

Fielding's Controversial Moralism versus Tom Jones's Catharsis

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Abstract

Exhausted and fed up with hypocrisy along with material jealousy-which seems to be the root cause of the conflict between individuals, sects, races, colours and religions- humanity requires some blazing instances of integrity and magnanimity of heart for consolation. Tom Jones is such a novel where the hero's self-sacrifice for the sake of the emancipation of the anguished and aggrieved mankind has been focused evidently. This article has attempted a psycho-analysis of Tom Jones's personality with a view to imparting a motivating sway upon readers as well as critics making a careful study of Tom Jones to reduce and alleviate affliction of the concerned human beings to a large extent for a serene society of reciprocal understanding and deference. It also attempts to present Tom Jones, the hero of Henry Fielding's novel, Tom Jones, as a man having the greatness of heart in spite of tremendous criticism regarding the novelist's incessant reluctance of his hero's frequent moral progresses downhill. It observes and explores a hero's physical and psychological evolution and mellowness to a quite altered man from what he was during his parentless, immature and childhood lapses against conventional Christian ethical codes. In this article, Tom stands out from a natural human being to a schooled and learned one through different ordeals. This article also counts Tom's goodness of heart which is considered as the supreme human virtue and which- while existing in a man's heart- gradually and unquestionably undertakes the purification process. An attempt has also been made to highlight the opposite trait, hypocrisy that mars a human character. By comparison and contrast of Tom's portrayal with others, Fielding's philosophy of 'goodness of heart' is brought to light.

Key Words: Goodness of heart, ethical laxity, catharsis, hypocrisy, awareness and penitence.

1. Introduction:

Tom Jones, the hero, in Henry Fielding's novel, Tom Jones, is intrinsically good-hearted in quest of judiciousness, which Tom eventually achieves in his matrimony with Sophia. His high-spirited temperament now matures into a sensible perspicacity of virtue. The narrative of a foundling upon whom nature has bestowed physical splendor and exultant vivacity is designated to focus on Fielding's philosophy, 'goodness of heart'. But the juvenile Tom does not always act equitably, so he ostensibly appears to be a dissolute hero and is pungently criticized thereby. Tormented and preoccupied with the verisimilitude of having no parents, he acts on impulse, sometimes well, sometimes ill and he lacks a particular sorts of responsibility. It was a case of his seeing and approving the higher and following the lower impulses. His sexual experiences are of course ethically contemptible. Although Tom sins a couple of times in the heat of his blood, he personally does not seem to take any initiative whatsoever. In his sexual escapades with Molly Seagrim, Mrs. Waters and the Lady Bellaston, these women remains the seducers and Tom the seduced. Besides, though Tom is a rascal, Fielding seems to find Tom's jovial bestiality much more preferable to other graver sins like malevolence, brutality, heartlessness and hypocrisy committed by Mr. Allworthy, Squire Western, Squire Thaucum, Master Blifil, Lady Bellaston and others. In spite of Tom's confession to be guilty with women, he professes that he has not injured or caused misery to any as a consequence. Tom, thus, is not an anti-hero. If only Tom had discretion, he would not have engrossed himself in all his lapses. Squire Allworthy is convinced that much generosity, goodness and honour consist in Tom and if only he adjoined foresight and religiosity to these, he would be released of criticism. The novel is in part, an account of "how Tom learns to add prudence," which to Allworthy perhaps signifies practical religion. Fielding leads us to Tom's bigheartedness and compassion towards the dissolute Anderson family and to Tom's active and warm-spirited services on behalf of Nightingale and Nancy and to Tom's rejection of Mrs. Arabella Hunts' offer of a comfortable match. He tells Mrs. Hunt that it would be reprehensible and dishonorable to accept her proposal as he adores someone else, while admitting at the same time that he has hardly any hope of ever winning Sophia. His presentation of Tom is that of an ordinary social human being who frequently tends to 'the first sin of disobedience' committed by Adam who was later condoned by ever-merciful God himself.

2. Objectives:

Despite tremendous criticism of ethical laxity against Tom, the hero, on the part of some renowned critics, in this study, the author feels interested to highlight and recommend Tom Jones's goodness of heart, which is one of the most principal functions of the study of literature itself. It is also the rationale of the article to identify the true nature of hypocrisy in the characters round the hero, Tom whose character, by comparison and contrast, stands out as not having such human frailty like hypocrisy.

This study also aims at enhancing literary thinking power of the learners. At the tertiary level, while students are asked in interviews whether they like Tom Jones as the hero of Fielding's masterpiece or what heroic qualities Tom have, often the responses are embarrassing; the respondents simply blush possibly at the remembrances of Tom's moral deviation with Molly Seagram, Mrs. Waters and Lady Bellaston. The fresh learners do not seem to look at Tom's goodness of heart, by thinking of his unharmed nature, philanthropic mind, soft corners towards men and women in difficulties, unadulterated commiseration towards the poor man burdened with a big family or that forced lady whose honour is at stake, or that girl whose virginity has been marred by the deceiving man who has now no inclination to marry her. I conceive the learners as well as the ordinary readers will get a scope that in no vulgar action Tom took a hearty initiative and after his psychological maturity and sharp realization he does not respond to the advances made by Mrs. Fitzparick and Mrs. Arabella Hunt. Therefore this writing will focus Tom's return from the sin to which the mankind tend at almost invincible instigation perpetrated by Satan who is responsible for their Father's first sin of disobedience. So one of the objectives is to clarify that besides Tom's being the hero, he is like a natural human being living in our society, who are every now and then committing sins, getting repentant and seeking forgiveness of compassionate God.

