context that truly determines our virtue or lack of it. and in this respect Fielding is following the Low-Church or Latitudinarian

doctrine of good works versus mere faith, or the profession of virtue.[30] As Bernard Harrison points out, Fielding's novels present the characters' actions to us, and how they appear to each other, and we are in the position to come to conclusions as to whether these actions are good or evil.[31]

One of the key words in Fielding's philosophy is "prudence", which can be defined as our rational sense guiding our "passions" along proper paths.[32] It is through our reason that our will works, and if we overrule our passions and act in ways we know will aid others (thus the importance of charity), we become virtuous. Without such "prudence" we become automatons at the mercy of our irrational desires; Lady Booby, for example, is blinded by her lust and pride, and cannot see Joseph's real virtue. In all, there is a sense of "benevolence" in Fielding's thought and work. Our salvation comes from prudent and charitable actions while we avoid the fate of the "Man of the Hill" and retain our full place in society.[33]

Scholars have shown that Fielding's ironic technique is in its essentials quite conventional.[34] Among the techniques used are blame by praise, under- and over-statement, and the persona. On the other hand he is unlike previous satirists because of the comic sense of the works. Satire implies that one has put oneself in a position of moral authority, and that one can make harsh judgments about the

satiric targets. In earlier Augustan satire, the targets were considered real threats to moral, social, and aesthetic order. Fielding's targets, on the other hand, are placed in a comic world where threats to happiness are known to be temporary. A comparison of Pope's Dunciad and Fielding's novels will clarify this concept. The Dunces are threats to literature, and in the fictional world established by Pope they succeed in plunging all into "eternal Night" (Bk. IV, l. 2). The satiric targets in Fielding's novels engage our attention, but we know that the bad doctors and lawyers, self-indulgent aristocrats, and impious clergymen will not prevent the final meeting and marriage of the lovers.

Before looking in more detail at the differences between satire and comedy it must be emphasized that irony has its dangers as a technique. The audience must be one that will not accept the surface meaning of an ironic passage.[35] The early Augustans did not have this worry because most of their literature was intended for an established and familiar audience. Fielding realised the dangers inherent in irony, as can be seen in his remarks in the Jacobite's Journal of 26 March 1748:

> I have observed that tho' Irony is capable of furnishing the most exquisite Ridicule; yet as there is no kind of Humour so liable to be mistaken, it is, of all others, the most dangerous to the Writer. An infinite Number of Readers have not the least Taste or Relish for it, I believe I may say do not understand it; and all

> are apt to be tired, when it is carried to
> any degree of Length.[36]

Gradually, a moral element was added to the general rejection of satire: "Behind much of the growing eighteenth-century resistance to satire lies the fear that knowledge of evil would somehow corrupt."[37] Once again, then, we meet with the fear that presenting evil in a tone other than pure seriousness might somehow lead to it.

Paulson appears to be quite correct when he says that "Fielding's irony implies a more general audience, a somewhat lower common denominator than Swift admitted."[38] It was to this general audience that Fielding always had to appeal, and he did not have the confidence earlier Augustans had that complete irony such as we find in Swift's <u>A Modest Proposal</u> would not be lost on that audience. Early Augustan satires were often, at least in part, attacks by one party or club on another, in spite of the claim by Edward and Lillian Bloom that behind all satire lies a desire to improve its readers.[39] Tory satirists placed themselves above the "Mob"; "this distinction between their audience and the world in general is insisted upon and exploited by Tory satirists."[40]

As we have seen, however, for Fielding it is the "world in general" that is most important. Rather than place himself above it, Fielding must work within it by

establishing close ties with its readers. He does not belong to a close-knit inner circle but must appeal to a basically unknown public. Further, an important difference between satire and comedy is that the former deals with social "disintegration" while the latter deals with social "reintegration". In other words, comedy provides an established social context in which the hero must find his place, whereas satire presents an unacceptable context the hero rejects.[41] The satiric elements are there in Fielding's work, as the professions and the critics are mercilessly attacked, but the comic spirit dominates. Tom and Joseph seek their place in society, and after gaining prudence, which in part means acting for the good of others, they succeed in finding it.

One important reason comedy is such a dominant force in Fielding is that his work is intended to improve us, not attack anyone. Fielding's novels are the sort of moral guide that a truly benevolent person, one who is willing to make the conscious effort to be virtuous, can use. It is for this reason that Fielding attacks "not Men, but Manners"; he does not have his own set of "Dunces" to assail, but rather attacks the follies all men suffer from and which all who are willing to do so can eradicate.[42] In sum, there is behind his gentle satire a belief that all men are perfectible but not a naive confidence that all men will

be perfected.[43]

Fielding's satire, then, is based on a distinct view of the audience. That audience is too general to be taken in as confidants against a wider world; in fact, they are that wider world. Fielding must therefore reach out to them, so that he and they can laugh at follies that can be eliminated by the will to do so.

It has been indicated at various points throughout this study that Fielding's reader may have only read a few chapters of any novel of his at a time. Further evidence for this idea can be found in the very structure of the novels. Both Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones are episodic, which may imply that readers were unable or unwilling to concentrate on a unified action for many pages. More revealing, however, is the division into chapters. Philip Stevick suggests that there were practical reasons for the brevity of the chapters, as eighteenth-century fiction was designed "to be carried and read casually." He says that "its audience was wide and diverse, but it included a majority of readers who were not at all leisured, whose attention to a novel must have been shallow."[44] We have seen also that Fielding's novels were published in multi-volume sets like other contemporary works of fiction, and short books and chapters would conform easily to such publication. The novels, then, seem to have been for readers who carried

their volumes with them and read whenever time permitted. At the moment, such theories are quite speculative, but there does seem to be ample reason to think that the eighteenth-century audience for fiction was made up in part of intermittent readers and not just the leisured classes.

Finally, we might discuss an issue that defies easy consideration: Fielding's prose style. James Sutherland, in an article published some time ago, said that the prose of the eighteenth century was based on social intercourse and polite, decorous conversation.[45] Watt sees the rise of "conversational prose" as a result of middle-class norms of simplicity and directness, so that in the novel we find "a prose which restricts itself to a descriptive and denotative use of language."[46] It must be pointed out, however, that Pope's poetic language has also been called "conversational", and no one would argue he wrote this way to appeal to a middle-class audience.[47] Fielding's style can certainly be classified as "simple" in many ways; the diction is not very Latinate and the sentence structure is usually straightforward. One description will illustrate the style fairly well, as the narrator of Joseph Andrews speaks of Adams:

> He had on a Night-Cap drawn over his Wig, and a short great Coat, which half covered his Cassock; a Dress, which added to something comical enough

> in his Countenance, composed a Figure likely to attract the Eyes of those who were not over-given to Observation.
>
> (J.A., Bk. I, Ch. xvi; p. 73)

In the first part of the sentence the language is quite plain, and directly sets the scene. Later, Fielding switches to a more Latinate diction in order to add comedy to the scene. The phrase "over-given to Observation" implies a seriousness out of keeping with Adams' comical appearance.

