TEZPUR UNIVERSITY

MASTER OF ARTS

ENGLISH

CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

MEG 202: BRITISH FICTION I: BEGINNINGS TO VICTORIAN

BLOCK I

CENTRE FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

TEZPUR UNIVERSITY (A CENTRAL UNIVERSITY)

TEZPUR, ASSAM -784028

INDIA

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- To undertake various research and academic activities for furtherance of distance education in the region.
- To contribute to conserve and promote cultural heritage, literature, traditional knowledge and environment conducting short programmes, workshops, seminars and research in interdisciplinary field.

MEG 202: BRITISH FICTION I: BEGINNINGS TO VICTORIANS

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INDIA

MEG-202 BRITISH FICTION I: BEGINNINGS TO VICTORIANS

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BLOCK I

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COURSE INTRODUCTION

BLOCK I

Novel as a literary genre emerged in the beginning of the eighteenth century in England. The industrial revolution in most ways paved the way to the rise of the middle-class and also created a demand for people's desire for reading subjects related to their everyday experiences.

MEG 202: British Fiction I: Beginnings to Victorian is designed to introduce the learners to the emergence and growth of British fiction in eighteenth century and its journey till Victorian Age. This is the first of the two courses, the second being offered in the fourth semester. This course deals with the seminal texts of representative novelists from the beginnings to Victorian age. The learners are expected to examine the themes and form of the texts as it constructs psychological and political landscapes as well.

For the convenience of the learners we have structured the whole course into three Blocks. Each of the Blocks will cover representative novelists of a particular period which is categorised according to trend and style of either of the novelist or of the age.

Module I entitled **Daniel Defoe** has three units**. *Unit 1: Rise of the English novel*** will acquaint you with beginning of novel and the factors that helped in the emergence of this new genre of literature. We have also incorporated critical observations of critics regarding the cause and effect of this novel literary form. In this unit we have discussed the life and works of Daniel Defoe, the pioneer of this new genre and his contribution in the field of novel writing. We have also introduced briefly works of other writers that contributed to the growth of English novel in eighteenth century. ***Unit 2: Reading Robinson Crusoe*** will present you a detail summery of the text. We have made our best effort to go through the storyline as elaborately as possible, though we always

suggest our learners to read the text for better understanding of various critical aspects of a fiction. In this unit you will understand different thematic concerns of *Robinson Crusoe*. ***Unit 3: Critical Analysis of the text*** will help you to see and analyse a work of fiction from different point of views. A fiction is constituted of action, characters, multiple angle of storytelling, theme etc. To understand what a particular fiction wants to convey, we must go through every details of the aspects mentioned above. We have elaborately and critically analysed the text with all the nuances to make it more and more intelligible for our learners.

Module II: Henry Fielding is divided into two units. ***Unit 4: Reading Tom Jones*** will enable you to know in details the life and works of another prominent novelist of eighteenth century, Henry Fielding. This unit will also provide an extensive reading of the summery of the text *Tom Jones.* After reading this unit you will be able to know the story with minute details.

Unit 5: Critical Analysis of the text will provide critical analysis of different characters, including important female characters, various themes such as theme of marriage, law, sexuality etc., narrative techniques used by the novelist and allusions and references in the novel. All these will enable the learners to evaluate the text with critical and analytical insight and prepare themselves for higher critical perspectives.

In the succeeding two Blocks you will be acquainted with more novelists of eighteenth century and their trend setting works.

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MODULE I: DANIEL DEFOE

UNIT 1: RISE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

UNIT STRUCTURE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Novel as a literary genre emerged in the beginning of the eighteenth century. The industrial revolution in most ways paved the way to the rise of the middle-class and also created a demand for people's desire for reading subjects related to their everyday experiences. The novel, therefore, developed as a piece of prose fiction that presented characters in real-life events and situations. Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* are some of the early English novels. The novel is realistic prose fiction in such a way that it can demonstrate its relation to real life.

1.1LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit will aim to:

- provide a look into the rise of the English novel.
- offer a detailed examination of Defoe's life and work and his indispensable contribution in the rise of the novel.
- understand the age reflected.

1.2 RISE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

The eighteenth-century welcomed the desire of the masses towards reading materials that reflected their lives and situation. The English Novel was a result of this desire. "The novel emerged and distributed widely and largely among its readers. Moreover, with the increase of the literacy, the demand on the reading material increased rapidly, among well-to- do women, who were novel readers of the time" (Mariwan,19).

"The social and intellectual currents of the age were linked for creating something new and different. Those who carried out the action became individualized; they were interpreted in and all their complexity and the social pressure on them were minutely detailed. When people wanted to hear stories of those who are not too different from themselves, in a community recognizably a kin to their own, then the novel was born" (Mariwan, 20).

There are also other reasons and factors that influenced the rise of the English novel. More or less most of the people got an opportunity to get education, including a large group of women, both in upper and middle class. The social milieu and social condition of the life of the middle-class, specially the leisure of middle class women much contributed in the popularity of this new genre called Novel. The invention of traveling libraries was another factor that helped both men and women that were receptive to literary forms, which would open them to the recent and real world outside their own world.

Printing was a major factor for the rise of the English novel during the age. "The reproduction of newspapers in the eighteenth century is evidence on the rise of the novel and so is the popularity of the periodicals (Mariwan, 20)." The rise of the economy contributed towards the growth of novels. The relation

between the writer and the readers increased, which led to further broadening of the novel's span. The rise of individualism was yet another crucial development.

Ian Watt (1957), in his book, The *Rise of the Novel* states that "Defoe's "fiction" is the first, which presents us with a picture of both-individual life in its larger perspective as a historical process, and in its closer view, which shows the process being acted out against the background of the most ephemeral thoughts and action" (Watt, 373).

In the later part of the seventeenth century, the novel genre developed many of the traits that characterize it in modern form. Novels were more inclined to realism than sensationalism of the early writers. Three of the foremost novelists of this era are Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, and Samuel Richardson. With the publication of *The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* in 1719, Defoe's is credited with the emergence of the "true" English novel. In the works of these three writers, the realism and drama of individual consciousness that we most associate with the novel form took precedence over romance, which also contributed later in England to other genres, especially in history, biography, and religious prose works.

1.3 DANIEL DEFOE: LIFE AND WORKS

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) had a remarkably varied career: which included countless trade and business projects, a number of failed business enterprises, and he also secretly worked for the Government. *Robinson Crusoe*, published in 1719, was Defoe's first fictional creation when he was almost sixty years old. David Daiches writes "Defoe had already demonstrated his talents as a reporter and observer in a great variety of writings but *Robinson*

Crusoe, written almost with nonchalance with the means of making money, revealed something more- the ability to organize and present detail in order to implement a view of the relation between man and nature that sprang from the depths of English middle-class view of life."(Daiches, 599-600) *Robinson Crusoe* is a popular novel similar to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrims Progress* and Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* on grounds that these novels explore the quest for adventure and spiritual rejuvenation. While *Robinson Crusoe* agrees with the former only on grounds of spiritual quest, it connects with the latter on its adventurous expeditions. *Robinson Crusoe* defies single thematic interpretation. It can be read as an adventure story, as a moral treatise, as a religious theology, as a spiritual revelation, as material advancement and as a colonial expansion. The first edition was published under the full title *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, Of York, Mariner: Who lived in Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an uninhabited island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates.* Danny Heitman observes that Defoe originally kept Crusoe as the author leading many readers to believe that he was not fictitious and the book was a travelogue of true incidents. In the course of this study we will see that Daniel Defoe's greatest novel presents three chief aspects of life and thought:, a religious, a commercial, and a social aspect of the same..

Daniel Defoe is the bridge between the great essayist of the preceding years and the great novelists of the eighteenth century. Before he tasted successful reception for his writing, he experienced failure in more than just one career. In addition to him being an inexhaustible writer, he was a Government agent, a

traveller and a journalist. His failures in business lead him to venture in pamphlet journalism and novel writing. In 1697 he published his *Essay on Projects* in which he advocated 'standard mannerisms' for the society and voiced his contempt upon the discouragement of women education. Daiches calls this book 'a work of a shrewd and humane mind'. His verse satire produced in 1701 *The True Born Englishman* won him the friendship of the King which unfortunately did not last long with the sudden demise of the latter. This poem, though crude in its techniques of versification, accumulated laurels as it was a response to the opponents of the English throne by the Dutch King William; ironically describing the 'mixed stock from which the English people derived.' Defoe is an observer and commentator of the establishments and codes of society. In *Shortest Way with the Dissenters* published in 1702 he attacks the Church of England. But his playfulness with irony cost him. The bold proceedings against the authorities and institution backfired Defoe with imprisonment, bankruptcy and starvation. Enterprising and inventive as ever, he emerged from jail to experiment a new career in journalism and secret government work. His periodical *The Review* which ran from 1704-13 was carried out in the interests of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford. Harley was a moderate Tory during the reign of Queen Anne who induced his party to pass the Act of settlement which confirmed the succession of throne to the House of Hanover on the death of Anne without children. Defoe, a dissenting Protestant and bourgeois, published pamphlets in favour of the Hanoverian succession. In 1706 he published *A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal* (1706)which is a gripping account of supernatural occurrence. This piece of work demonstrated Defoe's journalistic eye for detail and his mastery of the art of realistic reporting.

The gamut of Defoe's work is enormous. Some of his

profound work includes *The Hymn to Pillory* (1703) which was composed on the occasion of his exhibition. He experimented in political satire in *Consolidator* (1705). His methodical accuracy is displayed in *History of the Union* (1708-1709) while *Reasons Against the Succession of the House of Hanover* (1712) is responsible for his prosecution. *A General History of the Trade* (1713) established him as the father of free trade. The challenges involved in recording these activities of the Government routed him towards producing his first iconic novel, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) which is responsible for landing Defoe as a serious fiction writer. This book was written with the intention of mercenary benefits but instead revealed something greater- the ability to cohere and present detail to implement a relationship between man and nature that originated from the depths of English middle class life.

The successful reception of *Robinson Crusoe* led Defoe to write many other works of fiction. *Captain Singleton* (1720) is an adventurous novel dealing with piracy while Defoe explores his artistry as a novelist in his picaresque novel *Moll Flanders* (1722) where the fortunes of the heroine rise and fall with her amorous advances. She is haunted by her conscience in her old age for her wicked life. *Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) accounts the realistic condition of the terrible London plague of 1655. *Roxanna or the Fortunate Mistress* (1724) returns to the pattern established by *Moll Flanders.* The occasional half-hearted self-denunciation by the heroine does not detract from the rollicking account of her rising fortunes by the use of sex appeal and bold methods of seduction. Defoe's eye for detail, his fascination with material things and with the surface of human behaviour, and his deep roots in the English middle class, combined to make his best fiction both historically important and intrinsically interesting.

1.4 THE OTHER IMPORTANT WORKS

Gulliver's Travels (1726, amended 1735), by Irish writer and clergyman Jonathan Swift, is both a satire of human nature, as well as a parody of travellers' tales like *Robinson Crusoe"*, is another early and influential novel of the times. The novel is "Swift's best known full-length work, and a classic of English literature. Swift himself claimed that he wrote *Gulliver's Travels* 'to vex the world rather than divert it". Other major 18th-century English novelists are Samuel Richardson (1689–1761), author of the epistolary novels *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1747–48); Henry Fielding (1707–1754), who wrote *Joseph Andrews* (1742) and *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749); Laurence Sterne (1713–1768), who published *Tristram Shandy* in parts between 1759 and 1767, Oliver Goldsmith (1728–1774), author of *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766); Tobias Smollett (1721–1771), a Scottish novelist best known for his comic picaresque novels, such as *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751) and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), who influenced Charles Dickens, and Fanny Burney (1752–1840), whose novels "were enjoyed and admired by Jane Austen," wrote *Evelina* (1778), *Cecilia* (1782) and *Camilla* (1796)".

Pamela is a story that highlights the kind of evil that lurked in society. The novel is story of a "beautiful 15-year-old maidservant named Pamela Andrews, whose country landowner master, Mr. B, makes unwanted and inappropriate advances towards her after the death of his mother. After Mr. B attempts unsuccessfully to seduce and rape her multiple times, he eventually rewards her virtue when he sincerely proposes an equitable marriage to her. Pamela, who is emotionally fragile and confused by Mr. B's manipulation, accepts his proposal. In the novel's

second part, Pamela marries Mr. B and tries to acclimatize to upper-class society. The story, a best-seller of its time, was very widely read but was also criticized for its perceived licentiousness and glorification of abuse". The novels of the times didn't shy away from bringing out the truth, rather the novelist made sure the times were highlighted explicitly.

