

Reader Participation and Rationalism in Fielding's *Tom Jones*

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Wolfgang Iser, developing his theory of reader participation and reader response, chose Fielding's *Tom Jones* and *Joseph Andrews* as his starting point.¹ Fielding's novels, therefore, do not just serve Iser as examples to illustrate his theory but actually provide the patterns or substrata on which it is based. This inductive method, however sound in itself, requires close attention to what the text says. In this paper, I am taking issue with Iser because his reading of Fielding does not seem quite close enough.

According to Iser the reader of *Tom Jones* or *Joseph Andrews* is encouraged by the author-narrator to help constitute the meaning of the novel. He sees Fielding's offer of co-operation at certain places in the novels which he calls "blanks" or "gaps." The reader is meant to fill the "Blanks" (*Tom Jones* II.i.76),² "vacant Spaces" (III.i.116) or "vacant Pages" (*Joseph Andrews* II.i.89)³ with the help of certain textual signs.⁴ Iser's main contention is that the novel does not explicitly state its meaning, but that it is the reader who constructs its meaning on the basis of these signs. In other words, the author provides the reader with guidelines, "prestructured by the written text."⁵ These guidelines are mainly found in the initial essays to the 18 books of Fielding's *Tom Jones* and the prefaces to his novels.

Iser interprets Fielding's theoretical essays and statements in an intellectual and epistemological sense.⁶ In this view he follows John Preston, who also claimed that Fielding aims at rational understanding and that the effect of his novels was "epistemological rather than moral."⁷ I cannot agree with either of these propositions but shall argue that Fielding's aim was a composite one, ruled by feeling.

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One of Iser's main stays is a passage from *Tom Jones* in which Fielding expands on "the vacant Spaces of Time." In Chapter III.i Fielding addresses his reader, attributing to him, as so often, "Sagacity" (116). As nothing of importance has happened in the history of *Tom Jones*, so he tells the reader, he intends to pass over a long stretch of time. The reader, therefore, has a chance of intelligent participation,

an Opportunity of employing that wonderful Sagacity, of which he is Master, by filling up these vacant Spaces of Time with his own Conjectures. (116)

Iser comments this passage as follows:

The vacant spaces in the text, here as in *Joseph Andrews*, are offered to the reader as pauses in which to reflect. They give him the chance to enter into the proceedings in such a way that he can construct their meaning.⁸

First of all, Iser does not meet the tone of the passage, but falls, to put it bluntly, into the trap of Fielding's irony. This is clearly indicated by the hyperbolic compliments concerning the reader's sagacity. Secondly, what Fielding calls "vacant Spaces" is hardly identical with spaces for a congenial interpretation leading up to "constructing" the text. He does not provide any spaces at all for readers to exercise their conjectural abilities but, on the contrary, he caricatures an altogether unwanted reader-participation.⁹

. . . what Reader but knows that Mr. *Allworthy* felt at first for the Loss of his Friend, those Emotions of Grief, which on such Occasions enter into all Men whose Hearts are not composed of Flint, or their Heads of as solid Materials? Again, what Reader doth not know that Philosophy and Religion, in time, moderated, and at last extinguished this Grief? (116)

The "captatio benevolentiae" is followed, first, by an example showing what might happen if the wonderfully sagacious reader really availed himself of the offer to fill in the "the vacant Spaces." He would produce the typical clichés of the dilettante. Fielding recounts purely conventional reactions and his irony—" . . . Flint, or . . . Heads of as solid Materials"—marks them as such. His approval of *Bridget Allworthy's* strict

observation of mourning as far as her garments are concerned points in the same direction. We should not, therefore, put too much trust in the reader's "Sagacity" nor in his ability to contribute intelligent conjectures or to participate in the construction of meaning.

This scepticism on Fielding's part is corroborated by some other comments on his readers. He distinguishes two types of readers, those of "the lowest Class" and "the upper Graduates in Criticism" (117). Of course, everybody will identify with the "graduates," but it is just the epithet "upper" which should warn the discerning reader. The events or episodes which these readers are supposed to be imagining, the author assures us, are "of equal Importance with those reported by the daily and weekly Historians of the age," yet all these things are obviously not "worthy of a Place" in his history and therefore negligible. Of course, the reader is at liberty to conjecture whatever he likes, but Fielding would hardly regard this type of literary activity as very much worthwhile.¹⁰ He seems to have anticipated, ironically, Wittgenstein's famous phrase: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent."¹¹ The reader should not talk of what the author is silent about.

After the ironic *captatio benevolentiae* Fielding then resorts to *hysteron proteron*, expressing his conviction that the conjectures about the characters and their actions will exercise "some of the most excellent Faculties of the Mind." It would be much more "useful," indeed, to foretell "the Actions of Men in any Circumstance from their Characters" rather than to take the trouble to judge them by their actions. In the light of this ironic inversion of cause and effect it is not surprising that Fielding emphasizes the great difficulty of exercising this talent, assisted though it be by "Penetration" and "Sagacity," of course.¹² The absurd flattery reaches its climax at the end of the chapter:

As we are sensible that much the greatest Part of our Readers are very eminently possessed of this Quality, we have left them a Space of twelve Years to exert it in; and shall now bring forth our Heroe, at about fourteen Years of Age, not questioning that many have been long impatient to be introduced to his Acquaintance. (118)

Now we know what to make of the reader's attributed "Sagacity," warned by the assertion that most of the readers are "very eminently

possessed" of it. The ambiguity of the verb "possessed" is a special case of irony which allows Fielding to say and not say what he means. The very readers who are stupid enough to swallow his bait, "Sagacity," and believe (like the ass in the fable) to know better than the real craftsman, are the ones to whom the satirical epithet "possessed" applies. Perhaps the crowning absurdity in this passage is the offer of a twelve years' gap to be filled by volunteers. What they are offered is literally a stretch of twelve years in which to have their say. Discourse time and story time are inextricably mixed in the clause and sub-clause. The result is nonsense.

What Iser does not see or state clearly is that even "gaps" and "blanks" are a means of directing the reader. The gap is, if at all, the illusion of freedom to fill something in. The reader is confronted with schematised views and gaps between them, but they belong to schemes of textual presentation which aim at a particular reader-involvement.¹³

In Iser's description of the reading process the terms "gap," "vacant spaces," and "missing links" are not ironical as they are in Fielding's (or in Sterne's) dialogue with the reader and their literal meaning is taken to be stronger than their function as metaphors. For Iser they seem to signal a deficiency. The reader is supposed to fill in what the author left out—on purpose and by necessity (the text cannot spell out its own meaning). But an author like Fielding does not leave out anything essential. The metaphors of space, if not used ironically, are rather unsuitable in a theory of reading as they suggest the author left out parts, almost in the way of a puzzle.