3. Methodology:

This article is principally founded on documents collected from various secondary sources like books of criticism, journals and intellectual articles and on long critical experience of teaching literature. Sometimes, different important pieces of information have also been accumulated from related websites.

4. Literature Review:

4.1. Arthur Murphy's Mixed Estimates:

Critics and other readers have expressed the most diverse opinions regarding Fielding's major works. Some have bestowed the highest praise upon them, on the other hand, others have censured them as menace to public morals. Fielding was unlucky that he had Arthur Murphy as his first biographer. This young Irishman was a devotee of Fielding, whom he regarded as his master. Subsequent to Fielding's demise, he shifted his fondness to Dr. Johnson, whom "he sought to please by his flattery." (Cross, 1918, p.127) Murphy's estimates of Fielding were not comprehensive since he omitted a lot of works including Fielding's autobiography, *A Voyage to Lisbon*. Thus distorted, Fielding's works passed on to next generation. Later on, "for more than a century, editors and publishers followed, either directly or indirectly, the selection made by Murphy." (Cross, 1918, p. 125-127) Arthur Murphy comments that Fielding's "novels took the reader into low life among people guilty of crime and all sorts of moral offences. Sex instinct was often perverted or subject to no control." (Cross, 1918, p.135). Afterwards, Murphy turned Fielding's integrity into deficiency. Nor did he hesitate at all in making contradictory remarks in different portions of his writings. Murphy said "though learned, Fielding's mind was never properly disciplined by severe study." (Cross, 1918, p.139) This is a comment about a man whose literary works give testimony to that wide reading which later on loomed immense. More irresponsible observations resulted from Murphy, as he termed Henry Fielding as a careless writer. He added "There were times when Fielding was forced to let his work go before it completely satisfied him." (Cross, 1918, p.144) Fielding was sworn in as a Justice of the peace for Westminster on October 26, 1748, and "Tom Jones" was first published on the twenty-eighth of the following February. Hence the novel, according to Murphy, was written and given to the press within four months at the longest. However, if Murphy were careful about the facts, he might have been informed that two or three years were spent in writing. Nonetheless, Murphy also commented favourably about Henry Fielding. He writes "neither in his life nor in his works did he ever betray the interests of virtue and religion." (Murphy, 1806, p. 83) He concludes his praise by saying "our author was unhappy, but not vicious in his nature." (Murphy, 1806, p. 84)

4.2. The Harsh Comments Made by Dr. Johnson and His Contemporaries:

In a bitter criticism towards Tom Jones, Dr. Johnson opines to Hannah More, one of his admirers, that "I am shocked to hear you quote from so vicious a book. I am sorry to hear you have read it: a confession which no modest lady should ever make. I scarcely know a more corrupt work." (Boswell, 1836, p. 293) Again, Sir John Hawkins, one of Johnson's biographers, treats Tom Jones as "seemingly intended to sap the foundation of the morality" (Hawkins, 1914, p. 214). Samuel Richardson (Barbauld, 1804, p. 275) speaks out in the same strain. He thinks "Tom Jones is a dissolute book. Its turn is over.... It is true that France had virtue enough to refuse a license for such a profligate performance." After Richardson's decease, Dr. Johnson took the charge of criticism on his friend's part. He always felt great obligation to Richardson, who bailed him out of jail in the days of his hardship. Johnson, a man of sound heart, could never forget these enormous services. As such, Johnson on every chance acted as Richardson's representative. (Cross,1918, p.157-158) Wilbur L. Cross says

