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# On the Technique of Irony in Fielding's Tom Jones

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## Abstract

The paper focuses on examining Henry Fielding classic, Tom Jones, with a view of answering a major question: To what extent did Fielding use the ironic technique in stimulating the reader's mental imagination to understand opposite meanings and in consequence adopt a proper evaluation of the characters' behaviour? The basic premise, here, is that irony meanings are not explicitly conveyed but are rather inherent in a single word or a whole sentence. The study, however, uses the qualitative content analysis method. The study shows that irony is largely exploited and Fielding through it discussed some important concepts such as chastity, charity, reason, and gentility. Irony is also exploited to distinguish between 'love' and 'lust' and between 'justice' and 'mercy'. Two conclusions are basically emphasized; first, language does not serve as an index to truth, but it is in itself a reflection of fallible perception. Accordingly, the mind has to be more discriminating and more flexible. Second, 'Tom' Jones is a parody of the nature of the world and in the meantime, the narrative voice confirms that it is a comedy despite the fact that the conditions of the world that are presented are not comic.

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**Keywords:** Henry Fielding's language use, Characterization, Satire (Irony), Philosophical concepts.

## Introduction

Seventeenth century philosophers consider language as an unparalleled achievement among human skills. Descartes notes that animal behaviour is similar to mechanical action and that its linguistic skills are remarkably identical to human skills: "For we can easily understand a machine being constituted so that it can utter words, and even omit some responses to action on it of a corporately kind, which brings about a change in its organs; for instance, if it is touched in a particular part it may ask what we wish to say to it; if in another part it may exclaim that it is being hurt, and so on. But it never happens that it arranges its speech in various ways, in order to reply appropriately to everything that may be said in its presence, as even the lowest

types of man can do” (Descartes, 1637/1969, p.138). Men’s use of language, as viewed by Descartes, is one of two outstanding features which differentiate him from animal. The other feature is man’s ability to react in more than one way to various stimuli. Descartes states: “... It is morally impossible that there should be sufficient diversifications in a machine to allow it to act in all the events of life in the same way as our reason causes us to act (Ibid: 139). The humanity of man proceeds from his two brilliant characteristics which both originate from the same faculty. Hence, the difficulty of unraveling connotations of meaning is solely a human characteristic.

Kenner (1973, p.12) points out that the satire of the 18<sup>th</sup> century fiction is relevant to the deceptive and defrauded image of man. He states “either speech is sheer behaviour and a parrot can simulate it, or it is sheer concatenate reason and a fine machine can stimulate it”. In this connection, Fielding is convincing the reader that one of his distinguished characteristics, which mark his humanity "speech", is a mere behaviour possibly imitated by a parrot or a mechanic response to a certain attitude which is an identical response from a machine. Thus, words like "reason" and chastity would only maintain a slight value. Fielding’s satire of the professional jargons suggests, despite the ideas advocated by Locke and others, that language which is precise, informative, and free of ambiguity may be used to distort rather than clarify. He also underlines the importance that such language which is aspired by Locke and his associates to be used is not his ultimate aim. Since the success of words in communicating facts cannot determine the value of language, it is rather the ability of linguistic contexts to fit with the circumstances proposed, which is sought by him. Cohen (1974, p.36) shares Fielding's ideas that language has a productive and creative function. He also suggests that attempts of the seventeenth century philosophers to achieve clarity by setting up rules for language are merely divergence from the linguistics trend: “It might be more appropriate to see Locke's and Wilkins's concentration on word-meaning as a brief atomistic aberration, in a period when atomism was fashionable also in physics and political theory, rather than as a classical norm from which modern logic and linguistics had to liberate themselves” (see El-dali, 2011, 2012, 2019a,b; Boisvert & Thiede, 2020; Hart, 2020).



## **The Purpose / Methodology**

The purpose of the present study is to examine Henry Fielding classic, Tom Jones, with a view of answering a major question: To what extent did Fielding use the ironic technique in stimulating the reader's mental imagination to understand opposite meanings and in consequence adopt a proper evaluation of the characters' behaviour? The basic premise, here, is that irony meanings are not explicitly conveyed but are rather inherent in a single word or a whole sentence. Therefore, the study uses the qualitative content analysis method.

Content analysis is a highly flexible research method that has been widely used. It is applied in qualitative, quantitative, and sometimes mixed modes of research frameworks and employs a wide range of analytical techniques. As a research methodology, it has its roots in the study of mass communication in the 1950s (Berelson, 1952; Busha et al., 1980; de Sola Pool, 1959; Krippendorff, 1980). Since then, researchers in many fields have used content analysis and, in the process, they have adapted content analysis to suit the unique needs of their research questions. They, also, have developed a cluster of techniques and approaches for analysing texts grouped under the broad term of textual analysis (White & Marsh, 2006, p. 22-23). As defined by Krippendorff (2004, p.18), content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use. Such a definition emphasizes the fact that the notion of inference is especially important in content analysis.

The present study uses Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) as a research methodology. Qualitative content analysis is one of the several qualitative methods currently available for analysing data and interpreting its meaning (Scheier, 2012). As a research method, it represents a systematic and objective means of describing and quantifying phenomena (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Schreier, 2012). A prerequisite for successful content analysis is that data can be reduced to concepts that describe the research phenomenon (Cavanagh, 1997; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) by creating categories, concepts, a model, conceptual system, or conceptual map (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Morgan, 1993; Weber, 1990). The research question specifies what to analyse and what to create (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Schreier, 2012). QCA is mainly inductive; that is, research questions guide data gathering and analysis. Its main objective, according to Altheide (1996, p.33) is 'to capture the meanings, emphasis, and themes of messages and to understand the organization and process of how they are presented'. Relatedly, Krippendorff (2004, p.00) refers to the objective of QCA as follows: '[to] search for multiple interpretations by considering diverse voices (readers), alternative perspectives (from different ideological positions,

oppositional readings (critiques), or varied uses of the texts examined (by different groups)'.

The data used in content analysis studies must satisfy, at least, two conditions; first, the data must provide useful evidence for testing hypotheses or answering research questions. Second, the data communicate or provide a message from a sender to a receiver. Both conditions are quite satisfied in the data of the present study, namely, Fielding's work, *Tom Jones*. Moreover, in QCA studies, including the present study, the data are subject to purposive sampling to allow for identifying complete, accurate answers to research questions. It is, also, important to emphasize the point that selection of the data has been a continuous process. The analysis of the data is integrated into coding much more in qualitative content analysis than in quantitative content analysis. The emphasis is always on answering the research questions.

