Epic's varying fortunes fall into a relatively coherent pattern, both formally and materially. Verse epic in the high style is, if we are to take *The Rape of the Lock* seriously, impossible because of disjunction between the fragility of contemporary mores and pursuits and the ponderousness of the vehicle that would have to convey them. *A Tale of a Tub* postulates a further disjunction between the theoretically exemplary epic hero and the fragmented, multiplex society he can no longer adequately represent. Swift's choice of form also demonstrates how great an indecorum would be involved in the use of full-dress verse epic format for the aspirations of Augustan England. In a real sense, the Longinian revival and the attachment of the aesthetics of the sublime to epic criticism should be understood as an attempt to substitute a rhetorical grandeur for what no longer existed in fact. All that this sort of criticism accomplished, however, was to distance epic still further from the real interests of the age, to make it more unreal and irrelevant, just as the gradual elevation of the hero from normal humanity to near divinity, from representative to paragon, accomplished the material cognate of that formal disaster. To be arbitrary and absolute, from the moment of Landino's singling out Aeneas as the man "destined for glory" — as opposed to Bernardus's "dweller in the body," i.e., everyman — poets and critics steadily intensify the virtues and status of the epic hero until the appearance of such bloodless lay figures as Blackmore's Arthur or Fénelon's Télémaque. Only Milton really stands aside from this development, showing in *Adam and Eve* the possibility of epic scope and heroism in flawed humanity, but that represents a direction epic did not take.¹
Restoration and eighteenth-century readers chose rather to try to assimilate *Paradise Lost* to then prevailing notions of epic regularity, and Milton himself moved into a much more conventional pattern with *Paradise Regained*.

All the works we have examined so far have one firm material link with traditional epic: they have all offered or satirized competing or complementary definitions of wisdom. Wisdom, whether conceived as knowledge of philosophy or theology, politics or ethics, has been the core of epic from the Hellenistic allegoresis of Homer forward. Renaissance criticism and practice intensified this element by heavily emphasizing the didactic purpose of epic and fitting it out as a tool to teach man about, and to help him obtain, felicity: the *summum bonum*. Usually this end was sought through the medium of allegory, as in Tasso and Spenser, but subsequent poets tended to be more and more explicit about the goals of their poetry. Thus Milton deals overtly with the loss and regaining of felicity, and Fénelon, pursuing a civil virtue rather than a theological one, puts his Télémaque through a series of explicitly political lessons. The matter of the allegory tends to replace the matter of the narrative. Epic is in the process of biting its own tale, of moving through narrative and allegory back to psychomachy — a process that is perhaps best illustrated in *The Dunciad* or *A Tale of a Tub*. The process is complicated further by the shifting definition of wisdom itself, which was undergoing changes diametrically opposite those of the epic hero. While he was metamorphosing from everyman to super-hero, wisdom was moving from divinity to near-worldliness, from an attribute of God and knowledge of things divine shared by men only through a kind of divine in-flowing or participation in Christ who was Wisdom, to philosophical knowledge naturally obtainable, to morality, to prudence. The epic virtue moves out of the sphere of contemplation and more and more into the realm of action — like the respective bodies of knowledge in *The Dunciad* and *A Tale of a Tub* — while the epic hero performs the contrary motion and becomes more and more actionless — like David in *Absalom and Achitophel*, or Shadwell in *MacFlecknoe*, or Cibber in *The Dunciad*. The tension tears epic apart, dividing it between a series of episodes more and more sensational because they
must provide the interest and a hero who because of his superiority to all circumstances can provide no drama whatever. At least a part of the mock epics we have talked about has been legitimately mockery of the epic: Cibber's inactivity means many things, and that is one of them. The *Tale of a Tub*, too, partakes of that mockery: its alternation of fable and essay and usurpation of fable by essay recapitulates the process by which content destroyed form. These two works embody, for me at least, the nadir of formal epic, epic's own descent to hell. Fielding plays the sybil to lead it back to light. In his works, from *Joseph Andrews* through to *Amelia*, epic meaning is once again welded to epic action, and the internals and externals of epic are made to coincide.

Fielding's three novels deal with increasingly larger and more generous notions of wisdom and with correspondingly greater sweeps of society. Their themes progress from an examination of prudence and constancy in *Joseph Andrews*, where the effects are confined to the relatively small space symbolized by Wilson's home, to the elaboration of a much fuller conception of wisdom in *Tom Jones* and the greater scope represented by the Allworthy and Western estates, to the meticulous investigation of philosophic liberty in *Amelia* and the embryonic regeneration of a whole society. As this thematic growth goes on, Fielding at the same time proceeds to utilize more and more traditional epic material; this culminates in *Amelia*, which, simply, *is* epic. If Renaissance is to be defined or characterized, as Irwin Panofsky suggests, by the rejoining of classical form with classical meaning, then Fielding's novels constitute the Renaissance of epic: by *Amelia*, a classical notion of wisdom has been relinked with a classical notion of epic scope, both articulated over a traditional structure and worked out through the deeds of flawed human beings. Fielding, by discarding the petrified *forms* of epic and rediscovering the human nature of the epic hero, managed to restore epic to the culturally central position that, under the guise of the novel, it has not lost since.

It is probably important at this point to acknowledge that, strictly speaking, it is incorrect to speak of "the novel." Novel is not a *genre* but many genres: Fielding's kind derives from the epic and responds best to criticism guided by that knowledge whereas Defoe's kind, for instance,
derives from spiritual biography and responds best to examination from that point of view, as Hunter’s and Starr’s books have shown. Richardson’s novels, too, have a different pedigree, and there are undoubtedly many others, but real generic distinctions can and should be made among them. To refer to them all in a lump as “the novel” is not merely confusing, it is dead wrong.

I

It should be clear from all this that I regard seriously Fielding’s claim that Joseph Andrews is a comic epic in prose, however unfashionable it may be to do so. Fielding does not obfuscate, however much he may indulge his irony, and his careful establishment of pedigree, his examination of Joseph Andrews’s form, action and fable, characters and manners, and diction in the manner Bossu made standard for criticism of epic (“Author’s Preface”), his careful distinguishing of Joseph Andrews from the productions of romance writers on the one hand, and burlesque writers on the other” (“Author’s Preface”) — all these seem clearly designed to guide and shape the reader’s expectations from the beginning of the book. I cannot see what value an extended irony at this point would have for an author as concerned about form and the reader’s response to it as Fielding consistently shows himself to be. He seriously means that Joseph Andrews is “a comic romance,” which is in turn the same thing as “a comic epic-poem in prose,” and he really means that its non-comic counterpart and predecessor is “the Telemachus of the Archbishop of Cambray” (p. 2) — and behind that, of course, the Odyssey.

At just about the halfway point of the novel, Fielding uses Parson Adams to remind us of that opening analysis by having that benevolent Christian express and explain his preference of the Iliad to the Odyssey, contrary to the opinions of Aristotle and Horace (3.2). Adams employs the same divisions Fielding earlier used: subject, action, manners, sentiments, and diction. To these he subjoins several other considerations — that of “the Harmatton, that agreement of his action to his subject”; Homer’s excellence in delineating “the pathetic”; and his management of “Opsis, or the scenery.” Fielding is of course exploiting some obvious ironies here in the kindly parson’s taste for the fierceness
and cruelty of the *Iliad* while he himself is unknowingly engaged in an *Odyssey*, but that should not distract us from the larger ironic counterpoint between the things Adams praises in Homer’s poem and the excellences of Fielding’s novel. Certainly Parson Adams’s encomium of the richness of Homer’s characters and his ability to delineate the passions is designed not merely to remind us simultaneously of Adams’s erudite vanity and basic good heart, but also to call forth our assent that these are indeed accomplishments and to direct our attention to just how much Fielding has done in the same vein. And the notion of the *Harmatton* seems crucial to Fielding’s own book: its subject is constancy, and its action, like the *Odyssey’s*, a much-interrupted journey home. Adams and Joseph are, in the literal sense, men of as many turns as Odysseus. And for scenery, Fielding offers neither the plains of Troy nor the summits of Ida, Olympus, or Sarnos, but the inns and homes of England, where, as Parson Adams remarked some pages earlier, “he almost began to suspect that he was sojourning in a country inhabited only by Jews and Turks” (2.16).

Fielding frequently strives for this sort of juxtaposition, and he achieves it in a number of ways besides through formal analysis or criticism. A number of quotations from the *Aeneid* are scattered throughout *Joseph Andrews* that serve the immediate function of (usually) allowing Parson Adams vent for his feelings and the ultimate one of briefly juxtaposing moments from *Joseph Andrews* with moments from classical epic. Fielding’s occasional burlesques and his more frequent allusions to the high style serve the same ends. Stylistic self-consciousness furnishes one of the most important means by which Fielding can with greater and greater sharpness distinguish what his novel is doing from what it will not even attempt. In distinguishing *Joseph Andrews* from works in the high style, Fielding can make some very precise discriminations about the adequacies and relevance of those styles.

The twelfth chapter of the second book furnishes a fine example of this. Ostensibly, what happens in the course of this chapter is very simple. Adams and Fanny are driven by rain to an ale-house where Fanny hears a man singing in another room and promptly faints; Adams
bellows to call help; the singer, responding, turns out to be Joseph Andrews, and a joyous reunion follows. But that synopsis entirely misses the point of the chapter, which is — and is conveyed by — style. Fielding begins with a paragraph, preparatory to his description of Fanny, that concerns itself with the deliciousness of the artifact about to be introduced and invokes several precedents, classical and otherwise, for the danger of infatuation:

Fanny sat likewise down by the fire; but was much more impatient at the storm. She presently engaged the eyes of the host, his wife, the maid of the house, and the young fellow who was their guide; they all conceived they had never seen anything half so handsome, and indeed, reader, if thou art of an amorous hue, I advise thee to skip over the next paragraph; which, to render our history perfect, we are obliged to set down, humbly hoping that we may escape the fate of Pygmalion; for if it should happen to us, or to thee, to be struck with this picture, we should be perhaps in as helpless a condition as Narcissus, and might say to ourselves, *Quod petis est musquam.* Or, if the finest features in it should set Lady ________’s image before our eyes, we should be still in as bad situation, and might say to our desires, *Coelum ipsum petimus stultitia.* (2.12)

The description that follows debunks this mock solemnity and showy erudition by its sheer naturalness: Fanny’s beauty is unaffected, owes nothing to art, and in fact is not reducible to it: “... Add to these a countenance in which, though she was extremely bashful, a sensibility appeared almost incredible; and a sweetness, whenever she smiled, beyond either imitation or description. To conclude all she had a natural gentility, superior to the acquisition of art, and which surprised all who beheld her.” Fielding immediately juxtaposes this with Joseph’s song, “a voice from an inner room,” which is “artistic” in the extreme, filled with Lethes and Narcissus, Graces and Zephyrus, images living in the breast and burning souls. It concludes with an ornate and elegant fornication and an equally elegant joke:
Advances like these made me bold;
I whisper'd her, "Love, — we're alone";
The rest let immortals unfold:
   No language can tell but their own.
Ah, Chloe, expiring, I cried,
How long I thy cruelty bore!
Ah! Strephon, she blushing replied,
   You ne'er was so pressing before.