about Dr. Johnson: "I surmise that his first-hand knowledge of Fielding was very slight. He said himself that he had never read "Joseph Andrews"; nor is there any evidence that he ever read "Tom Jones." He several times told his friends that he read "Amelia" through "without stopping." If this be so, it is the only book that ever he read through. (Cross, 1918, p.158) As a result, in the interest of Richardson, Johnson called Fielding "a blockhead" and "a barren rascal," meaning thereby that Fielding's novels had no substance, that they were superficial pictures of life, only "the shell" without "the kernel," when brought into comparison with Richardson's. (Boswell, 1832, p. 292) There was as great a difference between the two writers, He every now and then declared that the difference between them was as great, "as between a man who knew how a watch was made, and a man who could tell the hour by looking on the dial-plate. Fielding's novels were the watches which only the sharp-eyed were able to read, while Richardson's were the dials by which one might see at a glance where the sun stood in the heavens. (Cross, 1918, p.158) Sir John Hawkins, a member of Johnson's club, who was related with Johnson in the early days on "The Gentleman's Magazine", sharply reacts against Fielding's 'goodness of heart': "He was the inventor of that cant-phrase, goodness of heart, which is every day used as a substitute for probity, and means little more than the virtue of a horse or a dog; in short, he has done more towards corrupting the rising generation than any writer we know of." (Hawkins, 1787, p. 214-215) Dr. John Aikin, Barbauld's brother, wrote about Henry Fielding: "there is no doubt that his [Fielding's] course of early licentiousness and extravagance had laid an unhappy foundation for too much knowledge of this kind. (Cross, 1918, p.197) The defamers, however, basically depended upon Murphy whose statements they picked up out of their context and then gave them a meaning which the author never intended. Again, William Mudford harshly comments about Fielding: "no man of genius, perhaps ever sunk deeper in vice and folly than Fielding." (Cross, 1918, p.202) He also criticizes Fielding's hero, Tom Jones, who "was a detestable young man prostituting himself to "the superannuated desires of Lady Bellaston." (Cross, 1918, p.202)

4.3. Fame Accorded by Contemporary and Later Critics to Henry Fielding and His Masterpiece, Tom Jones:

Sir Joshua Reynolds, a member of Johnson's own club, regarded "Tom Jones" as "a work of the highest merit". (Zimmern, 1887, pp. 222-223) he adds "that the moral tendency of Fielding's writings, though it does not encourage a strained and rarely possible virtue, is ever favourable to honour and honesty, and cherishes the benevolent and generous affections. He who is as good as Fielding would make him, is an amiable member of society." (Hill, 1887, p. 49) Six years after the storm of criticism against Henry Fielding, Murphy's friend, John Nichols, describes Henry Fielding as "an author of great eminence". (Cross, 1918, p. 204) Coleridge accepts him as "moral as well as literary" (Coleridge, 1836, p. 310) and Byron names Fielding "the prose Homer of human nature. (Moore, 1832, p. 55). The moral of "Tom Jones" Hazlitt conceived was assailed "without much reason" William Hazlitt profusely appreciated Fielding. He thinks that he (Fielding) has congregated "a greater varieties of common life, marked with more distinct peculiarities, and without an atom of caricature than any other novel writer whatever. The extreme subtlety of observation on the springs of human conduct in ordinary characters, is only equaled by the ingenuity of contrivance in bringing those springs into play, in such a manner as to lay open their smallest irregularity. (Cross, 1918, p. 205) Charles Lamb, who was not wholly at ease in the "low life" pictured by Fielding, felt that the moral eye might rest content on his characters: "One cordial honest laugh of a Tom Jones absolutely clears the atmosphere that was reeking with the black putrefying breathings of a hypocrite Blifil." (Lucas, 1903, p. 83) In the most favourable comment Sir Walter Scott said, "Fielding was the first to transform loose adventures into a new and wonderful art. For this reason he called Him the Father of the English Novel." (Cross, 1914, p.208)

The plausible analytical deficiencies of the aforesaid critiquing lie in the fact that they appear to have only focused light upon the immature, boyish nature of Tom Jones's Character without considering his noble quality, the goodness of heart and philanthropic spirit to those surrounding him and his final repentance and reluctance to the immoral advances made by Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Mrs. Arabella Hunts. The author of this article conceives that if a person does not take any initiative in mischievous activities, does not have any intension to harm anybody, rather becomes a victim to socio-economic unfavourable situations; and moreover if he extends his helping hands to those who are in difficulty, helplessness even at the cost of his life, his peculiarities and eccentricities may be condoned. Tom Jones is such a hero and this is how the author wants to prove that Tom Jones is a masterpiece of highly ethical standard.

5. Justifications:

Critiquing Henry Fielding and his hero, Tom Jones, a number of articles have been written and numerous scholarly studies have been made against the novelist's peculiar creation and his hero's serious moral degradation, but nowhere, it seems to me, the causes of Tom's depravity, his frustrating suffering, his awareness

of sins and consequent contrition have been elaborately and minutely clarified. And hardly in any research, the magnanimity of Tom's heart has been affectionately portrayed. In this article, the author attempts to remain unbiased in depicting true character of Tom Jones and identifying really good men in our society.

6. Fielding's Objective in Writing Tom Jones:

In the preface to Tom Jones, Fielding says that the reader will find in the whole course of it "nothing prejudicial to the cause of religion and virtue, nothing inconsistent with the strictest rules of decency, nor which can offend even the chastest eye in the perusal." He recapitulates his purpose in writing this novel by saying "that to recommend goodness and innocence hath been my sincere endeavour in this history." (Rhys, 1908, p.) Henry Fielding's purpose of writing this novel is to uphold generosity of human heart without hurting the sense of morality or religion. In this connection, David Daiches asserts that "the kind of morality he was preaching-goodness of heart rather than technical virtue, with sins of the flesh regarded much more lightly than sins against generosity of feeling- might be superficially shocking to at least some of his readers." He also opines that "his book was both chaste and moral." (Daiches, 1960, p.719) The novelist, through this work of art, also wants to serve an artistic purpose which is to bring "his hero into a series of situations where his imprudence and lack of discretion give power to his enemies and seem to be about to destroy him" in order to reform his hero. (Daiches, 1960, p.719) Therefore, Henry Fielding's purpose seems to keep readers as well as young learners aware so that they may not suffer from the want of prudence. Fielding appears to believe that virtue may be distorted by errors of judgment in different stages of life. Neilson rightly remarks about Fielding's purpose: "Fielding ... had pronounced ethical convictions, and were at pains to justify ... (his) writings upon moral grounds." (Eliot, 1917, p. xii)