The most widely used criteria for evaluating qualitative content analysis are those developed by Lincoln and Guba (1985). They used the term *trustworthiness*. The aim of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are 'worth paying attention to' (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is especially important when using inductive content analysis as categories are created from the raw data without a theory-based categorization matrix.

Several other trustworthiness evaluation criteria have been proposed for qualitative studies (Emden, Hancock, Schubert & Darbyshire, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Neuendorf, 2002; Polit & Beck, 2012; Schreier, 2012). However, a common feature of these criteria is that they aspire to support the trustworthiness by reporting the process of content analysis accurately. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have proposed four alternatives for assessing the trustworthiness of qualitative research, that is, credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability.

### **Preliminary Notes on 'Tom Jones'**

*Tom Jones* is among the earliest English prose works describable as a novel, and is the earliest novel mentioned by W. Somerset Maugham in his 1948 book *Great Novelists and Their Novels* among the ten best novels of the world. It is divided into 18 smaller books, each preceded by a discursive chapter, often on topics unrelated to the book itself. Though lengthy, the novel is highly organised. S.T. Coleridge noted that it had one of the three great plots of all literature. The plot of *Tom Jones* is too ingeniously complicated for simple summary. The triumph of the book is its presentation of English life and character in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Every social type is represented, and through them every shade of moral behavior. *Tom Jones*, the main character and hero, is to a large degree a fictionalized version of his creator's own boyhood experiences, as well as Fielding's own psychological responses to

those experiences. The narrative structure moves, through the journey to London that Tom makes, from innocence to experience. The main theme of the novel is the contrast between *Tom Jones's* good nature, flawed but eventually corrected by his love for virtuous Sophia Western, and his half-brother Bilfil's hypocrisy. Secondary themes include several other examples of virtue, hypocrisy and just villainy, sometimes tempered by repentance (for instance Square, Mrs. Waters nee Jones).

*Tom Jones* is a parody of the nature of the world and in the meantime, the narrative voice confirms that it is a comedy. This is despite the fact that the conditions of the world that are presented are not comic. Language does not serve as an index to truth, but, it is in itself, a reflection of fallible perceptions. In this respect, the mind has to be more discriminating and more flexible. In this regard, Leavis (1963, p.4) states that 'Fielding's attitudes, and his concern with human nature, are simple and not such as to produce an effect of anything but monotony (on a mind that is demanding more than external action), when exhibited at the length of an 'epic in process' ... We all know that if we want a more inward interest, it is to Richardson we must go'. Watt (1957, p.280) indicates that Fielding's occupation is towards a comic plot with little interest in character except when it serves comic purposes and targets. Fielding in the eyes of Watt is an entertaining writer and he is not important for the "development of fiction in the way that Richardson is". The Judgment of both Watt and Leavis are spoiled by Richotti who asserts 'telecological bias'. The presumption that the early works of fiction are characterized with an experimental nature has not contributed to the declination of the novel, but rather added towards the coronation of what is considered today as the great art. Works which do not mirror and throw light on human values seem less successful in contributing to the rise of the genre (Richetti, 1969, p.2). From the very beginning of the book, the reader is acquainted with the fact that the story will be formed in proportion to the self-conscious caprice of an individual, pertaining to the outward existence of the world of the book. The work is categorized as an art as much as a reflection of life.

## **Discussion**

### **Henry Fielding and the Technique of Irony in *Tom Jones***

Arriving at the truth is a focal point on the level of the plot of *Tom Jones*. The story begins with an esoteric and obscure birth and ends with the unraveling of this mystery. When the truth is revealed, the book is given a line of unity. The theme of the novel is marked by ways of unfolding truth and divulging deceit. Irony which is used throughout the book enhances this theme since it is built on double meaning. On this account, one attempts to seek the truth which lies behind the false appearance. Hatfield claims that Fielding: "Takes a word which, by virtue of the abuse of 'custom' has already a kind

of built-in ironic potential, and playing this ironigenic corrupt sense against the ‘proper and original’ meaning of the word that is developed in the definition of action, seeks to restore the word to its rightful dignity of meaning” (Hatfield, 1968, p.191-192). Irony relies on double connotations of meaning which are to be supplied by the narrator, but this does not suggest that it is based on custom. A further point is that Fielding does not intend to write a novel to restore a word to its rightful dignity of meaning, unless it is meant by Hatfield that he attempts to eliminate any corrupt use of a word. Hutchens (1965, p.111) proposes that irony is produced by a gap between the accepted meaning of a word and its meaning in the context it occurs. However, Hutchens seems to be like Levine, as both consider irony not only as a means through which the nature of the characters is exposed but also it serves as a means of establishing truth. Hutchens states that: “The ... techniques, of connotative irony ... by suggesting what is not true or good or appropriate, throw into sharp relief what is” (Ibid: 146).

Irony as one of the distinguished devices exploited in *Tom Jones* mainly unravels connotations of meanings and the nature of the characters. Irony in the limited sense of the word is relevant to the use of words for conveying the opposite of their literal meaning. On the other hand, it might be identified as an expression or utterance marked by a deliberate contrast between apparent and intended meaning. The aim behind these contrasts of meaning is to initiate humours or rhetorical effects. It might be notable as well that incongruity arises between what might be expected and what actually occurs. Fielding’s target for fully exploiting the device of irony in *Tom Jones* is to delineate characters’ behavior and conduct. Fielding’s technique sheds light on the significance of irony and underlines the fact that language is not merely an inflexible conveyer of information but rather the reader’s mind has to be more flexible and capable of grasping shades of meaning. Fielding’s technique of irony also destabilizes the reader’s assurance of his unscrutinized notions. It is the attitudes of the reader as much as those of the characters that are being subject to examination by the novelist (see le Boeuf, 2007; Gibbs, 1994; Attardo, 2000; Chen, 1990; Barbe, 1995; Kruez & Roberts, 1993; Clark & Gerrig, 1984).