The artificiality of language and sentiment masks the extreme natural­ness of the wooer's and lady's behavior — indeed, masks the irony that it is chaste Joseph Andrews who sings this seduction song. Fanny has more reason than the shock of recognition for fainting. Her reaction, of course, immediately deflates the artificiality of the song's reunion of lovers, and their simple exchange — "Are you Joseph Andrews?" "Art thou my Fanny?" — effectively demolishes the ornate style for the purposes of this novel, just as the real chastity of Joseph and Fanny undercuts the literary copulation of Chloe and her swain. The death blow — in many ways — is dealt by Parson Adams, who prances for joy at this reunion, and does not notice that his Aeschylus, like Strephon, is expiring in flames. Adams's Aeschylus is an easy symbol of his harmless vanity and pride in his erudition; equally easily, it embodies the most elaborate form of an ornate and ritualized art, and the first subsidiary genre derived from epic. Fielding is making points about decorum and about natural­ness, and both the stylized lyric and the stylized drama (and I would say, by extension, the stylized epic) are inappropriate as vehicles for what he has to depict, just as the artifice of the Pygmalion simile is inappropriate to the naturalness of Fanny or the sophisticated license of the song is inappropriate to the unaffected modesty of Joseph and Fanny. The high style and the genres and conduct associated with it are no longer an adequate vehicle for the kind of truth Fielding is trying to express. The whole point of the juxtaposition of all these elements in this chapter is to dramatize the necessity, out of reasons of simple decorum, to generate a new form commensurate with these contents. In the same manner, I would also argue that one of the functions of the "Tale of Leonora, or the
Unfortunate Jilt" is to demonstrate the narrative inadequacies of the Richardsonian epistolary form. This is exactly the opposite of the function of the ornate style in *The Rape of the Lock*; here the mock epic is mocking the epic, or at least that portion of it that had been frozen into attitudes and language inappropriate to contemporary reality. One need only compare the reunion of Orestes and Electra in the Aeschylus that Parson Adams discards with the reunion he witnesses to realize the gulf that Fielding's style has crossed.6

I do not mean that Fielding created *de novo*, of course, but that he forced a new bloom from the old rootstock, and most of its characteristics can be traced with relative clarity to various components of its ancestry.7 Fielding's burlesques of the epic are, with the exception of Adams's and Joseph's battle with the hunting squire's dogs, not substantive but stylistic, and the sorts of romances he distinguishes his book from are not *Don Quixote* or *Gierusalemme Liberata* or the *Faerie Queene*, but "such . . . voluminous works commonly called Romances, namely, Clelia, Cleopatra, Astraea, Cassandra, the Grand Cyrus, and innumerable others, which contain, as I apprehend, very little instruction or entertainment" ("Author's Preface"). I want to suggest that in establishing a structure for this book, his first try at "this species of writing, . . . hitherto unattempted in our language" ("Author's Preface"), Fielding consciously or unconsciously, with or without knowledge, recreated the form of the prime example of the "grave romance" in English, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. Let me make clear at the outset that I am not trying to argue that Fielding in any detailed sense used a particular book of *The Faerie Queene* as a model; rather, I want to suggest that in Spenser he could find a versatile structural pattern used to embody a subject matter very similar to what he himself had in hand (*The Faerie Queene* is not the only place he could find it, of course, but it is one of the most proximate). He could also find in *The Faerie Queene*, seriously treated, the chivalric materials *Don Quixote* burlesques, which would be in itself an advantage to his "Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes" without burlesque. That is, *The Faerie Queene* is the major English work that stands in the same relation to *Joseph Andrews* as the continental chivalric romances do to *Don
Quixote. For these reasons I will attempt to use Spenser's poem to clarify Fielding's novel (which may be darkness heaped on darkness); for the sake of simplicity and because of the consonance of subject matter, I will confine my discussion to the Britomart episodes of The Faerie Queene. Again, I will not be arguing that Fielding "followed" Spenser; I am only trying to show the place that the comic materials of Joseph Andrews already held in the epic tradition and to locate them against the background of serious meaning another writer in that tradition utilized. The underlying assumption I am making is that epic as genre possesses a kind of autonomy that in and of itself bends its practitioners into paths already blazed within its confines. Something like this notion seems to me to lurk not very far behind the eighteenth century's respect for genre and decorum; the very violations of decorum to which so much of my discussion thus far has been attentive seem in themselves to point to an organic relation among form, content, and style of which it would be folly to assume a writer as sensitive to such matters as Fielding was unaware. For all of these a priori reasons, I find it useful to consider Joseph Andrews in the light of The Faerie Queene; my ex post facto reason is that it works.

Although it is undeniably true that Joseph Andrews in the course of his wanderings acquires the kind of prudence that will enable him to survive in the world and that Parson Adams so delightfully lacks, it is nevertheless not true that this is the point of the novel. If it were, I doubt anyone would read it or that a man as imprudent as Henry Fielding would have written it. It has always struck me that in making Joseph Andrews into a tract on prudence we act as if it were written by Blifil. The simple virtue or compound of virtues that Joseph Andrews genuinely displays, however, and that impels the major actions of the story, from Joseph's first refusal of Lady Booby's bed to his final escape from her hand and house, can be subsumed briefly under the name of constancy — the constancy of Joseph to Fanny that informs his chastity and enables him to scorn the lure of wealth and position, her constancy to him, Parson Adams's constancy to his parishioners and his own benevolence, even, in both the physical and metaphorical senses, the constancy of their homeward journeys. This more generous and humane virtue is the real core of
Fielding's novel; for it, Joseph and Fanny are rewarded — "A minute carried him into her arms, where we shall leave this happy couple to enjoy the private rewards of their constancy" (4.16) — and to it, prudence, circumspection, and all narrower virtues are clearly subservient.

Britomart's quest for Artegal spans books 3 and 4 of *The Faerie Queene*, the books of chastity and friendship respectively; and the idea of constancy provides the unifying element for the diverse episodes of these books in the same manner that constancy in Fielding's novel holds to a single point the diverse pulls of chastity, love, and friendship among Joseph, Fanny, and Adams. The sexual roles are, of course, reversed, and Joseph plays Britomart's part as exemplar of chastity, impelled by love and constantly seeking union with his beloved. However, he is like Artegal in that he is a changeling. Fanny seems more like Amoret — lovely, timorous, chaste, faithful to her lover, a foundling also, and incessantly subject to attack, abduction, and near rape, from which she is rescued by Britomart. Fielding conflates all of the diverse love pursuits of *Faerie Queene* 3 and 4 into a single tale of chaste love aided by friendship. But the importance of the *Faerie Queene* to *Joseph Andrews* is not through specific characters, though there are many correspondences — the blood-and-thunder gentleman who descants to Adams about bravery and flees at the first alarm is a lineal descendant of Braggadocchio, for instance — but through the broad structural pattern I discussed in connection with *The Rape of the Lock* and through certain narrative particulars Spenser uses in association with it.

*Joseph Andrews* employs the same basic epic grammar as the other works we have thus far discussed. Books 1 and 4 answer each other with perfect symmetry in every major factor. The discovery of Joseph's real birth and family in 4 parallels the account of his supposed birth and family at the very beginning of the book. Lady Booby's and Slipslop's comic attempts to seduce him correspond to Didapper's inept attempt at Fanny and Adams's innocent sojourns in Slipslop's and Fanny's beds (in Joseph's discovery of him in the latter, Fielding also gives us a reprise of Mrs. Towitzoue's discovery of her husband in the arms of Betty the chambermaid). Joseph dismissed, robbed, stripped, and abandoned is
recapitulated and reversed by Joseph freed from trial, dressed, and welcomed as brother into the Booby family. Books 2 and 3 are more intricately intertwined and paralleled, in a manner reminiscent of Spenser's overall management of his books 3 and 4. Here Fielding multiplies incidents astonishingly, and the correspondences abound, ranging from the repetitive loss and recovery of Adams's horse and his preference of the "pedestrian" mode to the "equestrian," through symmetrical fights at inns, to counterpointed rescues of Fanny from rape. The cowardly hunting squire of book 2 anticipates the vicious hunting squire of book 3. The troubles Adams's Aeschylus and his vanity about his learning lead him into at his trial in book 2 foreshadow the similar troubles raised by his readiness to read a sermon and play Socrates in the hunting squire's prank. The first meeting of Joseph, Fanny, and Adams is matched by their reunion near the end of book 3. The argument Adams has with the innkeeper, at the end of 2, about practical and speculative knowledge is perfectly paralleled by a similar argument, near the beginning of 3, with Joseph about public and private education. Over this basic grammar, of course, Fielding has fashioned a structural rhetoric of his own, which works itself out through an intricate series of repetitions and modifications of thematic situations involving religion (Barnabas, Trulliber, Adams himself), law (the quarreling lawyers, Adams and Fanny's trial, Wilson's story, Lawyer Scout, Joseph and Fanny's trial), active good works, love and sex, interpolated stories, and so on. Wilson's story is obviously central to this rhetoric since it provides links forward and backward to almost every major theme in the story, including the crucial one of Joseph's and Fanny's real identities.

The Wilson episode functions too as a comic version of the typical Spenserian "house of recognition," which usually schools the hero about himself and matters pertaining to the theme of the particular book. Such are the House of Holiness in book one of the Faerie Queene, the Castle of Alma in book 2, the Temple of Isis in book 5, and less typically but more relevant here, Belphoebe's dwelling ("a dainty, place . . . As it an earthly Paradize had beene . . ." [3.5.40]) and the Garden of Adonis (3.6), both the symbolic loci of chaste and fertile love, like Wilson's house and gardens, which Adams, ignoring the intrusion of reality in the
young squire’s cruel shooting of the spaniel (as death, too, mars the perfection of the Garden of Adonis), declares “was the manner in which the people lived in the golden age” (3.4).

Characteristically Spenserian, too, is Fielding’s use of houses of recognition — or perhaps more properly, houses of temptation — at the beginning and end of his book. In book 3 of the Faerie Queene, these are the Castle Joyous, where Malecasta attempts to seduce Britomart, taking her for a man, and the House of Busirane, where Britomart frees the faithful Amoret from her captivity to lust; in Joseph Andrews, they are the town and country homes of Lady Booby. Malecasta tempts to simple lust, from which pitfall Britomart is effectively saved by the naturalness of her inclinations and their being already fixed on Artegal. Nevertheless, she is somewhat taken in by Malecasta’s “strong extremitie” (3.1.53) and as a result sustains a slight wound from Gardante (3.1.65), that is, lust of the eyes. Lady Booby’s own “strong extremitie” subjects Joseph Andrews to the same trial, which he comically passes through the strength of his virtue (“Your virtue! ... I shall never survive it.” [1.8]) and, as we discover later, of his love for Fanny. Nevertheless, he too is touched: “But I am glad she turned me out of the chamber as she did: for I had once almost forgotten every word Parson Adams had ever said to me” (1.10). The temptation posed in the House of Busirane is far more complex, and Britomart, to emerge safely from it and save Amoret, must draw on everything she has learned in the course of the book about love, chastity, and constancy. She must, in effect, see through the whole Masque of Cupid and distinguish lust in all its disguises. Then she must reject not merely lust as an end, but lust as a means to power, position, wealth, and so on. At Booby-Hall, Joseph undergoes this complex of temptations as, with shifting clarity, it becomes apparent that he is no longer a footman and as marriage to Lady Booby becomes a more and more real possibility. He is no longer tempted to simple lust (in that respect he is exactly like Britomart in the House of Busirane, fighting not for his own chastity but for another’s) but rather to inconstancy, self-aggrandizement (self-improvement, Pamela would say), and loveless marriage: he can, if he wishes, use Lady Booby’s lust as a means to his own ends. Lady Booby is of course no longer the simple lay figure for
Fielding

sexual desire and hypocrisy that she was in book 1; she, too, is now presented as a far more complex creature, alternately driven and distracted by her desires, even to the point that, like Busirane, she would sooner destroy her beloved than lose him.