7. Tom's Aberrant, Unaided Nativity Arousing Sympathy:

Tom Jones is obviously not responsible for his illegal birth which is taken unfavourably in the conventional Christian society. Deborah Wilkins does not consider the foundling her fellow creature; even she gives vent to her extreme odium towards the innocent infant:

"it goes against me to touch these misbegotten wretches, whom I don't look upon as my fellow-creatures. Faugh ! how it stinks ! It doth not smell like a Christian." (Fielding, 1907, book iii, Chapter i, p. 8)

Even what is more inhuman is Debora's nonchalance concerning the security of the newly born baby:

"If I might be so bold to give my advice, I would have it put in a basket, and sent out and laid at the church warden's door. It is a good night, only a little rainy and windy; and if it was well wrapt up, and put in a warm basket, it is two to one but it lives till it is found in the morning. But if it should not, we have discharged our duty, in taking proper care of it; and it is, perhaps, better for such creatures to die in a state of innocence, than to grow up and imitate their mothers; for nothing better can be expected of them." (Fielding, 1907, Book iii, Chapter i, p. 8)

Although he was a bastard, he is a human being who should be brought up like other children in the existing society. Deborah Wilkins expresses her intense aversion to him and recommends Allworthy to put the foundling at the church door. Now the readers' sympathy naturally goes with Tom, regarding who will take up his social responsibility concerning where he will be given shelter for survival. Readers are also concerned as to who may give him sustenance. Of course, Ethics does not allow adulterous relationship between a man and a woman (Miss. Bridget and Mr. Summer) who were liable for Tom's birth, but Tom during his childhood psychologically acutely suffers from his having no parents- and thereby no social identity as well as dignified status. Moreover Blifil, every now and then, maliciously calls him a bastard. Tom feels ashamed and embarrassed. Hence Tom Jones is the victim of such environment which is evil enough for him to be unruly and dare-devil.

8. Tom Jones's Childhood Flaws/ Indiscretion due to Unfavourable Circumstances:

Introducing Tom, in the Third Book, Fielding informs readers that "it was the universal opinion of Mr. Allworthy's family that he was certainly born to be hanged." (Fielding, 1907, p.75) He had been already convicted of three robberies, namely, robbing an orchard, stealing a duck and picking Mr. Blifil's pocket. Fielding declares that "bad though he is, Tom Jones must serve for the hero of his History". (Fielding, 1907, p.75) Fielding explains that the aforementioned three acts were committed not because Tom was vicious, but because of the instigation of Black George gaining from them. It was for this 'friendship' and in order to shield Black George from dismissal in the partridge case, that Tom suffered beating which was nothing short of torture. He did persist in an untruth, but it was for a friend and a poor game-keeper who could be dismissed. When the

truth was out, he begged Allworthy 'to have compassion on the poor fellow's family'. Even his untruth resulted from kindness. Allworthy could not punish Tom.

9. Feat of Kindheartedness:

One day, Tom Jones and Black George, the gamekeeper, went on shooting. They saw some partridges near the border of the manor of Squire Western. Both of them entered the manor and both discharged their guns almost at the same instant and one of the partridges was shot down. The owner went straight to Squire Allworthy and reported the matter, stressing that some other person was in his company, as two guns had been discharged almost at the same instant. Tom was called before Allworthy. He confessed his fault but persisted in asserting that he was alone, as he wanted to save his friend from ruin. Next morning Thwackum, the tutor, asked Tom the same question. Receiving the same answer he gave him a severe whipping. Tom bore the punishment but did not betray his friend. Squire Allworthy now suspecting that the gentleman had been mistaken felt sorry and gave Tom a little horse to make amends. Afterwards, in a quarrel, as Blifil called Tom a beggarly bastard, Tom felt mortified and gave him a bloody nose. Master Blifil with the blood running from his nose, went to Squire Allworthy. He complained against Tom Jones and said that Tom was a great liar, as Tom had refused to admit that George was in his company when actually he was accompanied by George, the game-keeper. Tom admitted that he had told a lie which he scorned as much as anyone else. He said that he had done so as he had promised the poor fellow to safeguard him from any potential misfortune. Finally he submissively recommends for George:

"Do, pray, sir, let me be punished; take my little horse away again, but pray, sir, forgive poor George."(Rhys, 1908, Book. iii, Chapter. iv, p. 80)

Mr. Allworthy was deeply impressed by Tom's sincerity and straightforwardness. Tom Jones, unlike most of the hypocritical inmates of our society, has a readiness of heart to save the poor even at the cost of his own catastrophe.