Joseph Andrews, or ***The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams***, by Henry Fielding was the author's first published full-length novel. Published in 1742 and defined by Fielding as a "comic epic poem in prose", it is the story of a good-natured footman's adventures on the road home from London with his friend and mentor, the absent-minded parson Abraham Adams. The novel represents the coming together of the two competing aesthetics of 18th-century literature: the mock-heroic and neoclassical (and, by extension, aristocratic) approach of Augustans such as Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift; and the popular, domestic prose fiction of novelists such as Daniel Defoe and Samuel Richardson.

LET US STOP AND THINK

Professor Saintsbury designates Tobias George Smollet (1721-1771), Laurence Sterne (1715-1768), Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) and Henry Fielding (1707-1754), as the "Four Wheels of the Wain" of the English Novel in the eighteenth century.

1.5 SUMMING UP

This unit introduces and elaborates the rise of the English novel. It traces the reasons that led to the growth of the novel as a popular genre of literature. The unit also emphasizes the life and work of Daniel Defoe who is credited as the Father of the English

Novel and how his contribution changed the very course of novels and genres. The unit concludes with a list of the other important works of the eighteen century.

1.5 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. 'Defoe is the father of the English novel.' Elucidate
2. Trace the rise of the English Novel.
3. 'Daniel Defoe is the bridge between the great essayist of the preceding years and the great novelists of the eighteenth century'. Elaborate.

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UNIT 2: READING ROBINSON CRUSOE

UNIT STRUCTUE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Published on 25th April 1719, Robinson Crusoe is an adventure tale which is also a historical fiction that gives a clear reflection of the times. This novel is credited as being the "first English novel" which started the wave of realistic fiction as a true-blue literary genre. Being one of the most published books in history, Robinson Crusoe has even been imitated numerous times and in numerous ways, right from literature to television and even movies. "The book is so popular that the names of the two main protagonists have entered the English language. During World War II, people who decided to stay and hide in the ruins of the German-occupied city of Warsaw for a period of three winter months, from October to January 1945, were called Robinson Crusoes of Warsaw. Robinson Crusoe usually referred to his servant as "my man Friday", from which the term "Man Friday" (or "Girl Friday") originated", thus making this selected reading a classic.

2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to learn

- a detailed discussion of the novel *Robinson Crusoe*
- the major thematic concerns of the novel

2.2 READING THE NOVEL ROBINSON CRUSOE

Robinson Crusoe was born in 1632 in York. Despite his father's repeated admonitions, requests and discouragements Crusoe set sail on tempestuous seas to travel the world. As he was casually walking around in Hull one day, at the persuasion of his friends he went on board a ship bound for London on September 1, 1651 without the permission of his father and the blessings of the Almighty, he 'went on board a ship bound for London'. Unfortunately, on reaching Humber, the ship was terribly tossed by a furious storm which made Crusoe repent the breach of his duty to God and his parents. He was afraid that he was being reprimanded by the Almighty for eloping from home. He resolved that, if God would save his life, he would return home at once and never set foot in a ship again. But once the weather recovered he forgot his resolution of returning home and lost himself into a bottle of wine.
In London he profited from the camaraderie of the English Captain of the ship. Crusoe's adventurous spirit immediately captured the fancy of the Captain who offered Crusoe to accompany him to Guinea, to which Crusoe instantly agreed. This voyage turned out to be remarkably educational for Crusoe on matters of navigation, entrepreneurship and commerce. Unfortunately with the untimely death of the Captain, Crusoe set sail for Guinea with the Mate who was in charge of the ship at the Captain's absence. While at the sea, the ship was attacked and captured by Turkish pirates near Canary and Crusoe was taken to Sallee as a captive. He spent two

years of his life in Salle where he devoted hours scheming to liberate himself from slavery. Crusoe thinks that his captivity as a prisoner is a punishment for his disobedience against God and his father. One day he found an opportunity to escape. The Turkish Captain sent Robinson to sea, with a Moor whose name was Ismael and a boy named Xury, for fishing. While they were out in the sea Crusoe took Ismael by surprise with his arms twisted and tossed him overboard into the sea. He threatened Xury to remain loyal and dumb about the occurrence in the boat. To escape being chased and caught, Crusoe changed direction and sailed far away from Sallee and landed in an island of dreadful wild animals. After vainly sailing for ten days, occasionally harbouring at the shores for water, they finally reached Cape Verde which was inhabited by savages whom Crusoe describes as 'quite black and stark naked'. They sailed in vain for another eleven days and finally found a Portuguese ship. The captain of the ship sympathized with Xury and Crusoe and took them to Brazil, free of cost, where he bought Crusoe's barge and Xury as a slave.

The voyage to Brazil again proved to be overwhelmingly educational as it exposed Crusoe to the plantation business. He met a man on the boat who owned a plantation farm and a sugar house. Crusoe benefitted immensely from his experience. He established a plantation farm and bought land from the money he left under the English Captain's widow's supervision. He was successful in his cultivation of tobacco and cane and was steadily elevating his status to middle class. Sadly, Crusoe brought his own downfall. Wanderer and exciting as Crusoe was, though enviable, lead him to uncalled peril. On the advice of his associates he agreed to undertake another voyage to Guinea in order to bring Negroes for their plantation work. He set sailed on September 1, 1659 with detailed directions given to his associates about the management of his plantation. As fate had in store for him furious storm raged the

sea and tossed the ship vigorously. Eventually, they had to abandon the sinking ship and resort to a life boat which was crushed against the pressure of the giant waves. Crusoe somehow pushed himself to swim towards the shore and on reaching safely he thanked God for his safety. But this solace was short lived when he discovered to his dismay that he was the lone survivor and the solo occupant of the uninhabited deserted island while all his other shipmates perished.

Ultimately his tired body surrendered to sleep and he woke up to a sunny morning and clear sky. But what relieved him more was the sight of the wrecked ship, about a mile away that was driven by tide to the shore. He reached the ship with the assistance of a rope and filled his pockets with necessities and prepared a raft with chests containing bread, rice, cheese, wine, barley, wheat, the carpenter's tools and many other amenities. He made several trips to the ship to acquire all kinds of things like nails, iron crows, bullets, screw-jacks, sails, spikes, hatchets, clothes, hammock, bedding and a hundred other things. Having stacked himself with his immediate requirements and a lot extra from the wrecked ship his next mission was to decide on a suitable place for his habitation. His was entirely clueless regarding the geography of the place; whether it was an island or a continent, was it inhabited or otherwise. He carefully chose a place at a foothill that agreed to all his considerations. The spot was secured from wild animals, provided adequate shelter from the burning heat and most importantly provided him with a view so as not to miss the sight of any ship that would give him his deliverance.

The isolation and seclusion of the island steered Crusoe towards God and religion. All these years of insincere prayers and resolutions finally turned to a 'meaningful relationship' with God. He complained to God about his solitude but feared that he had already been punished enough and should not aggravate the wrath

of the Almighty. So he resorted to thanking God for his life and for bringing the wrecked ship closer to the shore. Crusoe set his foot on 30th September, 1659 and resolved the dilemma of losing notion of time by engraving the dates on wood which was the shape of a cross. He remembered Sabbath days by inscribing the dates and in this way he maintained a calendar. His newly found faith in God was practiced by a regular reading of the Bible which he brought from the ship. He also brought a dog and two parrots from the ship, which later became his pets. Crusoe was not someone who would sit idle and anticipate for a miracle to deliver him from his condition. He crafted a chair and a table and made his life comfortable by industry and application. He recorded all the activities of the island in a journal and ceased only when his ink exhausted. He cultivated barley and thought that God has rewarded his faithfulness. When the rain came, his crops multiplied and he had adequate food stock.

Crusoe travelled the island with his dog, a large quantity of powder, biscuits, raisins, a gun and a hatchet. Although the opposite part of the island seemed more pleasant and he was tempted to shift his abode to this side, he rejected the idea when he realized that this part is visited by savages. On 30th September he observed the first anniversary of his landing in the island and thanked God for being merciful to him throughout the year. He admitted that he somehow is happier and that his present condition has delivered him from the wicked ways of his past. He bursts out into tears and his grief is abated. But he also realizes that he is feigning his happiness and is in reality, a hypocrite.

Crusoe divided his time for his various activities throughout the day in the island. He reads the scriptures three times a day, then takes his gun and goes out hunting after which he devotes time to cook. Sometimes, to break the monotony of his routine, he shifts the hours of hunting and working. He had earlier

made a mistake by sowing in the dry season but after he learnt it right he expected his harvest by November and December. Crusoe also devoted much of his time in building various tools for his necessity. He made a board for shelf, a scythe to cut the crops, a wooden spade, vessels to hold liquid things, sieve, earthen vessels that serve as oven, and a canoe with which he explores around the island.

Crusoe feels he is removed from all temptations of evil. He is exempted from the lust of the flesh and the greed of the eyes. He has nothing to covet and is the lord of the island, a master of all his surveys and projects. There is no one to challenge him or dispute over his rights. He has plenty for his survival. He is thankful to God who has provided him with abundance in the wilderness. His survival makes him reflect upon the grace of the Providence. Crusoe recollects and regrets abandoning and disobeying his parents. It is his choice for the sea, that, he believed is responsible for his present circumstance. However, he ceaselessly continues to thank God for watching over him constantly in the island. He feels that his life of affliction has turned into a life of grace.

30th September turns out to be an important day for Crusoe because on this day he goes to Hull and it was on this day that he was also made prisoner in Sallee. He escapes from Yarmouth, lands on the island and was also born on this day.

He had turned professional in his mechanic executions; an expert in carpentry, pottery, making excellent earthen ware. He made baskets and a tobacco pipe. He tamed the goats and fenced them. He never once forgot to thank God. He had two dwelling places; one is his fortification of the cave with its door on the wall above and the other is the country house.

One day, as Crusoe was walking on the beach, he saw a print of a man's naked foot on the shore. He was bewildered and petrified at once. On scrutinizing the area he found no one. He was

so terrified that he even imagined that the footprint belonged to the Devil because it is impossible for humans to come in the island. Crusoe was so afraid that his fear banished his spirituality and religious hope. This episode of the footprint is so unnerving that it had shaken his faith in God. However, he attempts to console himself by reading the Bible. He sought solace in Biblical verses such as 'Wait on the Lord, and be of good cheer, and He shall strengthen thy heart'. The footprint was so terribly disturbing for Crusoe that for three days he kept hiding in his cave and finally stepped out of starvation and concern for his cattle. He built a second fortification, a double wall. The outer wall is thickened with timber and cables. In two years the grove grew so thick that no one could pass through it to his dwelling. He also doubled the enclosure of his flock. Although he had not seen any human creatures so far on the island, he does all this post the appearance of the footprint.

As Crusoe was wandering around the island he suddenly witnesses skulls, bones and other parts of the human body. This was a result of the cannibals 'inhuman custom of their devouring and eating one another'. A hoe had been dug into the ground where the cannibals set down to their feasting upon the bodies of their fellow creatures. This is the first time that he witnessed such barbaric practice from such close proximity. He is thankful to God for casting him on the side of the island where such inhuman spectacles are not seen. He resolves to keep his identity anonymous and low-key. After this incident Crusoe restricts his movement within his fort, country house and his enclosures.

Crusoe woke up to the sound of gun firing and realizes that there is a ship in distress close by. He lights a fire in the hill with the intention of being rescued. Soon he discovers that the ship has wrecked and he overcomes hazards and launches his canoe amidst currents to the wrecked ship and gets horrified at the dismal sight.

He brings back a hungry dog, treasures and chest full of food, liquor and gold coins.

Crusoe with his zest and liveliness has survived the solitariness of the island but every now and then he reminisces and regrets committing the Original sin. He regrets disobeying his father and venturing out to the unknown. He regrets being greedy and abandoning the prosperity of his enterprise in Brazil to be stuck in a circumstance like that. He had lived on the island for twenty- five years and as the years passed by, he has been constantly haunted by innumerable thoughts that whirled his brain. His thoughts oscillated between regretting disobeying his father,wondering if his isolation in the island was a punishment for his evil doings, and thanking God for delivering him from his wicked ways and steering him towards God and religion, constantly thanking God for his protection and faithfulness. His resignation to the will of God was temporarily suspended. He struggled in resisting the impetuosity of his desire to voyage to the side of the Cannibals. One night he dreamt that upon the shore two canoes and eleven savages came to land. They brought with them another savage whom they would kill and devour. Suddenly, the victimized savage runs to Crusoe's grove to be redeemed. Crusoe smiles as the savage kneels down to him begging him to save his life, Crusoe lead him to his habitat and hoped to visit the mainland with the help of the savage. He exults in the prospect of his escape. On waking he felt despaired that it was merely a dream.