To pass this test, Joseph must balance his own love and fidelity against the demands of a fickle and inconstant world and the kind of prudence, which, to this point, has been the *sine qua non* of survival in the world. That is, at the crucial point in the novel and his fortunes, he has to turn his back on the world and opt for impracticality and improvidence — for Parson Adams, in short, rather than Lady Booby. The choice is not easy, particularly when Joseph finds Adams and Fanny in bed together: after all that has happened in the novel, it requires a very impractical act of faith to believe that Adams does not know “whether she is a man or a woman” (4.14). If the momentary disclosure that Joseph and Fanny are brother and sister exposes the limitations of prudence as a governor of human conduct (there being no possible prudential step that could prevent their ignorant incest, and the unpredictable appearance and chance information of the pedlar being the basis of the episode), then Joseph’s final choices with regard to Lady Booby and Parson Adams show the absolute necessity of transcending it. Lady Booby is prudential, and at the end of the novel Lady Booby is alone. It is a nice touch, I think, that Fielding casts this last test for his heroes in the form of Britomart’s first. In that episode, her manly appearance in full armor led Malecasta to think her a man and subsequently to steal into her bed; discovering the intrusion, Britomart grabbed her sword and Malecasta shrieked in fright, rousing the household, thus revealing Britomart’s sex and finally forcing Britomart and the Red Crosse Knight to fight their way out of the Castle. The compound of mistaken identities and genders that speeds *Joseph Andrews* to its conclusion is loosely drawn on this same pattern: Parson Adams, responding to a cry for help, mistakes the sexes of assailer and assaulted, releases Didapper (who had already mistaken his target) and pummels Slipslop, whose sex he only discovers when Lady Booby arrives with light. Embarrassed but exonerated, he beats an erroneous retreat to Fanny’s bed, where he is discovered by Joseph soon after, unable to explain his presence and protesting
— with some justice, after his run-in with Slipslop and Didapper — that "As I am a Christian, I know not whether she is a man or woman" (4.14). In that denial lies the real comic resolution of Joseph Andrews; coupled with Joseph's and Fanny's acceptance of it, that narrative moment graphs both the limitations of prudence and the limits of chastity, as well as the absolute necessity for constancy, love, and friendship to transcend them. What is at stake here is a virtue in which prudence, chastity, love, friendship, and constancy are all rooted — self-knowledge, the simple fact of one's own identity. In the terms of Joseph Andrews, to know who you are is to know what you are; for this reason the novel climaxes in its plethora of mistaken identities and final sortings-out of relation, all of which are comically encapsulated in Parson Adams's nocturnal misadventures. Vanity prevents one from seeing himself and others clearly, and from that vice only Joseph and Fanny are free, though the vanity of others has made the two of them the victims of misunderstanding and misinterpretation throughout their adventures. Their final appearance before the justice (4.5) dramatizes this: treated as vagrants and criminals because of Lady Booby's vanity, they are freed and reappraised because of her nephew's familial pride. No one sees them in themselves, only in relation to a complex of factors engaging or endangering their own pride and self-esteem. Adams and Fanny's early appearance before a justice almost overtly states this: (2.11) the issue of the hearing becomes Adams's identity, and to the query "What's your name?" Adams, answering another challenge to his vanity and not the relevant question, responds, "It is Aeschylus, and I will maintain it." Vanity, as Fielding insists throughout the book, fogs the mind and the perceptions, makes us see ourselves and others falsely — and the only viable correctives to vanity are self-knowledge, constancy, and active charity joined together. Prudence merely serves vanity, and the others disjunct are powerless against it, as is Joseph by himself — discharged, robbed, and beaten — or Fanny — deceived and nearly raped — or Adams — deceived, put upon, made a butt of. Together they triumph in the novel's understated and inevitable denouement when, in one of Fielding's moments of crystallized significance, Parson Adams marries Joseph and Fanny.
Again let me insist that I do not mean to imply that Fielding is in any way alluding to Spenser. I do not think that an awareness of the presence of Spenserian elements is important to understanding Joseph Andrews. The reasons I mention Spenser at all in connection with Fielding are three: first, the Faerie Queene shows the place Fielding's thematic materials already held in "serious romance" (not entirely serious either; there are many comic elements already in the Faerie Queene, and many more capable of comedy); second, Fielding could find in Spenser a usable pattern for structuring his narrative; and third and most important, he could find in Spenser the techniques for making that narrative be meaningful, rather than bear meaning. Plot in novels or epics is usually talked about as a separable value: it is nice, neat, well-rounded, or it is loose, uneven, disjointed, and so on. It is never discussed as if the plot — the simple movement of the characters from place to place, episode to episode — in itself meant anything. It does. This does not refer to situational symbolism, intermittent allegory, or anything of that sort, but to a pervasive use of the literal statement of the plot as significant, intelligible, in itself; not the vehicle of meaning, but meaning itself.

All love, the Renaissance knew, moves toward fulfillment, and the kind of motion it performs defines it. Rational motion is like the motion of the planets, circular, from east through west and back to east again. Animal appetite is centrifugal, a straight line breaking out of the rational circle; love is centripetal, a straight line breaking through the ring of rationality. Constancy guides these motions, holds them to their goal, and bends the straight lines of appetite and love into the circles of reason. That set of motions furnishes Fielding's "Harmatton, that agreement of his action to his subject" (3.2); his subjects are love, lust, and constancy; his action is a homeward wandering — a straight line that the conclusion of the novel curves into a circle. So the journey itself is not symbolic. It is not the vehicle of meaning; it is meaning. We are not dealing with a system of substitutions here, with things standing for other things, but rather with a system of equations: love is motion, motion is a journey, love is a journey, and every step and episode of that journey exist and mean in precisely that way. This is not exactly allegory, and it is certainly not metaphor; but whatever you call it, it works. Consider,
for example, Parson Adams asleep and unknowing by Fanny's side: the meaning of that episode is contained perfectly in the action — or inaction — of it. It is not that it does not mean anything — it means, and means profoundly, in the context of *Joseph Andrews* — but that its meaning is perfectly crystallized in its narrative statement. Fielding has achieved, at this moment, and in the wedding, and in a few others in *Joseph Andrews*, a perfect consonance between form and content so that his subject is embodied with perfect clarity, with unimpeded translucence, in his action.

This notion of Harmatton, the congruence of tenor and vehicle, seems as central to Fielding's conception of his book as Adams implies it is to epic, and Fielding's manipulation of it and the narrative manner that develops from it are thoroughly Spenserian. This means, I think, that the novel proceeds by a kind of quasi-allegoresis: quasi because the process is, as I said before, not one whereby one thing stands for or represents another but rather a process of embodiment or equation. My critical vocabulary is inadequate to what I am trying to express here: what is at stake, as clearly as I can put it, is the articulation, the enunciation, of the figurative not through but in the literal — in the terms I have used elsewhere in this book, it is, metaphorically, the rejoining of spirit and letter, theologically, making the word flesh.

I can only clarify by examples. Fielding often in *Joseph Andrews* forces us to appraise the *littera* of his text by juxtapositions that push us to awareness of the value of sameness and difference. Early in the novel, Slipshlop's awkward attempt on Joseph neatly counterpoints Lady Booby's more elegant try. Later in the book, two supposedly simultaneous actions, Joseph and Adams, tied to the bedpost, argue about giving vent to the emotions, while a poet and a player argue about the state of the drama (3.10,11). Poet and player pass from decrying the poorness of the stage and blaming it, respectively, on players and poets to excluding each other from the general condemnation to quarreling about which was responsible for the failure of their last endeavor. In the parallel chapter, Joseph bemoans the loss of Fanny, and Parson Adams comforts him in such a fashion that he is even more grieved. Joseph
admits his obligation to accept the dispensations of Providence, but denies he is capable of performing it; Adams further lectures him in the same vein, until Joseph bursts out with a snatch of Shakespeare. The whole final paragraph deserves quotation:

They remained some time in silence; and groans and sighs issued from them both; at length Joseph burst out into the following soliloquy:

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

Adams asked him what stuff that was he repeated? — To which he answered, they were some lines he had gotten by heart out of a play. — “Ay, there is nothing but heathenism to be learned from plays,” replied he. — “I never heard of any plays fit for a Christian to read, but Cato and the Conscious Lovers; and, I must own, in the latter there are some things almost solemn enough for a sermon.” But we shall now leave them a little, and inquire after the subject of their conversation. (3.11)

The sequence apparently takes its point from the ancient metaphor of the world as stage or the stage as world; the two chapters simply juxtapose the two terms of the metaphor, leaving the reader to choose for himself whatever relation of tenor to vehicle he likes while pushing him to see the mutual equality of both. The two cases are not so much allegories of each other as they are parallels: both are concerned directly with the problems raised by a difficult part; both revolve around the expression of emotion. But the poet and the player argue because the emotion — the distress — was, either in the writing or the saying, expressed inadequately; the distress was not done justice. Adams and Joseph, on the other hand, argue because Joseph is expressing distress, despite the fact that the latter doesn’t “endeavour to grieve.” Adams preaches a harsh and highly erudite Stoicis...
to the moment but pretty well beyond the powers of a human being. The stage appears more real(istic?) — certainly more human — than life; life, as expounded and exemplified by Adams, has all the artificiality, the role-playing, of the stage. Adams makes life into formal declamation and the striking of pose, like the two highly rhetorical and attitudinizing plays he cites, *Cato* and *The Conscious Lovers*, “in the latter” of which “there are some things almost solemn enough for a sermon.” Joseph breaks the deadlock — for the reader, if not for Parson Adams — by appealing out of life to high art, out of the unfeeling life that Adams at this point expounds to the rich humanity of Shakespeare. He merges life and art in the moment when artistic utterance becomes the only valid expression of what he really feels; although Parson Adams damns the play, Joseph does the distress of it justice. How you handle life and how you handle a role are the questions of the two chapters, and humanly is Shakespeare’s and Joseph’s and Fielding’s answer. Parson Adams’s assertions that “there is nothing but heathenism to be learned from plays” and that he “never heard of any plays fit for a Christian to read, but *Cato* and the *Conscious Lovers*” sound more than odd from one whose prize possession has been an edition of Aeschylus, and we may very well wonder what it all means. The tension in Adams between theory and practice, between the formulaic demands of his erudition and the spontaneity of his own feelings, remains unresolved in *Joseph Andrews*; Adams is still at the end of the novel a schizoid figure who cannot rationally master, as he knows he ought, what he so passionately feels. He appeals to the wrong authorities, to the aloofness of Stoicism and the ritual of Aeschylus to order and restrain a life that resists both. Joseph’s turning to Shakespeare shows the inadequacy of that kind of art to contain real life just as Adams’s throwing his Aeschylus in the fire out of joyous excitement dramatizes the same thing. The richness, diversity, and irregularity of Shakespeare offer the only adequate merging of art and life, the only adequate vehicle for the actions of real people in a real world. As opposed to Adams’s Aeschylus, Seneca, Cicero, and Homer, Shakespeare is well within the reach and capacity of Fielding’s “mere English reader.” In the bedroom farce that moves the novel to its final unraveling, Adams can only call upon the *deus ex machina* of witchcraft, whereas Joseph can recognize a wrong turning. That, and these two
chapters, are not allegories for something else: like Shakespeare’s plays, they are the thing itself.

Parson Adams provides the formulaic center of the novel, the man who generates theories to explain what is going on around him. The fact that his theories are always inadequate to explain, much less to control, the events of the book aligns him in conception and function with Gulliver and the narrator of A Tale of a Tub and with the yet unborn Walter Shandy — which is one very clear reason why Parson Adams is not and cannot be the hero of the book. He shows in himself the irrelevance of theory to reality, the futility of trying to force life into a mold rather than looking at it clearly. For this reason, I think, Fielding has equipped him with a harsh theoretical Stoicism that contradicts directly the warmth of his own feelings as well as a “masterpiece” against vanity that must underscore his own very real vanity about his pastoral and pedagogic abilities. Similarly, Wilson appears in his own story in the same way; he is a man who has tried all of the theoretical approaches to life, from sensuality to reason to literature, from activity to retirement, from public to private, from gentleman to imprisoned debtor, from the fixity of reason to total commitment to fortune. His story functions in the novel as a succinct Rasselas, exploring all of the possible choices of ways of life according to eighteenth-century preconceptions or theories. Fielding uses the Wilson episode as a comic descent to hell in parodic relation to the Aeneid: Adams, Joseph, and Fanny, frightened by what they take to be ghosts, flee down a steep hill and across a river, enter the house of a man who is in fact Joseph’s father, hear from him an autobiography that is a paradigm of the knowledge needful for survival in the world and that contains the essential clues to Joseph’s identity. Joseph, however, sleeps through it all, and all practical knowledge is wasted on Parson Adams. What we eventually learn from it, however, is who Joseph is and what he must become: we see in it the inadequacy of Parson Adams’s theory of private education, the ludicrousness of his system of physiognomy, and the irrelevance of his “book traveling” to form a man capable of dealing with reality. We understand, simply, what the protagonists of mock epic never learn, that you cannot substitute theory for life. Parson Adams’s pronouncement that Wilson’s life is Edenic, despite the vicious neighboring squire and the killing of the
spaniel, simply confirms him as a mock-epic figure and an inadequate
guide, an earthly Anchises from whose erroneous tutelage Joseph must
break free.¹⁰

Fanny's role in the novel illustrates in a similar way this process by
which Fielding realizes the figurative in the literal. Since Fanny provides
the main impetus for Joseph's single major act (leaving London for the
country) and many subsequent lesser ones, she is obviously a crucial
figure in our understanding of the novel (though you might not be able to
judge that from the dearth of readers' comments about her). Physically,
Fielding describes her as the female counterpart of Joseph: they are
obviously, in a meaningful phrase, made for each other. It would be
simplest merely to juxtapose the two descriptions.