10. Philanthropy in Restoring Black George into Service:

Because Mr. Allworthy dismissed George from his service, George and his family passed miserable days. Tom could not see these poor wretches naked and starving. He went to a neighbouring fair and sold the horse earlier presented to him by Mr. Allworthy and gave all the money to the gamekeeper. On his return Thwackum asked him what he had done with the money for which the horse was sold, but Tom firmly refused to tell him. Thwackum was about to punish him when Mr. Allworthy appeared there and took Tom to his room. Mr. Allworthy asked the same question. Tom explained everything fully and frankly and said :

"You yourself, sir, I am convinced in my case, would have done the same for none ever so sensibly felt the misfortunes of others." .(Rhys, 1908, Book. iii, Chapter. viii, p. 91)

With tears running down his cheeks, he added:

"It was to save them from absolute destruction that I parted with your dear present notwithstanding all the value I had for it. I sold the horse for them and they have every farthing of the money." .(Rhys, 1908, Book. iii, Chapter. viii, p. 91)

Mr. Allworthy stood silent, but his eyes were filled with tears at the generosity of the lad. Mr. Allworthy decided to take back George in his service. But Master Blifil poisoned his ears saying that the game-keeper had killed several hares belonging to Mr. Western, the nearby Squire. Mr. Allworthy was enraged and resolved not to employ George further. Tom now got determined to try another method of preserving the poor gamekeeper from ruin. Here, Blifil's hypocrisy categorically shows of Tom's altruism towards afflicted humanity. In fact, there is no scarcity of men in our society, who, like Blifil, are ever in quest of causing others' ills, by misleading them into complexity.

11. Tom's Hazardous Endeavour to Get Back Sophia's Bird:

Once, Tom gifted Sophia with a little bird she kept with her always as a pet. Master Blifil let the bird fly away from confinement, and Sophia greatly resented this action. The bird 'perched on a bough at some distance' on a tree. On hearing this, Tom 'applied himself to climbing the tree to which the bird escaped'. Just when he got hold of the bird, the branch on which the bird took shelter and 'that hung over a canal broke and the poor lad plumped over head and ears into the water'. This incident had, like many others, become the occasion of a debate between Thwackum and Square. Squire Western had put an end to this debate by pointing out that Tom Jones was a generous-spirited lad who had risked breaking his neck in order to please his daughter Sophia. Later on,

the novelist makes a contrast between the sentiments of Tom and Blifil through Sophia's realization, focusing Tom's self-sacrifice:

"To say the truth, Sophia, when very young, discerned that Tom, though an idle, thoughtless, rattling rascal, was nobody's enemy but his own; and that Master Blifil, though a prudent, discreet, sober young gentleman, was at the same time strongly attached to the interest only of one single person" (Rhys, 1908, Book. iii, Chapter. v, p. 108)

12. A Humanitarian Attempt to Rehabilitate Black George:

Since Mr. Allworthy fired George from his job, the latter with his wife and several children passed wretched days. Tom now resolved to undertake to preserve the poor gamekeeper from ruin. He had grown very intimate with Mr. Western. So he determined to help Black George in getting employment in Mr. Western's family as a gamekeeper. The anxiety and devotion Tom nurtures for the poor, sacked gamekeeper stands transparent in the novelists delineation:

"Tom, one afternoon, finding Sophia alone, began, after a short apology, with a very serious face, to acquaint her that he had a favour to ask of her which he hoped her goodness would comply with." (Rhys, 1908, Book. iii, Chapter. v, p. 109)

Sophia was confused and perplexed as to what might be the possible 'favour'. As Tom told her he needs her help to save Black George and his large family from ruin, immediately releasing her of the anxiety, she reacted favourably with the assurance of all types of possible help with a smile full of sweetness:

"Is this the mighty favour you asked with so much gravity? I will do it with all my heart." (Rhys, 1908, Book. iii, Chapter. v, p. 110)

More articulately Tom implored her to recommend her father for Black George's employment as a gamekeeper at her father's service. The next morning Black George got the 'deputation'. This is obviously working for humanity on earth where tentatively everybody is hankering after his own interest.

13. Tom's Hand Broken for Saving Sophia's Life:

Tom's mind always used to abound in manliness and bravery; he rushed to extend his helping hand to the endangered and distressed people. One day, in the course of a ride, Sophia's horse suddenly turned restless and unruly, and began to leap and jump in such a manner that she would have fallen to the ground and been killed or badly hurt, had not Tom Jones, who was at a little distance from her, seen this and immediately rushed to her assistance. Leaping from his own horse, Tom caught hold of the bridle of 'Sophia's horse. The unruly beast reared himself on his hind legs and threw Sophia from his back. Tom caught Sophia in his arms and thus saved her life, thereby breaking his arm. Thwackum said it was a punishment, which made Squire Western angry; He felt greatly indebted to Tom for having saved his daughter's life. Although Tom was seriously injured, he was tremendously jubilant to confront such mishap:

"if it preserved Miss Western, I shall always consider it the happiest accident of my life." (Rhys, 1908, Book. v, Chapter. ii, p. 151)

Some readers may doubt about Tom's sincerity. They may say that Tom wanted to get the hand of Sophia, and as such he could easily make such sacrifice. But a little judiciousness may make it clear that Tom had hardly any such possibility due to his social stigma of being a bastard. Even when he fell in love with Sophia, he could not think of alliance for fear that that may cause ruin to her. In his last letter before leaving the country, he wrote:

"O, my Sophia, it is hard to leave you; it is harder still to desire you to forget me; yet the sincerest love obliges me to both" (Rhys, 1908, Book. vi, Chapter. xii, p. 233)

Therefore, risking his own life, Tom went forward to catch the bird and thereby to condole with crying Sophia without thinking to serve any personal interest.

14. Generosity towards the Old Man of the Hill:

Tom's treatment of Anderson, the old man of the hill, is quite symbolic of the generosity of heart most of the people of our society desperately lack. He demonstrates clemency rather than justice towards the highwayman attempting to rob him. When he realises that the man's tale of a famished wife and children is factual, he instantly donates him all the funds he has. Afterwards, not knowing that Mr. Anderson, Mrs. Miller's unfortunate cousin, is the same person, he urges Mrs. Miller to take the entire amount of fifty pounds Lady Bellaston has just given him and to spend it for the family. When Anderson comes to the house, he recognizes Tom as the man he had tried to rob. Tom keeps silent on that aspect of their earlier meeting, and puts aside Anderson's assertion of thankfulness for the fresh contribution:

If there are men who cannot feel the delight of giving happiness to others, I sincerely pity them, as they are incapable of tasting what is, in my opinion, a greater honour, a higher interest, and a sweeter pleasure than the ambitious, the avaricious, or the voluptuous man can ever obtain. (Roscoe, 1841 Book xiii, chapter x, P.198)

Thus, Henry Fielding's hero remains steadfast in the mind of suffering mankind from all walks of life. It is as if he were Hazi Muhammad Mohsin¹ in the British-Indian Subcontinent.

15. Nancy Miller Rescued from Destruction:

Unhesitatingly and spontaneously Tom Jones is seen serving the distressed humanity. He protected Nancy Miller from being dishonoured by Mr. Nightingale by whom the trusting, but foolish girl became pregnant as a result of being seduced under a promise of marriage. Tom, making a contrast between his impropriety and that of Nightingale, gently attempts to motivate Nightingale:

“Looke, Mr. Nightingale, I am no canting hypocrite, nor do I pretend to the gift of chastity more than my neighbours. I have been guilty with women, I own it; but I am not conscious that I have ever injured any; Nor would I, to procure pleasure to myself, be knowingly the cause of misery to any human being.” (Roscoe, 1841 Book xiv, chapter iv, P.206)

As Nightingale, after finding that his father demands his marriage to an heiress, informs Nancy that he must desert her, Tom opposes the disgraceful scheme:

“Can you, with honour, be guilty of having, under false pretences, deceived a young woman and her family, and of having by these means treacherously robbed her of her innocence?” (Roscoe, 1841 Book, xiv, chapter, vii, P. 210)

Nightingale rejoins that the world will think he is dishonouring himself if he gets married to an unchaste woman. Tom accuses Nightingale of Nancy's being foolishly seduced. He reminds Nightingale that he solemnly promised to marry her. At last Tom forced Nightingale to marry her and thus saved her from ruin. Tom always remained ready for people in nuisance.

16. Fielding's Philosophy of Hypocrisy Showing off Tom's Integrity:

Limitations of almost all the characters are contrasted to Tom's generosity and goodness of heart. Allworthy's ignorant view of human nature, Bridget's feigning virtue, Captain Blifil's betrayal of his benefactor brother, Blifil's treachery, Molly's frailty, the inconstancy of Nightingale and Mrs. Fitzpatrick, and Lady Bellaston's deliberate profligacy obviously show off Tom's nobility and goodness of heart. Particularly, Blifil is portrayed as a foil to Tom Jones. People believe that Tom is a trouble-maker and that Blifil is a discreet and pious person. But actually Tom is moved by generous impulses, while Blifil is hypocritical. Charles Lamb's comment incorporated by Tackeray releases Tom, by indicting Blifil and Lady Bellaston:

A single hearty laugh from him (Tom) “clears the air”—but then it is in a certain state of the atmosphere. It might clear the air when such personages as Blifil or Lady Bellaston poison it. (Thackeray, 2007, p. 85)

However, Fielding seems to favour Tom's goodness and at the same time censures his imprudence for engaging in poaching. He also shows that Tom's treatment of Black George deserves commendation. Fielding believes that true religion is dynamic and practical, and good actions are more important than a knowledge of good principles. Presented as pompous and hypocritical, Two tutors- Thwackum and Square are also contrasted to Tom. Both have knowledge of what is good but lack the ability to carry it out in daily life.