If Fielding's irony points to nothing else it points out that the activity of the reader depends on what the author actually put into words. His words create impressions in the reader's mind and subsequently cause imaginative activities. The reader reacts to the features of language, responds to its various aesthetic and rhetorical qualities as well as to its semantic aspects. Metaphors for these activities should have more positive connotations than those of "filling in," an expression which does not do justice to the richness of textual connotations, implications, references, and emotional appeals.

The reader's imagination is able to work on the text, not because of what the text does not say or leaves out, but because of what its words

suggest. Granted that we can only picture what we do not actually see, as Iser says, it does not make much sense to say "the written part of the text gives us the knowledge, but it is the unwritten part that gives us the opportunity to picture things."¹⁴ We imagine what the text says, precisely because the text is not picture but word, i.e. a sign which creates a picture in the mind. The contention that we "are not able to use our imagination" without the gaps in the text seems to ignore a fundamental function of language, especially literary language.

Throughout Iser's essays one encounters the notion that the reader is somehow competing with the author. This implies a wrong notion of the working of the imagination. Iser's interpretation of Virginia Woolf's comment on Jane Austen reflects this misunderstanding.¹⁵ The things which in Virginia Woolf's view Jane Austen offers to the reader are said to "expand" in the imagination. In other words, the reader's imagination builds on what the author provides, but this is different from saying that the reader does not get the whole story, that he creates the unwritten parts of the text. "The most enduring form of life" Virginia Woolf speaks about is not a material, quantitative, addition, not a background created by the reader, but a quality with which the author "endows . . . scenes which are outwardly trivial." It is Jane Austen who offers this to the reader's mind and imagination.

Iser understands the reader's role in a substantive sense, in spite of his protestations that he regards it as re-creative.¹⁶ The reader, however, is, and even ought to be, primarily an understander—words convey first of all meaning—and where the imagination is concerned, the reader is a visualizer. In the imagination the things signified come to life. Naturally, the author does not and cannot "give" that inner picture of the mind to the reader directly, but whoever would claim this to be the case? Therefore, the claim "no author worth his salt will ever attempt to set the *whole* picture before his reader's eyes"¹⁷ is either a truism or does not make sense. Fielding, at any rate, does not invite the reader to participate (or rather intrude), quite the contrary. The spaces he leaves out are not spaces for the constitution of meaning. Fielding's addresses to the reader primarily aim at the fanciful reading habits of dilettante readers. He exposes such habits by ironical praise and tells us more about how not to read than how to read. But, although Fielding makes it quite

clear how he expects a really intelligent reader to deal with a literary text, Iser sticks to his theory and takes those appeals to the sagacious reader for granted:

This typical appeal to the reader's "sagacity" aims at arousing a sense of discernment. . . . Here we have a clear outline of the role of the reader, which is fulfilled through the continual instigation of attitudes and reflections on those attitudes.¹⁸

Though Iser mentions Fielding's irony in the "history" part of the novel, he fails to account for it in the addresses to the reader, whose activity he describes, without qualification, as a process of rational reasoning.¹⁹ Fielding's texts as well as the various philosophical treatises of the period demand an altogether different perspective. Rational self-righteousness, the supposed "Sagacity" of the dilettante, was nothing less than one of the targets of Fielding's satire. A reader reaching up to the author's ideal of participation would be a sensitive understander, wary of ironic overtones and far from being willing to interfere.

The irony of "Sagacity" is obvious enough in the context of *Tom Jones*—even Squire Western boasts about his "Sagacity"²⁰—but its poignancy becomes even more apparent when it is looked at in the light of John Locke's definition.²¹ In the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, "Sagacity" denotes the exercise of arriving at knowledge, not by intuition which is the highest form, but by "Demonstration," the use of "intermediate *Ideas*." In other words, sagacity is defined as an ability to arrive at knowledge through a process of "Reasoning," of using "intervening *Ideas*": "A quickness in the Mind to find out these intermediate *Ideas* . . . and to apply them right, is, I suppose, that which is called *Sagacity*." Locke is concerned here with that quality of judgment which is achieved through a process of reasoning alone.²² For Fielding this is just not good enough. His parody of sagacity suggests, rather, that he wants to question the possibility of arriving at any kind of true knowledge by this method at all. The reason for this ineffectiveness may be sought in the absence of wisdom, which is all the more apparent as it is present in "Sophia," the true end of Tom's journey. Keeping "Sagacity" and "Wisdom" so much apart, Fielding made it quite clear that he regarded the rationalist concept of sagacity as deficient. *Tom Jones*

much rather exemplifies Berkeley's view that "wit without wisdom . . . is hardly worth finding."²³

One of the reasons why Iser mistakes Fielding's "vacant Spaces" in his theory of reading may be his observation that Fielding rejected Richardson's overt didacticism. But in ridiculing outright didacticism, Fielding does not altogether dispense with teaching. On the contrary, he wants to teach in a less obvious and more effective way. He makes the reader learn on his own, not by telling him what he thinks is right but by letting him discover sense and nonsense for himself. To let his readers, i.e. us, achieve this aim, Fielding addresses the reader in the novel, makes him his confidant, an observer of his world. The actual reader, then, becomes a meta-reader who communicates with the author through the figure of the reader in the novel,²⁴ a process reminding us of similar dramatic techniques, e.g. in Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.²⁵ In that play the audience on the stage, being the object of satire, serves to make the spectator aware of his own aesthetic and emotional expectations and reactions. Similarly, by exposing his reader's follies, Fielding is holding the mirror up to us, who are thus led to discover what he did not want to pronounce in a didactic fashion.

In his attempt to establish a place for reader participation, Iser knows only one alternative, either didacticism or vacant spaces, *tertium non datur*. But if we do not accept this alternative, the question remains: what is the function of Fielding's addresses to the reader?

One possible answer is that Fielding uses the weapons of irony and satire to expose the rationalist school of thought. As has been shown, the words "sagacious," "Sagacity" etc. indicate his opposition to and the ridiculing of Enlightenment rationalism. Fielding's irony is directed against the dogma of the *animal rationale*, the claim of the Cartesian school that we are human by virtue of our reasoning faculty only. However, Fielding counters this one-sided rationalism not on the level of philosophical discourse but in the context of an imaginative construction.