Mr. Joseph Andrews was now in the one-and-twentieth
year of his age. He was of the highest degree of middle
stature. His limbs were put together with great elegance and
no less strength. His legs and thighs were formed in the
exactest proportion. His shoulders were broad and brawny;
but yet his arms hung so easily, that he had all the symptoms
of strength without the least clumsiness. His hair was of a
nut-brown colour, and was displayed in wanton ringlets down
his back. His forehead was high, his eyes dark, and as full of
sweetness as of fire. His nose a little inclined to the Roman.
His teeth white and even. His lips full, red, and soft. His
beard was only rough on his chin and upper lip; but his
cheeks, in which his blood glowed, were overspread with a
thick down. His countenance had a tenderness joined with a
sensibility inexpressible. Add to this the most perfect neat­
ness in his dress, and an air which, to those who have not seen
many noblemen, would give an idea of nobility. (L8)

Fanny was now in the nineteenth year of her age; she was
tall, and delicately shaped; but not one of those slender young
women who seem rather intended to hang up in the hall of an
anatomist than for any other purpose. On the contrary, she
was so plump that she seemed bursting through her tight
stays, especially in the part which confined her swelling
breasts. Nor did her hips want the assistance of a hoop to
Fielding

extend them. The exact shape of her arms denoted the form of those limbs which she concealed; and though they were a little reddened by her labour, yet, if her sleeve slipt above her elbow, or her handkerchief discovered any part of her neck, a whiteless appeared which the finest Italian paint would be unable to reach. Her hair was of a chestnut brown, and nature had been extremely lavish to her of it, which she had cut, and on Sundays used to curl down her neck in the modern fashion. Her forehead was high, her eyebrows arched, and rather full than otherwise. Her eyes black and sparkling; her nose just inclining to the Roman; her lips red and moist, and her underlip, according to the opinion of the ladies, too pouting. Her teeth were white, but not exactly even. The small-pox had left one only mark on her chin, which was so large, it might have been mistaken for a dimple, had not her left cheek produced one so near a neighbour to it, that the former served only for a foil to the latter. Her complexion was fair, a little injured by the sun, but overspread with such a bloom that the finest ladies would have exchanged all their white for it; add to these a countenance in which, though she was extremely bashful, a sensibility appeared almost incredible; and a sweetness, whenever she smiled, beyond either imitation or description. To conclude all, she had a natural gentility, superior to the acquisition of art, and which surprised all who beheld her. (2.12)

This physical similarity, of course, matches a general moral similarity: both are pure, honest, devoted to each other, and acquiescent to their lot in life. But there are other differences as well as those that spring from gender and the roles and limitations that imposes. Fanny is shy, retiring, sparing of speech (even when she does talk, Fielding tends to report it indirectly rather than by direct quotation), normally undemonstrative, and quite unassertive. She is also illiterate — which is more than a sardonic comment on Pamela's epistolary prolixity. Despite the fact that she is a strapping country girl, she remains the essentially helpless and passive target for a series of would-be rapists and molesters that includes the diminutive Didapper. While being hurried off "towards the squire's house, where [she] was to be offered up a sacrifice to the lust of a
ravisher,” she alternately weeps, implores aid from passersby, and protests most improbably against the captain’s references to Joseph as “that pitiful fellow” and to her own “fondness for men.” Clearly, she embodies more than the object of Joseph’s love; she stands in a relation of total dependence to him, not just for her safety but even for activity, for speech, for literacy. Except for her original move to join Joseph, Fanny does nothing in the book that is not impelled directly by another, and even that is motivated by her concern for him. Joseph is her active principle, she his goal and source of direction. The full dimensions of her role are perhaps signaled by her surname, Goodwill, though I do not take this in any rigorous sense. Peter Pounce, shortly after rescuing her, modifies Parson Adams’s definition of charity — “a generous disposition to relieve the distressed” — to “not so much consist in the act as in the disposition to do it” (3.13). Fanny is something like that, well-disposed but in herself powerless to act, though able to generate action in others. She is the mainspring of Joseph’s virtues as she is of many others’ basenesses — as object, morally neutral, though capable of exciting to either good or evil; as subject, disposed to good though impotent to do it. She plays the “unmoved mover” of the novel, the source of constancy and goal of love, toward which still point Joseph Andrews and the novel inexorably move. Fielding ludicrously hyperbolizes this in a comic reprise of his implicit comparison of her to Galatea and himself to Pygmalion (2.12), where he has Joseph frozen and fixed by the sight of Fanny’s bosom, which “was more capable of converting a man into a statue than of being imitated by the greatest master of that art” (4.7). So, too, when they are wed: “She was soon undrest; for she had no jewels to deposit in their caskets, nor fine laces to fold with the nicest exactness. Undressing to her was properly discovering, not putting off, ornaments: for, as all her charms were the gifts of nature, she could divest herself of none. . . . Joseph no sooner heard she was in bed than he fled with the utmost eagerness to her. A minute carried him into her arms, where we shall leave this happy couple to enjoy the private rewards of their constancy. . . .” Shortly after, Joseph and Fanny join the Wilsons in their retirement, rounding the physical journey of the novel into its perfected circle and returning Joseph to his true home. The prominence
of vicissitude, inconstancy, changes of fortune, and even the fickle goddess herself in Wilson’s history make his home a haven of stability and permanence and a refuge from change and bustle. To this stillness Joseph and Fanny, immediately fertile in their union, retire. The novel closes with quiet insistence on this sabbath from change, the permanence of the achieved stillness after motion:

Joseph remains blest with his Fanny, whom he doats on with the utmost tenderness, which is all returned on her side. The happiness of this couple is a perpetual fountain of pleasure to their fond parents; and, what is particularly remarkable, he declares he will imitate them in their retirement; nor will be prevailed on by any booksellers, or their authors, to makes his appearance in high-life. (4.16)

II

In *Tom Jones*, Fielding moves much closer to the traditional epic. The novel’s much-remarked-upon plot falls with almost perfect symmetry into the ancient palindrome. Tom, in his pursuit and attainment of Sophia, emulates literally and allegorically both Aeneas and Odysseus; Fielding’s epigraph reinforces these correspondences; “Mores hominum multorum vidit.” Sophia herself amalgamates into her role portions of Penelope — fidelity; Athena — the wisdom for which she is named; Venus — the love she feels and inspires; and Lavinia — the wife and prize. An outline of the plot of *Tom Jones* is the skeleton of epic, from the strange birth of the hero through his exile and labors to his triumphant return. *Tom Jones* manages to be comic epic in both Dante’s sense and *Joseph Andrews*’s sense. In so being, it redefines and recreates epic as genre in a new, complex, and viable manner, with a vitality that Fielding could never again reach, despite the richness and penetration he was later to bring to *Amelia*.

Fielding continues the constancy theme of *Joseph Andrews* in the plot of *Tom Jones*, making of it the nub of Tom’s relations with Sophia. Here the concept and its handling are far more complex than they were in the earlier novel. Even on the simplest literal level, Tom violates constancy in his amours with Molly Seagrim and Jenny Waters and Lady
Bellaston as Joseph never does; and if Tom is constant as he claims to be, he must be constant to something beyond Sophia's physical form. The great reconciliation scene between the two plays intriguingly with these notions. After the withdrawal of Squires Allworthy and Western, Jones asks Sophia to forgive him: she responds by appealing to his own justice "to pass sentence on your own conduct" (18.12). She then accuses him of inconstancy: "What happiness can I assure myself of with a man capable of so much inconstancy?" Tom in turn protests that his love is sincere, that had he possessed the slightest hope of her, "it would not have been in the power of any other woman to have inspired a thought which the severest chastity could have condemned. Inconstancy to you!" Sophia responds to this by saying that only time will give proof of the sincerity of his repentance: "After what is past, sir, can you expect I should take you upon your word?" The central dialogue of the whole scene follows, for which we need the exact words of the text:

He replied, "Don't believe me upon my word; I have a better security, a pledge for my constancy, which it is impossible to see and to doubt." — "What is that?" said Sophia, a little surprised. — "I will show you, my charming angel," cried Jones, seizing her hand and carrying her to the glass. "There, behold it there in that lovely figure, in that face, that shape, those eyes, that mind which shines through these eyes. Can the man who shall be in possession of these be inconstant? Impossible! my Sophia; they would fix a Dorimant, a Lord Rochester. You could not doubt it, if you could see yourself with any eyes but your own." — Sophia blushed and half smiled; but, forcing again her brow into a frown — "If I am to judge," said she, "of the future by the past, my image will no more remain in your heart when I am out of your sight, than it will in this glass when I am out of the room." — "By Heaven, by all that is sacred!" said Jones, "it never was out of my heart. The delicacy of your sex cannot conceive the grossness of ours, nor how little one sort of amour has to do with the heart." — "I will never marry a man," replied Sophia, very gravely, "who shall not learn refinement enough to be as incapable as I am myself of making such a distinc-
tion." — "I will learn it," said Jones. "I have learnt it already. 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." — "Well," said Sophia, "the proof of this must be from time. Your situation, Mr. Jones, is now altered, and I assure you I have great satisfaction in the alteration. You will now want no opportunity of being near me, and convincing me that your mind is altered too." (18.12)

Sophia promises that she will eventually, after this probationary period, marry Tom: he ecstatically kisses her, and they are interrupted by Squire Western's explosion into the room demanding an immediate wedding, to which importunate parental directive Sophia becomingly agrees. The chapter closes with general joy and congratulations.

Tom appeals to the idea of Sophia as proof of his constancy — to her image in the glass (with all that that should mean to us after the long history of the image itself and of reflective relationships in mock epic and epic), to the mind that her physical form manifests, to her image in his heart. His plea explicitly distinguishes between the physical Sophia and the idea of Sophia, between his own physical errancies and his spiritual constancy: for Sophia, that distinction is not valid, and Tom must learn that his physical fidelity must reflect his spiritual devotion just as Sophia's physical existence mirrors her spiritual perfections. One of the first facts Fielding told us about Sophia constitutes almost the last lesson Tom must master in the novel: to merge totally the flesh and the spirit.

———— Her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
That one might almost say her body thought.

(4.2)

As Sophia is, so must Tom become, body mirroring mind, both embodying and enacting the virtues Sophia possesses and Tom pursues. At the very end of the novel, Fielding assures us that he has done this: "Whatever in the nature of Jones had a tendency to vice, has been corrected by continual conversation with [Squire Allworthy], and by his union with
the lovely and virtuous Sophia” (18.13). Tom Jones must become the permanent mirror of Sophia’s perfections, and the constancy he must develop is fidelity to that elaborate amalgam of virtues: that alone will wed him to Sophia and transform him from mere Tom Jones into Tom Allworthy.

Fielding rediscovered one basic fact about epic that guaranteed him a place in any history of epic or any other literature: the key to its complexity is its total simplicity; the entrance into myth and universality is through uniqueness and individuality. One can safely postulate, without the benefit of very much statistical research, that there were not very many foundlings in eighteenth-century England who were adopted by wealthy landowners or who married the prize catch of the county; yet for all that, Tom — to borrow a phrase from a later book in this same tradition — “is one of us.” So the woman he loves, loses, leaves, pursues, and ultimately weds is Sophia. The sheer directness of that quasi-allegorical, “gothic” conception diverts attention from what Fielding is actually doing, just as the bland simplicity of Fielding’s earlier citation of “the celebrated Dr. Donne’s” description of his version of the female Wisdom figure (the verses quoted above, from The Anniversaries) masks the equation he is there making. Is Sophia wisdom? Certainly, or Fielding would not have called her that; but how she is wisdom and in what sense she is wisdom are questions far more problematical. She certainly does not appear to be wisdom in the same sense that Una is holiness: it is not her primary level of existence or signification in the novel. Rather, she becomes wisdom by what she does and by what is done about her; even more than in Joseph Andrews, the narrative events provide the mode for significance. Static symbols have little place in Fielding’s novel except among the minor characters — Thwackum, for instance. For the reader, Tom’s relationship with Sophia begins when Blifil releases the pet bird Tom had given her (4.3-4). The episode, ending with Tom’s falling from a tree into the canal and the bird’s falling to a hawk, provides a comic miniature centered in problems of justice and mercy, liberty and confinement, real and dissembled motive. The discussion among Thwackum, Square, a lawyer, and the two squires that follows it makes two facets of the situation clear: no one
Fielding

sees Blifil's real motive for his action (Thwackum and Square are blinded by devotion to their own theories of conduct, Allworthy by his softheartedness, and neither Western nor the lawyer are interested in motive, only in results), and the rather ponderous ethical issue at stake in this trivial event is justice. The law of nature legislates freedom for all creatures as the highest good; Christian equity demands that we do as we would be done to. Human law is silent in the case, since it is \textit{nullius in bono}. All of this is true, but it takes Squire Western's simplicity to put it in perspective.