He therefore concludes that he can venture to the mainland only with the help of a savage, a savage who is condemned to death and redeemed by him. He resolves to rescue one savage and waits for a year and a half for this opportunity. His prophetic dream comes true where he rescues a savage from the tyranny of the cannibals and calls him Friday to commemorate the day on which he saved him. Friday laid his head flat on the ground close

to Robinson's foot and sets Crusoe's foot upon his head. He expresses through sign language that he will forever remain his slave. Crusoe teaches him words like, 'master', 'yes' and 'no'. Friday is taught and clothed and is submissive and obedient to Crusoe who is finally elated to have a companion to talk to. Crusoe taught him about killing animals and eating their flesh as against the flesh of humans. He also taught him to cultivate corn, now that they have two mouths to feed. Crusoe educates him in English at which Friday turns 'pretty well'. Crusoe also preaches to Friday about God and his sacrifice for mankind which eventually converts Friday to Christianity. On another such occasion when the savages come to ravage on human flesh in Crusoe's 'land', Crusoe and Friday are successful in rescuing a white man who is a Spaniard and another savage who turns out to be Friday's father. Crusoe along with his new companions live harmoniously in the land. The Spaniard informs Crusoe that there are others like him who has suffered a wreck in the mainland. Crusoe is, however, doubtful regarding the treachery of the countrymen and asks the Spaniard to first bring a confirmation that they will remain faithful and work under his leadership. While the Spaniard and Friday's father went to win the trust of the other Spaniards, Crusoe rescues the Captain of an English ship from attacking mutineers. Collectively, they strike the ship convinces them to live in the island and set sail for England. On reaching England he learns that his family believed him to be dead and therefore did not leave him entitled to any property. He, however, claims the profits of his estate in Brazil. Eventually, he transports his wealth to England but avoids travelling by sea. Friday, his faithful companion, accompanies him and they endure one last adventure together, while crossing the mountains. Crusoe gets married and has three children.

2.3 MAJOR THEMES

2.3.1 Crime and Punishment/Moral allegory

Defoe's novel is the record of a notable spiritual pilgrimage across the sea of life, from a lawless course of living to true Christian repentance: a symbolic voyage from sin and folly to the gift of God's grace attained through sincere belief in Jesus Christ. A fundamental purpose of Defoe's novel is to set forth and magnify the great grace, love, and compassion of God the Father to the greatest sinner, who through Jesus Christ returns by an unfeigned, sincere faith to Him. The conversion of Robinson Crusoe reflects Daniel Defoe's own intimate knowledge of Puritan Christian doctrine- that is the case of the repenting prodigal, Robinson Crusoe, who, after a series of trials, begs the favour of God and is enabled through the gift of divine grace to contribute to his own physical survival on the island. The motives leading to the conversion of Crusoe were two: fear of the wrath of God, and love of God for His goodness.

Defoe is voicing and in a not so subtle way regarding his understanding and belief in the Puritan doctrine. Crusoe is the hallmark for the transformation from a sinner to a believer. The novel is an example of a religious allegory. On the surface it might seem as an innocent story of an adventurous journey but in reality it records and unearths the spiritual voyage of Crusoe. This novel, like the works of Bunyan and Milton, resounds of the Providence. Defoe sketches Crusoe's spiritual experiences through sin, repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. Crusoe is wanting in moral conscience: when he sells Xury as a slave and enslaves Friday. He has little or no emotional accountancy for anybody. Reverberating throughout the novel he is seen believing in the power of God over nature and his life. He believes that God is punishing him when he leaves home, deprived of the consent of his

father and the blessings of the Almighty. The shipwrecks, the misfortunes and trials that he faces throughout the novels are a response of the wrath of God to his unrighteousness. Prior to his isolation in the desolate island, we see Crusoe thanking and acknowledging God, feigning promises only to be delivered from his troubles. But it is only in the uninhabited island, during the twenty-eight years course that a steady prolonged relationship between God and Crusoe began. Crusoe religiously reads the Bible and thanks God at every opportunity. He praises and glorifies God for his protection in the island and Crusoe gradually transforms into a priest. Crusoe's mortality and human vanity is, however, documented in the episode of 'the footprint', where he is terror stricken and blames God for positioning him in such situation. He soon recovers and restores his quotient with God. The religious aspect of the book reaches a zenith when Friday is taught the religion and eventually converts. And when Friday exchanges his barbaric notions for Christianity, Defoe has Crusoe boldly assert that Friday became 'a good Christian, a much better than I,' in fact, 'such a Christian, as I have known few equal to him in my Life.'

2.3.2 Economic Individualism

The defining characteristic of Robinson Crusoe is his role as a complex symbol "of interdependent factors denoted by the term 'individualism' ". A concern of this novel is the individual value of each member of the society and considering them as proper subjects of serious literature.

Crusoe is a self-made man, the creator and demolisher of his own rules. He is not somebody to submit to the demands and orders of others. Crusoe embodies in himself the true essence of individualism discarding any domination or instruction that is not his. Crusoe's individualism also pushes him to make the best out of the worst. Even when he is on the island with no opportunity for

monetary transaction we see him bringing and hiding a chest full of gold coins into the sand from the wrecked ship. He was a successful business man and he owes the credits to himself. This ferocity with which Defoe pursues commerce has diminished his social relationships regarding which he doesn't seem to be either complaining or longing.

Defoe's protagonists are pursuers of money, and Crusoe is no exception. He is an adventurer with a passion for commerce: a modern man who has severed his 'traditional' expectations and responsibilities to venture out to the unknown for the love of thrill and money. Watt further comments that Crusoe's 'original sin' is actually the dynamic tendency of capitalism itself, whose aim is never merely to maintain the status quo, but to transform it incessantly. Leaving home, improving on the lot one was born to is a vital feature of the individualist pattern of life. Profit is Crusoe's only vocation, and the whole world is his territory. The chapter 'I Find my Wealth All About Me' screams loud and clear on the acquisitive nature of Robinson, the material aspect of the novel and his individualistic freedom.

2.3.3 Colonialism/Imperialism in Robinson Crusoe

In *Robinson Crusoe* representation of colonialism is clearly reflected through the relationship of the colonizer and the colonized, of colonized land and people, of colonialism from the viewpoint of trade, commerce and building empires. Defoe's 'master' narrative of Empire or his protagonist's relationship to Friday encapsulates the colonial myth and the dynamics of colonial relationship in general. Edward Said eludes Robinson Crusoe as 'a work whose protagonist is the founder of a new world, which he reclaims for Christianity and England'. Brett further adds that the novel indicates ways in which British colonial history shapes the genre of the novel. The colonial setting where Crusoe is swallowed

by storm and enslaved by Moors and shipwrecked on an uninhabited island facilitates the colonial setting and Crusoe's individualism as he comes to recognize the unique place he occupies as a British Protestant in a world in which he is surrounded by religious and cultural others. Crusoe transforms the island world through the agency of religion, language and particularly through a creative process of naming. He never asks Friday his real name but instead *gives* him the name based on the day he was rescued. He imposes his language, his civilized culture upon others lands in foreign societies. Through Crusoe, Defoe establishes the exceptional nature of the English subject. The trajectory of Crusoe's colonial experience is clear: master yourself and you master your destiny, master your destiny and you master others master these and you master the economic contingencies of life. Defoe's interest in cultivation concerns more than the domination of land; it is part and parcel of British and Western identity formation.

LET US STOP AND THINK

Two more sequels to *Robinson Crusoe*were written by Defoe: *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* and *Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe*. But these were not as famous as the first could receive.

2.5 SUMMING UP

This unit brings a classic to light, along with highlighting the major themes represented in the novel. The themes discussed reflect the age and the society in an extremely relatable work of fiction. The unit ends with a detailed discussion on the narrative technique used that helps make the novel more understandable and relatable.

2.6 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. How does Defoe create, in the novel, the illusion of reality? Justify your answer with illustrations from the text.
2. Comment on the story of Crusoe as man's conquest over nature.
3. Are the themes discussed above interdependent or can they exist independently without usurping Crusoe's character and the structure of the novel?
4. Share your views on the novel as a moral allegory.
5. Comment on how Crusoe was represented as a part of the capitalist society and discuss the importance of economic individualism as a theme.
6. Share your opinion about the representation of imperialism in the novel.
7. Are the themes- economic independence and spiritual revival of *Robinson Crusoe* interdependent?

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UNIT 3: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

UNIT STRUCTURE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit brings into focus the characterization skills of Defoe and how each character is developed in the novel with their unique sensibilities and traits. Defoe introduces his characters through their actions and personality, while making the readers create their own sensibility. The narrative technique used by the novelist was quite fresh for the times along with the use of the motifs and symbols. Realism played a very important role in Defoe's novel along with the autobiographical elements making Robinson Crusoe a "fictional autobiography".

3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The aim of this unit is to provide you

- a detailed summary and analysis of the major characters of Defoe's novel
- an understandingof the narrative technique/s employed.

- idea of the role of motifs and symbols in the novel
- the element of realism in the novel
- an understanding of the autobiographical elements in *Robinson Crusoe*

3.2 MAJOR CHARACTERS

Robinson Crusoe

The primary characteristic of Crusoe is that he is a self-made man. Defiant and disobedient by nature, he leaves his family and submits to a conformist career of trade. The Swiss philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau applauded Crusoe's independence in *Emile.* His undeterred spirit is captured when Crusoe does not give up or surrenders his fate to his perils but constantly plans to escape his bondage and profit from his associations. Crusoe is a man of reason who disassociates himself from emotional commitment and never misses opportunities that benefits him. This does not qualify him as a dishonest man. Hans W. Hausermann observes that his chief qualities where 'prudence, honesty, diligence, moderation, sobriety, and thrift.' Defoe has enveloped the character of Crusoe with essential qualities of the middle class and the ethics of the Puritan merchant which he mastered while his habitation in the island although his commercial enterprise where not so satisfactory he won riches through trade. Robinson Crusoe is methodical in all his executions. The dexterity with which he rescues the Spaniard and Friday demonstrates him as calculative and master of himself in challenging circumstances. Defoe had endowed Crusoe with a multitude of identities. He was a courageous person, a successful merchant, an excellent navigator, a spiritual guide, a farmer, an educator and a fighter. His mental and emotional strengths are arrested in his response to the Herculean trials he faces. He was a representation of the middle-class and was told so by his father,

who said: ‘that mine (Robinson’s) was the middle state, or what might be called the upper station of low life, which he had found by long experience was the best state in the world, the most suited to human happiness’

Hausermann displays that Robinson Crusoe obviously strives to regulate his life in a way most appropriate to the laws of reason. He plans beforehand what he is going to eat: ‘my food was regulated thus: I eat a bunch of raisins for my breakfast, a piece of the goat's flesh, or of the turtle, for my dinner . . . and two or three of the turtle's eggs for supper’ Crusoe was also a man of intensity. In all his beliefs and practices he enforced a certain degree of persuasion. Just like his passion and zeal for trade we also see him, over the course of the novel, converting into a spiritual man. According to Martin J. Greif the motives leading to conversion were two: fear of the wrath of God, and love of God for His goodness. The initial chapters show Crusoe to be morally vein and bankrupt. He had no conscience or guilt in doing the wrong things: selling Xury as a slave despite his assistance in his escape. This unrighteousness of Crusoe is entirely transposed during his solitude in the island. His carelessness towards God turns to faith and belief. He regularly starts to read the Bible and although on the occurrences of certain circumstances like the discovery of the footprint he questions the Providence but eventually reprimands himself. His ‘greatest victory’ as a Christian is when he is successful in converting Friday.

Hausermann further observes that Crusoe is decidedly self-assertive and thinks himself the centre of the world. He discovers the mysterious influence of the heavenly powers in his life: September 30th is the day on which all the remarkable events in his life fell. Thus he says: ‘The same day of the year I was born on viz., the 30th of September, the same day I had my life so miraculously saved twenty-six years after, when I was cast on

shore in this island; so that my wicked life and solitary life, holy life, both began on a day'. The self-complacent and egotistic attitude of Robinson Crusoe manifests itself strikingly in his exclamations of satisfaction at being different from the cannibals: 'When I came a little out of that part of the island, where he had seen the marks of the inhuman feastings of the savages, he looked up with the utmost affection of his soul, and, with a flood of tears in his eyes, gave God thanks, that had cast his lot in a part of the world where he was distinguished from such dreadful creatures as them.

Crusoe was an exquisite dominating commander. His rearing and taming of animals, Friday, the Spaniard, the English Captain, he demonstrates these qualities. He is fond of asserting his position as their absolute master. He is the born military commander: he has authority and knows how to impose it. In the episode where the attacks the cannibals with Friday while they are horribly feasting upon human flesh, he never loses his complete self-possession; and his orders to Friday are sharp, clear, and decisive.

Friday

Friday has a massive literary and cultural importance. All the other characters in *Robinson Crusoe* are sketched to highlight and endorse the potentials of Crusoe. Friday is a savage himself and a victim in the hands of the cannibals who was rescued by Crusoe just when he was to be feasted upon by the cannibals. Friday is a savage, and is thus resolved into, as Defoe puts it as the lowest degeneracy of human nature- the savage life. However Crusoe rescues him with the intention of 'befriending' him and later use his knowledge to explore the mainland.