William B. Coley considers the source of Fielding's "plain style" to be preachers' sermons. Because of a Puritan fear of metaphors, which are actually "lies" of sorts, preachers developed a direct style of speaking that Fielding adopted for his writing while reading them.[48] Miller sees the changes in authorial voice as based on the Augustan concept of "decorum", with a high style used for philosophical subjects, a middle style for actions and descriptions (which predominate in Fielding's fiction), and a low style for scenes involving low characters.[49] But it seems likely that Fielding adopted those prose styles because he wished to write in a way familiar to his broad and in part less educated readership. In the absence of direct evidence, however, such a supposition must remain in the realm of speculation.

In our look at the implied reader as established through direct addresses to him and in the assumptions behind the

structure, imagery, characterisation, and language of Fielding's novels, we have seen that no one type of reader emerges. He may be learned and well-read, but he may also need to have passages in Latin translated for him. He may be quite sophisticated in some ways, but Fielding must be careful in his irony so that his meaning will not be lost on him. Women and the young, and above all Fielding's critics, are addressed directly throughout the work. Our historical study of the audience for fiction showed that it was probably much more diverse than is generally believed, and those critics who say that Fielding's work is intended for a middle-class audience underestimate it.[50] We have seen that readers of epics and romances, theatre-goers of all ranks, professionals, and those with little leisure time who wish varied and continuous entertainment, all make up part of Fielding's implied readership.

Amelia

In earlier chapters we concentrated on Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones because those novels are similar to each other in many ways. Amelia, Fielding's last novel, is vastly different from them in tone and subject matter. The humour that plays such a strong role in the other novels is almost non-existent in Amelia, and in some respects, as will be seen later, the novel seems to be the sort of fiction that Fielding had always attacked. Previous efforts to account for the change from the earlier works to Amelia have been either wholly unsatisfactory or have answered only some questions. Many critics have in fact rejected the idea that one can judge Amelia on the basis of the earlier novels, since it seems to represent an entirely new departure for Fielding. After reviewing the earlier critical commentary on the novel we will look at what are in fact a number of similarities between Fielding's previous novels and Amelia. I will then propose a theory as to what led to the writing of a novel like Amelia--a theory built on what we have seen thus far concerning Fielding's real and assumed reader. It will be suggested that Fielding shaped his novel in conformity to a changed vision of his reader.

The most common of the earlier suggestions about the

tone of Amelia is that it represents a "darker vision" on the part of Fielding. Tuvia Bloch, in an article on Booth's "doctrine of the passions", says that Fielding developed a more pessimistic view of man's underlying nature through his career as a magistrate.[1] Cynthia Woolf says much the same thing in attempting to account for what she sees as a more self-consciously moral tone in the novel.[2] Because of what he had seen in the courts, says Michael Irwin, Fielding gained a "new willingness to admit the more painful contingencies of ordinary life."[3] Both Woolf and Claude Rawson see the novel as an extension of Fielding's Enquiry into the Causes of the late Increase of Robbers (1751), as in both works Fielding seeks to reform the ills of the society with which he had come into such close contact.[4] As Rawson says, "Fielding's world has ceased to make total sense, so that his reactions have become fragmentary."[5] For J. Paul Hunter, Fielding's "darkened spirits" were the result of the adverse criticism of Tom Jones.[6]

The biographical explanation, unfortunately, is the least plausible of those offered for Amelia's "vision". As Anthony J. Hassall points out, only three years separated Tom Jones and Amelia. Also, by the time he wrote Tom Jones Fielding was in his early forties, and it is doubtful that he could have seen anything during that three-year span

that he had not seen before.[7] As well, Fielding had managed to solve the financial problems that had always plagued him, and Tom Jones was a popular and financial success.[8]

A common complaint about Amelia has to do with its moralising tone. Too often, as Eustace Palmer says, the morality is "stated rather than demonstrated."[9] Hassall's study shows that there is a tension in the novel between "authorial and dramatic narration" such that "the two methods inhibit one another."[10] Without the close relationship with the reader that Fielding established in his earlier works through his prefatory chapters, the authorial intrusions in Amelia seem inappropriate.[11] We must not forget, however, the high moral tone permeating Fielding's earlier novels.[12] As we have seen, he interrupts the story often to clinch a moral point. Actually, while the general sense we get is of a greater number of sermon-like passages in Amelia, more come from the characters themselves than was usual in the earlier works. The majority come from Dr. Harrison, of course, as practically every speech of his is a near-sermon. His letters, such as the ones to Booth regarding the latter's purchase of a coach and to Colonel James about his designs on Amelia, are intended for the moral education of the recipient and the reader. Like Adams' discussions with other parsons, Harrison's conversation with his friend and the latter's son is meant to

clarify points of doctrine.[13]

Characters often comment on their own indiscretions while recounting their life stories. Booth wonders how he can be deserving of Amelia (I, Bk. III, Ch. iv; p. 125, and I, Bk. III, Ch. vii; p. 139), Miss Matthews laments her fate (I, Bk. I, Ch. viii; p. 50), and Mrs. Bennet speaks of her own follies (II, Bk. VII, Ch. iii; p. 21). Efforts to allow characters to speak for the author reveal a more sophisticated conception of the novel, as Fieling de-emphasises his own presence in favour of the seeming autonomy of the characters. As we will see later, however, the didacticism is in some ways more insistent in _Amelia_ than it is in the earlier works.

More recently, critics have sought the answer to _Amelia_'s unique tone in its literary models, in particular the _Aeneid_, which Fielding said in the _Covent-Garden Journal_ (28 January 1752) was his source. The idea that the _Aeneid_ was the guiding principle behind Fielding's shaping of _Amelia_ was first taken up by George Sherburn, and the range of parallels between the two works has been outlined by Thomas Maresca.[14] Both critics see the opening scene between Miss Matthews and Booth, for example, as based on the meeting between Aeneas and Dido. The other literary model suggested for the novel is _Othello_, and Robert Folkenflik has pointed to those scenes in both works that

are related thematically.[15] Jealousy and suspicion are indeed forces with which characters in Shakespeare's play and Fielding's novel must contend. There is no reason to believe, however, that Fielding could not use serious models for a non-serious work, as he had done in the past. Fielding certainly used other works as structural guides, but we are still not told why Fielding declined to use them to create another mock-romance.

Critics who consider the novel to represent a new frame of mind on Fielding's part, either in psychological or aesthetic terms, do not emphasize sufficiently the similarities between Amelia and the "comic epics in prose". We will review some of these similarities to show that in fact the novel is part of a distinct progression in Fielding's novel-writing career.