“Well,” says the squire, “if it be \textit{nullus bonus}, let us drink about, and talk a little of the state of the nation, or some such discourse that we all understand; for I am sure I don't understand a word of this. It may be learning and sense for aught I know; but you shall never persuade me into it. Pox! you have neither of you mentioned a word of that poor lad who deserves to be commended: to venture breaking his neck to oblige my girl was a generous-spirited action: I have learning enough to see that. D--n me, here's Tom's health! I shall love the boy for it the longest day I have to live.” (4.4)

The trouble with all the views expressed is that they are all partial ones, all singling out one aspect of justice and offering that as the whole, whereas justice itself, the crown of the virtues, embraces a whole gamut of considerations, from prudence and self-knowledge through to the duties owing to society and to God. The practice of justice is wisdom in its highest form, as any reader of Charron's \textit{De la Sagesse} would have known.\footnote{Sophia is already being linked with wisdom in this sense by the predictive analogue of this episode: Blifil's machinations in the name of justice “free” and ultimately destroy an object of Sophia's affection, a small bird not accidentally named Tommy, and set up for the rest of the novel both narrative problems about the human Tom's fate and thematic problems of definition about justice, liberty, and confinement. These are the central concerns of the novel itself that will reach their climax in the parallel actions of Tom freed from prison and — the scene discussed before — Tom distinguishing apparent from real motive before Sophia's
mirror. Sophia becomes wisdom by being inextricably involved in Tom's progress through these concerns; she is wisdom in the sense that the attainment of wisdom involves the practice of justice and mercy, "the natural beauty of virtue" and "the divine power of grace" (3.3), liberty and confinement, truth and self-knowledge. That is to say, the wisdom Fielding concerns himself with in *Tom Jones* is not mere prudence but a much larger virtue composed of speculative and practical, theological and profane elements. It is, in short, much more closely allied with the wisdom of the epic tradition than it is with the practicality of *Moll Flanders*: Fielding's Sophia derives from the same complex of ideas as does Bernardus's or Landino's explanation of Venus, or Pope's parodic goddess Dulness. Fielding leaves no doubt about the richness of the figure he is drawing: in the middle of his elaborate introduction of her (4.2), sandwiched between a quotation from Suckling and a quotation from Horace, he quotes from, and compares her directly to, the heroine of Donne's *Anniversaries*, that complex "she" who can only be understood as Donne's version of the traditional wisdom figure. Fielding very deliberately and very explicitly places himself and his creatures in the mainstream of epic tradition: "this heroic, historical, prosaic poem" (4.1) domesticates epic in England as it had never been before.

The complexity of Sophia's role and Tom's relation to it does not demand that she be specific things but that she do certain things, that, for instance, she have the intelligence to refuse both Blifil and Fellamar, and the courage to do it; that she free herself from the confinement and restriction her father, her aunt, and Lady Bellaston seek to impose on her; that at Upton she remind Tom of what he is losing and spur him to seek it. She enables Tom to discover himself, not only in that through his pursuit of her he finds himself to be Allworthy's nephew, but also in that through her he becomes aware that what he does defines him and consequently seeks to change his actions. In their climactic interview, Sophia gives Tom a lesson in the whole gamut of virtues — justice, mercy, honor, constancy, temperance — before both are moved by the purely appetitive and unreflecting Squire Western to the union that both desire but which an ambiguous prudence inhibits. Like *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones* ends with the transcending of prudence. Tom and
Sophia at the end of the novel re-create very closely the conditions of the icon of wisdom that prefaces Charron's *De la Sagesse*:

*Sagesse* is represented as a beautiful woman, naked, *quia puram naturam sequitur*, and standing firmly on the cube of Justice. Her face is healthy, joyful, and radiantly imposing. On her head are branches of laurel and olive, symbolizing the fruits of wisdom: victorious self-mastery and tranquillity. Around her is the empty space of sapiental liberty. Her arms are crossed as though she were embracing herself. This signifies the wise man's independence and self-sufficiency. Like *Sapientia* in the *Wisdom and Fortune* which illustrates Bovillus' *De sapiente*, she is looking at herself in a mirror, "because she always looks at and knows herself." To her right we read the device, *Je ne scay*; to the left, *Paix et peu*. Chained below her feet are four women: Passion, her face in a hideous grimace; wild-eyed Opinion, supported by the heads of the fickle and inconstant mob; Superstition, her hands clasped like a kitchen maid, trembling with fear; and Science, artificial, acquired, pedantic, and arrogant, the archenemy of wisdom, who reads in a book the words *ouy* and *non* — dogmatic knowledge crushed by the laughing skepticism of the wise *homme de bien*. This is Charron's wisdom, an imitation of nature whose imperatives are skepticism and *preud'hommie*, whose cause and obligation is man's own nature, whose method is the active practice of justice, whose fruits are constancy, tranquillity, and an imperturbable virtue.15

Most of what is present there iconographically is present in *Tom Jones* narratively and dramatically. The handsome Tom and lovely Sophia are both freed from the restraints and confinements that have plagued them throughout the novel. Both of them have attained literal and figurative self-knowledge, most emphatically displayed in the mirror scene we have been discussing. Tom has achieved mastery over his passions (dramatized in his prudent retreat from Mrs. Fitzpatrick's transparent hints). Both have triumphed over opinion, jointly in the persistence of their love for each other, singly in Sophia's separation from her maid,
Honour, who has joined Lady Bellaston, with whom honor resides in London, and in Tom's graduation from the several inadequate notions of honor exemplified by such groups as the soldiers with whom he originally joined and the gypsies. He has conquered superstition in the graphic form of Partridge, whose faults he now sees clearly; in its larger manifestation as ignorance, he has been combatting it throughout the book. The capitulation of arrogant and pedantic science is marked by Square's letter of retraction and Allworthy's finally seeing through the viciousness of Thwackum, as well as political Aunt Western's withdrawal from the action of the novel. The marriage of Tom and Sophia conforms to the dictates of nature in almost every conceivable sense of the phrase; and Fielding presents it in the novel as almost coincident with Tom's final distribution of justice and mercy to Blifil, Thwackum, Lawyer Dowling, Partridge, Jenny Waters, and the Seagrim family. For the remainder of Charron's attributes, the final paragraph of the novel speaks for itself:

To conclude, as there are not to be found a worthier man and woman, than this fond couple, so neither can any be imagined more happy. They preserve the purest and tenderest affection for each other, an affection daily increased and confirmed by mutual endearments, and mutual esteem. Nor is their conduct towards their relations and friends less amiable than towards one another. And such is their condescension, their indulgence, and their beneficence to those below them, that there is not a neighbor, a tenant, or a servant, who doth not most gratefully bless the day when Mr. Jones was married to his Sophia. (18.13)

The mirror scene illustrates perfectly Fielding's ability to realize the figurative in the literal. Sophia, for all her spirit, functions to restrain Tom (during the period in which their love ripened, Tom was partially confined to bed and much restricted in his activities by a broken arm acquired in Sophia's service), to confine and channel his energies, sexual and otherwise. When unrestrained by Sophia, Tom has been limited by his own ignorance of himself and by his own passions, up until the
moment of his literal confinement in prison, when the true nature of his follies is borne in upon him. Sophia herself, of course, though free of Tom's limitations, has been the victim of many physical confinements and quasi-imprisonments throughout the book. The whole ambiguity of liberty and confinement was early encapsulated in the novel by Blifil's release of the bird: confined it was safe; free, it perished. The core question obviously becomes: confinement for what? and freedom for what? For Tom and Sophia, true liberty and proper confinement are clearly simultaneously defined as the fulfillment of their mutual love. But they are both restrained from achieving that by prudence, until Squire Western breaks the deadlock for them. Squire Western has throughout the novel acted something like pure, undirected will, reaching out for one object after another, but chiefly preoccupied with the hunt, the bottle, and the bed; he traced an erratic path in his pursuit of Sophia and was easily diverted by foxes and by hospitality. Most of Sophia's acts are traceable to her acceptance or rejection of his willfulness. So then, are we to understand, when she at Western's urging agrees to marry Tom, that we have just seen an allegory of the will and the judgment, or of appetite and wisdom, or some such thing? Perhaps. Why not? That is, after all, what happens on the literal level of the story — but that is exactly why, I think, we cannot say that Tom Jones is an allegory. Sophia is not judgment or wisdom, though she does embody and enact both of those, and we do not come to understand this scene or any in the book by extrapolating from fixed values but rather by evaluating the dynamic interactions of very fluid characters. What the characters are is what they do (and vice versa): Sophia proceeds straight from Somerset to London according to a preconceived and thought-out plan with a known end; Tom wanders aimlessly, trying out one scheme after another until Sophia recalls him to himself and provides him with a goal and a direction; Squire Western begins with a goal but loses both his way and his interest in short order. That requires no allegorization to understand: it is clear both literally and figuratively at the same time. You have only to compare this with, say, the episode of the Red Crosse Knight's leaving the road to seek shelter from a rainstorm in a wood to see the differences between allegorical method and Fielding's mode of figurative
narration. On the simple literal level, the Red Crosse Knight acts in a perfectly normal and morally neutral manner; there is nothing wrong with sheltering oneself from the rain. But our full understanding of that act is conditioned and dictated by our knowledge of the static allegorical correspondences: this is the Red Crosse Knight, that is, Holiness, and holiness is leaving the path, that is, deviating from the plain way of truth into error. This is what the episode means in the allegory; and though it is not incompatible with the narrative, it is not coincident with it. Rather, it is prior to the narrative, directs its shape, and dictates its meaning. In Fielding, such a situation almost never occurs: there are practically no static symbolic or allegorical characters to impose fixed meanings, and we are never called upon to reinterpret a scene in the light of its figurative sense because the figurative and the literal almost always coincide. Epic allegoresis, whatever form it takes — Bernardus's, Landino's, Spenser's — operates out of and within a fixed value system, a cosmos well-regulated enough to provide unchanging reference points from which writer and reader could triangulate the significance of any unknowns. Fielding has divorced himself from that; in effect, he has accepted the challenge of MacFlecknoe, of A Tale of A Tub, of The Dunciad. He has confronted the problems of subjectively generated significance, of the cosmos understood as flux, of pervasive corporeality, all of which overwhelmed traditional epic, and answered them with a mode of figurative narration that takes dynamic flux as its base of meaning and out of the interplay of events generates objective significance, while at the same time wedding that meaning to the body of language. The overall narrative technique that generates meaning out of plot essentially duplicates the technique by which individual characters — Sophia for instance — come to embody meaning. He achieves linguistically the kind of proper incarnation of thing-in-word and word-in-thing that has been the implicit property of epic from at least Virgil forward; he achieves literally the adaptation of epic, with most of its appurtenances intact, to the unmapped new world of change and flow. It is an act of cultural reclamation almost without parallel in literature or any other art. (Not the least striking aspect of Fielding's achievement is the success with which he translated large quantities of characteristically epic exegesis
into the overt narration of his revitalized form. There is not time or space to catalogue all of these things, but a few examples are in order: the childhood and adolescence of his hero realize, on the literal level, what the ages-of-man theory had seen on the allegorical; Paradise Hall, Black George, and Tom's expulsion therefrom recapitulate mythically both the Eden story of Milton and the Troy episodes of the *Aeneid* as understood by the commentators; the movement from country to city back to country explicitly captures the thought-action-contemplation or retirement-activity-retirement pattern of the commentators' explanations.

As I said before, the plot of *Tom Jones* forms an almost perfect paradigm of epic, especially as understood and elaborated by the kinds of commentators we have discussed. Fielding manages to bring under control the tendency of the allegorical explanation to supplant the epic tale by overtly incorporating aspects of what would normally be the allegory into his narrative — Tom's childhood, for instance, and his ability to withstand the contradictorily erroneous teachings of Thwackum and Square, while his doppelgänger Blifil, in fine mock-epic fashion, steers a parodic mean between their doctrines. (As with Parson Adams's role in *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding in *Tom Jones* manages to employ and to counterpoint epic and mock-epic patterns.) The novel moves as Bernardus's *Aeneid* moves, from childhood to maturity and knowledge, and also as Landino's *Aeneid* moves, from an ambiguous home where the hero is unproductively at rest in the flesh out into the active world and at last to a real home and the possession of wisdom. It is important to realize that Fielding remains faithful to the core of the epic tradition and antipathetic to contemporary notions of wisdom and prudence (as active, practical, and pragmatic virtue) in allowing his hero to pass through the active life to come to rest in retirement and contemplation. The whole point of the *Aeneid* and the *Odyssey* (even, in an ironic mode, of the *Iliad*) lies in the achievement of order, the reestablishment of stability: rest after motion is the goal of epic, whether it be in the narrative or the allegory, public or private, individual or social.