'Friday was a comely, handsome fellow, perfectly well made, with straight strong limbs, not too large, tall and well-shaped, and… about twenty- six years of age.' He was smart,

merry and swift- footed. Crusoe is criticized for stealing Friday's identity. He teaches Friday not to greed after human flesh as that is not something to be eaten, he re- directs his palette to the taste of the meat of birds and animals, teaches him to shoot and navigate a boat. Friday learns English and by the end of the novel he turns quite adept in speaking broken English. He also converts to Christianity. He is a loyal servant and is good at following instructions. Friday is extremely dexterous and Crusoe praises this quality, 'he was a most dexterous fellow at managing'. There is a deep sense of patriotism in him too. On seeing his motherland from the mountain top he screams out with joy and excitement.

Despite the dexterity he posseses, he remains a faithful slave to Crusoe. Friday is Crusoe project of glorifying the English civilization. One cannot ignore the colonial prejudice that is etched in Friday's character. The colonial objectification of Friday cannot be overlooked from the structure of the novel.

3.3 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

The narrative style in *Robinson Crusoe* is of autobiographical fiction which is narrated in first person. Defoe's journalistic extensions can be traced in the way Crusoe records his activity and encounters. Defoe's eye for picturesque detail pervades throughout the novel. He weaves a very intense web of detailing, specific with dates and numbers that add to the entertainment and graphic value of the text. His implementation of vivid details and nautical language diminishes the fictional tone which compliments Defoe's prominent style of depending on reason. Other significant narrative technique used in Robinson Crusoe are memoir and epistolary. The book is presented as a memoir of Crusoe after his adventure and incorporates his diaries into the narrative. This memoir-style is reminiscing with wisdom

used to present a more realistic, immediate experience. Epistolary narrative is the style of using what appear to be authentic letters or documents in the narrative.

David Daiches mentions that Defoe was deficient both in creative imagination and sense of structure. Yet he had his own imagination and that was his ability to lie like the truth. His fiction writing was in tone with the literary needs of the developing English novel. Robinson Crusoe is the first full-length piece of prose fiction written in the plain style of early eighteenth century expository prose with continuous colloquial overtone. His diction is allusive and Biblical like Jonathan Swift. W. H. Hudson praises his 'plain, matter-of-fact, business-like way… his homely, easy, colloquial, style lent itself admirably to his purpose'.

3.4 MOTIFS AND SYMBOLS

SEA:

Baptism is a key aspect of Christianity. It is a practice by which a believer is either fully immersed or sprinkled with water announcing that he is a born-again Christian and that his old life/ habits have transformed into Biblical ethics. The transformations that take place in Crusoe are all affiliated to the sea. He encounters a number of shipwrecks and has spent a large part of his life in and around sea. In fact, the sea forms the pervading backdrop of the entire novel. The first wreck 'baptizes' Crusoe in becoming a promising merchant, the second wreck transforms him into a surviving slave and the third one in which he spends the longest amount of time in sea strengthens and intensifies his skills as a human being and also as a professional.

FOOTPRINT:

Chapter 14 reveals Crusoe's discovery of a man's footprint that terrifies him to death. The footprint is an announcement of the

presence of another human being in the island. The footprint is a symbol of Crusoe's simultaneous yearning and dreading of human companionship. His first reaction at the sight of the footprint is terror and Crusoe is seen hiding in his bower for days and even when he emerges he multiplies the defence around his bower. This novel is, of course, a social satire. The footprint is a symbol, of the years of confirmation, that man is the greatest threat to his own kind. Defoe makes Crusoe a brave and courageous man who has survived the impossibility of prolonged solitude, mastered and tamed the wild animals of the forest yet the impression of the foot in the shore challenges the sovereignty of Crusoe in the island. This episode is a hiccup in Crusoe's absolute obeisance to God. His years of faith and thankfulness to God are thrown out of the window and he is seen accusing God and fearing that the Devil himself has reincarnated into a man.

CROSS:

Crusoe has been on a tumultuous spiritual journey prior to his isolation in the island. His spirituality was switched on only during difficult circumstances and when his situation turned comfortable his interest in God also evaporated. When Crusoe is deserted in the island, one of the first things that he does is inscribe the dates in the calendar which is a cross that he carves out of wood. This cross bears a hallmark of the spiritual autobiography that the novel resounds of. The cross is an announcement of Crusoe's daily spiritual practice that he will undertake in the island. It is only in the island that he is steady and steadfast in his devotion to God which is asserted by the carving of dates in the cross.

FRIDAY:

The role of Friday is an indispensable example of how a White man views a native. The character of Friday encompasses

the decadence of the Empire. The novel was written to caress the White civilizations colonial ego and authority over the colonized and Friday is an embodiment of it. He is a project for Defoe who relishes in mastering and towering over him. He 'teaches' Friday education, tenets of the Christian God and is successful in eroding his real identity. The juxtaposing of education and Christianity with civilization and standards of an English society and thus, imparting these ideas into Friday screams of the colonial advocacy of Defoe. Friday is a symbol of the White's opinion of the natives of the land upon which they colonize. The relationship of Crusoe and Friday, the master and the slave, the teacher and the obedient student, the giver and the unquestioning recipient are a small frame reflecting vociferously the much larger colonial framework.

3.5 REALISM IN 'ROBINSON CRUSOE'

Defoe writes the story of Robinson based on his fascination with the adventure of Alexander Selkirk, and his actual experiences, as he was stranded on an uninhabited island for four years in Juan Fernandez. It was this fancy with Selkirk that initiated Defoe to write this fiction in the first place. The story is written in the form of an autobiographical fiction in the first person narrative. Defoe intends to diminish as extensively as he can, the distance between fiction and reality. Although largely fictional in nature, his narrative technique heaps the novel with realism. His narrative, with its diction and colloquial style, intends to make the reader realize that it is a true story and not a replica or fiction. He attempts to divorce fictitious elements by incorporating minute details. The picturesque and specificity of occurrences and imaginary intrinsic detailing in the novel surprisingly keeps the reader closer to believing that it is indeed a realistic novel and not some fictitious production. Defoe's narration never once makes the

reader question the narrator's credentials. The realistic effect of the novel is kept alive in the liberal description of dates and geographical names. The incorporation of the journal is a culmination to the journalistic and realist effect the author wants to create.

3.6 AUTOBIOGRPHICAL ELEMENTS IN ROBINSON CRUSOE

As apparent as it is, *Robinson Crusoe* is an autobiographical novel that accounts the journey of Crusoe- physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual. The first person narrative sets the autobiographical tone to the novel. According to David Marshall, from the first words of its title page, *The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner announces itself as a Life.* 'Written by Himself', announces that the narrative tells the life story of Robinson Crusoe, the story of his life, but it also tells the story of his Life, the story of the writing of his Life. He further observes that *Robinson Crusoe* narrates how Robinson Crusoe comes to find himself the author and subject of an autobiographical account. From the outset, the narrative is preoccupied with autobiography itself as Robinson Crusoe engages in repeated and at times almost compulsive acts of autobiography. The Preface of the novel declares, 'if ever the story of any private man's adventures in the world were worth making public, and were acceptable when published, the editor of this account thinks this will be so… The editor believes the thing to be a just history of fact: neither is there an appearance of fiction in it.'

The most obvious of these autobiographical acts is the journal that Crusoe writes while on the island. Post the shipwrecks, he maintained a calendar and a journal where he kept account of

himself and his days in various different forms, recording his events from the first day on the island, he promises to 'give a full account' of certain details, after he gives 'some little account of myself, and of my thoughts about living'. The autobiographical element is further extended when we learn that Crusoe was 'called Robinson Kreutznaer; but by the usual corruption of words in England, we are now called, nay we call ourselves, and write our name Crusoe, and so my companions always call'd me'.

The novel can also be translated as a spiritual autobiography of Robinson Crusoe. The wicked self with which he leaves home is transformed into a devoted Christian whose adherence and obeisance to the religion is seen in his relentless and successful attempts in preaching and eventually converting Friday. The novel is not a mere account of Crusoe's activities but it analyses and reflects sagaciously at Crusoe's past with a certain degree of insight and understanding.

LET US STOP AND THINK

• *Robinson Crusoe* became so popular that it gives birth to a new literary genre known as the Robinsonade.

• James Joyce, had criticized Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* for being a representation of British colonialism.

• Full Title · *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an uninhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself*. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates.

3.7 SUMMING UP

This unit in a very cohesive manner provides a critical analysis of the text –"Robinson Crusoe". It gives a detailed character description of the main characters in the novel, along with the narrative technique used by the novelist. The technique was followed by a detailed discussion on the motifs and symbols used that adds to the flow of the novel. The unit ends with discussions on "realism" and "autobiographical elements" in Robinson Crusoe making it a "fictional" and also a "spiritual" autobiography.

3.8 ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1. Daniel Defoe creates the minor characters only to uplift the character of Robinson Crusoe. Justify your answer with illustrations from the text.
2. 'Defoe can lie like the truth'. With assistance from the text, discuss Defoe's narrative technique in *Robinson Crusoe.*
3. Trace the autobiographical elements in *Robinson Crusoe.*
4. How does the symbol and motifs contribute to the structure of *Robinson Crusoe*?
5. Examine the significance of the foot-print episode in *Robinson Crusoe*.
6. All of Defoe's hero chase money.' Compare and contrast the character of Crusoe with Defoe's other heroes

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MODULE II: HENRY FIELDING

UNIT 4: READING *TOM JONES*

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.0 INTRODUCTION: HENRY FIELDING

A playwright, novelist, journalist and magistrate Henry Fielding was born on 22 April 1707, the eldest son of Edmund and Sarah Fielding. Edmund Fielding was a General in the army and came of a distinguished family: his great-grandfather Sir William Fielding was the Earl of Denbigh and one of his sons became the Earl of Desmond. From a young age Edmund earned plaudits for his performance on the battlefield. On the other hand, Henry's mother Sarah was the only daughter of Sir Henry and Lady Sarah Gould. Sir Henry Gould was not only one of the most distinguished lawyers of his time, he was also a King's Bench Justice1 from January 1699 till March 1710, when he passed away to the ages. Lady Sarah was the daughter of a wealthy and influential London merchant Richard Davidge. Eminent and influential, the Gouldswere opposed to their daughter's marriage to Edmund. This stemmed from the fact that despite his family background Edmund Fielding was known to possess a trait of intemperance2 that was commonly found in several generations of his family. Despite oppositions, however, Edmund and Sarah Fielding were married in 1706. Henry Fielding was born in 1707 in

his maternal grandparents' home at Sharpham Park, Somersetshire. He was baptized in the St. Benedict's Church at Somersetshire along with his sisters Catharine (born in July 1708) and Ursula (born in October 1709). Despite his displeasure at his daughter's decision, Sir Gould eventually reconciled with his daughter before the birth of his eldest grandson. However, he passed away before he could complete the process of procurement of a farm at East Stour in Dorset where he intended to settle his daughter and her children. Even the three thousand pounds, that he had left behind for his daughter as a legacy was insufficient to complete the procurement process. As a consequence Edmund Fielding had to pay another seventeen hundred fifty pounds to complete the purchase of this farm. Though this added to Edmund's financial tensions, his extravagant lifestyle was not affected. Henry Fielding's siblings Sarah (November 1710), Anne (June 1713), Beatrice (June 1714) and Edmund (April 1716) were baptized at Christ's church in East Stour. In 1718, just before Henry's eleventh birthday, Sarah Fielding passed away and Lady Gould accused her son-in-law of misappropriating the income from East Stour, which was meant to secure the future of her grandchildren. Edmund on his part left the children in the care of Henry's great aunt (Lady Gould's sister) Mrs. Katherine Cottington and moved to London; where in 1719 he married Ann Rapha. Ann was a Roman Catholic and she bore Edmund six sons, one of whom was John Fielding who would later become Henry's close friend and partner, both in business and magistracy. In 1720, to make up for heavy losses at the South Sea Bubble3 Edmund Fielding sold off a large part of the East Stour property which legally belonged to his first wife's children. In addition to Edmund's remarriage with a Roman Catholic, this became the reason that led Lady Sarah Gould to initiate a bitter legal battle with Edmund for the control of the East Stour farm and the custody of her grandchildren. This legal battle stretched for two years and saw numerous accusations and