Irony is largely exploited and the distinction between ‘love’ and ‘lust’ is also voiced throughout the book. ‘Justice’ and ‘mercy’ as abstract values are also examined. The shifts in the narrative voice impel the reader to derive information either from relying completely on the narrator, or from depending upon his own potentials for measuring the value of the narrator’s claim, to know a particular fact or not. Empson (1982, p.142) indicates that double irony is a means through which the narrator, instead of adopting one level of meaning by exposing the flaws in another, ‘may hold some wise balanced position between them, or contrariwise may be feeling a plague on both your

houses'. Empson seems to initiate a third indicator, namely 'qualified irony' in which the narrator asserts that there is merit on both sides which is one method of explaining the prudence of Mrs. Adams. Thus we can say that the basis of judgment of characters is gone under complex attempts. Levine (1967, p.79) views irony in *Tom Jones* as a means of satirical characterization. He concentrates on the way through which the characters are presented, but my concentration will be on the way through which the nature of the characters is unfolded. Their nature shares some aspects of the reader's nature and thus the reader is invited implicitly to re-evaluate and perfectly judge the real aspects and qualities of the characters themselves as well as those of himself (see Kruez & Glucksberg, 1989; Brown, 1980; Mao, 1991; Glucksberg, 1995; Myers Roy, 1977; Giora, 1995, 1997; Giora et al., 1998; Amante, 1981).

Irony is one of the four kinds of humour which might be operational in a fictional world. Satire, romance, and farce are also regarded as types of humour. The difference among the four kinds could be reflected in the actions they represent. Lang (1983) says that farce emphasizes a kind of comedy characterized by loud, noisy, and rough behavior. It leaves people at its end as they were at its beginning. The repetition which the farce suggests is the point which increases attraction to it. Romance often brings agreements in feelings, always in the form of marriage. Satire suggests ridicule and a form of mockery aiming to bring about a conflict. While farce depends upon the physical use of power and romance upon hopes and expectations, satire is designed to serve its end without elaboration.

Irony has a doubling effect, a surface level and a real depth, weakness and strength, affirmation and denial, all are included within an ironic view. The doubling effects of irony are forced on the investigator and it is his responsibility to recognize the hidden ground. Irony is the major form of humour found in Fielding's discourse of his classics. Leech (1981) says, basing his view on Booth's (1974) ideas, that irony represents some kind of 'secret communion' between the author and the reader. In case such communion is undermined, then it is to be the author's inability to bring the reader in line with him, and not the reader's deficiency to comprehend the values presented by the author. Irony which represents contrasts in values within the framework of two different viewpoints could take place either in one sentence or in a comprehensive work. To depict the heroes and their companions with these changes in their characters, the author has employed ironic devices in his work to illuminate it. The importance of employing ironic techniques is to set up two opposite meanings for reinforcing the style and for urging the readers to understand properly the characters' behavior.

Fielding's *Tom Jones*, which is built on satire, tackles also two important concepts namely, charity and chastity, and it is through connotations of meaning that the author makes it difficult for the readers to make a simple

judgment and thus complications arise for the evaluation of characters. Some puzzling questions are set up: Do mercy, compassion, and forgiveness contradict justice or not? But whether they contradict justice or not, are they regarded as virtues or vices? Do mercy, compassion, and forgiveness cause harm or reconcile? The problem is incorporated in the fact that the Christian religious doctrine asks for forgiveness, while the laws of justice ask for punishment. Thus, a culprit should get his deserts. The problem is also incorporated in the fact that it is difficult to know which cases deserve forgiveness and compassion and which do not. Those who wish to be charitable will either encourage vice and infringe the laws of justice or fulfil the laws of justice and condemn others. In both cases, no assertions of judging correctly are underscored as long as the evidence is not sufficient to communicate the truth. A judge has to avoid hasty judgment as long as the judgment constitutes a major significance. He has to judge not only in accordance with the laws of justice but also in accordance with the laws of the religious doctrine.

### **Fielding's Characters in *Tom Jones***

The demonstration of characters is a two-edged weapon; it gives the narrator the freedom to expose specific moral or ethical considerations, in addition to expressing implications and restraining information, which affect the judgement of the reader. Actions and situations also contribute to defining the nature of certain concepts, such as charity and chastity. Fielding's characters are considered flat or static as Watt (1957, p.274) suggests that they have no 'convincing inner life'. They do not change or enhance the course of events of the story. Fielding seems to be a close associate to Aristotle and Horace in regards to the flatness of characters. He proclaims that actions: "Should be likely for the very actors and characters themselves to have performed; for what may be only wonderful and surprising in one man, may become improbable, or indeed impossible, when related to another ... This requisite is what dramatic critics call conservation of character, and it requires a very extraordinary degree of judgement" (Fielding's *Tom Jones*, BK viii, Ch. 1, p.366).

Fielding is less inclined to describe the psychology of the characters but rather the qualities and peculiarities of them. Sometimes, flat characters are described in a way which could not be mistakenly understood. For instance, it is stated that "Allworthy was, and will here after appear to be, absolutely innocent of any criminal intention whatever, 'which is one way describing an aspect of Allworthy's character to be fully perceived by the reader". In other cases, flat characters add complications to the reader's response, such as those described as 'notorious rogues' or 'abandoned jades'. This is because in these cases, it is the reader's assumption of the qualities of

the characters that is subject to change. Obviously, flat characters do not change or develop but rather it is the reader's perception of them that changes. Early in the book, the narrator makes fun of epithets given to persons, in accordance to one's needs. On blaming Jenny Jones for having a bastard son, she is described by Mrs. Deborah Wilkins as "a very sober girl" and by the housekeeper as an "audacious strumpet". Bridget, on the other hand, states that she is one of those "good, honest, plain girl(s)" who are deceived by wicked men. Despite Wilkins' previous condemnation of Jenny's attitude, she agrees with her mistress in her characterization. Referring to epithets to characterize the nature of persons, serves as a means of measurement and judgment. Sometimes the public judgment aligns to that of the narrator, as is the case when Bilfil exposes the illicit catch incident of Tom and Black George: "When this story became public, many people differed from Square and Thwackum in judging the conduct of the two lads on the occasion. Master Bilfil was generally called a sneaking rascal, a poor-spirited wretch; with other epithets of the like kind; whilst Tom was honoured with the appellations of a brave lad, a jolly dog and an honest fellow" (Ibid, BK 111, Ch. 5, p.134).