*Tom Jones* contrives to achieve that rest in almost all its aspects. Tom, Sophia, Squire Western, and Squire Allworthy retire to the coun-

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try and lives of personal tranquility, abandoning the city, which the popular town-country opposition had made the locus of the active life. Epic tradition made cities both that and the locus of temptation — Troy, the city of the flesh; Carthage, both the active life and the temptation of Dido — and Milton’s treatment in particular made cities almost one of the direct results of the Fall and the chief site of human misery, next to which the country seemed still at least slightly Edenic. Tom Jones, in these senses, plays itself out across a properly epic landscape: Paradise Hall, badly misnamed, is its Troy, an earthly paradise at best, where despite a benign but by no means omniscient or infallible Squire Allworthy, vanity, pettiness, greed, lust, and jealousy provide the basic motivations for most of the characters. For Tom to remain here is for Tom to remain ignorant, passive, sterile: he does not know who or what he is, who acts upon him or why, what the real state of the world is. He is a stranger in his own home, different from its other inhabitants — more potent than Allworthy, better than all the rest. So his expulsion from the false familial order of Paradise Hall becomes an entrance into the possibility of other orders to which, potentially or hypothetically, he may belong. His acquisition of his putative father Partridge is a sign of that, though like Aeneas and Anchises he will not find his real home until that “father” is removed. He tries or sees a number of societies, all with varying social codes based in one way or another on the slippery concept of honor, and all insufficient: the navy (he initially plans to go to sea), the army, the gypsies, the beau monde of London itself, as personified by Lady Bellaston. It is obviously not mere chance that Lord Fellamar’s plans for Tom should involve fulfillment of his own original plan (Fellamar means to have him taken by a press gang and sent to sea); that they are frustrated by Tom’s arrest and imprisonment is no irony, but a literal working-out of Tom’s true state. Without wisdom, without self-knowledge, he is in prison and has been in prison all along. The real irony is that in prison — in a forced state of rest, his motion stopped — Tom becomes free: in prison he discovers both his paternity and his own nature; at rest, he discovers his capacity for action. After this his attainment of Sophia is ensured: starting with real self-knowledge (literally the knowledge that he is Allworthy’s nephew and Blifil’s half-
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brother) he can proceed to the acquisition and execution of justice and mercy and from here, by virtue of marriage to Sophia, to the constancy he has so desperately needed. His retirement to the country is a withdrawal from activity to rest, from change to constancy, from confusion to clarity. There, in limited realm of his family and estate — in private, as the eighteenth century would have said — he practices the virtues he has acquired and exorcises the vices he was born with.

Although the action of Tom Jones is confined to a few individuals and families, the scope of the novel is much greater than that. I don't mean by this the common notion of Fielding's amazing spectrum of types and panorama of England and English life. Rather, I am referring to the intricate use Fielding has made of the historical fact of the 1745 uprising on behalf of Prince Charles Edward, "the young Pretender." Fielding uses this as an ambivalent analogue to his main action. First mention of the '45 occurs with the arrival of political Aunt Western, and it coincides with the initial confusion among Sophia, Squire Western, and his sister as to whom Sophia loves and who is to pay court to her. At this point, Tom is apparently the Pretender, seeking Sophia's hand and her father's estate, and his exile soon after seems to confirm this. But we, the readers, although ignorant of Tom's true birth, also know that Blifil certainly pretends to Sophia's affections and that his goal really is her father's estate. Once on the road, of course, the complications multiply: Tom attempts to join a troop of soldiers going to fight for the crown; the Jacobite Partridge believes he plans to support the Pretender; the Man on the Hill gives them an account of his unfortunate involvement in an earlier rebellion; Sophia is mistaken for the Pretender's mistress, Jenny Cameron. Insofar as she loves Tom, she is the Pretender's mistress; insofar as her family obliges her to Blifil, she is also the Pretender's mistress. Aunt Western, with her basic political and social differences from her Jacobite brother and her constant political turn of phrase, serves as the convenient crossover point from the political analogue to the main plot: by her constant use of words like alliances, treaties, tactics, and so on, she makes the public disturbances and the private ones metaphors for each other, synecdoche and metonomy for the same basic attempt at usurpation. The predictive value of our knowledge of the outcome of the
rebellion would seem to doom Tom — he was, after all, “born to be hanged” — until the point at which he and we learn who he really is and, consequently, who the Pretender and usurper really is. So the defeat of the Pretender and the restoration of public order under what Fielding felt a rightful monarch parallels exactly the restoration of private order under the rightful heir. The cause of justice and English liberties — public and personal — triumph over the pretensions of absolutism — political and moral. Tom's and Sophia's “condescension, their indulgence, and their beneficence to those below them” (18.13), which close the novel, are the private models of those virtues restored to English public life. For this reason, in what seems to me a casual masterstroke of significance, Tom does not return to Paradise Hall but settles rather on the neighboring estate of Squire Western, which the old foxhunter abdicates to him — Tom, who has played Aeneas to Blifil's Turnus in their struggle for Lavinia (Sophia) attains his Hesperia, the Western lands that were Aeneas's fated goal, and yet another Troy-novant rises on English soil. In that marvelous understated moment, classical epic makes a home in English literature. At least one phase of the *translatio studii* has achieved its own rest from wandering.

III

With *Amelia*, Fielding moves on to the logical culmination of his work; after the comic romance of *Joseph Andrews* and the comic epic of *Tom Jones*, he here attempts the serious epic in prose with Virgil's *Aeneid* as his confessed model. Overt parallels between the two works abound, in terms of both character and situation. Miss Matthews corresponds to Dido, Colonel James to Turnus, Amelia at different points to both Creusa and Lavinia. Booth's recitation of his past to Miss Matthews approximates Aeneas's similar recounting to Dido. The sea journey and Gibraltar adventures relate closely to the battles at Troy and Aeneas's wanderings; in these and in Booth's subsequent mishaps the unselfish Atkinson plays "fides Achates" to his Aeneas. Fielding also shifts emphases, carefully using the *Aeneid* as a foil. The threatened duel between Booth and Colonel James, which would furnish a climax and a
demonstration of the hero's individual virtus in the manner of Aeneas's battle with Turnus, never takes place, but much examination of the whole ethic of dueling does. Book 4 of Amelia ought, because of parallels already established, to correspond to book 4 of the Aeneid; but although Miss Matthews does early and easily seduce Booth, most of the book is taken up by Booth's reunion with Amelia and problems with Colonel James (raised by Miss Matthews, to be sure) and by the ominous introduction of the Noble Lord. Far from being the slothful hero luxuriating in his mistress's love and recalled to duty only by a divine messenger, Booth's conscience quickly and thoroughly discomforts him for his one week of inconstancy. Indeed, even the metamorphosis of Mercury into Dr. Harrison's letter warning Booth against vanity and improvidence is part of this playing-off of Fielding's creation against Virgil's paradigm.

Equally important to an understanding of Fielding's accomplishment in Amelia, however, is an awareness that he has also employed Milton's Paradise Lost as a foil in a similar manner. From Booth's first entry into the "not improperly called infernal" (1.10) region of Newgate to the point at which, as Dr. Harrison phrases it, "the devil hath thought proper to set you free" (12.5), Fielding has set up a network of correspondences and counterpoints between his own work and Milton's epic. As these are somewhat elaborate and affect directly the development and meaning of the novel, it would be best to discuss the most important ones sequentially and in detail. Fielding is constructing Amelia out of the materials of the epic tradition, and he is relying on our recognition of the materials themselves, the uses he has put them to, and the relations those uses set up with the tradition to make his points. He innovates traditionally, and by what he does changes both the epic tradition and our angle of sight upon it.

The opening sequence of events in Amelia indicates the complex use Fielding intends to make of Paradise Lost. Milton's poem opens with the fall of Satan and the confinement of the devils in Hell; Fielding's novel begins with Booth's apparently unjust imprisonment (he is committed essentially because he is poor) in Newgate, which is, as Fielding says here (1.10) and elsewhere, Hell. The Council of Demons in Pandemonium and the difficulty of breaking the bonds of Hell are aptly
parodied and re-created in the dinner conversation in Miss Matthews's quarters (1.10), and the roles of Miss Matthews and Colonel James (grudging and indirect, to be sure) in effecting Booth's release comically miniaturize the actions of Sin and Death in freeing Satan from Hell. One of the greater ironies of Fielding's treatment of Booth lies in the fact that this process of parallelism identifies him with Satan, or at least, as Dr. Harrison's previously quoted remark indicates, one of his agents or victims. However gross the miscarriage of justice that committed Booth to Newgate in the first place, in the ethical system of the novel he belongs there. He is one of the devils, not because of his subsequent liaison with Miss Matthews, but because of the radical intellectual flaw that permits him to indulge that mere weakness of the flesh. Booth “did not absolutely deny the existence of a God, yet he entirely denied His providence”; he believes “that every man acted merely from the force of that passion which was uppermost in his mind, and could do no otherwise” (1.3). Booth's conversations with Robinson (from which the remarks above are taken) about “the necessity arising from the impulse of fate, and the necessity arising from the impulse of passion” (1.3) and with the Methodist pickpocket about grace and crime accomplish two things in the novel. By parodying the songs and disputations of Milton's demons, who “complain[ed] that Fate / Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance” (2.550–51) and “reason'd high / Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate / . . . / Vain Wisdom all, and false Philosophie” (2.558–59, 565), they confirm the linking of Booth and Satan. In addition, they define the terms of the novel and the scope of its concerns: fate and free will, fortune and ruling passion, liberty of action and the moral neutrality or merit of those actions furnish the central themes of *Amelia*, from its exordium (1.1), which like the invocation of *Paradise Lost* raises basic questions about Fortune, Fate, Free Will, and Providence, right down to Booth's final liberation from prison and repayment of all his debts. Booth is in prison because he thinks he is in prison; he must obey his dominant passion. His good actions produce no effect, because, as he later tells Dr. Harrison, “as men appeared to me to act entirely from their passions, their actions would have neither merit nor demerit” (12.5). Booth is a kind of secular Methodist, denying the worth
of works and lacking a redeeming faith. Throughout the novel, he remains in prison, either literally or confined within the Verge of Court or within his own mind. His own sense of “honor” will not allow him to confess his derelictions to Amelia and repent; neither will it allow him to act efficaciously. The prison is the central symbol of Amelia and the arena of its action. Because Booth’s will is malformed, he is imprisoned; when, by reading Barrow’s sermons, his will is reformed, he is freed — and not accidentally, the tamperings with Mrs. Harris’s will are discovered and corrected. Booth and Amelia have been thrall to that will all through the novel, locked in poverty by its forged deformation just as they have been locked in failure and futility by Booth’s deformed will and his sensitive “honor”: the one is the external correlative of the other, and correcting both of them are cognate acts. Booth converted and freed, Amelia prepared for good fortune and for her rightful inheritance are Fielding’s version of Adam and Eve repentant and resigned, awaiting the redemption that is their promised heritage. The Booths’ escape from the prison of London into the semi-Edenic countryside ironically recapitulates the banishment from Paradise that made all the Londons possible.