counter accusations from both sides and revealed many uncomfortable aspects of the Fieldings' family life. All these had a distressing affect on the children, particularly on Henry who as a teenager was known to be "passionate, headstrong and unruly." (Rawson 4) In 1722, the Lord Chancellor delivered a judgment in favour of Lady Gould as a result of which she not only won the custody of her grandchildren, the East Stour farm was also to be held in trust for Henry and his siblings till Edmund, the youngest of the siblings, came of age. It was further decided that Henry's sisters would continue to stay at Mary Rookes' boarding school in Cathedral Close while Lady Gould and her sister Mrs. Cottington had the responsibility of young Edmund's upbringing. Henry was supposed to spend his vacations with his grandmother who now lived in the town of Salisbury in Wiltshire. By then, Henry had entered Eton College and till May 1739, when the East Stour farm was finally sold off, it remained his base and refuge in the countryside. In 1719, before he was sent to Eton College, he had lived for a while with his father and his new wife at Blenheim Street, St. James. It is possible that till 1722, Henry used to visit his father's house occasionally. From 1719 to 1724 Henry spent five important years at Eton during which he forged valuable friendships with George Lyttleton, William Pitt and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams. At that time, Eton was one of the leading educational institutions in England and its students generally belonged to the aristocracy and the gentry. Eton provided a curriculum that emphasized on a thorough knowledge of classical literature in Latin and Greek besides the Bible, for it was believed that such readings would equip the students to succeed in the leading professions besides providing them with "superior social and intellectual resources" (Rawson 4). In Salisbury, Henry formed a few important acquaintances: Charlotte Cradock, who he fell in love with and would become his wife some years later, and James Harris who was related to the Earl of Shaftesbury and would

remain Henry's closest friend; besides the Barkers, the Collier and the Hodley families. In 1725, soon after he'd left Eton Henry, then an eighteen year old, was involved in a failed attempt of eloping with a distant cousin Sarah Andrew at Lyme Regis. In 1726, in London, he was accused of assaulting one of his father's servants. However, it became apparent to young Henry that it was time he chose a profession. Although he had a modest maintenance for himself (courtesy his father) and although the Goulds were extremely fond of him (as of his siblings), there was no inheritance that would allow him to live in comfort. There were two professions that Henry could have chosen from—the army (which was his father's profession) and the law (the profession of his maternal grandfather and uncles). Since in eighteenth century England, family and connections mattered immensely for securing a future, Henry would have had no difficulty had he chosen either of these professions. But he decided to take up writing as a profession; and this decision can probably be seen as an act of rebellion against both his father and mother's families.

Henry's first attempts at authorship was a pamphlet which had two poems—*The Coronation, a Poem* and *An Ode on the Birthday*. These poems were written on the occasion of King George II's coronation and birthday (11 October 1727 and 30 October 1727 respectively). In 1728 his satiric poem The Masquerade was published. However, it was as a playwright that Fielding established himself. On 16 February 1728 his first play Love in Several Masques was performed at Drury Lane. Few days later, on 23 February, this play was published with a dedication to his maternal cousin Lady Mary Montagu. The play was directed by Colley Cibber, a powerful figure of London theatre of that time. Although the play was not a spectacular success for a twenty-two year old who had just made his foray in a new field, Fielding's achievement was nothing less than extraordinary. In March the same year, Henry enrolled himself in the University of Leiden (in

Holland) as a student of literature. However, this stint proved to be a brief one and in 1729 he returned to England. In August 1729 his first prose piece was published anonymously in Mist's Week Journal. His second play, another comedy, The Temple Beau was performed at Goodman's Fields on 26 January 1730. His third play The Author's Farce (30 March 1730) was comparatively more successful and had a run of forty-two performances at New Theatre in Haymarket. The same year witnessed two more successful dramatic ventures—Tom Thumb (24 April) and Rape Upon Rape: or The Justice Caught in His Own Trap (23 June). Both these plays were performed at Haymarket and were revived later on: while Tom Thumb was revived as The Tragedy of Tragedies: or The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great on 24 March 1731, Rape Upon Rape was revived on 4 December 1730 at Lincoln's Inn Fields as The Coffee-House Politician. Along with The Tragedy of Tragedies Fielding also wrote a farce The Letter Writers: or A New Way to Keep a Wife at Home. The same year, on 22 April, Fielding's satirical ballad opera The Welsh Opera: or The Grey Mare the Better Horse was performed at Haymarket. On 1 January 1732, Fielding's farcical play The Lottery opened at Drury Lane. From then on, he firmly established himself as the most successful dramatist of London. Some of his remarkable plays during this period include—The Modern Husband (14 February 1732), The Mock Doctor: or the Dumb Lady Cur'd (adaptation of Moliere, first performed on 23 June 1732), The Miser (adaptation of comedies by Moliere and Plautus, performed on 17 February 1733), all these plays performed at Drury Lane; Don Quixote in England (5 April 1734, performed at Haymarket); An Old Man Taught Wisdom: or, The Virgin Unmask'd (6 January 1735, performed at Drury Lane), Pasquin (5 March 1736) and The Historical Register for the Year 1736 (21 March 1737). When Pasquin was staged at the Little Haymarket Theatre, Henry headed his own company of actors. This is an example of his success as a

dramatist. However, his political satires increasingly displeased those in power. In fact, precipitated by Fielding's plays as well as an article like Some Thoughts on the Present State of the Theatres, and the Consequences of an Act to destroy the Liberty of the Stage, the Theatrical Licensing Act received royal assent and it became a law on 21 June 1737. This drew the curtains on Fielding's career as a playwright and he now embarked on a new journey in the legal profession.

On 1 November 1737, Fielding entered the Middle Temple and began preparing to qualify as a barrister. But his journalistic work did not cease during this period too. In 1739, under the pseudonym of Hercules Vinegar, Fielding along with James Ralph began a journal called The Champion. This journal published satirical writings and was inclined towards the opposition. Fielding's efforts to master this new pursuit (of law) and his maternal relatives' influence resulted in him being called to the bar at the Middle Temple in June 1740. In October the same year his translation of Adlerfelt's Military History of Charles XII, King of Sweden was published. In November that year, Henry's father Edmund Fielding was committed for debts; from then he would spend the rest of his life in an area called "The Rules" which was next to the Fleet Prison. In financial matters, Henry Fielding was a little similar to his father: he too was never an austere man. His marriage to Charlotte Craddock on 28 November 1734 had brought him an inheritance of fifteen hundred pounds and a larger inheritance followed when Charlotte's mother died in 1735. This along with the money he earned from his dramatic successes and the income from East Stour meant that the Fieldings initially had a luxurious life. Gradually, however, financial constraints began to emerge as his family grew and the inheritance began to wane. Problems multiplied when his dramatic career came to an end. Between 6 and 20 March 1741, Fielding was even confined to the bailiff's sponging house 4 for debt. In his early years as a lawyer

Fielding did not achieve the success he had achieved as a playwright though he managed to keep his family from grinding poverty. In this, his political writings played a considerable role.

It was also around the same time that Fielding began to experiment with fiction, which as a genre was in a nascent phase at that time. Samuel Richardson's epistolary novel *Pamela: or, Virtue Rewarded* had just been published in 1740-41. This novel, about a virtuous maid (Pamela) who wins the heart and an offer of marriage from her master who had earlier been making unwanted advances towards her, had become quite popular. The readership, that comprised a sizeable population of the emerging middle class and included a large number of women, embraced this new form of writing. Richardon's novel stirred Fielding into writing a parody of *Pamela* titled *An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews* (1741). However, it was his next novel *The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews, and of His Friend, Mr. Abraham Adams; Written in Imitation of the Manner of Cervantes* (1742) that brought him success as a novelist. This novel, termed 'a comic epic-poem in prose' was also the first comic novel in the English language. In 1743, Fielding's *Miscellanies* was published in three volumes, which included the novel *The History of the Life of the Late Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great.*

However, things had never been easy for Henry Fielding. He lost his daughter Charlotte in 1742, just before the birth of his son Henry. In 1744 Charlotte passed away. In that hour of crisis his sisters, who were in London by then, supported him as did his close friend James Harris. During that entire decade, Fielding tried to juggle between his legal career, political journalism, family problems and his experiments with the genre of the novel. On 27 November 1747, he married his deceased wife's maid Mary Daniel, who was pregnant at the time of their marriage. Though Fielding addressed her in affectionate terms later on, this marriage when it took place became scandalous to the point of ridicule at the

hands of his political enemies, who were not few in number. In 1748, to supplement his income, Fielding under the name of 'Madame de la Nash' opened a satirical puppet show at Panton Street, near Haymarket. In this he was assisted by his wife and a puppet master. Things gradually began to improve when in October 1748 Fielding was appointed to the Commission of the Peace for Westminster. In this George Lyttelton and the Duke of Bedford had major roles to play, particularly Lyttelton who was now an important figure in the new government. Soon, Fielding was appointed to the position of the Justice of Peace for Middlesex too. In 1749, his novel The History of Tom Jones a Foundling, begun in the mid-1740s was published, with a dedication to Lyttelton. This novel became a bestseller and this success further unsettled his enemies. This also contributed towards accusations on Fielding of unscrupulousness in executing his duty which was far from the truth, for unlike many of the earlier Justices of Peace, Fielding proved to be scrupulous and efficient. At that time, the Justice of Peace had twin responsibilities of administering the law and detecting and controlling crime. In a city like London, such a post was of immense importance; with his team which comprised his half-brother John, assistant Saunders Welch and clerk Joshua Brogden, Fielding succeeded in curbing the growth of crime and maintaining peace and order in the areas under his jurisdiction, particularly in London. Fielding is also said to have begun the first organized police force with salary and other incentives. At the same time, he also wrote pamphlets like *Enquiry into the Causes of the Late Increase of Robbers* (19 January 1751). In 1749, Henry and John Fielding opened the Universal Register Office, which provided varied services including "employment, housing, financial advice, and product placement" (Rawson, 14). On 19 December 1751, Fielding's last novel Amelia was published. This novel was severely criticized and never attained the popularity of his earlier novels. This response disillusioned Fielding and he

decided not to write any other novel. In 1752, he began a periodical *The Covent –Garden Journal*, "a periodical of literary, social, and moral comment designed also to promote the Universal Register Office and to publicize HF[Henry Fielding]'s activities as magistrate" (Battestin xxvii) . In 1752, Examples of the Interposition of Providence in the Detection and Punishment of Murder was published with an introduction and conclusion by Fielding. In 1753, A Proposal for Making an Effectual Provison for the Poor was published. In March 1754, a revised version of Jonathan Wild was published. Gradually his health began to bother and in June that year he wrote his will; after which he left for his final journey to Lisbon, accompanied by his wife, his daughter by his first wife Harriet, Margaret Collier (friend and acquaintance from his Salisbury days) besides a couple of servants. On 8 October 1754, Henry Fielding breathed his last and was buried in the English Cemetery at Lisbon.

LET US STOP AND THINK

King's Bench Justice—a judicial position under the Chief Justice in England.

Samuel Pepys' Diaries (1667) notes that two of Edmund's uncles were involved in a drunken brawl once over a disagreement in which one of the brothers was killed and the other sent to prison.

South Sea Bubble—a speculation bubble or "mania" (according to Encyclopedia Britannica) that destroyed many investors who had invested on the South Sea Company, founded in 1711 to trade with Spanish America. The trade mostly involved slave trade.

Sponging house— in the United Kingdom, a place where people

who are charged with debt are temporarily kept confined.

4.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit will introduce you to one of the early masters of English fiction, Henry Fielding. To this end, this unit will:

- acquaint you with the novelists of seventeenth century
- Familiarize you with the life and works of Henry Fielding
- Enable you to read critically Fielding's *Tom Jones*

4.3 READING 'THE HISTORY OF TOM JONES, A FOUNDLING'

Book I: The first chapter of Book I begins with the author-narrator addressing the reader. He presents himself as a Restaurateur; as a consequence his work i.e., the book is a 'feast' and the reader is his customer or patron. Like a customer in a restaurant, the reader too can choose from a menu, which the omniscient author-narrator says would be provided in the form of an introductory chapter at the beginning of each Book. Fielding thus seeks to involve the reader in the happenings that would unfold in novel; thereby revealing a degree of self-consciousness as an author. Of course, unlike the first chapter, where the author-narrator addresses the reader in third person, in the remaining chapters of Book I, he addresses the reader directly. Also Fielding addresses a single reader and not readers which further underlines how the new genre of novel contributed towards the emergence of the act of reading as a private experience.