Fielding not only questions reading habits but also confronts the reader with his views on the nature of his novel as a work of art and the author as a creator.²⁶ In the prefatory chapter of Book X he links the topics of reading and literary creation. Having tried from the very beginning

to create in the reader a real understanding of his role in relation to the history of Tom Jones, Fielding chooses, at this stage, to approach the subject by discussing the author's position with regard to the nature of his work, thus leading up to a more distinct outline of the relationship between the reader and the meaning of the novel. He defines the roles of the author and reader. One might say, he puts the reader in his place.

Reader, it is impossible we should know what Sort of Person thou wilt be: For, perhaps, thou may'st be as learned in Human Nature as *Shakespear* himself was, and, perhaps, thou may'st be no wiser than some of his Editors. (X.i.523)

As we can easily guess, Fielding takes no chances and decides to give the reader

a few wholesome Admonitions; that thou may'st not as grosly misunderstand and misrepresent us, as some of the said Editors have misunderstood and misrepresented their Author.

Fielding stresses the primacy of the work and its own specific rules originating in the creative idea of the author. "This Work may, indeed, be considered as a great Creation of our own" (X.i.524-25). In the hierarchy of literary values Fielding puts all those categories in the first place which relate to the author as creator. Terms like "Design," "conceive," "Creation," the idea of the "Whole" and the "Parts" (524-25) suddenly abound and recall the fact that the idea of the poet as creator is an integral part of the epic tradition.²⁷ Accordingly, the analogy between the poet as creator and creation as the art of God belongs to the tradition of poetic theory leading up to and culminating in the Renaissance.²⁸ Placing himself within this tradition, Fielding seeks to affirm his control over his readers rather than open the way to reader participation. The prefatory chapters, just as the narrative reality in the novel, point to the unrelenting discipline of the author. Not surprisingly, therefore, Fielding asks the reader to refrain from passing judgment too quickly, because he may not have recognized the author's "Design."

It is not, however, Fielding's purpose to use this traditional metaphor in a merely affirmative sense.

The Allusion and Metaphor we have here made use of, we must acknowledge to be infinitely too great for our Occasion, but there is, indeed, no other, which is at all adequate to express the Difference between an Author of the first Rate, and a Critic of the lowest. (X.i.525)

Fielding strikes a cautious note about his creative claim, after all. In the face of the older idea he sees himself and his role in the novel in an ironic light, particularly when he teasingly reminds the reader of his superior knowledge derived from "Inspiration" (III.v.135) or when he calls his work "prodigious" (V.i.209).

We should therefore take his assertion that he is "in reality, the Founder of a new Province of Writing" (II.i.77) with a pinch of salt. As an admirer of Cervantes, to whom he paid tribute for the kind of history he himself was composing, Fielding cannot but be ironic about his claim, the more so as he admits following a lost tradition, i.e. that of comic epic in prose, the definition of his comic romance.²⁹

Fielding, therefore, neither pleads the cause of the sagacious reader nor of the creator-author. This puts him in opposition to the intellectual as well as moralist demand for exemplary characters in literature ("in any Work of Invention," X.i.527), which, on the other hand, shows him to be an author who follows the classical doctrine of the mixed character. This, again, leads up to the real subject of the novel: the moral improvement of the reader.

Indeed, nothing can be of more moral Use than the Imperfections which are seen in Examples of this Kind; . . . The Foibles and Vices of Men in whom there is great Mixture of Good, become more glaring Objects, from the Virtues which contrast them, and shew their Deformity; . . . (X.i.527)

The mixed character has a greater potential for improving the reader than an exemplary one, which is the reason why Fielding asks the reader to look closely at the differences between characters rather than to reduce them to popular literary types. The passage quoted is a seminal one for Fielding's concept of reader participation. It indicates how the reader should or is likely to react.

Fielding's various claims, however sparkling with irony, are no mere intellectual vagaries but serve a purpose. He refutes those critics who

believe they have discovered eternal rules, said to be conforming to reason, and who are able to find fault, therefore, with authors like Shakespeare and, by self-ironic implication, himself. Fielding undermines these contemporary judges of taste and their dogmas by his travesty of the *deus artifex* and, as he sets himself apart from the "*jure divino* Tyrant" (II.i.77), by a parody of another great paradigm of the past, the "rule by divine right" of the Stuarts. By asserting his position as a lord over his province, free to follow his own rules, Fielding puts himself on the same pedestal with established literary criticism and quite rightly challenges the validity of literary dogmas which deny their own origin in literary practice: "Who ever demanded the Reasons of that nice Unity of Time or Place which is now established to be so essential to dramattick Poetry?" (V.i.209-10) The danger, however, of undercutting his own position by mixing with such critical company is met by Fielding's assertion to "wave the Privilege" (212) of demanding obedience for his own laws of writing and to provide reasons for them. Naturally this promise also belongs to the ironical exchange with the reader, who, in fact, has little choice but to accept the rules; Fielding obviously regards himself as the literary equivalent of the constitutional monarch, a Hanoverian King, as it were.³⁰ These allusions to contemporary criticism and politics as well as Fielding's promise to provide the reader with reasons for his literary rules lead up to a new climax of self-irony:

And here we shall of Necessity be led to open a new Vein of Knowledge, which, if it hath been discovered, hath not to our Remembrance, been wrought on by any antient or modern Writer. This Vein is no other than that of Contrast, which runs through all the Works of the Creation. (212)

Fielding raises the reader's expectations by his promise of "a new Vein of Knowledge," but instead of providing a real climax he pulls something very trivial out of his conjuror's hat which, like the hyperbolic and rather self-laudatory style, reveals the ironist at work. As a matter of fact, the claim to a new "Vein" is contradicted by the very ubiquity of it, which he sees "through all the Works of the Creation," and by the fact that it is the principle of any kind of perception, e.g. of beauty "as well natural as artificial" (212). Even the arts serve to illustrate the principle.

Quite clearly, Fielding is not really *au sérieux*. As soon as he has assured the reader of what he "really" means, his example turns every idea of meaning into absurdity. While his criticism of contemporary comic practice on the stage is plausible enough—once again making the reader unaware of his ironic aim—at the end of the chapter he refers to "a late facetious Writer" (Sir Richard Steele) "who told the Public, that whenever he was dull, they might be assured there was a Design in it" (V.i.215), thus pointing out the evident absurdity of the very principle Fielding claims to have opened up.³¹

In this Light then, or rather in this Darkness, I would have the Reader to consider these initial Essays. And after this Warning, if he shall be of Opinion, that he can find enough of Serious in other Parts of this History, he may pass over these, in which we profess to be laboriously dull, and begin the following Books, at the second Chapter. (215)

I find it difficult to believe with Iser that Fielding has provided here for his novel a key named "Contrast" ("... at least it indicates clearly to the reader that this principle will provide him with a key to the narrative").³² Even if Fielding were speaking quite in earnest, contrast is surely not a quality—structural or thematic—sufficiently specific to provide a key to plot or action. There is hardly any literary work that does not depend on contrasts.