Booth is Satanic in the novel insofar as he is his own hell and his own prisoner; other characters are Satanic in much more primary ways. Miss Matthews, for instance, and the Noble Lord both assail the Booths and attempt to break up their marriage, as do Mrs. Ellison and Colonel James. Even Dr. Harrison attempts briefly to separate Booth from Amelia, and to that extent becomes a tool villain. One of the central episodes in the novel defines what is really at stake in the marriage of the Booths and why, consequently, so many of the forces of Hell are bent on destroying that marriage. Mrs. Ellison offers Amelia a masquerade ticket for the Noble Lord; Booth, whose suspicions have been aroused by comments from Colonel and Mrs. James, peremptorily forbids her to accept it. Amelia complies, and Mrs. Ellison leaves. In the chapter that follows (6.6), Booth explains his reasons for this prohibition and Amelia defends herself from what she takes to be demeaning implications about her virtue and intelligence — “Good Heavens! did I ever expect to hear this? I can appeal to Heaven, nay, I will appeal to yourself, Mr. Booth, if I have ever done anything to deserve such a suspicion. If ever any action
of mine; nay, if ever any thought, had stained the innocence of my soul, I could be contented." "O, Mr. Booth! Mr. Booth! you must well know that a woman's virtue is always her sufficient guard. No husband, without suspecting that, can suspect any danger from those snares you mention. . . ." "What is it you fear? — you mention not force, but snares. Is not this to confess, at least, that you have some doubt of my understanding? do you then really imagine me so weak as to be cheated of my virtue? — am I to be deceived into an affection for a man before I perceive the least inward hint of my danger? No, Mr. Booth, believe me, a woman must be a fool indeed who can have in earnest such an excuse for her actions. I have not, I think, any very high opinion of my judgment, but so far I shall rely upon it, that no man breathing could have any such designs as you have apprehended without my immediately seeing them; and how I should then act I hope my whole conduct to you hath sufficiently declared." This domestic drama to modern ears borders on soap opera, but its point is far more serious than that. Fielding's situation recreates exactly what happens in the climactic ninth book of *Paradise Lost*, when Eve proposes to Adam that they work apart: Adam objects, and dialogue very like that between Booth and Amelia ensues. I will quote only one passage of Eve's arguments; the similarity to Amelia's will, I hope, be quite evident:

    Offspring of Heav'n and Earth, and all Earth's Lord,
    That such an Enemy we have, who seeks
    Our ruin, both by thee inform'd I learn,
    And from the parting Angel over-heard
    As in a shady nook I stood behind,
    Just then return'd at shut of Ev'ning Flow'rs.
    But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
    To God or thee, because we have a foe
    My tempt it, I expected not to hear.
    His violence thou fear'st not, being such,
    As wee, not capable of death or pain,
    Can either not receive, or can repel.
    His fraud is then thy fear, which plain infers
    Thy equal fear that my firm Faith and Love
Can by his fraud be shak'n or seduc't;
Thoughts, which how found they harbor in thy breast,
Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?

(9.273–89)

The immediate result of both episodes is identical: both Adam and Booth capitulate; Eve goes to work alone, and Amelia accepts the masquerade ticket. The disastrous effects that follow in *Paradise Lost* are averted in *Amelia* by the intervention of Mrs. Bennet, whose tale of her own seduction in like circumstances sufficiently warns Amelia of her danger. But the use of *Paradise Lost* as foil for this episode alters the dimensions of the drama. It is not merely that *Paradise Lost* provides, in some of its scenes, a model for domestic epic, but that the marriage of the Booths comes to share some of the importance of the marriage of Adam and Eve. With all these mighty engines, with Satan himself (through his human agents, with whom Mrs. Bennet identifies him [7.7]) engaged in attacking it, there must be more involved than the happiness of two individuals, however handsome and admirable.

What appears to be involved is something analogous to the establishment of Rome in the *Aeneid* or the providential plan for humanity revealed in the last two books of *Paradise Lost*. Through the Booths and the values they embody, Fielding directly deals with the problem of the Christian commonwealth: through Booth and Amelia and Dr. Harrison, he delineates all the difficulties incident to practicing real Christianity in a world of real evil. The novel opens with an episode of law and justice, both crudely and cruelly applied, and ends with the Booths at last freed from the law and given true justice: between those points Fielding tackles directly the questions of freedom and law, merit and justice, forgiveness and revenge, as they apply both to the individual and to the commonwealth. Captain Booth himself is the focal point for all this, since as private individual — Amelia's husband — and as public official — an officer in the service of the crown — he must balance and adjudicate the welter of responsibilities that fall to him. Booth fails initially precisely because, for all his good intentions, his theory of the dominant passion makes him incapable of assuming responsibility. His actions in his own
eyes always remain morally neutral, and their outcome is determined only by chance. For the greater part of the novel, Booth is literally a Soldier of Fortune (so his penchant for gambling) and not a Christian Soldier. Only when Barrow’s sermons convert him to true belief does he break free from the wheel of fortune and into a world of individual responsibility and consequently of causation and effect, where Providence, as Dr. Harrison remarks (12.7), “hath done you the justice at last which it will, one day or other, render to all men.” Immediately before this, Booth has sunk to his lowest ebb — imprisoned once again, almost destitute, pitifully dependent that his giving his last fifty pounds to a political functionary will win him a commission. “Thus did this poor man support his hopes by a dependence on that ticket which he had so dearly purchased of one who pretended to manage the wheels in the great state lottery of preferment. A lottery, indeed, which hath this to recommend it — that many poor wretches feed their imaginations with the prospect of a prize during their whole lives, and never discover that they have drawn a blank.” (12.2). The “great state lottery of preferment” enmeshes all of society in its turnings, from the Captain Treants and old lieutenants through to the lawyer Murphys and the sister Bettys — and there is no Lady Philosophy here to rescue Booth as there was to save Wilson. The governmental system so based obviously operates amorally — law and justice are hollow concepts, cards to be played to gain advantages over others. Merit, as a nobleman makes clear to Dr. Harrison, furnishes no recommendation for office or promotion, and his passionate defense of a commonwealth based on strict justice and the rewarding of merit produces only the following supercilious retort: “This is all mere Utopia,” cries His Lordship, “the chimerical system of Plato’s commonwealth, with which we amused ourselves at the university; politics which are inconsistent with the state of human affairs.” (11.2). I think it is significant of the extent to which Fielding’s reformist thought had gone that, in response to this and other of the lord’s declarations of the impossibility of preferring men by merit, he has Dr. Harrison cite honorifically the example of Oliver Cromwell — “and it was chiefly owing to the avoiding this error that Oliver Cromwell carried the reputation of England higher than it ever was at any other time”
Coupled with Dr. Harrison's earlier remarks about the role of the clergy and the importance of the example of their lives (9.9–10), as well as with Dr. Harrison's own crucial role in managing and unraveling the lives and fortunes of the Booths, these sentiments seem to point strongly in the directions of republicanism, reform, and something that smacks of theocracy. Dr. Harrison's Christianity is radical — at least in the context of *Amelia* — in that he accepts literally the biblical injunction to “love your enemies” and has consequently recast, in his own mind at least, the whole concept of law:

> "But if this be the meaning,"
> "there must be an end of all law and justice, for I do not see how any man can prosecute his enemy in a court of justice."

> "Pardon me, sir,"
> "indeed, as an enemy merely, and from a spirit of revenge, he cannot, and he ought not to prosecute him; but as an offender against the laws of his country he may, and it is his duty to do so. Is there any spirit of revenge in the magistrates or officers of justice when they punish criminals? Why do such, ordinarily I mean, concern themselves in inflicting punishments, but because it is their duty? and why may not a private man deliver an offender into the hands of justice, from the same laudable motive? Revenge, indeed, of all kinds is strictly prohibited; wherefore, as we are not to execute it with our own hands, so neither are we to make use of the law as the instrument of private malice, and to worry each other with inveteracy and rancor. And where is the great difficulty in obeying this wise, this generous, this noble precept?" (9.8)

Law such as Harrison envisions constitutes a total antithesis to law as seen and practiced by the other characters of the novel, and one of the signs in the book of the triumph of his views can be found in Captain Booth's and Amelia's joining him in the actual practice of such law — I refer, of course, to their joint distribution of justice and mercy to Murphy, Robinson, and Miss Harris at the end of the book. That is doubly significant in that it marks both the efficacy of Booth's conversion and a partial purgation of a corrupt society. The estate of the Booths and their
posterity both typifies and promises the completion of that regeneration: Booth and Amelia, like Adam and Eve, have learned of, and been reconciled to, God's providential plan, and have taken their places in it as progenitors of a regenerate race. Their family is the nucleus and prototype of Dr. Harrison's Christian commonwealth; he is the spiritual father of their incipient "mere Utopia."

Behind all this lies a fundamental concept that gives form to the novel. As I remarked before, Captain Booth is a kind of secular Methodist, and his early encounters in prison with the free-thinking Robinson and the Methodist pickpocket (1.3—5) set up some of the moral terms of the novel — the law, under which they all are bound; the meritoriousness of works, which Booth disbelieves; faith, which Booth must acquire; justification, which can only flow from the latter two; and freedom, which is a consequence of justification. Not surprisingly, given Fielding's long-standing concern with Methodism and what he considered the pernicious doctrine of justification by faith alone (for which, in Amelia, he makes the hypocritical pickpocket the spokesman), these are all catchwords and concerns of Saint Paul's Epistle to the Romans, which provided the central document in the quarrel of orthodoxy with Methodism. Fielding's concern with these issues here, however, ranges far beyond his earlier concentration on active charity, just as his use of constancy in Amelia as part of a large complex of virtues transcends his earlier, straightforward treatment of it. Like Dr. Harrison's radically literal understanding of Christ's commands, Fielding undertakes a similarly literal exploration of the Pauline epistle, whose meaning, in his view, Methodism and contemporary English mores have narrowed and perverted. Saint Paul talks of freedom from the law and transcendence of it in Christian liberty, and this is the core of Fielding's novel. English law, as misapplied by a heathen society, becomes the eighteenth-century manifestation of Mosaic law, and the true Christian must free himself from bondage to it. The law works only to awaken consciousness of sin, which it does for Booth, but no man is saved by the law. The law leads only to death, as it does for lawyer Murphy. Not accidentally, one of the novel's few enthusiasts for "the constitution, that is the law and liberty" (8.2) is the despicable bailiff Bondum, into whose hands Booth is often
Fielding conveyed and under whose notion of law and liberty Booth suffers. Booth is confined by other kinds of law too, the law of honor for one, which "a man of honor wears . . . by his side" according to Colonel Bath (9.3). Fielding devotes a good portion of Amelia to extricating Booth from the trap of this concept of honor, which seems to embody aspects of trial by combat, the law of Talion, and simple unchristian vengeance. Appropriately, Colonel Bath, who lives by the sword, dies by the sword. He is beset as well by "the laws of nature," which he encounters at the very beginning of the novel in the person of Justice Thrasher, who, "if he was ignorant of the laws of England. . . . perfectly well understood that fundamental principle. . . . by which the duty of self-love is so strongly enforced, and every man is taught to consider himself as the centre of gravity, and to attract all things thither" (1.2). That law, of course, commits Booth to Newgate in the first place. Varying ideas of freedom correspond to these different notions of law. Primarily, freedom is bought, in this society, by wealth or position or power; and it is freedom in terms of the society — that is, freedom to acquire greater wealth, position, and power, and to manipulate and exploit those who want them. That, too, is a kind of bondage, as is the freedom offered by the Methodist, the freedom of election, which makes a rhetorical distinction between "the days of sin and the days of grace," but which neither affects his conduct nor effects his release from Newgate or from corruption. Finally, Stoicism — in the person of the philosophic debtor (8.10) — purports to offer freedom from the vicissitudes of fortune; but all it can really accomplish is to make imprisonment more endurable, and the emotional and intellectual detachment that even that little requires Fielding quickly shows to be humanly impossible for the debtor, just as it was for Parson Adams. The only real release from the pervasive corruption of society and the doom of the law lies in acceptance of a radically anarchic Christian liberty that transcends Mosaic law and all the ephemeral human laws that furnish its avatars and incarnations. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 13:2). " . . . The creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). That liberty
is achieved, according to Paul, only through the faith that Booth acquires by reading Barrow's sermons and by what Paul calls "the Spirit of adoption" (Romans 8:14), whereby "we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16-17). Dr. Harrison accomplishes the necessary adoption by his constant references to, and treatment of, Amelia as his daughter, of which practice he makes an elaborate explanation to his visiting friend and clergyman son (9.8), and by referring to Booth for the first time, shortly after his conversion, as "My child" (12.7). At that same time, he announces to Booth that "your sufferings are all at an end, and Providence hath done you the justice at last which it will, one day or other, render to all men. You will hear all presently; but I can now only tell you that your sister is discovered and the estate is your own." What follows in the novel confirms this: Amelia very shortly receives her inheritance, and subsequently (almost at the end of the novel) Dr. Harrison declares "that he will leave his whole fortune, except some few charities, among Amelia's children" (12.9).