17. Unfavourable Circumstances Liable for Tom's Digression:

Some critics mentioned earlier have commented harshly on this young man; yet some pretexts may reasonably be recommended in his defense. Middleton Murray says:

‘It is often forgotten by those who cannot help thinking Tom Jones disreputable that he never lays siege to a woman; it is always the woman who beleaguers him. Tom's trouble is that he cannot find heart to repulse them.’ (Arya, 1999, p.47)

Tom Jones's early childhood milieu was scarcely propitious for his psychological maturity. During his adolescence, he was constantly encompassed by the people who, with very few exceptions, loathed him, exaggerated his infirmities, and predicted that ‘he was certainly born to be hanged’. Nobody really commiserated with him; nobody cared to understand him, or to give him the thoughtful motivation which a wild lad badly required. Tom found Allworthy benevolent and generous, but at the same time the latter remained rigid and inaccessible as well; Thwackum treated him brutally; Square was ‘active in injustice towards him’;

Mrs. Blifil at first seemed to hate him; young Blifil hardly let pass a chance of mortifying him. The friendless, forlorn boy was thus destined to lodge with the unenlightened and unpolished associates, the thieving game-keeper, Black George, and the boisterous, hard drinking sportsman, Squire Western, who alone seemed to appreciate him. It is to his credit that, with such an upbringing, his morals and conducts were not worse than in fact they were. Everything goes wrong for him- from Book iv, Chapter iii (the incident of Sophia's escaped bird), to Book xiii, Chapter iii, when he offers the fifty pounds he has received from Lady Bellaston to Mrs. Miller for her starving cousin, he has a long bad period. And Jones himself is undergoing transformation. This gradual modification really stands transparent when Mrs. Miller comes on the scene. Her cousin happens to be married to the highwayman whom Jones has forgiven and helped in Book xii, Chapter xiv, and this munificence, criticized so sturdily by Partridge, launches a series of events which continues now with Mrs. Miller's unwavering support of Jones. But at the same time, his exertions grow more and more like those of a fly in a cobweb. Instead of being the end of Jones, it is the beginning of his recovery. Mrs. Miller's daughter Nancy, Nightingale, and the two senior Nightingales form a smaller world within a world, in which, later, Jones moves like an angel of justice, and this is the evidence that after Upton he has been reformed; he is worthy of Sophia at last. His living as a 'kept man' with Lady Bellaston, which has offended more people than has the short-sharp affairs with Mrs. Waters, has much more justification that he and Partridge would otherwise have starved. Unfortunately, at the moment, he was in dire need for money; indeed, he had literally not a shilling in the world. Hence the temptation to accept her ladyship's gift of £ 50 was almost irresistible. On this episode, Scott makes a singularly inapt comment. He writes:

The character of Jones, otherwise a model of generosity, openness, manly spirit mingled with thoughtless dissipation, is ... unnecessarily degraded by the nature of his intercourse with Lady Bellaston and this is one of the circumstances which incline us to believe that Fielding's ideas of what was gentlemanlike and honourable had sustained some depreciation. (Williams, 1968, p.38)

But in the first place, there is no ground for stating that Tom's degradation was unnecessary. The novelist's problem was to inspire a wild young man, only too prone to yield to temptation, particularly when it came to him in a woman's shape, with so profound a distaste for illicit amours, that the reality and permanence of his reformation could be depended on. As a matter of fact, Henry Fielding seems to treat such activities as Tom's degenerations from the moral path. Moreover, he did not condone those deviations, or minimize their heinousness, or let them pass without adequate punishment. On the contrary, we find that for every delinquency of which Tom was guilty, he was in some way made to suffer. Readers observe Tom venting remorseful utterance:

"Why do I blame fortune? I am myself the cause of my misery. All the dreadful mischiefs which have befallen me are the consequences only of my own folly and vice."(Roscoe, 1841 Book. xviii, chapter. i, p. 255)

In fact, far from justifying misconduct, the author of Tom Jones laid himself out to enforce the moral that every transgression, no matter how strong the temptation to it may have been, is infallibly and horribly visited on the transgressor.

18. Suffering and Eventual Purgation:

During boyhood, Tom's imprudent actions result in his tremendous suffering. He faced whipping; he is expelled from Allworthy's house; he goes to jail and finally he is ridiculed by Sophia. Both psychologically and physically he suffers. Coleridge's prudent opinion, hence, is worth mentioning: "Every indiscretion, every immoral act, of Tom Jones (and it must be remembered that he is in every one taken by surprise his inward principles remaining firm) is so instantly punished by embarrassment and unanticipated evil consequences of his folly, that the reader's mind is not left for a moment to dwell or run riot on the criminal indulgence itself. A modern critic, Stephen remarks favourably that Tom Jones has a moral learnt by Fielding in his school life:

"It is the moral that dissipation bears fruits in misery The remorse, it is true, which was generated in Fielding and in his heroes was not the remorse which drives a man to a cloister, or which even seriously poisons his happiness."
(Stephen, 1892, p.177)