Fielding's supposed "pessimism" concerning man's nature is simply the fuller expression of a view he had always held about the passions. Bloch says that Fielding now believes that "a man acts according to the passion uppermost in his mind and can do no otherwise."[16] That Fielding has Booth convert at the end in itself implies otherwise, but it is true that few characters in the novel display anything but evil intentions. Characters such as Colonel James and Mrs. Bennet are said to be "good-natured" and generous when they are first introduced, but their later actions reveal them

to be anything but. We cannot foresee that James will try to seduce Amelia after the extremely positive impression we get from his gift to the Booths (I, Bk. IV, Ch. iv; p. 194). Their "goodness", then, seems powerless against their essentially evil natures. John S. Coolidge explains the apparent inconsistency in character portrayal as part of Fielding's sophisticated method; we are gradually shown more and more of the characters' personalities through the course of the novel.[17] In fact, throughout his career, as we have seen, Fielding believed that men have passions but that they could govern them by reason if they so choose. Booth's conversion is an act of the will after a long lesson in prudence, in spite of Sheridan Baker's contention that Booth's life is a passive one.[18]

Most of the characters' difficulties actually come not from their own vices but from social ills. Booth's inability to gain a commission through his merits has been a common defense of his character.[19] Miss Matthews and Mrs. Bennet each begin as potentially good but circumstances lead one to prostitution and the other to adultery and drink. In all, then, it is not the characters who are totally at fault. Bad institutions must take some of the blame for not presenting enough in the way of positive moral reinforcement.[20] Amelia's ability to reject pressures to sacrifice her honour for the sake of her husband's career is in itself

ample proof that Fielding did not become more pessimistic about the potential for goodness in people. As for his negative view of institutions, in spite of Michael Irwin's claim that Amelia represents a new interest in social criticism, Fielding had included social comment throughout Jonathan Wild, Joseph Andrews, and Tom Jones. In all the novels, evil men are shown in positions of authority as Fielding develops his habitual theme that the "great" are not necessarily the "good".[21]

Amelia resembles the major interpolated tales of each of the previous novels, the Wilson story and the tale of the "Man of the Hill". Charles Poston sees all three as "exempla" of the way imprudence can lead one to disaster.[22] A major theme of all three is the power of "Fortune" to lead one astray if prudence is not exercised. One criticism of Amelia is that she never acts but is acted upon by fortune; but this criticism fails to take into account the fact that throughout his fiction Fielding shows characters transcending adverse circumstances by gaining prudence.[23] When Amelia learns that she is heir to her mother's fortune, she is not the recipient of "good luck", but rather of a providential reward for not succumbing in the trials she has undergone.

The last aspect we will discuss that relates the novel to Fielding's previous fiction is that Amelia also requires

knowledge on the reader's part of previous literary forms. Baker has shown the parallels between Amelia and the romance, particularly the stage romance.[24] Booth's strategem in gaining entrance to Amelia's house in a basket is meant to recall a scene from Congreve's The Mourning Bride (1696). Moreover, the masquerade is a familiar romantic device. Baker makes the interesting point that the names Amelia and Sophia are among the most common in romances.[25] Like the heroines of romances, and indeed like all of Fielding's heroines, Amelia leads the hero to his future happiness.[26] Part of the failure of Amelia, according to Baker, is that the romantic ending clashes with the general seriousness of the novel.[27]

A suggestive statement by Aurélien Digeon in 1925 provides part of the answer to the nature of the progression from the earlier novels to Amelia: "We may, if we wish to define it straightway by its extremes, say that Fielding began with a work of intellectual criticism, Jonathan Wild, and ended with one of sentiment, Amelia."[28] A number of studies have shown that sentimentality was being increasingly sought by the eighteenth-century reading public. It would of course be an oversimplification to call Amelia a novel of sensibility, but it does have many of the elements of that genre. We will look briefly at what has been said about the "cult of sensibility", then at Fielding's possible

place in it, and finally at the aspects of that sort of fiction we can find in Amelia.

The novel is said by a number of critics to be defined partly by its realism and partly by its concern for feelings and sentiment.[29] As Claude Rawson puts it, the eighteenth century was "an age when the self-conscious relishing of the emotions was more normal and more open than it is today."[30] Some see the rise of sentimentality as a desire among the middle class to live vicariously, and one example of this desire is the development of epistolary fiction, which permitted one to read intimate communications between strangers.[31] The growth of female readership may have had something to do with the increase of sentiment in fiction, and novels like Pamela are clearly designed for women.[32] If it is true that the middle class was prominent in shaping the novel as a genre, what we are seeing is the hidden side of middle-class Puritan morality. "As the early critics and commentators of fiction suggested," Frederick Karl says, "the novel presented another view of the self: a self that demands to visit hell as readily as it seeks a safer course."[33] Actually, we can assume all readers, not just the middle class, sought works that allowed them to enjoy scenes and events not totally acceptable in society.

As Irwin suggests, Fielding may well have been affected by this movement towards the presentation of sentiment.[34]

It would not be too difficult to show that Fielding's earlier fiction includes sentimental heroines. Mrs. Heartfree of Jonathan Wild is a woman of strong sentiment and weak constitution, and Fanny and Sophia are idealised heroines. In all cases, irony is used to pull the works back when they come too close to sentimentality. Without its irony Tom Jones, as Eleanor Hutchens says, "would be grim in some places, sentimental in others, slow in still others."[35] An interesting point is made by Tobey Bradley in her dissertation on sentimentality and Fielding's work: "satire may be the response of an artist who is, on the contrary, fascinated with the chaos of pure feeling ... his lifelong struggle is to put critical distance between himself an chaos ... to control the sentimental impulse."[36] The comic tone of Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones allows us to accept Joseph's scenes with Fanny and Tom's with Sophia's as mocking versions of the romantic tradition, but the heroines are still very much like Amelia and Pamela. Fielding's language, in particular his addresses to "good-natured" and "good-hearted" readers, reveals his desire to ensure an appropriate emotional response in his reader.[37] The implication, as Miller notes, is that Fielding was uncertain that the scenes alone would evince that response.

In many ways it is quite conceivable that Fielding could have created a serious sentimental heroine. First,

it should be pointed out that such heroines may not have seemed so idealised to Fielding's contemporaries. The sentimental heroine's practical wisdom, emotional sensitivity, physical vulnerability, and strong sense of virtue were probably attributes of many of the period's women.[38] Fielding may therefore have had far less difficulty believing in the existence of an Amelia than we do. Frederick G. Ribble, in a recent article, shows that like other sentimental writers Fielding throughout his career accepted the idea that emotion is a "sensation", and that excessively strong emotions can cause physical reactions like fainting and crying.[39] A modern reader reacts perhaps most negatively to the number of times characters in the novel, especially women, faint or burst into tears. There are at least two dozen instances of the latter; and at one point, during Miss Matthews' relation of his life story, she is said to vent her emotions "in a large flood of tears" (I, Bk. I, Ch. vi; p. 38)--an almost ludicrous description. Whenever Amelia has a strong emotional experience she, like Fielding's previous heroines, reacts by fainting or growing physically weak. For Fielding, as for others writing in the sentimental mode, innocence implies vulnerability in physical and social terms.[40]