In **Book I** the reader is introduced to two important characters—Squire Allworthy and his lone sibling Bridget Allworthy. They are a distinguished family of Somersetshire in

western England. Bridget is thirty years old and unmarried. She is not very beautiful and is described as a 'very good sort of woman', something that turns out to be ironical as the narrative unfolds. The squire, upon returning home tired after some business in London, retires to his bed. However, as soon as he pulls back the sheets he finds a baby boy, wrapped in linen, fast asleep. This shocks the squire and he urgently rings the bell, summoning Mrs. Deborah Wilkins, his old servant. Upon learning the reason for her master's haste, the maid delivers a monologue on unchaste women, advising him to leave the baby at a parish door. However, as Mrs. Wilkins delivers her monologue, the sleeping baby clasps a tiny hand around the squire's finger and his heart fills with love for the infant. He now orders his servant to take the baby with her, prepare food for him and find some proper clothes for him the next day. At once, the servant changes her tone and calls the infant a "sweet little Infant". The next morning, at breakfast, he tells his sister that he has a gift for her. But Miss Bridget, his sister, is surprised to find the gift to be a baby boy. Upon learning of how her brother found it on his bed, she calls the unknown mother nasty names but shows some compassion for the child. All the female servants in the house are suspected but immediately acquitted by Mrs. Wilkins. Bridget Allworthy agrees to look after the baby at her brother's request. However, as soon as the Squire departs, Bridget cannot restrain herself from praising the child and kissing him. She orders Mrs. Wilkins to prepare one of the best rooms in the house for the child's nursery and arrange other necessities for the child. Of course, she does not forget to comment sarcastically on her brother's act of supporting 'vice'. Soon, Mrs. Wilkins sets out to find about the mother of the baby boy in the parish. She discusses this with an old woman who is the same age as Mrs.Wilkins and decides that the mother must be Jenny Jones. Jenny, though not beautiful, has the trait of 'understanding' –for her master, a schoolteacher had endeavoured to teach her Latin—making her

neighbours envious, as the narrator hints. Another reason is that Jenny had spent some time at Allworthy's house nursing Bridget Allworthy out of some illness. When summoned, Jenny accepts that the baby boy is her child, and is upbraided publicly. When this is conveyed to Squire Allworthy, he is both surprised and saddened because he had had a good impression of Jenny and had intended to settle her respectably with a neighbouring Curate. Jenny appears before Squire Allworthy, who delivers a long monologue on the dangers of a woman endangering her chastity herself. Nonetheless he appreciates her decision of not abandoning the child. But Jenny refuses to name the father of the child, saying that she is under a solemn oath not to reveal the same. The reader finds Miss Bridget and Mrs. Wilkins eavesdropping on the conversation. While Mrs. Wilkins criticizes the squire's leniency towards Jenny, Miss Bridget smiles (a rare occurrence, according to the narrator) and praises Jenny for confessing her crime; at which Mrs. Wilkins praises Jenny too. They end their discussion with a tirade against beauty and compassion towards plain-looking women who are deceived by deceitful men. When the neighbours learn that Squire Allworthy has simply banished Jenny from the parish, they hurl abuses at her. However, since Jenny is far away from such criticism, the neighbours redirect their diatribe at Allworthy, doubting the venerable squire to be the father of the child. Of course, at this juncture, the narrator states that henceforth the squire is to appear innocent for the rest of the narrative. Elaborating on the squire's nature further, the narrator informs the reader that although the squire appreciates and encourages men of merit and learning, his doors are open for all kinds of visitors, allowing them to enjoy his hospitality as long as they wish. One such visitor is Dr. Blifil, who wins Squire Allworthy's pity—for Dr.Blifil became a doctor under his father's pressure. Dr. Blifil rarely practices medicine(since this profession is not to his liking) and instead has great inclination towards religion, or rather, as the

narrator states, the appearance of religion. Since they share similar views on religion, a romance blossoms between Dr. Blifil and Bridget Allworthy. However, Dr. Blifil is married and so he summons his brother Captain Blifil to marry Bridget Allworthy. This might seem puzzling to the reader because Dr. Blifil did not really have great friendship with his brother. Captain Blifil's father wanted him to be a priest but he died before his son's ordination and the priest-to-be entered the army. However, he had to resign from the army after an argument with the Colonel. The narrator informs the reader that ever since, Captain Blifil has devoted himself to Biblical studies in the countryside. The narrator speculates over the reasons for which Dr. Blifil decided to set up a match between Bridget and his brother. Only a week after his arrival, Captain Blifil begins to impress Bridget Allworthy and soon she falls for him. And when he gauges this, Captain Allworthy too pretends to respond to her charms, though in reality he has fallen in love with Squire Allworthy's estate. Of course, he is afraid whether the squire would approve of his sister's marriage with a much poorer man; and so he hides his brief courtship from Allworthy. Eventually Bridget accepts Captain Blifil's proposal and Dr. Blifil takes up the responsibility of breaking the news of Captain Blifil and Bridget's marriage to Squire Allworthy. However, the squire is already aware of it and wholeheartedly supports the marriage despite the Captain's weak financial condition. After he marries Bridget and becomes rich, Captain Blifil's behaviour towards Dr. Blifil changes completely as he begins to treat his brother with contempt. He asks Dr. Blifil to leave the house. A desolate Dr. Blifil departs to London where he dies with a broken heart.

Book II: According to the narrator, this History would be a different kind of history. He claims that he is the 'founder of a new province of writing', and therefore he will operate according to his own laws. Of course, he adds, this does not mean that he will

tyrannize his readers and render them slaves. Rather, he hopes the readers would recognize his authority as they read the novel.

Eight months after their marriage, Bridget Blifil gives birth to a baby boy. The happy Squire Allworthy declares that this boy would be brought up along with Tom, the abandoned baby boy that the squire had found on his bed. Allworthy treats the baby as if he were his own son and names him Thomas, after himself and becomes his godfather. This Thomas is more widely known as Tom. The Blifils are objected to this though they eventually relent. In this Captain Blifil has the greatest objection because he is envious of the squire's attention to Tom. Mrs. Wilkins meanwhile discovers that Tom's father is Patridge, the teacher who had taught Latin to Jenny. Patridge and his wife have no children after nine years of their marriage. The plain-looking Jenny had been chosen by his wife, who is always afraid that her husband would be inclined towards beautiful women. Jenny was allowed to study Latin apart from her housework. However, one day, the seed of suspicion is sown in her mind and certain circumstances seem to confirm her doubts. She threatens Jenny with a knife and orders her to leave. Her terrified husband tries to placate her and is secretly happy because Jenny had begun to excel in her studies and exceed him. Soon rumours begin to pour in that Jenny has given birth to an illegitimate child. Since it is less than nine months since she had expelled Jenny, Mrs. Patridge suspects the child to be her husband's. She assaults her husband publicly and accuses him of beating her while he remains silent. The news spreads like wildfire and when Mrs. Wilkins learns this, she informs Captain Blifil hoping to please him while she hides this news from both Allworthy and Bridget. Captain Blifil drops the news of Tom's father in the course of a discussion on charity with Squire Allworthy, who summons Mrs. Wilkins who confirms it. The squire is shocked and summons the Patridges. When it is learnt that Jenny has run away with a recruiting officer, Jenny and Patridge's

guilt seems to be proven and Mrs. Patridge wins the case. Patridge loses his annuity, becomes poor and Mrs. Patridge dies of small pox soon after; after which Patridge leaves the parish. Allworthy's affections for Tom does not wane, however. This upsets Captain Blifil because he fears losing out on a bigger share of Allworthy's inheritance. Meanwhile, Captain and Bridget Blifil's relationship has degenerated to one of hatred, since the Captain no longer has any need for Bridget. The greedy Captain Blifil reads different books to find out how long Allworthy is expected to survive before he can enjoy the squire's property. However, one day, while contemplating on these matters, he himself dies of apoplexy. Bridget remains bedridden for a month out of sorrow and the squire commissions an epitaph for the deceased Captain. Among other things, Book II highlights Squire Allworthy's flaw of being an insufficient judge of cunning men. He is unable to discern (especially when required) the schemings of men. At the same time, this book also highlights the squire's unfailing love for Tom, which only deepens with time. In this, he presents himself as an exception and an almost radical figure in the class-conscious eighteenth century English society.

Book III depicts the maturation of Tom from the age of fourteen till nineteen. Tom is portrayed in contrast to Master Blifil, who emerges as his foil in the novel. Tom grows up to be a young man with good looks and equally appreciable virtues: generosity of nature, honesty, and a pleasant disposition. These virtues are, however, overshadowed by the approbations of Mr. Thwackum, the tutor and Mr. Square, who has been living with Squire Allworthy for sometime; besides Master Blifil who hates Tom right from his childhood. Square and Thwackum are always on the opposite sides of an argument, particularly those pertaining to religion and philosophy. However, they are united in their hypocrisy, their abhorrence for Tom and their support for Blifil. Squire Allworthy's compassion for and support of Tom continues

unabated even in situations where efforts are made to show him in a poor light. This book also presents Tom's growing friendship with their neighbour Squire Western, who remains engrossed in his hunting expeditions and thoughts of hunting expeditions.

Book IV: In the first chapter, the narrator stresses that his story is different from other stories due to its vital ingredient of truth. Of course, at the same time, he does not want this story or the history of Tom Jones to be so boring as to become unpalatable to the reader without the aid of ale. This statement is interesting because, firstly Tom Jones is a work of fiction and by calling it a history the author-narrator blurs the line of demarcation between history and fiction, which were not as differentiated as in the later stages of the development of the novel.

In this Book, the reader is introduced to Sophia Western, Squire Western's daughter and the heroine of the novel. The narrator initially presents her through comparison with several female characters from literature as well as high society. Finally, the narrator gives a description of her physical features, adding that she is as beautiful from within as she is from outside. Sophia had been educated by her aunt, who as the subsequent chapters reveal, is a woman with a modern outlook on life. Sophia is eighteen years old when she first appears in the narrative. She had lost her mother at a young age and is fond of her father. The narrator then goes into a flashback to depict the relations between the Westerns and the Allworthys, who were neighbours. The three children—Tom, Blifil and Sophia—grew up together as playmates, though Sophia was always more fond of Tom than of Blifil. Blifil too, in turn did not lose any opportunity of undoing what Tom had done. This way, even at that young age, Tom and Blifil seemed to have an unspoken rivalry, though it was from Blifil's side more than Tom's. Of course, whenever some mishap occurred and the accusation was aimed at the innocent Tom, Squire Allworthy forgave Tom or overlooked the matter, for he firmly believed in

Tom's goodness. Blifil, on the other hand never seemed to tire in his attempts at maligning Tom in front of others. Once Tom captured a bird for Sophia and Blifil released it; after which Sophia developed a kindness for Tom and hatred towards Blifil. These sentiments are not much altered when Sophia returns to her father's house as an eighteen year old. Squire Western enjoys Tom's company and allows him unrestrained access to his house. Upon her return, Sophia's acquaintance with Tom is not only renewed, it only grows stronger. Sophia gradually nurtures feelings for Tom who is now twenty years old. Tom's affections are meanwhile bounded with Molly Seagrim, the second eldest child of Black George, the former servant of the Allworthy estate and one of the most beautiful girls in the country. She is the reason why Tom does not reciprocate Sophia's affection. Of course he stays away from Molly so as not to rob her of her chastity but Molly thinks otherwise. And yet, the upright Tom feels guilty about seducing Molly and so he feels he cannot desert her in poverty. Molly becomes pregnant and causes an uproar in the parish. Soon after, while dining with the Westerns and Parson Supple, Tom is overwhelmed by Sophia's radiating beauty. However, when the parson remarks that Molly Seagrim is pregnant and she is being sent to Bridewell, Tom excuses himself and leaves immediately. Seeing this, Squire Western remarks that Tom could be the father of the child and Sophia's suspicion too is aroused. To prevent Molly's departure, Tom accepts before Allworthy that he is the father of Molly's unborn child. Hearing this, the squire sends Molly home and lectures Tom on the importance of chastity, which as the narrator says is not much different from the lectures on woman's chastity he had delivered to Jenny years ago. However, Allworthy appreciates Tom's honesty. Meanwhile Thwackum and Square contrive to, and succeed in sowing the seeds of suspicion in Allworthy's mind about Tom. That night, Sophia does not sleep well and next morning her maid Mrs. Honour informs her that Tom

is the father of Molly's child. Sophia does not want to hear about it, and decides that the only cure for her infatuation with Tom is to visit her aunt. However, before this happens Sophia is saved gallantly by Tom when she falls off a horse while reluctantly accompanying her father to a hunting expedition. Tom breaks his left arm trying to save Sophia . While Western is happy that his daughter is saved, Sophia is secretly thrilled at Tom's bravery. After Tom has been attended to by the surgeon, Mrs. Honour praises Tom's handsome features and his noble manners, adding that Sophia is in love with him. She even informs Sophia that she had seen Tom kiss Sophia's muff passionately.