A different evaluation of the public is suggested later and it is Sophia's perception which maintains that "To say the truth, Sophia, when very young, discerned that Tom, though an idle, thoughtless, rattling rascal, was no-body's enemy but his own and that Master Bilfil, though a prudent, discreet, sober, young gentleman, was at the same time, strongly attached to the interest only of one single person; and who that single person was, the reader will be able to decide without any assistance of ours" (Ibid, BK iv, Ch. 5, p.162). Epithets in the above-mentioned quotation are made obvious through inherent irony. Epithets also mirror the evaluation of the community. Tom at the age of twenty is called a "pretty fellow among the women in the neighborhood"; Allworthy when he dismisses Tom from his household is an "inhuman father"; and Square is "what is called a jolly fellow or a widow's man". These epithets give the reader information which aids him in attempting judgment. Refraining from giving complete information about the characters evokes not only misconception among the characters themselves, but also misunderstanding about the characters in the reader's eyes. This is the case of Jenny Jones or Mrs. Waters. Her character is a little bit conserved as long as it is not completely unfolded as that of Allworthy or Tom. Actions undertaken by the character's work is consistent with their natures. Black George, for example, attempts to take possession of the five-hundred-pound note extended from Allworthy to Tom when banished from Allworthy's house. When Black George met Tom after being dismissed, he is anxious least Tom asks to borrow some money although "he had ... amassed a pretty good sum, in Mr. Western's service". In a further situation, he gives Tom a sum of money amounting to sixteen guineas, sent by Sophia to him, because if he attempts to

pocket the sum as he has done in the previous case, the matter will be unfolded. Thus, "by the friendly aid of fear, conscience obtained a complete victory in the mind of Black George". George's ingratitude to Tom is apparent, although Tom in return attempts to save his family from starvation.

In a further situation, the reader as much as Tom doubts George's behaviour on meeting Partridge in London and knowing that Bilfil is coming to town in pursuit of Sophia to marry her. Partridge in his course of conversation with George hints at Tom's relationship with Bellaston and when Tom accuses Partridge of betraying him, he confirms George's loyalty: "I can assure you, George is sincerely your friend, and wished Mr. Bilfil at the devil more than once; nay, he said he would do anything in his power upon earth to serve you" (Ibid, BK xv, Ch. 12, p.737). Partridge seems to know little about George in comparison either with Tom or with the reader. George appears in a different air, near the end of the book. The reader seems to forgive him from his previous lapses, as when Tom has been imprisoned and George has been acquainted with reports among the Westerns, that Tom is about to be hanged. George appears of a "a compassionate disposition" rapidly offers services and money to Tom and quickly brings news about Sophia to Tom. Empson is puzzled by such narrative shift: "No doubt we are to believe the details, but Fielding still feels free, ... to give a different picture of the man's character at the other end of the novel; I refused to believe that the "inside" of a person's mind ... is much use for telling you the real source of his motives" (Empson, 1982, p.135).

It is only through full cognizance of the inside of a person's mind, that one is being acquainted with that person's motives. The theme of the novel, however, suggests that the outward appearance of a person could lead to delusion and it is the prudence and the acute insight of the reader that unravel connotations. It is through reduced information that the reader makes evaluation. This is why Black George is seen in two contradictory extremes in the reader's eyes. Therefore, it is not the character of George which changes but rather the reader's evaluation in the light of the given information that changes. Partridge is also introduced as flat character. At first, he is seen as a learned, good-natured, and a successful school master: "... tho' this poor man had undertaken a profession to which learning must be allowed necessary, this was the least of his commendations" (Fielding's *Tom Jones*, BK, 11, p.91). The last sentence in the quotation maintains inherent meaning, either learning is among other professions that are worthy of commendation or his learning is terribly ranked. This irony, of course, does not reflect directly the narrator's view of Partridge. A little bit later, he is seen to be afraid of his wife. His motives when the reader met him at Hambrook presented him in a different view. Thus, he wishes to accompany Tom in his military pursuit, in which he sees an opportunity to persuade Tom to come back home in order to gain a



reward from Allworthy. Later, his cowardice is reaffirmed when he is afraid to take part in the battle between Tom and Northerton to rescue Mrs. Waters. He is seen shivering on his knees, afraid of being shot by the highwayman. He is also afraid of a ghost, which has been participating in the performance of Hamlet.

A different presentation of Partridge is celebrated, suggesting that his probity and adherence to moral codes are not so far underscored. This presentation is maintained when he offers to borrow two horses from an inn, "now as the honesty of Partridge was equal to his understanding, and both dealt only in small matters, he would never have attempted a roguery of this kind, had he not imagined it altogether safe". In spite of Partridge's early presentation in the book, he is revealed to be neither honest, nor charitable, in addition to being a coward and an opportunist, who sees that accompanying Tom to convince him to return home is a chance to win a reward from Mr. Allworthy. When Partridge realizes in London that Tom has entirely no money, he urges him to break his relationship with Sophia and return to Allworthy. Such an attitude does not suggest his selfish motives as much as his good nature: "... that Partridge, among whose vices ill-nature or hardness of heart were not numbered, burst into tears; and after swearing he would not quit him in his distress, he began with the most earnest entreaties to urge his return home." "For Heaven's sake, sir", says he, 'do but consider ... How is it possible you can live in this town without money? Do, what you will, sir, or go wherever you please, I am resolved not to desert" (Ibid, BK XIII, Ch. 6, p.629).

Just as it is revealed late in the book that Black George has a "compassionate disposition", it is the same that Partridge is not ill-natured or hard-hearted, but good natured as was proposed by the narrator earlier in the book. The scenes, in which Partridge appears, shed no light on his good nature as when he rejects to give a shilling to a lame beggar. He seems to be interested in financial affairs. He is desirous to know the amount of money given to Tom by Allworthy, and he is less inclined to extend his own money to Tom in an attempt to impel Tom to use Sophia's bank note or return home. A distinguishing feature of Partridge's character is feelings of devoted attachment and affection to Tom. He insists to stay by Tom's side, not merely for reasons of self-interest.

Described as a 'faithful servant', Partridge was greatly frightened at not hearing from his master so long, when Tom has been put in jail for wounding Fitzpatrick. The narrator's earlier definition of Partridge and the reader's evaluation of him are discovered to be both inadequate. Partridge's dishonesty is rebuked in the reader's eyes, yet it is only in one instance that his dishonesty is praised; when he attempts to conceal the truth from Allworthy lest he knows that Tom and his mother have committed incest

ignorantly. The label that suggests Partridge to be an 'honest fellow' does not strictly suggest that he is not honest nor does it indicate him to be dishonest. Each case has its own justifications. The epithet 'honest fellow' resembles that given in the introduction, that he is 'one of the best-natured fellows in the world. The context emphasizes the opinion of the world rather than that of the narrator. The character of Partridge is displayed to be neither so good nor so bad. In both the cases of Partridge and Black George, there are inconsistencies. The characters are presented in a certain view, and it is contrasted a little bit later by another appearance. However, the narrator aims at concealing information which influences the reader's judgment, and in the meantime exhibits new evidence which destabilizes the reader's former response, suggesting inadequacy.