Considering the rivalry between Fielding and Richardson it may seem surprising to suggest that their fiction is in

some ways similar. Their fictional goals, however, as William Park shows; were nearly the same; both believed that a novel should provide positive moral examples to a reader, although they disagreed on how such examples should be portrayed. Like Pamela, Amelia is the image of pure virtue.[41] In this respect as in many others, as T. C. Duncan Eaves suggests, Amelia's character seems to have been patterned on the Pamela-like Clarissa. The title of Fielding's novel alone suggests an affinity between his and Richardson's heroines: "by calling his novel simply Amelia Fielding probably hoped that his readers would compare his heroine favourably with the heroine of ... Clarissa, and that they would be moved by her distresses as they had been by Clarissa's."[42] Like Richardson's novels, Fielding's include beautiful heroines and quite evil villains, although, at least in the earlier works, this is because Fielding is mocking the works of Richardson and others. Amelia, on the other hand, seriously adopts the equation, for example, of physical beauty and virtue.[43]

If it seems difficult to believe that Fielding could create a Pamela-like figure after having written parodies of Richardson's novel like Shamela and Joseph Andrews, it must be remembered that what Fielding disliked about Pamela was her pretense of virtue. He did not consider her a prude, but rather disliked her use of her virtue for what appeared

to be ulterior motives.[44] In any case, if we take Richardson as the most important of those eighteenth-century novelists concentrating on emotional experiences, Fielding's similarities to him provide strong evidence for placing him in the sentimental tradition. We do get the feeling that Fielding has moved towards the sentimental throughout his fiction, as Digeon says, and he may have done so because of a general trend in the century, in particular in the changing needs of the reading public.

Fielding's early literary training, however, was in the Augustan satiric mode modified to appeal to a different audience. Part of the failure of <u>Amelia</u> comes from the clash between Fielding's intentions and his capabilities. When he created a Richardsonian heroine, and left behind the ironic voice, he found himself writing the sort of fiction that was inappropriate to his artistic temperament and training. Thus, Amelia is too perfect, and her occasional losses of faith in her husband are paled by her general attitude of complete devotion. Fielding does not know how to create domestic scenes in a serious tone, having spent his whole career doing so in an ironic one. In scenes like the following, Fielding seems wholly out of his element:

> As soon as the clock struck seven the good creature went down into the kitchen, and began to exercise her talents in cookery, of which she was a great mistress, as she was of every economical office from the highest to the lowest; and as no woman could outshine her in

> a drawing-room, so none could make the drawing-room itself shine brighter than Amelia. And, if I may speak a bold truth, I question whether it be possible to view this fine creature in a more amiable light than while she was dressing her husband's supper, with her little children playing round her.
>
> (I, Bk. XI, Ch. viii; pp. 282-83).

We looked in some detail at the parallels between Amelia and the earlier novels to eliminate various factors as the source of the differences between them. Fielding had not changed a great deal in terms of vision; he had not grown more pessimistic about man nor about institutions. Nor is Amelia a marked change towards the sentimental, as Fielding shared some of the assumptions held by writers of novels dealing with the emotions. The change that does take place is in the relationship of the author/narrator and the reader. It will be suggested that in a number of important ways, Fielding was affected by the adverse criticism of his earlier novels, and that he reacted by shaping Amelia accordingly.

The important question with which to begin is whether Fielding was affected by the criticism. We have noted his sensitivity as revealed by his responses to the critics. We also know that Fielding depended, perhaps more than most major authors of his time, on the public's good will. At first, he depended on the public for economic reasons. His

sensitivity to criticism later on went much deeper than that, however. J. Paul Hunter says, "Fielding was extremely dependent upon the approval of others and even at his brashest he was very much intimidated by the figures of literary authority who reigned during his formative years." Hunter does not provide the source for his information, but sees Fielding's desire to be an Augustan as evidence that he sought critical acceptance.[45] More evidence of his sensitivity can be found in the preface to David Simple, where he reacts to the attribution to him by others of "half the scurrility, bawdy, treason, and blasphemy, which these last few years have produced." He goes on to promise never to publish any works anonymously, in order to silence these false accusations.[46]

More importantly, however, Fielding's desire to write morally edifying fiction must have been continually frustrated by the inability of readers to realise it. From his dramatic background Fielding gained a strong concern for eliciting audience response; throughout his novel-writing career, unfortunately, he seemed unable to convey the moral truths underlying his fiction. Critics continued to see his work as immoral, or "low", and as being valuable only for its humour. It was not Adams' comedy that Fielding wished his readers to respond to as much as to the truths that lay behind it. When Fielding came to write Amelia,

then, he may have determined to hide his morals no longer behind an ironic facade. Richardson was well-known as a 'moral' writer; he had been praised for his virtuous heroine and her successful struggle to retain her honour.[47] It is possible that Fielding sought to write a Richardsonian novel, one he thought he could write, so that his moral concerns might be more clearly visible.

Virginia Derstine, in the abstract to her dissertation on Fielding's early prose fiction, says, "The conclusion is that Fielding became distrustful of the deceitful tactics of satire ... His distrust may have been grounded in part on suspicions of gullibility and lack of discernment among a sizeable part of his audience. (The novel reached a public with a greater percentage of the uneducated than the more select readers addressed by Pope and Swift)."[48] A long quotation from Hunter provides further support for that view:

> The public--that new public so much talked about and so heavily counted on--had bought Tom Jones but seemed not to have understood. Fielding was often bold and scornful in his public defiance of criticism, but he was extremely sensitive to doubts about his intentions and morality. It was a chastened man, badly miscast as a dour and melodramatic lecturer, who lent his voice to that one last novel. The supreme sadness of Amelia is not that it fails artistically but that it represents Fielding's response to a belief that his triumphs were failures, that his lovingly shaped and honed rhetoric was useless in a crude world.[49]

The implied reader of the first two novels, as we

saw in the third and fourth chapters, was reasonably sophisticated. Fielding's irony in particular assumed some degree of community between author and reader, although once again not to the extent that could be assumed by Swift and Pope. What renders Amelia different is that the knowing tone almost disappears. Fielding's earlier rhetoric depended on allowing the reader to act as judge of the characters' actions, and assuming the reader's ability to come to the proper conclusions if helped by added hints. While the implied reader of Amelia is not entirely different from that of the earlier novels, he is certainly given less to do. In Robert Alter's phrase, "In Tom Jones ... the assumed reader was an intelligent man of the world with whom the narrator could share sly hints, innuendos, cunning ironies, tempered judgements of moral acts" but in Amelia "sometimes ... he credits his readers with too little experience and sometimes ... with too much."[50]

As in Tom Jones and Joseph Andrews, explicit addresses to the reader give him some credit; he is said, for example, to be "sagacious" enough to come to the proper conclusions about some scene (e.g., I, Bk. V, Ch. ix; p. 274, and II, Bk., VII, Ch. viii; p. 55). Fielding's confidence that the conclusions will be the right ones is clearly diminished, however. He speaks in some detail about Booth's affair with Miss Matthews, attempting to justify Booth's actions

to the "good-natured and candid reader" (I, Bk. IV, Ch. i; p. 175). At the end we are told, "if he will not acquit the defendant, he must be convicted, for I have nothing more to say in his defense." Mrs. James's cold treatment of Amelia is also up to the reader to account for. Because we are really disturbed by what we see as unkind actions, Fielding speaks seriously about her situation in "being wife to a man of a very large estate and considerable rank in life" after humble beginnings (I, Bk. IV, Ch. vi; pp. 208-09). The "sagacious" reader's suspicions that Sergeant Atkinson and Mrs. Bennet are married is not shared by all. For those who have yet to grasp the truth, "they must wait our time for disclosing it" (II, Bk. VII, Ch. viii; p. 55). The life story of Mr. Trent is given in some detail to explain his actions, and the narrator apologises for the delay (II, Bk. XI, Ch. iii; p. 254). Long explanations seem, then, more commonplace in Amelia than in Fielding's other novels.