And yet, Fielding's satire aims at the principle of contrast even quite specifically, because it is a rationalist commonplace. Seen from a sceptical point of view, the trust in the epistemological value of contrast has led into the darkness of absurdity. In the eyes of an ironist, sceptical of the absolute rule of kings as well as of reason, the light of reason and the rationalism of Enlightenment may be nothing but another version of darkness. Fielding makes use of the rationalist method of antithesis as the basis of thinking and knowing, i.e. of proving by contrast, in order to ridicule the rationalist ideal itself. What to the minds of rationalist critics appears as the brightness of reason turns out to be absolute nonsense when it has gone through the mill of Fielding's logic.

With his satire Fielding takes exception to a central issue of modern thought since Descartes, whose "*Je pense, donc je suis*"³³ marks the beginning of the epistemological separation between subject and object,

since the very act of consciousness constitutes an opposition between the subject thinking and the object of its thought.³⁴ Historically Descartes opened the way to the rationalist subject-object difference, as well as to the scientific dissection of the world.³⁵

Though the image of light and darkness obviously links Fielding's discussion with the ideas of the Enlightenment, the link can be traced more specifically. In an epistemological context, the image of light and the idea of contrast both occur in Locke's *Essay* (after all the most notable document of rationalist philosophy in England). In the chapter "Of Knowledge and Opinion" Locke describes the method by which the mind arrives at the "clearest" kind of knowledge:

The different clearness of our Knowledge seems to me to lie in the different way of Perception, the Mind has of the Agreement, or Disagreement of any of its *Ideas*. . . . And this, I think, we may call *intuitive Knowledge*. For in this, the Mind is at no pains of proving or examining, but perceives the Truth, as the Eye doth light, only by being directed toward it. Thus the Mind perceives, that *White* is not *Black*, . . . this kind of Knowledge is the clearest, and most certain, . . . This part of Knowledge is irresistible, and like the bright Sun-shine, forces it self immediately to be perceived, . . . the Mind is presently filled with the clear Light of it.³⁶

Locke here explains that the idea of contrast and the image of light are virtually interchangeable. What to the eye is light, contrast is to the mind. Both light and contrast lead to immediate perception and clear knowledge. Here light imagery is made to serve the rationalist foundation of knowledge, though it is nearly ubiquitous in the history of philosophy³⁷ and therefore not characteristic as such. In the same way Pierre Bayle insists on the "natural light" of reason, as it provides the highest authority in the process of arriving at knowledge,³⁸ any claim to knowledge having to submit to its rule.³⁹ This rationalist dogma is ironically reflected in Fielding's "new Vein of Knowledge." It is precisely this philosophy whose light, in Fielding's eyes, leads into darkness.

As a "historian" concerned with "Human Nature" and not only "human understanding" Fielding points to pragmatic absurdities of the subject-object dichotomy, the principle of contrast and opposition. This has been exemplified in the figure of the author who assumes creator-like

supremacy, as well as in the pseudo-rational qualities of sagacity and judiciousness attributed to the reader. The absurd implications of the principle of contrast become even more evident when Fielding ironically applies it to the relation between the initial chapters and the history proper. Telling the reader that he might pass over these essays—"if . . . he can find enough of Serious in other Parts" (V.i.215)—he plays a rhetorical trick on him. Rather than deciding between what is supposedly important or not, serious or not, the reader is coaxed into recognizing that there is no such contrast. Fielding leaves him little choice but to read these chapters with particular attention, the more so as he ironically professes "to be laboriously dull." The author-reader relationship all but hides the author's omnipotence just as there is the unifying formal structure of the novel, even numerologically organized,⁴⁰ which symbolizes order in the apparent chaos of the world. This does not contradict but rather underlines the fact that Fielding displays a genuine concern for the reader, aesthetically as well as morally. It is the foundation of his kind of teaching.

Fielding's method is a case in point of the classic strategy of forensic rhetoric, namely to outmanoeuvre the opponent with his own weapons. Fielding's satirical attack against the rationalist principle of contrast employs the very means he attacks. The basis of satire, after all, is the perception of contrast. In other words, his weapon allows Fielding to turn the method against its rationalist proponents. His provocation, however, aims at more than just criticizing a principle, be it ethical (hypocrisy), aesthetic (reading), or philosophical (perception/knowledge); it aims at actually overcoming the discrepancies and contrasts laid open. Fielding, at least in the fictional context, does not accept the rationalist principle of contrast but establishes a dialectical method of using contrast to overcome it.

In the context of the philosophical arguments of the period, his "dialogue" with the reader questions basic tenets of rationalism. Like Richardson before him and Sterne after him, Fielding was sensitive to the limitations of a purely rationalist ethic. Harrison quite rightly pointed out that Fielding parts company even with Shaftesbury, because practical goodness can hardly be grounded on moral rationalism.⁴¹ This is what Fielding repeatedly holds against rationalist positions and their

spokesmen. He is not so much an anti-rationalist as that he looks upon rationalism as insufficient.

Philosophical questions are not Fielding's main concern, even though they are among his favourite targets, as characters like Thwackum and Square indicate. As a novelist he is, like Aristotle's dramatic poet, primarily interested in characters acting, in their motivation. Something other than intellectual principles or maxims are demanded, something Fielding does not name precisely, if for no other reason than to make the reader more attentive, but perhaps also to stay out of a merely nominalist controversy:

Mr. Jones had Somewhat about him, which, though I think Writers are not thoroughly agreed in its Name, doth certainly inhabit some human Breasts; whose Use is not so properly to distinguish Right from Wrong, as to prompt and incite them to the former, and to restrain and with-hold them from the latter. (IV.vi.171-72)

What Fielding regards as important is the spring of action, not a conviction only. In his "Essay on Knowledge of Characters of Men" he identifies this spring as "Good-Nature," the most important aspect of which is that it is an active principle.

Good-Nature is that benevolent and amiable Temper of Mind which disposes us to feel the Misfortunes, and enjoy the happiness of others; and consequently pushes us on to promote the latter, and prevent the former; and that without any abstract Contemplation of the Beauty of Virtue, and without the Allurements or Terrors of Religion.⁴²

On the basis of this conviction, Fielding establishes a common ground between author and reader which remains untouched by doctrinal and nominalist disputes. Here he finds a criterion on which to base the unity of knowing and doing. Given good-nature and distinterestedness, the rationalist dissection disappears in favour of a sympathetic relationship between author and reader as well as reader and fictional character. It is hardly surprising, then, that Fielding builds his moral teaching in the novel on this axiom. The reader is invited to identify with Fieldings mixed characters rather than to judge them from a moral distance.