Nightingale who appears at the very end of the book is introduced as one of those "men of wit and pleasure in town", who devote their more serious hours to criticizing new plays, writing love poems, gaming, hack-writing and considering methods to bribe a corporation". The narrator confirms that he was a modern fine gentleman "only ... by imitation, and meant by nature for a much better character". When the reader meets him next, he is presented to be a niggard. When Tom is acquainted with the terrible situation of Mrs. Miller's cousins, he offers fifty pounds to relieve their distress, while Nightingale, not acquainted with Tom's offer, states, "I will give them a guinea with all my heart".

Nightingale's reluctance to extend money seems natural rather than as a deviation from the normal measure. The narrator points out that there are those who consider charity as something which deserves reward or praise, whatever the quantity of donation is. On the other hand, there are others who consider charity a duty which is either to be perfectly done or not at all. The narrator comments upon Nightingale's character: "This Nightingale, of whom we shall be presently obliged to say a little more, was in the ordinary transactions of life of a man of strict honour, ... he was even here as void of principle as gentleman sometimes are; ... but it is certain he had been guilty of some indefensible treachery to women, and had in a certain mystery called making love, practiced many deceits which if he had used in trade he would have been counted the greatest villain upon earth" (Ibdi, BK XIV, Ch. 4, p.669).

Many ideas arise in the reader's mind regarding Nightingale's character; "a man of strict honour", "the greatest villain upon earth" "void of principle" and guilty of "indefensible treachery to women". "He intends to change his place of residence without taking leave from Nancy and he declares that he is innocent of any approaches to the girl, asserting to Tom, "what, do you suppose", that we have a bed together?" Shortly, afterwards, it has been discovered that he has been in bed with Nancy and has deserted her pregnant

with his child. Tom's persuasive arguments to Nightingale, probably have worked to stricken his conscience and to give him the chance to marry his own whore. Nightingale having his feelings awakened by Tom's eloquence, consequently, declares his marriage with Nancy. Nightingale, who committed "indefensible" crimes with women, is not viewed to do so again. This happened after being seen as selfish, callous, and degraded in the reader's eyes. Nightingale is redeemed by conciliating his affair with Nancy. Irony is suggested in a phrase proclaiming Nightingale as a "worthy young man". If Nightingale is to be worthy, it is for his endeavors to collect evidence that will free Tom from prison and if he is ranked unworthy, it is for the fact that when the evidence goes against Tom, he begins to suspect Tom's story, telling him 'if you disguise anything to us; you will only be an enemy to yourself'.

### **The Concept of "Chastity"**

The concept of chastity seems to be baffling in examination as much as the concept of charity. The narrator is aware to differentiate love from lust, thus allowing the reader to excuse the behaviour of some characters and denounce the behavior of others. Empson proposes that the reader may: "get to the point of reading *Tom Jones* with fascinated curiosity, baffled to make out what the narrator really does think about ... (among other things) the Christian command of chastity" (Empson, 1982, p.124).

The narrator explores the wide meaning of love and gives an answer to those who ignore the existence of love. The difference between the narrator's own view of love and the meaning imposed on the word by custom is explored: "... what is commonly called love, namely the desire of satisfying a voracious appetite with a certain quantity of delicate white human flesh, is by no means that passion for which I here contend. This is indeed more properly hunger; and as no glutton is ashamed to apply the word love to his appetite, and to say he loves such and such dishes, so may the lover of this kind ... say, he hungers after such and such women" (Fielding's *Tom Jones*, BK VI, Ch. 1, p.252). The narrator adds that love is opposed to hunger and is part and parcel of benevolence. The pure love is that which contributes to the happiness of others, and which is "sweetened by the assistance of amorous desires". Thus, love is independent of sexual desires which are associated with hunger or more appetite. Sometimes, sexual desires become a part of love and thus they are excusable. However, when they become a part of hunger or more appetite, they arouse contempt. The distinction is set out in the example of Tom's love for Molly Seagrim, in comparison with his love for Sophia. Tom's love of Molly Seagrim is extended from his compassion for the situation of her family and from his gratitude for her interest in him in addition to his desire for her person. Tom seems to act neither for the mere appetite nor for exact love, which becomes clear when being aware of Sophia's affection for him. It

is Tom's behavior towards Sophia and Molly which is to be investigated to determine the definition of love. Molly's love for Tom is not of that kind which could give him any feeling of discomfort at her faithlessness. Meanwhile, his love for Sophia is marked with "unbound passions".

Although Tom's emotions are wholly dedicated to Sophia and his affections for Molly are not greatly marked, yet he allows himself to be once again seduced by her, which is no more than a consolation for his quarrel with Bilfil and being drunk and lonely for Sophia. He hardly loves Molly than she loves him: "Jones probably thought one woman is better than none, and Molly probably imagined two men to be better than one" (Ibid, BK V, Ch. X, p.240). Jones retires into the bushes with Molly because one woman is better than none. Rawson suggests that Tom's love is the outcome of "appetite alone". The effects of appetite seem to align with those of benevolence or pure love. The esteem and gratitude Tom cherishes for both Molly and Sophia are the effect of his attraction to them. Attraction seems to encourage benevolence rather than the latter promotes the former, as being suggested by the essay on love. If love is incorporated with emotions which focus on the happiness of others, then Tom loves both Molly and Sophia. Molly is no more than a whore, like those who marry men whom they dislike and abhor, only for their fortunes. Fielding calls that kind of marriage 'legal prostitution for hire'. Molly's plan to deceive Tom by convincing him that he is the father of her bastard son simply proceeds from her fear of losing her generous lover (Rawson, 1959, p.400-404). There are two kinds of appetite that are noteworthy; appetite that satisfies itself at any rate and appetite that could be kept under control when its satisfaction would probably cause the misery of others. Tom at the age of sixteen, when he casts eyes of affection on Molly, has been controlled by his principles from pursuing her: "To debauch a young woman, however low her condition was, appeared to him a very heinous crime" (Ibid, BK IV, Ch. VI, p.169).