At last, Tom Jones rejected Mrs. Fitzpatrick's proposal of illicit affair. In the case of Lady Bellaston, he was not easy of mind and took pains to avoid her by feigning illness. It was only to get rid of her that he proposed marriage to her. On the other hand, when the proposal of marriage came to him from Mrs. Hunt, an aristocratic

widow, he politely declined. Dobson, in this respect, asserts that Tom Jones has still some sorts of sincerity to ignore allurements:

“Towards the end of the book, for instance, it has to be shown that Jones has still some power of resisting temptation, and he accordingly receives from a Mrs. Arabella Hunt, a written offer of her hand, which he declines.” (Dobson, 1917, p. xxix)

Ultimately Tom returned to the path of virtue from his indiscrete boyish deviation by ignoring irresistible temptation. Makepeace Thackeray rightly comments upon Tom’s childhood follies and his subsequent, heart-felt disquiet for rectification:

“He is wild Tom Jones, ... less wild, I am glad to think, than his predecessor: at least heartily conscious of demerit, and anxious to amend.” (Thackeray, 1917, p. xix)

As per the part of the universal Heavenly process of sin and redemption, as a human being, Tom suffers for his flaws, realizes them and sounds conscious to be corrected.

19. Sophia’s Recognition and Tom’s Reformation:

Through Sophia’s acceptance of Tom Jones, the latter completes the rigorous process of catharsis since she is universally acknowledged by all readers as well as critics as the paradigm of righteousness. She symbolises Henry Fielding’s wife, Charlotte Cradock of Salisbury, whom Fielding dearly loved. Tom Jones became an altered figure like Fielding following his marriage with her. Neilson rightly remarks:

“Meantime, in 1735, he had married Miss Charlotte Cradock of Salisbury, who is considered to have been the original of ... Sophia Western ... His marriage was the turning point of his career. The wildness of his youth disappeared, to be bitterly repented of during the rest of his life.” (Eliot, 1917, p. xvi)

Tom Jones’s reformation could be a hard nut to crack if Sophia would not acknowledge Tom as worthy of being her husband. As a matter of fact, Tom-Sophia matrimony largely contributes to the completion of the moral development of Tom Jones. Gerould’s criticism is precisely worthwhile:

“So the curtain falls on a scene of domestic bliss in which the beautiful Sophia and the reformed Thomas Jones are the central figures.” (Gerould, 1905, p. liv)

Tom, at length, deserves Sophia through a long vicissitude of going astray, being repentant and getting optimistic.

20. Conclusion.

Born of Miss Bridget and one Mr. Summer, a university student lodging in the house of Mr. Allworthy, Tom was discovered as a foundling. Seeing him helpless, Allworthy treated him with all modes of consideration and Tom himself sincerely stood devoted to Allworthy. From his earliest years, Tom discovered a propensity to such petty mischiefs as robbing an orchard, stealing a duck, or picking his playmate’s pocket in a ball. As he advanced in life, he exhibited a certain limitation to which injudicious juveniles too easily fall prey, especially if they live in the environment of indomitable temptations. He is brave, generous, chivalrous, kind to the poor and courteous to women. Even a tinge of two-facedness or pretentiousness does not lie in him, although he always remains unimaginably outlying from foresight. Our highest empathy rests with him, if we sense that he counted himself as a foundling entirely relying upon Allworthy’s munificence, and, as such, hardly anticipating to be allowed to marry Sophia, that in his trivial falls before he was expelled by Allworthy, he was still tremendously liberal and self-denying, and that, after he was turned out from home, his case was wretched enough to be pitied. Those who look upon human nature as keenly and intrepidly as Fielding did, knowing how frail and fallible it is- how prone to fall away by accident or passion- can hardly deny the truth of Tom Jones. It is reasonable to believe that Tom Jones is an idealized portrait of Fielding himself- especially as he was in his youth. The principal figure and protagonist of the novel is, of course, Tom Jones, the foundling; He is manly, and is a good sportsman. He endears himself, in the beginning, to Squire Western for his sports-manlike qualities. Squire Western loved the young boy so much that he wished he had a son with such intelligence. Tom’s chief heroic feature is his daring, superb spirit, and his warmth of outlook. He tends to have animal spirit, but he is never unpolished in his manners. Although Tom Jones is sometimes unsagacious in his ethical habits, but he is never mean-minded or hypocritical. Tom’s selflessness, his keenness to ease others’ anguish, his good humour and gaiety, render him heroic. Tom’s personality, his traits of the heart and spirit, rightly recommends

themselves to Allworthy, who regarded him as his own son. He only cherished- so do we- Tom had a little discretion or prudence, as a defense to his many shades of virtue. Tom Jones stands out in contrast with Blifil, Squire Allworthy's nephew and Tom's opponent, who is ruthless and nasty and whose mind was never moved with leniency. Since Blifil is tricky, narcissistic, two-faced, covetous and ambitious despite his ostensible religiosity, he serves as a foil who as Tom's adversary endeavours to get Sophia for fortune, but is deprived of both. On the other hand, by marrying Sophia, the incarnation of virtue, Tom Jones obtains fulfillment and gets purgated.

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