. . . when we find such Vices attended with their evil Consequence to our favourite Characters, we are not only taught to shun them for our own Sake, but to hate them for the Mischiefs they have already brought on those we love. (X.i.527)

In this explication of his moral teaching Fielding shows his scepticism toward rationalist objectivity. Fielding wants to excite "Compassion," "Admiration," and "Affection" in the reader (527). Though rational instruction might also be effective, the result of emotional response is far "more apt to affect and dwell upon our Minds," as Fielding says when he talks about the imperfections of characters. This way a different kind of reader-address becomes apparent, in which Fielding does not appeal to the reader's "Sagacity" but gives an advice familiar from the first sonnet of *Astrophil and Stella*:

Examine your Heart, my good Reader, and resolve whether you do believe these Matters with me. If you do, you may now proceed to their Exemplification in the following Pages; if you do not, you have, I assure you, already read more than you have understood; . . . To treat of the Effects of Love to you, must be as absurd as to discourse on Colours to a Man born blind; . . . (VI.i.271)

Fielding now not only speaks in a new tone to the reader, but also appeals to another faculty, the heart. The words "Heart," "believe," and "understand" signify the level on which Fielding wants to establish the relationship between author and reader as well as his hierarchy of values. In a later "aside" Fielding coaxes the reader with the assumption: "thy Heart may be better than thy Head" (X.i.526). This points the way to overcoming the dichotomies of rationalism. If the reader cannot look into his heart, or if, to follow Fielding's way of thinking, he does not have one, he will never understand what love is, like the utilitarian philosophers to whom Fielding satirically attributes the opinion that "Love probably may . . . very greatly resemble a Dish of Soup" (VI.i.272); or, like Mr. Locke's blind man, who thought he could describe colours (IV.1.152).⁴³

In Fielding's eyes, then, the way which leads to knowledge is not rational analysis but empathy. This may also imply a possible explanation of Fielding's epistemological ideas. In IV.ii, in which the author an-

nounces the appearance of Sophia, we are able to observe Fielding's attempts to convey an "idea" to the reader, "the idea of Sophia," i.e. not the idea of beauty in the philosophical sense, but the notion of a particular beauty. As this is an example of a non-rational communication with the reader, the question arises how Fielding varies his technique in securing and directing the reader's participation. Fielding begins his announcement of Sophia with an atmospheric invocation drawing on myth and art to associate an image of beauty. Like Botticelli's *Primavera* "the lovely *Sophia* comes," "bedecked with Beauty, Youth, Sprightliness, Innocence, Modesty, and Tenderness, breathing Sweetness from her rosy Lips, and darting Brightness from her sparkling Eyes" (IV.ii.155). This allegorical vision then gives place to further examples of beautiful women in art and history and ends in an ironical remark to the reader about the naturalness of the effect of beauty: "If thou hast seen all these without knowing what Beauty is, thou hast no Eyes; if without feeling its Power, thou hast no Heart" (156).

And yet, although the effects of beauty seem to allow no question, Fielding remains doubtful whether the images evoked have conveyed "an exact Idea of *Sophia*: for she did not exactly resemble any of them." The reader, then, is left with ideas and images of beauty and their power, none of which can do justice to Sophia. It seems the reader is led on to ever new expectations, only to be disappointed. Even Fielding's promise to describe Sophia's appearance sounds rather sceptical: ". . . we are sensible that our highest Abilities are very inadequate to the Task" (156). Fielding is equally negative about his abilities to give an idea of Sophia's mind and again defers the reader's hopes:

But as there are no Perfections of the Mind which do not discover themselves, in that perfect Intimacy, to which we intend to introduce our Reader, with this charming young Creature; so it is needless to mention them here: Nay, it is a Kind of tacit Affront to our Reader's Understanding, and may also rob him of that Pleasure which he will receive in forming his own Judgment of her Character. (IV.ii.157)

Ironically leaving it to the "Reader's Understanding," Fielding undercuts his description of Sophia's qualities by references to the inadequacy or superfluosity of his words. What the reader finally gets from the

author is neither a description which might convey an image of Sophia nor an adequate idea of her beauty, but a moral evaluation of her character, typically in the form of a negative compliment; she was not corrupted by the practises of the so-called polite circles or by the education of her experienced aunt.

By her Conversation and Instructions, *Sophia* was perfectly well-bred, though perhaps she wanted a little of that Ease in her Behaviour, which is to be acquired only by Habit, and living within what is called the polite Circle . . . and though it hath Charms so inexpressible, that the *French* . . . mean to express this, when they declare they know not what it is, yet its Absence is well compensated by Innocence; nor can good Sense, and a natural Gentility ever stand in need of it. (158)

Fielding contrasts the corruptness of the very language of polite society—a kind of linguistic hypocrisy—with his moral norm. Ironically he reveals the emptiness and falseness of the words by applying the “je-ne-sais-quoi” of the aesthetic effect literally. As the terms are meaningless, so are the values they are supposed to denote. Sophia, however, untouched by such corruption, remains morally unstained as well. The fact that the “Absence” of that ominous social “Ease” rhymes with “Innocence” and “good Sense” explicitly points to its counterparts. This is what Fielding was aiming at: innocence, good sense, natural gentility. Sophia represents these moral ideals. Still, does Fielding convey an idea or a specific image or is this an instance of a “vacant Space” indeed,⁴⁴ left open to be filled by reader-friends capable of the empathy Fielding wants to establish?

If we look at the chapter again, we notice that Fielding does not, like a socratic teacher, make the reader ascend to an ever higher stage of cognition; on the contrary, he leads the reader to ever new impossibilities of knowing or forming the idea of Sophia. The “exact Idea of *Sophia*” resembles none of the beauties mentioned, nor does she represent an abstraction. Instead,

. . . she resembled one whose Image never can depart from my Breast, and whom, if thou dost remember, thou hast then, my Friend, an adequate Idea of Sophia. (156)

On the one hand the pronoun "whom" syntactically refers to the image in the author's heart, on the other hand it points, logically, to the object of the reader-friend's memory. This does not make much sense from the commonsensical point of view, but it makes perfectly good sense from a Platonic perspective. The reader who is also an understander⁴⁵ should be able to form an exact idea of her not because he has been told what it is like or because he derives it from abstraction and comparison—the rationalist steps to knowledge—but by looking into himself.