Book V: In the first chapter of Book V, the narrator prides in founding a 'prosai-comi-epic-Writing'. He says that these prefatory chapters are historical and philosophical treatises. He then turns his attention to critics who, he says, believe that they can create rules for the authors whereas in reality such rules only inhibit the genius. Further, the introductory chapters in each book are intended to excite the reader so that he is prepared to read the comic parts. As Tom stays with the Westerns, recuperating, news comes that Allworthy is ill. The different characters react in different ways to his illness. Of these, Tom's reaction seems the most genuine. He is aggrieved when he sees Squire Allworthy ill and refuses any share in the Squire's property (left to him in his will). On the other hand, Mrs. Wilkins, Thwackum and Square are unhappy over the inheritance left for them by the supposedly-dying Squire Allworthy. In this book, Tom proves himself to be a man of virtuous action rather than words. It also witnesses Tom and Sophia's deepening love. There are many images of war—in relation to love, disease and domestic squabbles—in this book.

Book VI: In continuation of the previous book, this book explores the notion of love even further. The narrator defines love as follows—there are minds that do not experience love, lust cannot control or give direction to true love, all that love want is

self-satisfaction, and when love acts toward one of the opposite sex, it appeals to lust for help. At Squire Western's house, everyone celebrates Allworthy's recovery but Sophia. Though Her father characteristically does not notice Sophia's state of melancholy, Mrs. Western, figures out that Sophia is in love. She, however, thinks that Sophia is in love with Blifil. Hearing this Western is angry at Sophia for falling in love without his permission. When he finally agrees to the match he worries that Allworthy will not agree to it, since money or wealth do not seem to have any effect of Allworthy. On the other hand, Sophia suspects that her aunt has realized her feelings for Tom, and she attempts to conceal her feelings by paying more attention to Blifil than to Tom. Squire Western invites Allworthy to dinner and proposes a match between Sophia and Blifil. Allworthy considers it to be a decent alliance and is effusive in his praise of Sophia. And yet he declares that he will ratify the alliance only if Sophia and Blifil profess their feelings for each other. This surprises and makes Wetsern unhappy. Allworthy proposes the match to Blifil, but he says that he has not once entertained the thought of marrying Sophia. Allworthy disapproves of Blifil's tepid response but Blifil cleverly gives a learned talk 'Love and Marriage' at which Allworthy seems satisfied and he and Western arrange an opportunity for what they suppose 'the young lovers' to court. Mrs. Western informs Sophia that Squire Western has already spoken to Allworthy, who has agreed with all his heart. Sophia is filled with unexpected happiness and remarks that (her lover) despite being low born has great qualities. This makes her aunt realise that Sophia is in love with Tom and not Blifil as she had supposed. This angers her at which Sophia begs Mrs. Western not to tell her father her secret. Her aunt agrees on the condition that Sophia will agree to meet Blifil that afternoon. Mrs. Honour the maid eavesdrops the conversation and encourages Sophia to make her own choice of partner and marry that man whom she believes is

the best. Blifil and Sophia meet later that afternoon and have an awkward courtship. After she returns home, Tom appears as a messenger of Blifil to Sophia. He admits that he loves Sophia and hopes for a response, at which Sophia says that disobeying her father would ruin her and Tom both. Meanwhile, Mrs. Western instigates her brother against Tom and he goes and criticizes Allworthy for giving license to a 'bastard'. Allworthy is upset to hear of Tom's 'misconducts', particularly his supposed ill-treatment of Blifil and asks Tom to explain himself. Tom is eventually banished from Allworthy's household and he decides to leave the parish. Sophia too soon afterwards follows Tom's trail in the hope of meeting him and also to avoid the impending marriage with Blifil. The end of this book marks a shift in the setting of the novel.

Book VII: In the first chapter of Book VII, the narrator dwells upon the frequent comparisons between the world and the stage. He adds that people with the most awful characters are also the ones who criticize others the most and the loudest. This book presents Tom setting off on his journey to Bristol as Sophia too begins her preparations to run away from home, her unrelenting father and impending marriage to Blifil. This way, the picaresque element emerges and henceforth, the reader is acquainted with the adventures of both Tom and Sophia. Tom at the time of his departure is unable to meet Squire Allworthy, for his belongings are sent to him with a letter from Blifil which states that the Squire does not desire to speak to him anymore. Tom sets off with a heavy heart. Sophia on the other hand decides to disobey her father and her aunt over their decision to marry her to Blifil. This refusal angers Squire Western and he even swears at her. The Squire and his sister Mrs. Western decide to have Sophia and Blifil married at the earliest. Blifil agrees readily for he has his lascivious eye on Sophia and secretly, he thinks he has triumphed over Tom. Sophia,

however, disrupts these plans by running away to London. In this, she is accompanied by her maid Mrs. Honour (who has been promised monetary rewards by Sophia), who gets herself discharged from service due to which her support of Sophia bears no fear of punishment from Squire Western. Sophia agrees to the marriage to Blifil and a happy Squire Western gives her a generous bank bill as a reward. With this, Sophia flees from home. At Bristol Tom meets the army; a fight erupts between some of the soldiers and Tom has to pay to bring an end to the brawl. He also meets a Sergeant at Bristol who tells him imaginary stories about the war. These episodes provide comic relief and some respite before the reader learns about Tom and Sophia encounter their troubles.

Book VIII: In the prefatory chapter, the narrator says that writers should incorporate both possibility and probability in their depiction of events but should refrain from bringing in supernatural agents like fairies and elves. This way, the narrator sets his novel apart from the epics of the earlier times.

Tom's stay at Bristol ends with the landlady snubbing him when he declares he has no money. When he hears that Sophia had stayed at her house several times, Tom narrates his story unaware that the landlady was saying was only a half-truth. Tom engages in a fight and is injured but the surgeon who comes to treat him leaves in anger when the landlady tells him that Tom has no money. After Tom wakes up from his sleep, a barber called little Benjamin arrives to shave him. When he hears the landlady's distorted story of Tom's past he states that he has heard Tom is Squire Allworthy's son. Later on, little Benjamin who is actually Patridge living under the pseudonym, tells Tom that he had heard about his good deeds to Black George. Tom then tells little Benjamin his whole story. At this, the narrator warns that there is always a difference between the ways in which a person recounts his own story and an adversary describes the same story. Patridge

too reveals his identity before Tom and decides to help Tom with his savings. Patridge thinks that Tom is actually Squire Allworthy's son and has probably run away from home. He plans to send Tom home by any means and thereby be restored in Allworthy's favour. They set off to Gloucestershire to join the war and as the journey progresses, Patridge becomes Tom's servant. The reader is acquainted with a number of characters, from the landlady of the inn Bell, Mrs. Whitefield whose courteous behaviour towards Tom changes to rudeness when she hears that he is a bastard child. Through this, Fielding alludes to the emphasis given by people on outward appearances rather than innate goodness and also the hypocritical nature of people who would bow down to any person they suppose is gentry but would not hesitate to be rude to someone belonging to the lower classes. The last five chapters of this book comprise the Man of Hill's story, making it the longest of the narrator's digressions in the novel.

Book IX: The narrator informs the reader that the prefatory chapters have been incorporated into the narrative to provide a benchmark to enable the reader to decide truth from falsity. He terms himself a historian and an author like him needs to have genius, knowledge and a good heart. By laying down the need to have a good heart to write a history like the present one, the narrator draws home the moral focus of the novel.

Book IX is one of the shortest books in this novel with seven chapters. Tom rescues a middle-aged woman from the clutches of a man who was trying to force himself on her. Tom beats the man before realizing that he is a soldier with whom he had earlier joined the army. Tom carries the half-naked woman (who refuses Tom's offer of covering her with his coat) to an inn, where the landlady refuses them admission, saying that the inn is a respectable place. Patridge arrives in time and saves Tom from the fury of the landlady. Meanwhile the half-naked lady and the landlady's chambermaid engage in a brawl which stops with the

arrival of a lady with a servant. After sometime, a Sergeant arrives with three musketeers asking if the half-naked woman, now covered with a pillowcase, is the lady of Captain Waters. Immediately the landlady's behaviour changes and she now treats the woman, Mrs. Waters with respect. However, Mrs. Waters is attracted to Tom, who is, according to the narrator, one of the most handsome young men in the world. Tom eventually succumbs to the desires of the flesh. It soon emerges that Mrs. Waters had developed an intimacy with Northerton with whom she had planned to elope. But Northerton tried to rob her and it was under those circumstances that Tom had found her. Thus what initially sounds like rape turns out to be a case of robbery. The landlady goes to have tea with Mrs. Waters and Tom and praises the beauty of the young lady who'd just left. Tom, remembering Sophia, sighs not aware that it was indeed Sophia and Mrs. Honour. Thus, before they finally come together, Tom and Sophia's paths cross each

other on several occasions.

Book X: The narrator compares critics to reptiles and says that the reader should not judge the work hastily; nor should he mind if he finds characters too similar because it is quite natural. Human beings do share affinity in their natures among themselves and only a good critic can distinguish between closely aligned characters.

Most of the characters of the novel converge at Upton in Book X. An Irish gentleman called Fitzpatrick arrives at the inn at Upton where Tom is staying. He is in pursuit of his wife, who has run away from him and who, incidentally, is Squire Western's niece. Fitzpatrick barges into a room, and finding Tom apologizes, but when he sees a woman's clothing strewn all around the room, he attacks Tom. Sophia arrives at that inn with Mrs. Honour, both under different names. Mrs. Honour calling herself Mrs. Abigail learns from a maid about Tom's presence. Upon learning this,

Sophia asks Mrs. Honour to seek an appointment with Tom who is, however, informed by a drunk and tired Patridge that Tom is in bed with a woman. Sophia bribes the same maid to check whether Tom is in his bed and gets the confirmation that he is not. Sophia also learns how Patridge had been telling everyone a convoluted story of her love with Tom,which put Sophia in a poor light. The saddened Sophia declares that even if she forgives Tom's behaviour, she cannot forgive his act of abusing her name. she leaves soon, leaving behind her muff with a message for Tom. When Tom learns this next morning, and finds the muff, he is distressed. To make matters worse, Squire Western arrives with Parson Supple and finding his daughter's muff with Tom, charges him and calls for a trial. In this, Tom is acquitted and he sets off soon after Squire Western sets off to find his daughter. The narrator going back to the past tells the reader how Sophia escaped from her father's home and had decided to follow Tom, in hope of finding him. The reader also learns how the shrewd Squuire Western had pursued Tom's trail because Patridge had announced Tom at all the places they had halted.

Book XI: Continuing his engagement with critics, the narrator says that the word critic denotes judgment. However, most critics are not true judges because they simply try to find faults with the books and authors they critique. Of course, there have been good critics like Aristotle and Horace, or Dacier and Bossu. Critics need to have mercy and not condemn an entire work if they only find fault with one part of it. This discussion of mercy and judgement are recurring concerns in this novel.

As they travel towards London, Sophia meets her cousin Harriet, who is Fitzpatrick's wife. They reach an inn, where the two ladies Sophia and Harriet are mistaken to be 'rebel ladies' and Sophia particularly is mistaken to be Jenny Cameron, who is supposedly the lover of the Jacobite leader Bonnie Prince Charlie. Though the landlord of the inn does not support the Jacobites, he

flatters the ladies and treats them well because he has heard that the Jacobites have gained an upper hand in London. At the inn, Sophia and Harriet tell their stories, reminiscing their childhood days at their aunt Mrs. Western's house. Harriet tells Sophia of how her husband ill-treated her, which distresses Sophia. Sophia does not utter a word about Tom while narrating her story. An Irish gentleman arrives: he was the man who had helped Harriet escape from Ireland. He offers to take the two ladies in his coach. Sophia discovers that she had lost the money her father had given her. However, she maintains a cheerful disposition, which the narrator effusively praises.

Book XII: This book traces Tom and Patridge's journey ever since they left the inn at Upton. Patridge now wants to return home while the Tom says that he is homeless and wishes to join the army. Patridge delivers a speech to desist Tom from joining the army because he is terrified of getting injured or dying in war. As they continue their journey, they meet a beggar whom Tom gives a shilling. The beggar in turn gives him a pocketbook which, to Tom's surprise, in Sophia's pocket-book. The pocket-book contained the hundred pounds that Sophia had lost. At an inn, Tom and Patridge meets the young boy who had acted as Sophia's guide. Though Tom does not speak a word about Sophia he manages to convince the boy to take them to London on horseback. They set off before the sun dawns and lose their way. Eventually they find a way out when they find an Egyptian gypsy wedding in a barn. Tom and Partridge travel from Coventry to St. Albans, which Sophia had left two hours earlier. Partridge wants to borrow some of Sophia's money but Jones refuses, saying this would be wrong on their part. They meet a stranger who asks if he can join them on their way to London. Tom welcomes him into the group. However, near Highgate this man takes out a pistol and reveals himself to be a robber. Jones bravely grabs hold of the pistol, at which the terrified man asks him to have mercy on him; since this

was his first attempt at robbery and he had a poor hungry family to feed. Jones forgives him and gives him two guineas.

Book XIII: In the opening chapter the narrator admits to being tempted by the lure of fortune and money to write this novel, which he hopes will be reckoned in times to come. He also entreats the assistance of genius, humanity, learning, and experience in writing this novel.