Also, as in the earlier works, the narrator tries to avoid tiring or boring his reader (e.g., I, Bk. I, Ch. ix; p. 58 and II, Bk. VIII, Ch. ii; p. 69). It is assumed that the reader is well-read, inasmuch as various authors and philosophers are mentioned. Even here, however, the quotations employed are usually aphoristic, such as the one illustrating James's desires for Amelia:

> Friendship take heed; if woman interfere,
> Be sure the hour of thy destruction's near.
> (II, Bk. VIII, Ch. viii; p. 99).

The lines are from Vanbrugh, and seem to be used to provide moralistic support from outside.

Ironic commentary seems to be reserved for the prison scenes, as the building and its inhabitants are described in terms too lofty to be appropriate. The Methodist who has robbed Booth, for example, is said to have "dexterously conveyed the box out of his pocket" (I, Bk. I, Ch. v; p. 33). As a whole, the novel suffers from a lack of such subtlety. Its major problem is the overstatment of moral precepts. A number of examples can be cited, such as the paragraph following the description of Blear-eyed Moll, where he justifies his description on two grounds. The second, "which is more productive of moral lesson, is, that however wretched her fortune may appear to the reader, she was one of the merriest persons in the whole prison" (I, Bk. I, Ch. iii; p. 23). Miss Matthews tells Booth, "'I believe that from the damned inconstancy of your sex to ours proceeds half the miseries of mankind.'" Fielding does not allow this statement to rest. He continues in the narrator's voice, "That we may give the reader leisure to consider well the foregoing sentiment, we will here put an end to this chapter" (I, Bk. II, Ch. vii; p. 97). Bk.

IV, Ch. iii, begins with a long discourse on happiness (I, 184). James's initial charity to the Booths is followed by a treatise on that quality (I, Bk. IV, Ch. iv; p. 194). After Atkinson rebukes a soldier for injuring one of the Booth children, the narrator says,

> Thus ended this trifling adventure, which some readers will, perhaps, be pleased at seeing related at full length. None, I think, can fail drawing one observation from it, namely, how capable the most insignificant accident is of disturbing human happiness, and of producing the most unexpected and dreadful events. A reflection which may serve to many moral and religious uses.
>
> (I, Bk. IV, Ch. vii; p. 212)

It is doubtful that the narrator of either Joseph Andrews or Tom Jones would have been so explicit. There is no irony here to allow the reader to mistake Fielding's intention.

The comic sense is gone, except for the character of Bath (notwithstanding Samuel Longmire's incredible claim that the novel is a "comic action"[51]). We cannot laugh at Justice Thrasher's actions because they lead to real hardship for a number of innocent people. The deaths of Booth's sister (I, Bk. II, Ch. iv; p. 83), the crewmen on his ship (I, Bk. III, Ch. iv; p. 124), and Mr. Bennet (II, Bk. VII, Ch. ix; p. 57) clinch the solemn note Fielding is trying so hard to sound.

In sum, Fielding is not more moral in Amelia, but more explicitly moral. His near-perfect character, Amelia, is the Richardsonian target of threats from all sides, and the situation permits Fielding to make lengthy moral discourses not clouded by an ironic voice which could lead to misunderstanding. Unfortunately, he is not able to write a Richardsonian novel because his background is in the Augustan satiric tradition. Fielding's excessive sentimentality, the result of an exaggerated sense of what is needed to sound moral, renders his novel an unsuccessful exercise. The contemporary criticism of Amelia reveals that even now, he was attacked for "lowness". The most telling comment comes from one not sympathetic to his work, Anne Donnellan, writing to Richardson (11 February 1752): "Poor Fielding, I believe, designed to be good, but did not know how; and in the attempt lost his genius, low humour" (C.H., p. 319). Fielding did try hard to appear moral, was rebuffed, and his only response could be, as he wrote in the Covent-Garden Journal, to promise never to write another novel.[52]

Conclusion

It seems apparent that Fielding's readership played a strong role in shaping his final novel. Throughout his career, Fielding had attempted to write fiction in a mode not wholly suitable for a new, broadly-based audience. Those who read but did not comment on the novels seemed to have enjoyed Joseph Andrews and Tom Jones. Those who expressed their opinions made it apparent to Fielding that his humour had not been fully understood. Behind the humour lay Fielding's moral philosophy, but critics persisted in finding his fiction immoral in part because it combined levity with an exploration of such moral questions as promiscuity. When he came to write Amelia, then, he abandoned his earlier rhetorical techniques by removing the humour and allowing his moral purposes to be unmistakeable. Unfortunately, he continued to face the charge of "lowness", possibly because he still included lower-class characters but more likely because his enemies refused to acknowledge his moral goals.

We can best understand Fielding's last novel, then, with reference to his reader, both in terms of who he was and who Fielding thought he was. Such a view may, in fact, have implications for the study of the rise of the novel as a genre, as the eighteenth century's growing, diverse readership may have shaped to a large extent the "New Species of Writing".

Notes

Notes to Chapter I

[1]Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (1957; rpt. Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1972); Richard Altick, The English Common Reader (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1957).

[2]Watt, p. 45.

[3]Ibid., pp. 42-43, 51.

[4]Altick, p. 39.

[5]Ibid., p. 289.

[6]Leo Lowenthal and Marjorie Fiske, "Reaction to Mass Media Growth in Eighteenth-Century England," Journalism Quarterly, 33 (1956), 442.

[7]Leo Lowenthal, Literature, Popular Culture, and Society (Palo Alto: Pacific Books, 1961), pp. 55-56.

[8]Lawrence Stone, "Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900," Past and Present, 42 (1969), 77-81.

[9]Altick, p. 34.

[10]M. G. Jones, The Charity School Movement (1938; rpt. Hamden: Archon Books, 1964), Tables I and II, pp. 351-52.

[11]John Lawson and Harold Silver, A Social History of Education in England (London: Methuen and Co., 1973), p. 192.

[12]R. M. Wiles, "Middle-Class Literacy in Eighteenth-Century England: Fresh Evidence," in Studies in the Eighteenth Century, ed. R. F. Brissenden (Canberra: Australian National Univ. Press, 1968), p. 51.

[13]Watt, pp. 41-42; Altick, p. 35.

[14]Popular Education in Eighteenth-Century England (London: The Woburn Press, 1971), pp. 40, 58.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 42.