There are some people who ignore the existence of love in the human heart and in the meantime, they are incapable of understanding benevolence, since they are only capable of mere appetite. "And love probably may, in your opinion, very greatly resemble a dish of soup". Mrs. Water's affection for Tom ranks her among those groups of people: "... She was in love, according to the present universally received sense of that phrase, by which love is applied indiscriminately to the desirable objects of all our passions, appetites, and senses, and is understood to be that preference which we give to one kind of food rather than to another" (Ibid, BK IX, Ch. V, p.454). Later on, the narrator presents Mrs. Waters in a different view after being rescued by Tom from Ensign Northerton: "women to their glory be it spoken, are more generally capable of that violent and apparently disinterested passion of love, which seeks only the good of its object than men. Mrs. Waters, therefore, was

no sooner apprised of the danger to which her lover was exposed, then she lost every consideration besides that of his safety” (Ibid, BK IX, Ch VII, p.463). It is uneasy to bring to consistency, Mrs. Waters’ goodness and her sexual freedom. She is Captain Waters’ wife and has initiated a close acquaintance with Ensign Northerton, which has worked for the defamation of her reputation. Nothing dictates her conscience as long as what satisfies her pleasures does not harm anybody. Her benevolence which has been concealed is unearthed when Tom is put in jail for wounding Fitzparick, with whom Mrs. Waters have kept company since their departure from Upton. Patridge realizes that Mrs. Waters resemble Benny Joes, as both see it natural to embark upon incest. Yet, it is the discovery that Benny and Mrs. Waters are the same person that adds irony to the matter. It is underlined that Allworthy’s condemnation of Jenny Jones is as a result of her inability to preserve her chastity. “The heinous nature of this offence must be sufficiently apparent to every Christian inasmuch as it is committed in defiance of the laws of our religion, and of the express commands of Him who founded that religion” (Ibid, BK 1, Ch. VII, p.66).

The above mentioned extract includes the same lesson delivered to Jones when it was been hinted that he is the father of Jenny’s bastard son. Despite the exhortation and the moral lesson given by Allworthy to Tom and Jenny, neither of them seems to obey the exhortation nor respond to the lesson. Mrs. Waters, who has been described early in the novel as a ‘slut’ proves to be a truly benevolent character. Her sexual freedom which unquestionably laid emphasis for denouncing her seems, after all, to be one of the elements which underscore her sympathetic nature and benevolence. The man, to whom she owes happiness at Upton, is the one she wishes happiness in the arms of another woman. Meanwhile, appetite is only blameworthy when it impels one to sacrifice another’s happiness to one’s own. Bilfil’s appetites, which are “the common property of all animals”, represent such aspect. What is subject to condemnation is Bilfil’s sexual pursuit to Sophia which is heightened by her intense dislike of him. This is in addition to his thought of keeping Sophia away from Tom as a revenge on Tom’s side, which is just a means of separating the two lovers. Tom, in the meantime, whose animal spirits are somewhat stronger than Bilfil, vows to “sacrifice everything to the possession of my Sophia but Sophia herself”. Speaking with Nightingale, Tom points out that chastity is not among his virtues and he admits “I have been guilty with women, I own it, but 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”. Clearly, Bilfil’s attempt to establish his own happiness depends upon his desire to undermine the happiness of others, while Tom’s happiness could not be built by demolishing the happiness of others or causing misery to them. Remarkably, Lord Fellamar’s tender feelings towards Sophia shares

Bilfil's emotions. His affections towards Sophia also share the characterization of Tom's feelings towards Molly, "the nobleman ... might now without any great impropriety, be said to be actually in love with Sophia". "Apart from Sophia's physical charms, Lord Fellamar states to Lady Bellaston, "I should swear she had been bred in a court; for besides her beauty, I never saw anything so genteel, so sensible, so polite" (Ibid, BK XV, Ch. 2, p.698).

A further distinction between Tom's feeling and those of the nobleman, Fellamar, is that Tom's life when discovering Sophia's passion becomes "a constant struggle between honour and inclination", while Fellamar's life becomes a struggle between 'honour and appetite'. Fellamar, at the beginning, attempts to prove the success of honour by approaching Lady Bellaston and by rejecting the idea of rape. However, when he is being accused by Lady Bellaston of lacking courage, he attempts rape as a point of honour and to prove himself a "man of spirit". Building his opinion on a false view of honour, Fellamar continues his relationship with Bellaston, because he feels himself owing much to her kindness. In this connection, Tom's binding emotions with Sophia have resulted in reformation and wisdom: "The first moment of hope that my Sophia might be my wife, taught it me at once; and all the rest of her sex from that moment became as little the objects of desire to my sense, as of passion to my heart" (Ibid, BK XVIII, Ch. XII, p.866). Tom's love affair with all amours has something to do with the heart, including Lady Bellaston, for she has secured him against starvation. Thus, it is the calibration of the quantity of love and not the kind of love that strikes a difference between these amours and Tom's passion for Sophia. Chastity seems to suggest "rigid virtue" or excessive modesty incorporated under prudery. Chastity seems to be meaningless as being suggested by Fielding. Molly despite her unchastity seems to be likeable. Square, on the other hand, being an advocator of moral lessons, is degraded in the eyes of the reader for working in the opposite side to his advocacy and proving his weakness on attempting a sexual relationship with Molly. Moreover, Fellamar attempted rape to prove his manhood rather than to satisfy an appetite. Jonny Jones is seen in a view that is less strict than that presented by Allworthy.

## The Concept of Charity

In the early chapter in *Tom Jones*, Fielding's definition of charity aligns to that he initiated in *Joseph Andrews*, indicating that deeds are underlined rather than dispositions. In the dialogue between Mr. Allworthy and Captain Bilfil, Bridget's husband, who knew that Partridge is Tom's father, it seems that the Captain attempts to decrease Allworthy's tender feelings towards the child, whom he regards a rival in his quest for Allworthy's fortune. He capitalizes on the chance for doing so through his discussion on the nature of charity: "The Christian religion, she said, was instituted for much nobler purposes than to enforce a lesson which many heathen philosophers had taught us long before ... (he said) ... a virtue much higher, and more extensive in its nature, than a pitiful distribution of alms, which ... could never reach many; whereas charity, in the other and truer sense, might be extended to all mankind" (Fielding's *Tom Jones*, BK II, Ch. V, p.101). Bilfil further illustrates that the man who does help others materially is merely encouraging vice to triumph over virtue, as long as such aid is extended to those who do not deserve it. It is notable that Bilfil is talking about Partridge. Allworthy states that his ideas of charity "was interpreted to consist of action, and that giving alms constituted at least one branch of that virtue". According to Allworthy, charity is associated with the way that one diminishes the pressure of distress of another person, and it is by virtue of charity that "we condescend to share some part of them by giving what even our own necessities cannot well spare". Allworthy proclaims that a small number of cases which let man fall a prey to ingratitude from others or harden his heart against the distress of others cannot destabilize a truly good man from extending generosity to others, as long as "nothing less than a persuasion of universal depravity can look up the charity of a good man and, surely, it unfair to argue such universal depravity from a few vicious individuals" (Ibid: 103).