As it is in the heart that Fielding finds his true image, the reader can only participate by finding such an image in his own heart as well.

... how amiable soever the Picture of our Heroine will appear, as it is really a Copy from Nature, many of our fair Countrywomen will be found worthy to satisfy any Passion, and to answer any Idea of Female Perfection, which our Pencil will be able to raise. (IV.i.154)

The reader is not led to an ecstatic vision of the idea of beauty. On the contrary, Fielding introduces the passage with an ironical comment at the expense of his readers: "Indeed we would, for certain Causes, advise those of our Male Readers who have any Hearts, to read no farther" (154). Nevertheless, he assures his readers that everyone is able to find his own image of "Female Perfection."⁴⁶ In other words, everybody can remember the image that can never depart from his breast.⁴⁷ Here, Platonic anamnesis takes the form of a sentimental memory.

In terms of contemporary ideas Fielding seems to side with those who claim that it is possible to arrive at the knowledge of abstract ideas through sense perception: "If thou hast seen all these without knowing what Beauty is, thou hast no Eyes; if without feeling its Power, thou hast no Heart" (IV.ii.156). For the artist, however, the different interpretations of sense perception which Locke and Berkeley debate are rather irrelevant. True knowledge lies in the heart, and without it there is only Lord Rochester's answer "to a Man, who had seen many Things" (IV.ii.155-56)—which is rude.⁴⁸ Nevertheless Fielding is not engaging in an epistemological battle. His interest lies with his "Creation" and its effect. Whether one or the other philosopher is right remains unimportant, because in a work of art it is the author who makes the recipient

form an idea. Even his very personal experience, which is implied by Fielding's reference to the image in his breast, is not what the reader can draw on. The reader receives the ideas the author wants to convey in the work itself, in the "history" and is, therefore, enabled to form his own image and judgment. To quote again:

But as there are no Perfections of the Mind which do not discover themselves, in that perfect Intimacy, to which we intend to introduce our Reader, with this charming young Creature; so it is needless to mention them here: Nay, it is a Kind of tacit Affront to our Reader's Understanding, and may also rob him of that Pleasure which he will receive in forming his own Judgment of her Character. (IV.ii.157)

The intimate acquaintance which Fielding promises to the reader is identical with the kind of reading Fielding wants the reader to practice. In that case communication between author and reader does not take place on the level of rational demonstration, as Fielding implies in this chapter, but in a more immediate way. Fielding makes concrete ideas arise in the minds of his readers. Already in his "Dedication" he points out that the most effective method of communicating his intention ("to recommend Goodness and Innocence") will not be based on didactic preaching—though he will also appeal to his readers' "true Interest"—but on the immediacy of examples which are "a Kind of Picture" (7). In these "Virtue becomes as it were an Object of Sight, and strikes us with an Idea of that Loveliness, which Plato asserts there is in her naked Charms" (7). The narrative method suited to arrive at such objects of sight can hardly be the naming of an idea, which would be a rationalist understanding of the idea as an abstraction. This fear of abstract rationalism may be the reason why Fielding frequently makes use of periphrasis, in other words expresses his meaning by indirection,⁴⁹ as though he distrusted the words.⁵⁰ This would mean that communication works even beyond the level of denotative words when a sympathetic link has been established, in this case between author and reader.

Fielding, accordingly, is less interested in stimulating the reader to fill in gaps than in making him aware of the pitfalls of language, of clichés and hollow rhetoric, outright lies and linguistic insufficiency,

as well as hypocrisy. The relationship between words and meaning is just as dialectical as that between reason and sentiment. Meaning is conveyed as well as veiled by words. Fielding's irony is as much an indication of this as the hypocrisy he satirizes.⁵¹ Even in the case of an exemplary character like Mr. Allworthy words and meaning seem to be drifting apart when he starts "preaching," i.e. when he indulges in a fatal over-confidence in the affirmative effect of words.⁵² Inversely, Fielding's sympathy is with those characters who are discreet in their use of words, above all Sophia. She is not only reticent about disclosing her own true feelings but also puts more trust in Tom's goodness than in his protestations of love. It is only his goodness which finally convinces her of his love and makes her forgive him.

The problematical link between words and meaning reflects a certain distrust of words, but above all a trust in an indirect communication based on empathy. Certainly, Mr. Allworthy's rationalist beliefs are constantly proven wrong, just as his administration of justice is open to criticism and his long-winded speeches are ineffective. Yet he is the most positive figure and carries his name for the very good reason that he exemplifies what Fielding regards as necessary for true understanding, i.e. empathy and emotional identification. He practises solidarity from the very beginning when he takes in the foundling child. For Fielding feeling (and why shouldn't he have been aware of that paronomasia?) and doing are more important than rhetorical accomplishments or even the perfect administration of formal justice.

Fielding's exemplary characters show a sense of altruism, what he calls benevolence or what Square finally attributes to Tom, "Generosity of Heart . . . Capacity for Friendship . . . Integrity" (XVIII.4.927). These characters obviously are not followers of pure rationality,⁵³ but this does not mean that the basis of their thinking and acting is irrational.⁵⁴ If benevolence and feeling are emphasized here as central to Fielding's ethical ideal, it has to be emphasized, too, that Fielding is surely not putting forward an ideal of mere irrationality and sentimentality. This can hardly be expected from an author who is so fond of intellectual teasing and whose favourite rhetorical strategy is irony. His exemplary characters are guided by reason, which, though not an end in itself, is necessary as a means to an end. But it is insufficient as a final aim, as

is most clearly expressed by the converted Square in his final letter from his death-bed (XVIII.4).

Sophia symbolizes the true aim and ideal of wisdom in which reason and heart are united; that is to say, Fielding does not simply exchange the absolute rule of reason with that of sentimentality. Just as he expresses his belief in a dialectical unity of erotic love and charity, he equally looks to the unity of reason and feeling in wisdom. This is indicated by the great arguers in *Tom Jones* coming to naught or ending infamously, while those who think with the heart are rewarded. Tom himself is the best example that neither goodness of heart nor the impulses of feeling alone are a sufficient guide for getting safely through life, but he can be redeemed by the acquisition of wisdom, while his counterpart Blifil who affects reason and copy book virtue is left to his own corruption.