16 *Classics or Charity?* (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 1971), pp. 52-56.

17 *Ibid.*, Tables 10-12, pp. 97-98. "Workers" and "farmers" each represent about 10% of the total.

18 Altick, p. 34; R. S. Schofield, "The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England," in *Literacy in Traditional Societies*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1968), p. 318.

19 Neuburg, pp. 18, 38.

20 *Ibid.*, pp. 85-89.

21 *Ibid.*, Appendix III, pp. 170-74.

22 *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 6, 60.

23 R. M. Wiles, "The Relish for Reading in Provincial England Two Centuries Ago," in *The Widening Circle*, ed. Paul J. Korshin (n.p.: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), p. 109; Altick, p. 43.

24 Tompson, p. 21; Neuburg, p. 9.

25 Schofield, p. 315.

26 Watt, p. 52; Robert Adams Day, *Told in Letters* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 1966), p. 73. Day estimates the total readership of epistolary fiction as between 20,000 and 30,000 in the eighteenth century.

27 Schofield, p. 315.

28 Watt, p. 5; Altick, p. 52; James Sutherland, "The Circulation of Newspapers and Literary Periodicals, 1700-39," *The Library*, Fourth Series 15 (1934), 122; Wiles, "The Relish for Reading," p. 89.

29 Wiles, "The Relish for Reading," p. 94.

30 "Book Subscriptions Among the Augustans," *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 December 1972, p. 1540.

31 R. M. Wiles, *Serial Publication in England Before 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1957), p. 238.

[32]Altick, p. 57.

[33]Wiles, "Middle-Class Literacy," p. 56.

[34]Diana Laurenson and Alan Swingewood, The Sociology of Literature (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1971), p. 122.

[35]Altick, pp. 49-51.

[36]Paul Kaufman, Libraries and their Users (London: The Library Association, 1969), provides a good history of religious and secular libraries in England. See also Frank Arthur Mumby, Publishing and Bookselling (London: Jonathan Cape, 1930), p. 177. Mumby lists some libraries located in cities other than London.

[37]Neuburg, p. 133; Altick, pp. 36-37.

[38]Altick, pp. 60-61; Watt, p. 47. In reality, most of the proprietary libraries were very exclusive.

[39]Altick, p. 60.

[40]"Fiction and Society in the Early Eighteenth Century," in England in the Restoration and Early Eighteenth Century, ed. H. T. Swedenberg, Jr. (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), pp. 51-70.

[41]Kaufman, p. 192. The preponderance of fiction in eighteenth century libraries is discussed on pp. 195-96.

[42]Wiles, Serial Publication, passim.

[43]Wiles, "Middle-Class Literacy," p. 59.

[44]Wiles, "The Relish for Reading," p. 95.

[45]Wiles, Serial Publication, Appendix III, pp. 246-48. In "Middle-Class Literacy" Wiles says he has found another forty titles (p. 56n.).

[46]Serial Publication, p. 9.

[47]Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews, ed. Martin C. Battestin (London: Wesleyan Edition, 1967), Bk. II, Ch. 1 (p. 91). All further references will be in the text, and the novel will be cited where necessary as J.A.

[48]Henry Fielding, Tom Jones, ed. Martin C. Battestin (London: Wesleyan Edition, 1974), Bk. XIII, Ch. 1 (p. 684).

All further references will be in the text, and the novel will be cited where necessary as T.J. For the sake of simplicity, most examples taken from the text will be from the first volume, although further examples can, of course, be found in the second.

[49] Neuburg, pp. 120-23, 140.

[50] Sutherland, "The Circulation of Newspapers," pp. 118-19.

[51] Altick, p. 47.

[52] Wiles, "Middle-Class Literacy," p. 61; Pat Rogers, The Eighteenth Century (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1978), p. 42; Altick, p. 48.

[53] Rogers, The Eighteenth Century, p. 45.

[54] Wiles, Serial Publication, Appendix I, pp. 367-72.

[55] Altick, p. 46.

[56] Wiles, "Middle-Class Literacy," pp. 62-63.

[57] Wiles, Serial Publication, pp. 30, 46.

[58] Neuburg, p. 97.

[59] Ibid., pp. 104, 108.

[60] Schofield, p. 313; Laurenson and Swingewood, p. 122.

[61] Laurenson and Swingewood, p. 122; Sutherland, "Circulation of Newspapers," p. 124.

[62] Ronald Paulson and Thomas Lockwood, eds. Henry Fielding: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), p. 313. Hereafter cited as C.H. in the text.

[63] Watt, p. 49.

[64] Altick, p. 16.

[65] See Chauncey B. Tinker, The Salon and English Letters (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1915).

[66] Kaufman, p. 224; Rogers, "Book Subscriptions," p. 1539.

[67] Stone, passim.

[68]Ibid., Table 3, p. 104; Lawson and Silver, pp. 192-93.

[69]Stone, Graph 2, p. 111; Jones, pp. 351-53.

[70]Schofield, p. 321. On the other hand, Pat Rogers, The Augustan Vision (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), p. 85, says that readers as a whole were getting younger. He may be referring to a later period.

[71]Schofield, p. 324.

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[1]Pat Rogers, Henry Fielding: A Biography (London: Paul Elek, 1979), p. 132.

[2]Henry K. Miller, Introd., Miscellanies, by Henry Fielding (London: Wesleyan Edition, 1972), I, xlviii.

[3]Unless otherwise noted, all publication figures are from J. Paul de Castro, "The Printing of Fielding's Works," The Library, Fourth Series 1 (1921), 257-70, and payments for and costs of the novels are from Wilbur L. Cross, The History of Henry Fielding (1918; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1963).

[4]Wiles, "Middle-Class Literacy," p. 58.

[5]"The Publication of Henry Fielding's Amelia," The Library, Fifth Series 18 (1963), 303-07.

[6]For a full account, see Martin C. Battestin, "Fielding's Changing Politics and Joseph Andrews," Philological Quarterly, 39 (1960), 39-55.

[7]Jerry C. Beasley, "English Fiction in the 1740's: Some Glances at the Major and Minor Novels," Studies in the Novel, 5 (1973), 156; J. Paul Hunter, "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Reader," Genre, 10 (1977), 457, 460-61; Frederic T. Blanchard, Fielding the Novelist (1925; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), p. 126.

[8]Hunter, "Long-Distance Reader," p. 460; F. W. J. Hemmings, ed., The Age of Realism (Harmondsworth: Pelican Books, 1974), p. 19.

[9]Cross, I, p. 359.

[10]Wolfgang Iser, The Implied Reader (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1974), p. 55.

[11]Blanchard, p. 127.

[12]Eugene Williamson, "Guiding Principles in Fielding's Criticism of the Critics," in A Provision of Human Nature, ed. Donald Kay (University, Ala.: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1977), pp. 3-4.

[13]Bernard Harrison, Henry Fielding's Tom Jones: The Novelist as Moral Philosopher (London: Sussex Univ. Press, 1975), p. 12.

[14]Blanchard, p. 49.