Fielding also advocates that charity consists of the relief of suffering, which comes in line with the doctrines of the low - church. Although the narrator assert that Allworthy is entitled to this virtue namely, charity, and despite the fact that he fulfills his principle on an accurate basis, he is not sufficiently ranked as charitable as it first appears in the reader's mind. There are cases which reveal Mr. Allworthy less than completely generous. The first case is that which unfolds in the way he deals with Partridge. Being informed by Captain Bilfil about some aspects of Partridge's paternity, Mr. Allworthy questions Deborah Walkins who affirms the subject of debate. In a further stance, Partridge is proved guilty in the eyes of Mr. Allworthy despite Partridge's affirmation of his innocence. Mr. Allworthy is convinced by the indictment launched against Partridge by his wicked and wild wife concerning the fact that Partridge is the father of one of the two bastards brought by Jenny Jones. Thus, he decides to postpone judgment until Jenny can appear as a

witness. On being informed that Jenny ‘had left her habitation a few days before in company with a recruiting officer’, Allworthy declares that she is no better than a "slut" whose word is not to be trusted. Also, Allworthy points out that if she says the truth: “She must have confirmed what so many circumstances, together with his own confession and the Declaration of his wife, that she had caught her husband in the act did sufficiently prove” (Ibid, BK II, Ch. VI, p.107). According to such circumstances, Partridge and his wife are deprived of much of their income which has been taken from their school. Allworthy has not shown callousness but rather intends to supply them with enough money upon which they could be able to subsist. Yet on the death of Partridge's wife, he left the country threatened with the danger of starving. The next time the reader meets Partridge is when Tom has encountered him at an inn working as a barber. The fate of Partridge has been unknown for the reader within a number of intervening years, until it is only unraveled in the end of the story. A wicked and vengeful neighbour has footmarks for foiling Partridge's expected success of another school and for being sent to jail for seven years, which are both attributed to the fact that Partridge's pig intruded into the man's property. The magistrate, Allworthy, seems less interested in that issue in comparison with his anxiety to discover the true parentage of Tom, which is a mark of causal injustice. “Well”, says Allworthy, ‘pass that over till your return to England” (Ibid: BK. XVIII, Ch. VI, p.833).

The nature of Allworthy's compassion is also examined in the way he handles the issue of Black George. Tom has been seized in company with another man caught while venturing illicitly in squire Western's property who was beaten mercilessly by Thwackum to learn the name of his companion. He is forced to divulge such secret and on that account, Allworthy dismissed the gamekeeper from his service. The justice of this sentence is enhanced by the information that “Mr. Allworthy had given the fellow strict orders on pain of forfeiting his place, never to trespass on any of his neighbours” (Ibid, BK III, Ch. II, p.125). Tom assures that George's trespass or intrusion upon the property of squire Western is merely in response to his request, and the shooting of Partridge is migrated because the “covey was originally sprung in Mr. Allworthy's own Manor”. As a result of George's dismissal from his service, he and his family, like Partridge, are left to suffer from starvation. However, it is only due to the good offices of Tom that they are rescued. When Tom manages to acquaint Allworthy of the miserable conditions of the poor family, Allworthy has given the mother “a couple of Guinee” to clothe her children and is convinced by Tom, that he has to think of any means, by virtue of which the family could subsist. Allworthy's good offices are demolished on being informed by Bilfil that the gamekeeper has illegally killed a hare belonging to Western to feed his family. Bilfil exaggerates George's transgression to Allworthy: “Bilfil ... considerably altered the story; for he



said that George had wired hares. These alterations might probably have been set right, had not Master Bilfil unluckily insisted on a promise of secrecy from Mr. Allworthy, before he revealed the matter to him; but by that means the poor gamekeeper was condemned without having an opportunity to defend himself” (Ibid, BK. III, Ch. X, p.148).

Once again, Allworthy punishes a man on the basis of rumours and hearsay “... there is no zeal blinder ... against offenders” (p. 148). If the situation comments on Allworthy’s attitude, it also reveals Bilfil’s malice. The third case which unravels that Allworthy’s compassion is controlled by his sense of justice is his decision to turn Tom away. Such a horrible deed undertaken by Allworthy is the culmination of suspicions that Tom intends to steal Sophia from Bilfil, which are built on two extremes, namely, Squire Western’s notice of Sophia’s faint in Tom’s arms and Mrs. Western’s infringement of Sophia’s trust. In addition to that, Bilfil out of his malice and ill-intentioned purpose fabricates stories on Tom to distort his image before Allworthy. He has accused him of drinking intoxications during Allworthy’s illness and in the meantime, he has claimed that Thwackum has discovered him in the bushes “engaged with a wench in a manner not fit to be mentioned” (Ibid, BK. VI, Ch. X, p.285). Allworthy maintains that man is guilty until proven innocent, and as long as Tom has been really drinking when he received the news of Allworthy’s recovery, followed by the news of Bridget’s death, he cannot conceal or deny the indictment levelled against him. Allworthy tells Tom, “that unless he could clear himself of the charge, he was resolved to banish him from his sight forever” (Ibid, p. 286). He further illustrates that he has to act, as justice impels him to: “The world, who have already censured the regard I have shewn for you, may think, with some colour at least of justice, that I connive at base and barbarous on action ... indeed equal to your crimes, and I can think myself justifiable in what I am now going to bestow on you” (Ibid, BK. VI, Ch. XI, p.287).

Allworthy afterwards dismisses Tom with a sum of money to start a new livelihood. The narrator comments on Allworthy’s decision: “The Reader must be very weak, if, when he considers the light in which Jones then appeared to Mr. Allworthy, he should blame the rigour of his sentence. And yet all the neighbourhood, either from this weakness, or from some worse motive, condemned this justice and severity as the highest cruelty” (Ibid: 288). The term “weak” or “weakness” in the above mentioned passage becomes associated with compassion. Thus, it is the neighbours’ compassion which impels them to exaggerate Allworthy’s cruelty towards Tom, disregarding to mention that he has been sent with five hundred pounds. The reader should not denounce Allworthy’s decision as much as he has to find out the reasons behind which he is forced to embark upon this step. First of all, Jones appears in a very bad position, and unfortunately the evidence is against him.

Therefore, the decision for punishing him could not be rejected. On examining these three incidents, it is revealed that Allworthy's character is associated with both a charitable nature and a sense of justice.