All this constitutes the same kind of realization of the figurative in the literal that I have argued was Fielding's technique in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*. Here he has specifically worked with literalizations of the metaphors of the Epistle to the Romans — which, being canonical, Fielding and many other pious readers would be likely to treat as more than metaphorical anyway. He has given them in his fiction the same kind of efficacy they have in Scripture, where they function simultaneously as facts and metaphors, literally true statements and images for other things. By so doing, he breaks epic free of the trap of allegory and restores to it literally the kind of autonomy and validity it had been steadily losing to the omnivorous habit of abstraction. For himself, he accomplishes a perfect fusion of his humane concerns and his religious consciousness. The reforming London magistrate and the serious Christian unite to form the story of man saved from the corruption of society and the bondage of sin to live, not in Somerset or Hesperia, but in *Paradise Regained*. Fielding's vision in this last novel is radical and millennial: society from top to bottom stinks with corruption, and its only hope of salvation rests with the Booths and Amelias, with the
regenerate few whose families are the seedbed and nucleus for a new society of love. He has adopted what we would call now a radical position: implicitly, facing a society where, as Amelia insists, law means bondage, sin, and death, he has become a Christian anarchist urging the withdrawal of the few — into what we would now call communes — outside the law and above the law, outside of society and antithetical to it. Like Adam and Eve, Booth and Amelia must populate the earth anew with the inheritors of the promised redemption.

Such an understanding of Amelia is dictated by Fielding's careful manipulation of the traditional palindromatic structure of epic. He does not use merely the general pattern, but specifically the intricate interlocking sort of pattern Milton employed in Paradise Lost. And use is not the right verb: in Amelia, as in Paradise Lost, the structure embodies the argument. Its symmetries disclose Providence. At the center of the novel, in books 6 and 7, stand the masquerade at Ranelagh and its concomitants, the threat of seduction by the Noble Lord and the destruction of the Booths' marriage as Mrs. Bennet's had been destroyed. Around this central Satanic attempt and failure to separate and seduce Fielding's Augustan Adam and Eve, the other events of the novel circle, concentric rings of events around that dramatic core:^22

**Book 5**
A. Warning about Noble Lord's designs
B. Booth's scuffle with Bailiff
C. Reconciliation with Colonel James

**Book 4**
A. Booth seduced by Miss Matthews
B. Booth freed from prison and rejoined to Amelia
C. Harrison's censure of Booth's conduct in the country

**Book 8**
A. Warning about James's designs
B. Booth's duel with Colonel Bath
C. Reconciliation with Dr. Harrison

**Book 9**
A. James's designs on Amelia
B. Booth freed from prison and rejoined to Amelia.
C. Harrison's censure of Booth's conduct in the city
Amelia moves, like Paradise Lost, from imprisonment, sin, and hell to the freedom of a providentially ordered world, from the inhumanity of the law and the predatory creatures of it to the newly won humanity of its chastened and strengthened hero and heroine. Amelia is no more a paragon than her husband: a daughter of Eve, she shares Eve's vanities and Eve's weaknesses, and she avoids Eve's sin only through the actions of her surrogate, Mrs. Bennet. Like Captain Booth, she both watches and plays in a complex drama that hell and heaven stage for them and around them, a human comedy for them, a divine tragedy for many
Fielding

Fielding has reached back through the abstractions and rationalizations that had accumulated around epic to the living core of the tradition and set in motion once more a human Aeneas, a human Eve, fallible and vulnerable, to work out their destinies among real people rather than cardboard personae. In the radical simplicity of his vision of the family as the seedbed of society and of the bond of love between one man and one woman as its nurturing force, he approached the kind of luminous regularity that makes the works of Homer and Virgil and Dante so all-encompassing. *Amelia* is domestic drama, but all the world is in it, just as all the world was enfolded in the domestic drama of Adam and Eve.

Life may as properly be called an art as any other; and the great incidents in it are no more to be considered as mere accidents than the several members of a fine statue or a noble poem. The critics in all these are not content with seeing anything to be great without knowing why and how it came to be so. By examining carefully the several gradations which conduce to bring every model to perfection, we learn truly to know that science in which the model is formed: as histories of this kind, therefore, may properly be called models of *Human Life*, so, by observing minutely the several incidents which tend to the catastrophe or completion of the whole, and the minute causes whence those incidents are produced, we shall best be instructed in this most useful of all arts, which I call the *Art of Life*. (1.1)

The “Art of Life” is what the epic had always been and what Fielding made it again — a handbook for life, and a poem made of life. It is just that simple, and just that complex. The heart of epic, and the heart of *Amelia*, is the simultaneous everything-and-nothing of suffering and triumphant humanity, the joyous freedom hidden in the dark of the prison, the single small act of the single small will that alters the shape of the cosmos. That is what *Amelia*, and epic, are all about.
IV

In the course of his discussion of Milton in *The Descent from Heaven*, Thomas Greene enumerates three causes of the demise of epic.

In thus fulfilling the seventeenth-century tendency to shift the political medium from violence to morality, Milton implicitly rejected, it seems to me, part of the basis of epic itself — the balance of objective and subjective action, the balance of executive and deliberative. In the closing books of *Paradise Lost*, the books which define human heroism, the executive episodes almost disappear. This rejection need not in itself involve grounds for criticism. But it is important to see how the last of the great poems in conventional epic dress contained within itself, not accidently but essentially, the seeds of the genre's destruction. One of these seeds was the internalization of action, the preference for things invisible. A second was the questioning of the hero's independence; a third was the detaching of heroism from the community, the City of man in this world. (p. 407)

As should be clear from the earlier chapters of this book, I agree substantially about the nature of these destructive elements, although I think their seeds were well planted in the genre long before Milton. What I want to emphasize here is how, particularly in *Amelia*, Fielding has nullified these elements, how he has in effect jumped back over this malignant growth within epic itself to an earlier and sounder understanding of the genre. Fielding has restored a sense of community to epic, and has certainly returned epic to the community: for all of the diabolical engines turned to encompass the Booths' ruin, the action of *Amelia* plays itself out in the very heart of "the City of man in this world" — and even if the novel concludes with an escape from that city, it is a withdrawal that contains the promise of a future salvation for that city and that world. So, too, with Fielding's treatment of "things invisible": the novel fully embodies anything that properly fits that category in things very visible indeed — the prison, the Court, the Noble Lord. The question of the
hero's independence furnishes the whole point of the novel; it is Booth's discovery of that that constitutes its resolution. Booth's conversion restores epic firmly and finally to the world of living men: no angels enlighten him, even though "an angel might be thought to guide the pen" (12.5) of Dr. Barrow: no "Almighty, nodding, gave Consent; / Peals of Thunder shook the Firmament" (Absalom and Achitophel, 1026–27) to ratify his resolution. Booth's change of heart and mind antithesizes David's final stand in Absalom and Achitophel: there "Godlike David" conformed himself to the immutability of the God whose image he bore to promulgate divine law; in Amelia a very human Captain Booth realizes his own freedom in order to escape from disastrously human law. As the figurative manifests itself in the literal in Fielding's novels, so does the divine incarnate itself in the human. Booth's conversion is his acceptance of human responsibility, of his own accountability for his acts: after this, epic heroes and novel heroes can blame neither God nor fate for what they do. Fielding has newly recreated the epic hero as a responsible agent, freely choosing and shaping his own life amidst the anarchic liberty of a universe of flux and change. The gods of epic have withdrawn, and a human world, at last, lies all before us.

1. See Hagin, The Epic Hero.
2. In this and some of what follows, I am indebted to John M. Steadman's excellent "Felicity and End in Renaissance Epic and Ethics," JHI 23 (1962): 117–32.
4. This will be discussed below.
5. A somewhat similar understanding of this scene has been suggested by Maurice Johnson: Fielding's Art of Fiction (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 53–55 and pp. 61–62.
6. The two scenes have interesting similarities: in both the woman is "on stage," the man "off," though in The Libation Bearers the male overhears the female rather than vice versa. Electra finds clues (lock of hair, footprints) that lead her to hope Orestes is near; but when he appears, she greets him with mixed elation and skepticism, culminating in her asking directly if he is Orestes. The scene climaxes in Orestes' identifying himself and formally naming Electra and claiming her as his sister. If Fielding is playing with the similarities at all, the whole scene becomes delightfully ironic in the light of the later momentary revelation that Fanny and Joseph are sister and brother.
7. See for example Homer Goldberg's fine study of Fielding's assimilation of previous
continental fiction, *The Art of Joseph Andrews* (Chicago, 1969). Goldberg’s description of the continental background of Fielding’s first novel seems to me perfectly compatible with my claim for its epic genealogy, first because both sets of materials have already passed through the common experience of romance and second because most of the changes Fielding makes in his adaptations of the continental materials work to re-align them with traditional epic materials.


9. Maurice Johnson discusses the chapters in a slightly different fashion than what follows; see *Fielding’s Art of Fiction*, pp. 61–71.

10. Landino so understands Anchises: he is the father of Aeneas’s body, and his understanding is fleshly. Thus when Aeneas is told by Apollo to seek his ancient mother, Anchises takes this to mean Crete, which Landino identifies as the physical origin of the Trojans, rather than Italy, which is their spiritual origin. Thus Aeneas wanders aimlessly until he celebrates the funeral games in Anchises’ honor, which signifies the burial of sensuality in himself; after that he proceeds directly to his goal.

11. The structural parallels break down loosely as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>Discovery of Tom; Allworthy raises him as his own. Blifil marries Bridget; his brother banished.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>False accusation of Partridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tom aids Black George. Thwackum and Square woo Bridget. First mention of Sophia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Tom’s involvement with Molly Seagrim.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Sophia tends Tom during illness. Molly’s pregnancy and Tom’s love for Sophia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Aunt Western confuses Tom and Blifil; Sophia in her charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Tom loses way. Army and rebels: army and honor. Partridge and gypsy woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Man of the Hill’s story. Tom joined by Partridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Discovery of Tom’s parents and his real relation to Allworthy. Blifil banished. Tom marries Sophia.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>False accusation of Tom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Black George aids Tom. Fellamar and Square woo Sophia. Sophia breaks with Tom.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Tom’s involvement with Lady Bellaston.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lady Bellaston visits Tom during feigned illness. Nancy’s pregnancy and Nightingale’s betrothal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Mrs. Fitzpatrick confuses Tom and Blifil. Sophia in Lady Bellaston’s charge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Squire Western had lost his way. Puppets and rebels. Gypsies and honor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Mrs. Fitzpatrick’s story. Sophia joined by Mrs. Fitzpatrick and Irish Lord.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Like other epic structures I have described, *Tom Jones* also falls into three large units:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Six Books</th>
<th>Second Six Books</th>
<th>Third Six Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom's putative parents</td>
<td>Partridge and Mrs. Waters</td>
<td>Tom's true parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom's education</td>
<td>Various societies; the Man of the Hill</td>
<td>Lady Bellaston, Nightingale, the Andersons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia and Molly</td>
<td>Sophia and Mrs. Waters</td>
<td>Sophia and Lady Bellaston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home and dismissal</td>
<td>Exile and wanderings</td>
<td>End of wanderings; reacceptance; return home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. In my discussion of Sophia's role in *Tom Jones*, I have utilized many suggestions from Martin Battestin's important essay, "Fielding's Definition of Wisdom: Some Functions of Ambiguity and Emblem in *Tom Jones*," *ELH* 35 (1968): 188–217. The principal differences between our readings of the book, however, derive directly from our differing understandings of Fielding's concept of wisdom.

13. For a full discussion of the importance of Charron's work and of the relation of wisdom and justice, see Rice's *The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom*, especially pp. 178 ff.


16. It is on this point that I most fundamentally disagree with Battestin's article.

17. For a fuller discussion of this aspect of the novel, see Jessie Rhodes Chambers, "The Allegorical Journey in *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*." (Ph. D. diss., The Johns Hopkins University, 1960).

18. Fielding will exploit the *locus* and the symbol of the prison much more thoroughly in *Amelia*, to be discussed below.


20. These parallels and their significance are discussed in George Sherburn's "Fielding's *Amelia*: An Interpretation," *ELH* 3 (1936), and most importantly, in L. H. Rowen's "The Influence of the *Aeneid* on Fielding's *Amelia*," *MLN* 71 (1956): 330–36.


22. Also, like *Paradise Lost*, *Amelia* has subsidiary palindromes within this large framework: the two units of six books are similarly symmetrical within themselves, as are the yet smaller units of three books each.

23. Mrs. Bennet is her surrogate not only in this respect but also by marrying Atkinson, who loves Amelia, and also by sharing some of Eve's traits — most notably, the desire for intellectual superiority to her husband. In this same respect, she also seems to approximate the arrogance of Charron's *scientia*, which the wise man repudiates.