[15]Cross, II, p. 149. For a discussion of Tom Jones' supposed suppression, see B. P. Jones, "Was There a Temporary Suppression of Tom Jones in France?" Modern Language Notes, 76 (1961), 495-98.

[16][Francis Coventry], An Essay on the New Species of Writing Founded by Mr. Fielding, ed. Alan D. McKillop, Augustan Reprint Society, No. 95 (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1962), p. 1. All further references are in the text; hereafter cited as E.

[17]Samuel Johnson did not have Puritan views about sex, but only objected to its portrayal in a frivolous light; see Robert Alter, "On the Critical Dismissal of Fielding: Post-Puritanism in Literary Criticism," Salmagundi, 1 (1965), 15.

[18]Robert Etheridge Moore, "Dr. Johnson on Fielding and Richardson," PMLA, 66 (1961), 171, 179.

Notes to Chapter III

[1]"Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers," College English, 11 (1950), 265-69.

[2]The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 138.

[3]Ibid., passim.

[4]Iser, p. 31.

[5]John Preston, The Created Self (London: Heinemann Books, 1970), pp. 94-110. For an account of the differences between "verbal" and "dramatic" irony, see Eleanor Newman Hutchens, Irony in Tom Jones (University, Ala.: Univ. of Alabama Press, 1965), pp. 37, 41ff., and George R. Levine, Henry Fielding and the Dry Mock (The Hague: Mouton and Co., 1967), esp. pp. 126ff.

[6]Preston, p. 117.

[7]Wayne C. Booth, "The Self-Conscious Narrator in Comic Fiction Before Tristram Shandy," PMLA, 67 (1952), 117.

[8]Ibid., p. 178. See also Henry K. Miller, "The Voices of Henry Fielding: Style in Tom Jones," in The Augustan Milieu, ed. Miller et al. (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1970), p. 262.

[9]A number of critics have remarked on that relationship--see Bertrand Bronson, "Strange Relations: The Author and His Audience," in Facets of the Enlightenment (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1968), p. 315; Hunter, "Long-Distance Reader," p. 472; Henry K. Miller, Henry Fielding's Tom Jones and the Romance Tradition, E.L.S. Monograph Series, No. 6 (Victoria: English Literary Studies, 1976), p. 89.

[10]Irma Z. Sherwood, "The Novelists as Commentators," in The Age of Johnson, ed. Frederick W. Hilles (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1949), p. 116.

[11]Booth, "Self-Conscious Narrator," p. 180; William J. Farrell, "Fielding's Familiar Style," ELH, 34 (1967), 73-74. Farrell calls the reader a 'character' in many of the fictional and non-fictional works of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

[12]Studies in the Eighteenth Century English Novel (n.p.: Michigan State Univ. Press, 1969), pp. 41-50.

[13]Miller, "The Voices of Henry Fielding," p. 265.

[14]Levine, p. 63.

[15]Sherbo, p. 50.

[16]The unreliable narrator is a later invention. See Martin C. Battestin, "Tom Jones: The Argument of Design," in The Augustan Milieu, pp. 289-319.

[17]Martin C. Battestin, The Moral Basis of Fielding's

Art (Middletown: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1959), pp. 16-18. T. A. Roberts, The Concept of Benevolence (London: Macmillan and Co., 1973), passim.

[18]Cross, II, p. 101.

[19]A. E. Dyson, The Crazy Fabric (London: Macmillan and Co., 1965), p. 25.

[20]Miller, The Romance Tradition, p. 64.

Notes to Chapter IV

[1]J. Paul Hunter, Occasional Form (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1975), p. 17.

[2]Robert Alter, Fielding and the Nature of the Novel (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1968), p. 54.

[3]Iser, p. 32.

[4]E.g., Watt, pp. 272-95.

[5]Homer Goldberg, "Comic Prose Epic or Comic Romance: The Argument of the Preface to Joseph Andrews," Philological Quarterly, 43 (1964), 198.

[6]Frederick Karl, The Adversary Literature (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1974), pp. 159-60.

[7]Laurenson and Swingewood, p. 181; Ethel Margaret Thornbury, Henry Fielding's Theory of the Comic Prose Epic (1931; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), p. 137.

[8]Watt, p. 289.

[9]Complete Works, ed. William E. Henley (1903; rpt. London: Frank Cass and Co., 1967), XVI, 11.

[10]Dieter Schulz, "'Novel', 'Romance', and Popular Fiction in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century," Studies in Philology, 70 (1973), 77-91; Beasley, "English Fiction," p. 171.

[11]Melvyn New, "'The Grease of God': The Form of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction," PMLA, 91 (1976), 239.

[12]"Henry Fielding and the Writers of Heroic Romance," PMLA, 62 (1947), 984-94.

[13]See Thornbury, passim.

[14]E.g., Miller, The Romance Tradition. For a discussion of the parallels between Joseph Andrews and Don Quixote, see Cross, I, pp. 322ff.

[15]Miller, The Romance Tradition, p. 28; Aubrey Williams, "Interpositions of Providence and the Design of Fielding's Novels," South Atlantic Quarterly, 70 (1971), 285.

[16]Goldberg, p. 209.

[17]Williams, p. 267; New, p. 238.

[18]Miller, The Romance Tradition, pp. 56, 67.

[19]Cooke, p. 991; Jerry C. Beasley, "Romance and the 'New' Novels of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett," Studies in English Literature, 16 (1976), 448.

[20]Marston LaFrance, "Fielding's Use of the 'Humour' Tradition," Bucknell Review, 17 (1969), 53-63; Frederick Olds Bissell, Jr., Fielding's Theory of the Novel (1933; rpt. New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1969), p. 1; Michael Irwin, Henry Fielding the Tentative Realist (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 52.

[21]Irwin, p. 104; Michael Bell, "A Note on Drama and the Novel: Fielding's Contribution," Novel, 3 (1970), 126.

[22]Bissell, p. 40.

[23]Altick, p. 27.

[24]Farrell, passim. For a discussion of earlier biographies, see Beasley, "English Fiction," pp. 162-65.

[25]"Richardson's Pamela and Fielding's Joseph Andrews," Essays in Criticism, 17 (1967), 158-68.

[26]Battestin, Moral Basis, p. 27.

[27]Miller, The Romance Tradition, p. 26.

[28]Glenn W. Hatfield, Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1968).

[29]"Educational Theory and Human Nature in Fielding's Work," PMLA, 89 (1974), 113-19.

[30]Battestin, Moral Basis, p. 15; Harrison, pp. 44-45.

[31]Harrison, pp. 35, 51.

[32]Hutchens, pp. 101=02; Harrison, p. 37.

[33]Battestin, Moral Basis? p. 15.

[34]Levine, p. 11; Hutchens, p. 13.

[35]Jacob Viner, "Satire and Economics in the Augustan Age of Satire," in The Augustan Milieu, p. 80.

[36]The Jacobite's Journal and Related Writings, ed. W. B. Coley (London: Wesleyan Edition, 1974), p. 211.

[37]Hunter, Occasional Form, p. 119.