Although, sometimes, he attempts hasty conclusions and gives an ear to hearsay and rumours, yet it is out of fear to encourage vice which projects him to such an attitude. It seems in the eyes of Allworthy that it is better to give alms than to give one a good opinion. Being strict in judgement, followed by a decision to supply the family of the culprit with money to subsist for their life, is merely to bring Allworthy's conscience to comfort and it is not an overall sign of his charitable nature. It is worthy to note that Bilfil's rejection to the idea of charity, which according to his own view is a means to assist the wicked and to allow vice to triumph over virtue, has actually influenced Allworthy's opinion and has urged him to treat Partridge, Tom, and George on strict and severe bases. As long as Allworthy sees that the three men he judges are unquestionably guilty, he regards it immoral to release them without punishment. Along with Allworthy's complete devotion to severe the basis of justice, there is a flaw in his character in my own view which makes him fall as a prey to deception from clever hypocritical and ostensible characters such as Bilfil who has managed to undermine Allworthy's benevolent impulses.

Judgement which is accompanied by mercy and compassion seems to be a difficulty for Fielding and according to Henley, Fielding seems to give a defense of Allworthy: "... the mercy may appear more amiable in a magistrate, severity is a more wholesome virtue; nay severity to an individual may, perhaps, be in the end the greatest mercy, not only to the public in general ... but to many individuals" (Henley, 1969, p.118). A distinction is also drawn by Fielding as regards "the passions of the man" and the "principles of the magistrate", 'indicating that the latter should take priority over the former in cases of villainy. Probing the characters of Tom and Allworthy as judges is also the focus of excavation. The significant case of Tom's judgement is his meeting with the highwayman who has tried to rob him and Partridge. On investigating his circumstances, it is unearthed that he is being stripped out of his livery and it is the dire need to provide for his almost dead and starving family which forces him to attempt robbery. The highwayman suggested taking Tom to his house to prove the veracity of his story and he agreed, when Tom has accompanied him, that Tom no longer doubts him. Tom extends the poor man a couple of guineas as soon as he has felt pity for him. Tom, giving the highwayman a sum of money to provide for his family, seems to follow the example of Allworthy giving Black George the same amount of money to serve his family. Similarity worked out by the attitudes of both Allworthy and Tom, as regards their financial aid to the poor, seems to be disparity in their disposal. As the former provides money which is excessive to his needs, the

latter grants money of which he is in dire need. Neither of these cases proves the extent of the culprit's guilt, but yet the judges are ruled by different dispositions.

## **Conclusion**

Irony as one of the distinguished devices, exploited in *Tom Jones*, mainly unravels connotations of meanings and the nature of the characters. Irony in the limited sense of the word is relevant to the use of words for conveying the opposite of their literal meaning or it might be identified as an expression or utterance marked by a deliberate contrast between apparent and intended meaning. The aim behind these contrasts of meaning is to initiate humours or rhetorical effects. It might be notable as well that incongruity arises between what might be expected and what actually occurs. Fielding's target for fully exploiting the device of irony in *Tom Jones* is to delineate characters' behavior and conduct. Fielding's technique sheds light on the significance of irony and it underlines the fact that language is not merely an inflexible conveyer of information but rather the reader's mind has to be more flexible and capable of grasping shades of meaning. Fielding's technique of irony also destabilizes the reader's assurance of his unscrutinized notions. It is the attitudes of the reader as much as those of the characters that are being subject to examination by the novelist (see le Boeuf, 2007; Gibbs, 1994; Attardo, 2000; Chen, 1990; Barbe, 1995; Kruez & Roberts, 1993; Clark & Gerrig, 1984).

Fielding's *Tom Jones*, which is built on satire, tackles also two important concepts namely, charity and chastity, and it is through connotations of meaning that the author makes it difficult for the readers to make a simple judgment. Hence, complications arise for the evaluation of characters. Some puzzling questions are set up: Do mercy, compassion and forgiveness contradict justice or not? But whether they contradict justice or not, are they regarded as virtues or vices? Do mercy, compassion, and forgiveness cause harm or reconcile? The problem is incorporated in the fact that the Christian religious doctrine asks for forgiveness, while the laws of justice ask for punishment. Thus, a culprit should get his deserts. The problem is also incorporated in the fact that it is difficult to know which cases deserve forgiveness and compassion and which do not. Those who wish to be charitable will either encourage vice and infringe the laws of justice or fulfil the laws of justice and condemn others. In both cases, no assertions of judging correctly are underscored as long as the evidence is not sufficient to communicate the truth. A judge has to avoid hasty judgment as long as judgment constitutes a major significance. He has to judge not only in accordance with the laws of justice but also in accordance with the laws of the religious doctrine.

Fielding has proved himself not only a successful eighteenth century novelist, but also a master-key to the English novel at large. His capacity as a writer proves that he has abundant knowledge and skills not only revealed in the field of artistic activities, but also in fields of education, social classes of "high and low people", law and religious affairs. Such skills and knowledge have enabled him to set up a panoramic view of English life with consummate excellence and success. Most of the delight and success in Fielding's *Tom Jones* are taken from the power of the narrative voice: the true representation of the English life in the eighteenth century with examples of high and low characters, the well-formed structure of the book, the picaresque elements and various coincidences which enhance the plot and add to the comic features exploited in the novel. Fielding's insistence upon depicting affectation which stems from hypocrisy, probably attempting to deceit and vanity, possibly akin to ostentation is a device to expose vice and ugliness on one hand and virtue and goodness on the other. Such device does not only invite the reader to judge these traits only in the characters but also to explore them in human nature as well as in the depth of his own nature.

The presentation of characters and the irony maintained in the book is not the ultimate investigation but the narrative role and the narrator also contribute to the bulk of the whole work. Irony becomes apparent when the book is re-read and the enjoyment of re-reading the book is not only in questioning and doubting attitudes or disagreeing with assertions or generally accepted conclusions but also in being acquainted with the applied narrative stratagems and the narrator's role which works in a two-way track, creating puzzling characters and functioning in a puzzling way. Authors and readers are not the only characters taking part in a fictional work, but rather narrators play a pivotal role in the discourse of fiction. However, the narrative devices in Fielding's *Tom Jones* vary from the first person narration to the third person omniscience stratagem. Fowler (1966) points out that Fielding chooses the 'I figure' especially in the interpolated tales to give himself the opportunity of speaking out his own viewpoint and addressing the reader directly to make this activity the focus of importance. Fielding also attempted to follow the path of the historian who keeps himself detached from the text. He maintains the principle of objectivity and asserts his role as selector and organizer. Commenting on the objective type of narration in Fielding's work, Leech (1982) stated that the significance of employing the third person is to undermine the part of the addressor in the novel's discourse so as to combine the parts of the implied author and narrator together.

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