The kind of behaviour and communication realized in the novel mirrors Fielding's intentions with regard to the reader. He acknowledges that only on a common ground his aim of laughing his readers "out of their favourite Follies and Vices" may be achieved. Absolutely bad characters neither change for the better in his novels nor does he expect this to happen in real life. If there were not a vestige, at least, of altruism, benevolence, and charity he could not convey "ideas" like Sophia's virtuous beauty or Parson Adams' excessive joy about the rescue of his son.⁵⁵ What Fielding wants to "inculcate" in his readers is not so much an abstract ethical principle, but rather a basis on which he is able to communicate with them.

This shows that, in a moral sense, subject and object are not opposites but one and the same thing, in other words, *esse est percipi*. A corrupted heart cannot understand. This is what Fielding held against the utilitarian philosophers, the followers of Hobbes and Mandeville. To him, their negative view of mankind reflected "the nastiest of all Places, A BAD MIND" (VI.i.269).

Fielding, to conclude, does not replace Richardsonian didacticism with empty spaces for the reader to practice his intellectual faculty, nor does he advocate a sentimental ethic. Directly or indirectly, the author always guides the reader in a process of communication which achieves a fusion of irony and satire with empathy and charity. The participation

of the reader thus turns out to be a moral condition and an intellectual challenge, just as Fielding's epistemology proves to be inseparable from his ethics.

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NOTES

¹I am referring to Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (1972; Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1974), especially "The Role of the Reader in Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*" 29-56. See also his earlier *Die Appellstruktur der Texte: Unbestimmtheit als Wirkungsbedingung literarischer Prosa* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1970); *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978); *Prospecting: From Reader Response to Literary Anthropology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1989).

²All quotations refer to the Wesleyan Edition of the Works of Henry Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling*, ed. Fredson Bowers, introd. and commentary Martin C. Battestin, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974), and *Joseph Andrews*, ed. Martin C. Battestin (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967).

³Iser seems to have derived the idea of "Leerstellen" from the Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden. See Iser, *Die Appellstruktur der Texte* 36; *The Implied Reader* 40.

⁴*The Implied Reader* 30: "The reader has to be stimulated into certain activities, which may be guided by rhetorical signposts, but which lead to a process that is not merely rhetorical."

⁵*The Implied Reader* 32. Iser also speaks of "explicit guidance of the reader" (47). "This imaginary dialogue refrains from prescribing norms of judgment for the reader but it continually gives him guidelines as to how he is to view the proceedings" (46-47).

⁶"Fielding rightly considered this process [the principle of contrast] to be 'a new vein of knowledge'" (*The Implied Reader* 48).

⁷John Preston, *The Created Self: The Reader's Role in Eighteenth Century Fiction* (London: Heinemann, 1970) 114. According to Preston, Fielding "is actually trying to school the reader, to induce him to attend more closely and to judge well" (116). Other studies of the topic include Arthur Sherbo, *Studies in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (East-Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1969); John Ross Baker, "From Imitation to Rhetoric: The Chicago Critics, Wayne C. Booth and *Tom Jones*," *Novel* 6 (1973): 197-217; James J. Lynch, "Moral Sense and the Narrator of *Tom Jones*," *SEL* 25 (1985): 599-614; Eric Rothstein, "Virtues of Authority in *Tom Jones*," *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation* 28 (1987): 99-126; Nicholas Hudson, "Fielding's Hierarchy of Dialogue: 'Meta-Response' and the Reader of *Tom Jones*," *PQ* 68 (1989): 177-94. For an interpretation of the author-reader relationship in an ideological and political context, see John Richetti, "The Old Order and the New Novel of the Mid-Eighteenth

Century: Narrative Authority in Fielding and Smollett," *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 2 (1990): 183-96.

⁸*The Implied Reader* 51.

⁹Iser, on his part, criticized Ingarden for interpreting such constructions as trivial exercises. See *The Act of Reading* 176f.

¹⁰See, however, Iser's view: ". . . the written text furnishes it [the reader's imagination] with indications which enable it to conjure up what the text does not reveal." (*The Implied Reader* 31).

¹¹Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, introd. Bertrand Russell, trans. C. K. Ogden (1922; rpt. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985) 189.

¹²Again Iser does not appear to be aware of Fielding's irony, since he regards this passage as an instruction to the reader: "The consequence of this for the reader, in his role as observer, is that he thereby learns to distinguish between motive and action" (*The Implied Reader* 52).

¹³See W. Iser, "Indeterminacy and the Reader's Response," *Aspects of Narrative*, ed. J. Hillis Miller, English Institute Essays (New York: Columbia UP, 1971), 1-45. ". . . between the 'schematized views' there is a no-man's-land of indeterminacy, which results precisely from the determinacy of the sequence of each individual view. Gaps are bound to open up, and offer a free play of interpretation from the specific way in which the various views can be connected with one another . . . It is quite impossible for the text itself to fill in the gaps" (11).

¹⁴W. Iser, "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," *NLH* 3 (1972): 288.

¹⁵"The Reading Process" 280.

¹⁶Iser, "The Reading Process" 293 quotes from Dewey's *Art as Experience* the following sentence: "But with the perceiver as with the artist, there must be an ordering of the elements of the whole that is in form, although not in details, the same as the process of organization the creator of the work consciously experienced." I am doubtful whether this describes the process which Iser renders in this way: "We look forward, we look back, we decide, we change our decisions, we form expectations, we are shocked by their nonfulfilment, we question, we muse, we accept, we reject; this is the dynamic process of recreation."

¹⁷"The Reading Process" 287.

¹⁸*The Implied Reader* 31-32.

¹⁹"The reader, then, must apply the author's remarks to his novel . . ." (*The Implied Reader* 35). Cf. also: "This technique mobilizes the reader's imagination, not only in order to bring the narrative itself to life but also—and even more essentially—to sharpen his sense of discernment" (39).

²⁰If another proof were needed, Fielding's comment on Squire Western would settle the matter: "The Squire ended his Speech with some Compliments to his own Sagacity" (XVIII.ix.957).

²¹John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975) Bk. IV, ch. ii, § 3, 532. Dr. Johnson in his *Dictionary*, s.v. "sagacity" 2., also stresses the rational aspect, "Acuteness of discovery," and quotes Locke's *Essay* for a definition (*A Dictionary of the English Language*, vol. 2. (London, 1755; rpt. New York: AMS, 1967).

²²Locke's indebtedness to Descartes in this respect becomes obvious if one compares Descartes' *Regulae*, esp. 2 and 3, where he discusses intuition and deduction as methods to arrive at knowledge.

²³*Alciphron, or The Minute Philosopher*, vol. 3 of *The Works of George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne*, eds. A. A. Luce and T. E. Jessop (London: Nelson, 1950) 138.