[38]Ronald Paulson, Introd., Fielding: A Collection of Critical Essays (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 5.

[39]"The Satiric Mode of Feeling: A Theory of Intention," Criticism, 11 (1969), 115-39.

[40]Thomas Lockwood, "The Augustan Author-Audience Relationship: Satiric vs. Comic Forms," ELH, 36 (1969), 649.

[41]Ibid., p. 651; Peter Thorpe, "Satire as Pre-Comedy," Genre, 4 (1971), 7, 12; A. E. Dyson, "Satiric and Comic Theory in Relation to Fielding," Modern Language Quarterly, 18 (1957), 227; Miller, The Romance Tradition, p. 75.

[42]Alter, p. 14.

[43]Lockwood, p. 652; Irwin, p. 15.

[44]Philip Stevick, The Chapter in Fiction (Syracuse: Syracuse Univ. Press, 1970), p. 175.

[45]James Sutherland, "Some Aspects of Eighteenth Century Prose," in Essays on the Eighteenth Century Presented to David Nichol Smith (New York: Russell and Russell, 1963), pp. 96-97.

[46]Watt, p. 31. See also Morroe Berger, Real and Imagined Worlds (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1977), p. 17.

[47]E.g., Peter Dixon, "'Talking Upon Paper': Pope and Eighteenth Century Conversation," English Studies, 46 (1965), 36-44, and William Bowman Piper, "The Conversational Poetry of Pope," Studies in English Literature, 10 (1970), 505-24.

[48]William B. Coley, "The Background of Fielding's Laughter," ELH, 26 (1959), 234-35.

[49]Miller, "The Voices of Henry Fielding," p. 270.

[50]E.g., Dyson, The Crazy Fabric, p. 14.

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[1]"Amelia and Booth's Doctrine of the Passions," Studies in English Literature, 13 (1973), 465.

[2]"Fielding's Amelia: Private Virtue and Public Good," Texas Studies in Lit. and Lang., 10 (1968), 38.

[3]Irwin, p. 124.

[4]Claude J. Rawson, Henry Fielding and the Augustan Ideal Under Stress (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), p. 72; Woolf, p. 40.

[5]Rawson, Augustan Ideal, p. 96.

[6]Hunter, Occasional Form, p. 193.

[7]"Fielding's Amelia: Dramatic and Authorial Narration," Novel, 5 (1972), 225.

[8]"Amelia and Clarissa," in A Provision of Human Nature, p. 97.

[9]"Amelia--The Decline of Fielding's Art," Essays in Criticism, 21 (1971), 144.

[10]Hassall, pp. 226, 233.

[11]Ibid., p. 228.

[12]Alter, p. 173.

[13]Complete Works, Amelia Vol. I, Bk. IV, Ch. iii (p. 189); Vol. II, Bk. X, Ch. ii (pp. 189-91). All further references are to the Henley edition, and appear in the text.

[14]George Sherburn, "Fielding's Amelia: An Interpretation," ELH, 3 (1936), 1-14; Thomas E. Maresca, Epic to Novel (n.p.: Ohio State Univ. Press, 1974), pp. 216-33.

[15]"Purpose and Narration in Fielding's Amelia," Novel, 7 (1973), 168-74.

[16]Bloch, p. 473.

[17]"Fielding and 'Conservation of Character'," in Paulson, ed., Fielding, p. 165. Alter, p. 156.

[18]Sheridan Baker, "Fielding's Amelia and the Materials of Romance," Philological Quarterly, 41 (1962), 448.

[19]Robert L. Oakman. "The Character of the Hero: A Key to Fielding's Amelia," Studies in English Literature, 16 (1976), 484.

[20]C. J. K. Bevan, "The Unity of Fielding's Amelia," Renaissance and Modern Studies, 14 (1970), 101; Harrison, p. 206.

[21]Irvin, p. 114; Woolf, p. 50.

[22]"The Novel as 'Exemplum': A Study of Fielding's Amelia," West Virginia Univ. Philological Papers, 18 (1971), 23.

[23]Woolf, p. 42; Allan Wendt, "The Naked Virtue of Amelia," ELH, 27 (1960), 135; see D. S. Thomas, "Fortune and the Passions in Fielding's Amelia," Modern Language Review, 60 (1965), 183-84.

[24]Baker, passim.

[25]Ibid., p. 441.

[26]Woolf, p. 46; Coolidge, p. 167.

[27]Baker, p. 448.

[28]Aurelien Digeon, The Novels of Fielding (1925; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), p. 225.

[29]Watt, pp. 197-235; Helen Sard Hughes, "The Middle Class Reader and the English Novel," JEGP, 25 (1926), 375.

[30]Rawson, Augustan Ideal, p. 88.

[31]Bronson, pp. 307, 310-14.

[32]Berger, p. 40.

[33]Karl, p. 51.

[34]Irwin, p. 131.

[35]Hutchens, p. 30; see Edward C. Mack, "Pamela's Step-daughters: The Heroines of Smollett and Fielding," College English, 8 (1947), 299; Richard J. Dircks, "The Perils of Heartfree: A Sociological Review of Fielding's Adaptation of Dramatic Convention," Texas Studies in Lit. and Lang., 8 (1966), 9-10. Dircks sees Heartfree and Wild as the hero and villain of a prose "sentimental drama".

[36]Tobey S. Bradley, "The Relationship Between Satire and Sentimentality in the Works of Henry Fielding," DAI, 36 (1975), 2213A (Univ. of California, Santa Barbara).

[37]Miller, "The Voices of Henry Fielding," p. 287.

[38]Mack, p. 294; Clara Thomson, "A Note on Fielding's Amelia," Westminister Review, 152 (1899), 586.

[39]"The Constitution of the Mind and the Concept of Emotion in Fielding's Amelia," Philological Quarterly, 56 (1977), 104-20.

[40]Woolf, p. 41; Ribble, p. 116.

[41]Wendt, p. 132; William Park, "Fielding and Richardson," PMLA, 81 (1966), 384.

[42]Eaves, pp. 98-99. We must remember that Fielding praised Richardson's novel in a review in the Jacobite's Journal, 26 December 1747.

[43]Wendt, p. 133.

[44]Mack, p. 298.

[45]Hunter, Occasional Form, pp. 11-12.

[46]Complete Works, XVI, 8.

[47]Cross, II, 126; Blanchard, p. 127.

[48]"Fielding's Shift in Instructional Method as Reflected in His Early Prose Fiction," DA, 21 (1961), 3780 (Univ. of Washington).

[49]Hunter, p. 194. See also James Work, "Henry Fielding, Christian Censor," in The Age of Johnson: "by the time he wrote Amelia Fielding felt that his readers needed stronger medicine than mere benevolence" (p. 147).

[50] Alter, p. 161.

[51] Samuel E. Longmire, "*Amelia* as a Comic Action," *Tennessee Studies in Literature*, 17 (1972), 67-79.

[52] *Covent Garden Journal*, ed. G. E. Jensen (1915; rpt. Russell and Russell, 1964), p. 186.

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