²⁴Cf. A. Sherbo, "'Inside' and 'Outside' Readers in Fielding's Novels," *Studies in the Eighteenth Century English Novel* (East Lansing: Michigan State UP, 1969) 35-57.

²⁵All this also shows Fielding's consciousness of the imagery of the world as theatre, a topos which he quotes explicitly in the initial chapter of Book VII, "A Comparison between the World and the Stage."

²⁶The numerous critical discussions of the reader's role nearly always disregard the traditional context of author, work, and reader. See, as an exception, Batestin's comments on *Tom Jones* X.i.524.

²⁷See R. M. Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1965). It is significant that Fielding does not use the metaphor of the author-creator to justify his deviations from verisimilitude (like Sidney, e.g.) but to reaffirm his narrative control, in other words, the probable. Fielding thus departs from the view of some contemporaries who saw creativity in "non-realistic inventions" (M. H. Abrams, *The Mirror and the Lamp* [New York: Oxford UP] 275).

²⁸See E. N. Tigerstedt, "The Poet as Creator: Origins of a Metaphor," *CLS* 5 (1968): 445-48, and R. M. Durling, *The Figure of the Poet in Renaissance Epic* 123.

²⁹Cf. *Joseph Andrews* III.i, where Fielding defines his notion of "history" and of the major authors of this genre whom he cites as authorities, among them Cervantes. If Fielding is creating something new, it is a recreation of a lost tradition in the English language, as his remarks in the opening paragraphs of his preface show.

³⁰See Berkeley's variation of the *deus artifex* topos in terms of Fielding: "... not a Creator merely, but a provident Governor . . ." *Alciphron* 160.

³¹Claude Rawson, "Gulliver and the Gentle Reader," *Modern Essays on Eighteenth Century Literature*, ed. Leopold Damrosch (Oxford: OUP, 1988) 46-81 discusses Swifts comparable technique of "parodic intrusions" and sees a continuity of "self-conscious forms of parody and self-parody" (47) even in contemporaries like Norman Mailer. The following quotation shows that Mailer's self-parody can claim Fielding as an ancestor as well: "Like many another literary fraud, the writer has been known on occasion to read the Preface of a book instead of a book, and bearing this vice in mind, he tried to make the advertisement more readable than the rest of his pages" (Norman Mailer, *Advertisements for Myself* [London: Panther Books, 1970] 7).

³²*The Implied Reader* 48.

³³*Discours de la Méthode*, chronologie et préface par Geneviève Rodis-Lewis (Paris: GF, 1966) IV.60.

³⁴Cf. the discussion in Ernst Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der Neueren Zeit*, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (1922; rpt. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1974) 491-92: "In jedem tatsächlichen Denkkakt ist nicht nur das Bewußtsein eines denkenden Ich, sondern auch das Bewußtsein eines Etwas, das gedacht wird, eingeschlossen." (In every genuine act of reflection there is not only the consciousness of an individual reflecting, but also the consciousness of that which is the object of reflection).

³⁵There is no certainty of any object without an act of judgment or reasoning. Cf. Descartes, *Meditationes* II.13; *Discours de la méthode* IV.3.

³⁶Essay Bk. IV, ch. 2, § 1, 530-31. See ch. 17 "Of Reason," esp. §§ 15-18.

³⁷See Hans Blumenberg, "Das Licht als Metapher der Wahrheit," *Studium Generale* 10 (1957): 432-47.

³⁸Cf. the chapter on Bayle in Cassirer, *Das Erkenntnisproblem*, vol. 1, 589-90.

³⁹For the whole question of Locke and eighteenth-century literature see Kenneth MacLean, *John Locke and English Literature of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1936).

⁴⁰See Douglas Brooks, *Number and Pattern in the Eighteenth-century Novel: Defoe, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973).

⁴¹Bernard Harrison, *Henry Fielding: The Novelist as Moral Philosopher* (London: Sussex UP, 1975) 115.

⁴²*Miscellanies by Henry Fielding, Esq.*, ed. Henry Knight Miller (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972) 158.

⁴³Locke, *Essay* Bk. III, ch. iv, § 11, 165.

⁴⁴This particular type of negative description is discussed by Iser under the heading of "schematised views" in *The Implied Reader* 38 and again in a wider context in *The Act of Reading* 143-44. "However, what is not formulated does arise out of what is formulated, and so the written text must employ certain modes in order to bring about and simultaneously guide the conceivability of the unwritten" (147).

⁴⁵See Defoe's expectations of the reader in his preface to *Moll Flanders*: ". . . this Work is chiefly recommended to those who know how to Read it, and how to make the good Uses of it, which the Story all along recommends to them; . . ." (*The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous Moll Flanders, &c.*, ed. and introd. G. A. Starr [London: Oxford UP, 1971] 2).

⁴⁶Cf. *Tom Jones* IV.i.154.

⁴⁷The Platonic idea of remembering the image in someone else's mind is, implicitly, commented on in Berkeley's *Alciphron*, cf. 154.

⁴⁸Cf. *Tom Jones* IV.ii.155n5.

⁴⁹Cf. Iser's position in *The Act of Reading* 148: ". . . the imaginary object is to be built up . . . for the purpose of fulfilling the intention of the novel itself . . . it manifests itself in the scene as an 'empty' reference, which thus motivates subsequent images. The act of image-building is therefore a polysynthetic one . . ."

⁵⁰This topic is discussed in the context of the theory of signs and language in N. Hudson, "Signs, Interpretation, and the Collapse of Meaning in *Tom Jones* and *Amelia*," *English Studies in Canada* 16 (1990): 17-34.

⁵¹G. Hatfield, *Henry Fielding and the Language of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968) discusses Fielding's theoretical statements on language signs and his concern with abuses of language.

⁵²Fielding underlines Mr Allworthy's longwindedness, e.g. XVIII.ix.957: ". . . *Allworthy*, after a formal Preface, acquainted him . . ."; or: "*Allworthy* now made a long Speech" (958).

⁵³James J. Lynch, "Moral Sense and the Narrator of *Tom Jones*," *SEL* 25 (1985): 599-614 connects this feeling with Francis Hutcheson's "moral sense." His main

argument is that Fielding addresses the reader on the rational or critical and the sentimental level at the same time.

⁵⁴See Fielding's passage from "An Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men" quoted above, p.14 (n42).

⁵⁵*Joseph Andrews* IV.8.310: "No, Reader, he felt the Ebullitions, the Overflowings of a full, honest, open Heart, towards the Person who had conferred a real Obligation, and of which if thou canst not conceive an Idea within, I will not vainly endeavour to assist thee."