Tom and Patridge arrive in London. However, being new to the place, they are unable to find the house of the Irishman who brought Sophia and Harriet to London. The next day, Tom arrives at the Irishman's house but this man had already returned to Ireland. Tom bribes the porter to take him to Mrs. Fitzpatrick's house. Tom, however, misses Sophia by ten minutes. Tom impresses the waiting woman and, after keeping watch at Mrs. Fitzpatrick's door the whole day, the lady agrees to meet Tom. This lady initially thinks Tom to be Blifil but is convinced when her maid says that it must be Jones (for Mrs. Honour had revealed more than what Sophia had). Mrs. Fitzpatrick's interest in Sophia comes from the fact that she plans to send her back to her father: so that she can resurrect her image in front of her uncle Squire Western and his sister, Mrs.Western. Mrs. Fitzpatrick then seeks the help of Lady Bellaston, to whom she is distantly related, to dissuade Sophia from pursuing Tom. The two ladies meet Tom and shower their attention on him. The next day, Tom is returned from Mrs. Fitzpatrick's door by the maid who tells him that her mistress is not at home. Tom and Patridge lodge at a house in Bond Street. Next morning, at breakfast, a parcel arrives for Tom. The parcel contains a domino mask and a masquerade ticket. At the masquerade, Tom searches for Sophia but in vain. Instead, a lady in a domino mask meets him and dissuades him from pursuing Sophia. Tom realizes that he has to win this woman's favour to reach Sophia. Tom offers to accost the lady home. When they reach her home, the woman unmasks herself to reveal that she is

Lady Bellaston. This lady agrees to arrange a meeting between Tom and Sophia if Tom promises to quit thinking of Sophia. However, Lady Bellaston shows no signs of fulfilling her promise. The worried Tom sends Patridge to try and find out Sophia's whereabouts because if Sophia marries against Squire Western's will, he will disinherit her. Meanwhile, Lady Bellaston lavishes comfort and money on Tom and he begins to feel guilty at this financial dependence. One night, Lady Bellaston sends Tom two letters—informing him that they have to meet at some place other than their usual place. She also sends for Sophia. Tom arrives at Lady Bellaston's house and Sophia too walks in suddenly and unexpectedly. Unlike what Lady Bellaston had planned, Tom and Sophia clear their doubts and when Sophia refuses his marriage proposal, he promises that he will never destroy her. Just then Lady Bellaston arrives and all three feign ignorance of one another. After Tom leaves, Sophia feels guilty of lying.

Book XIV: The plot thickens in this Book with Lady Bellaston arriving at Tom's lodge to enquire whether Tom had arranged the meeting with Sophia. She also threatens Tom of dire consequences. Just then Mrs. Honour arrives and Tom barely manages to conceal his lie and Lady Bellaston behind the bed. After Mrs. Honour leaves, Lady Bellaston forces Tom to visit her at her usual place and they plan that the pretext would be Tom visiting Sophia. However, Jones receives a letter from Sophia advising him against visiting her since Lady Bellaston suspects her. To avoid getting into trouble, Tom feigns illness and writes to Lady Bellaston , who replies that she would visit Tom at night. This makes the landlady of Tom's house unhappy. However, Lady Bellaston does not arrive and instead Tom's attentions are drawn towards Nightingale, who was a fellow lodger at the house, and Nancy Miller, his landlady's daughter's love. Tom manages to convince Nightingale to marry Nancy whom he not only loved but had impregnated too. Mrs. Miller, the landlady of the house praises

Tom. Mrs. Miller, it is also revealed, was a beneficiary of Squire Allworthy. Tom, learning that Patridge had already revealed his past before Mrs. Miller, tells her his story and Squire Allworthy's benevolence. However, he does not mention a word about Sophia. This book has a number of letters written and read out by different characters. The novel thus assumes an epistolary form.

Book XV: After indulging in references to critics in the prefatory chapters in several of the preceding books, the narrator, in this book, expresses his disagreement with moral writers who always lay down that virtue leads to happiness and vice leads to grief.

Another character is introduced at this juncture. He is Lord Fellamar, a nobleman who has fallen in love with Sophia. Lady Bellaston contrives to use this Lord to keep Sophia out of Jones' life. Lady Bellaston circulates the false news of Tom killing a man and this drops into Sophia's ears, at which she faints. This convinces Fellamar that Sophia is actually in love with Tom. Lady Bellaston, meanwhile has been encouraging Fellamar to rape Sophia so that she is forced to marry him. The nobleman is tortured at this thought though eventually Lady Bellaston prevails upon him and he agrees to her plan. However, this lady's plans are foiled when Squire Western arrives at Lady Bellaton's house just as Fellamar is about to rape Sophia. The squire curses Fellamar and drags Sophia to his coach. It was Mrs. Fitzpatrick who revealed Sophia's whereabouts to Squire Western and his sister through a letter that she had sent to Mrs. Western. Mrs. Honour, now dismissed from her job appears before Tom. Soon after Lady Bellaston arrives and the two women confront each other under Tom's bed. Though Mrs. Honour is upset about Tom's infidelity, Tom manages to placate her. However, when Nightingale confronts him about his affair with Lady Bellaston, Tom realises his mistake. Nightingale then advises him to make a proposal of marriage to Lady Bellaston, who refuses promptly. Meanwhile,

Mrs. Miller receives a letter that informs of Squire Allworthy and Blifil's impending arrival. Nightingale and Tom agree to vacate the house. Mrs. Honour writes to Tom that she is hired by Lady Bellaston and so will not be of service to Tom.

Book XVI: In the introductory chapter, the narrator states that the purpose of the introductory chapters in this novel is merely to rouse the critic's appetite.

A messenger comes from Lord Fellamar, expressing his interest in courting Sophia. Squire Western once again refuses, surprising the messenger since Lord Fellamar is a nobleman of repute and affluence. Once the messenger leaves, Sophia and Squire Western weep, professing their love for each other. However, this is immediately forgotten the moment Sophia tells her father that she would not marry and devote her life to her father. Black George, now a servant at Squire Western's London apartment delivers a letter from Tom to Sophia who replies and sends a letter to Tom, stating that she would not marry. Mrs. Western arrives in London and she manages to convince her brother to take Sophia to her house. Mrs. Fitzpatrick approaches Tom and asks him to meet her. Soon, Squire Allworthy and Blifiltoo arrive in Lodon. The narrator informs the reader that Blifil wants to marry Sophia purely out of hatred. Since Sophia ran away from marrying Blifil, Squire Allworthy guesses that she did not like Blifil. However, Thwackum and Blifil managed to convince the squire that Blifil should pursue Sophia. Eventually, the Squire's affection for Blifil makes him accompany his nephew to London. As soon as they arrive in London, Squire Western insists that Blifil go to meet Sophia at Mrs. Western's lodgings. However, Mrs. Western chastises her brother and sends Sophia to her bedroom. Though Blifil trembles in fear at Mrs. Western's strong words, he suspects that something is afoot. Lord Fellamar still has not given up hopes of marrying Sophia and when she learns that Mrs. Western is in town, Lady Bellaston informs her of

Lord Fellamar's proposal. Lady Bellaston also shows Mrs. Western the letter of marriage proposal she'd received from Tom, adding that this would dissuade Sophia from Tom's thoughts. Mrs. Fitzpatrick, who has been charmed by Tom, advises Tom to flirt with Mrs. Western to get to Sophia but Tom refuses. As he is leaving, Fitzpatrick arrives and he challenges Tom to a duel. Though Tom knows nothing about dueling, he manages to retaliate and injures Fitzpatrick, who subsequently dies. Tom is apprehended by Lord Fellamar's men and after a trial, Tom is sent to jail. He receives a letter from Sophia telling him that she had seen his letter of marriage proposal to Lady Bellaston and did not want to have any contact with him.

Book XVII: Contrary to Blifil's efforts at painting Tom as a villain before Allworthy, Mrs. Miller the landlady praises Tom, adding that his faults were only the faults of his youth. Just then Squire Western arrives and informs them of Lord Fellamar's proposal while Blifil appeals to be given one more chance. Allworthy advises Western not to force his daughter, to which the latter retorts that he had a right over her since she was his daughter. Allworthy suspects that Blifil is pursuing Sophia out of lust and not love. Sophia, meanwhile, is trapped between her father and her aunt, who threatens her to send her back to her father if she did not agree to Lord Fellamar. Mrs.Miller, Patridge and Nightingale visit Tom in jail; Patridge informing him that Fitzpatrick is not dead as presumed but was saved from death. Though Tom is relieved he is worried at Sophia's plight. Mrs. Miller visits Sophia with a letter from Tom and vouches for Tom's goodness. Sophia reluctantly accepts the letter but is angered when Tom simply states that he did not wish to marry Lady Bellaston without giving any details. Mrs.Miller tries to restore Tom in Allworthy's favour but fails. Mrs. Waters visits Tom in jail; it surfaces that after Tom left her at Upton, Fitzpatrick had courted her and they had got married. Upon learning that Tom Jones was the man who wounded her

husband, she comes to meet Tom and informs him that her husband is out of danger.

Book XVIII: Since this is the last book of the novel, the narrator bids adieus to the reader in its opening chapter. While Tom is still in prison, Patridge brings him the news that Mrs.Waters is his mother. She also writes a letter to Tom informing him the same. Meanwhile, Sophia supports her father in his opposition to Lord Fellamar, at which he has an argument with Mrs. Western and the father and daughter are reconciled. Squire Allworthy visits Nightingale's father to reconcile him with his son. He meets Black George at Nightingale's father's residence and upon being asked, Nightingale's father shows him the money Black George had given him to invest. Allworthy recognizes them to be the same money he had given Tom. Patridge brings the good news that Fritzpatrick has recovered and admitted to initiating the duel. Mrs.Miller also urges Nightingale, her son-in-law, to tell Allworthy how much he respects Tom. Allworthy becomes emotional when he remembers the baby Tom he had found on his bed. According to the narrator, another reason for Allworthy's emotional state is a letter from Square. The letter informed Allworthy of Square's illness and his regret for his past actions, particularly his unfair treatment to Tom. Square further informs that Tom was innocent of the crime for which he had been punished, adding that there were the designs of another person in Tom's downfall. Patridge arrives at Mrs. Miller's house and Allworthy, hearing of Tom's servant wishes to meet him. He is greatly surprised to find Patridge and asks him why he is serving his own son. At that, Patridge asserts that he is not Tom's father. He then adds that Mrs.Waters, with whom Tom had a relationship is Tom's mother. Allworthy is horrified but just then Mrs. Waters herself enters and wishes to speak to Allworthy alone. She tells Allworthy about Tom's father, who was a clergyman raised and educated by Allworthy and his mother , Bridget Allworthy. It was,

however, true that Jenny Jones who was now Mrs.Waters had put the baby in Allworthy's bed. Allworthy is shocked. Mrs.Waters also adds that she had been promised good reward of money from a gentleman if she continued to prosecute Tom. Allworthy figures out that this gentleman was none other than Blifil. It also emerges that Blifil already knew that Tom was his brother by blood because at the death bed Bridget AllworthyBlifil had written a letter to Blifil, explaining the truth. Allworthy now demands to see that letter. Squire Western too arrives to show Allworthy Tom's letter to Sophia; upon reading which there are tears in Allworthy's eyes. He goes to meet Sophia and asks for her hand for his nephew Tom. However, Sophia refuses, stating that she cannot accept Tom as her husband. When Western learns this, he is overjoyed and asks Allworthy to bring Tom to court Sophia. Finally Allworthy meets Tom, apologizes for his past behaviour and advises him to submit to Sophia's will. Though Allworthy wants to punish Blifil, Tom begs him to desist. He himself goes to Blifil to inform him that he has been banished by Allworthy though he promises to provide for him. Sophia and Tom finally meet and after chastising Tom for his wild behaviour, Sophia accepts Tom's proposal, because it is also Squire Western's desire and they get married soon after. The last chapter ties up all the loose strands and leaves Tom, his wife Sophia and their parents and friends in happiness.

4.4 PLOT STRUCTURE

The plot of the novel is neatly constructed and this structural symmetry is one of the significant aspects of the novel, particularly in the context of Fielding's contribution towards the development of the art of the novel. At the same time, the neatly constructed plot reflects a belief in order that was widely prevalent in the eighteenth century. There are eighteen books in the novel

which can be neatly divided into six chapters each. The first six books provide the groundwork and lay down the causes that lead to the action in the subsequent chapters. The next six books show the consequences of the developments in the first six books, leading to an intensity of action. The last six books depict the disastrous after-effects of the developments of the preceding six books which result in the climax, after which all the loose ends are tied: the revelation of Tom's parentage and his true relation with Squire Allworthy, the union of Sophia and Tom and the downfall of the antagonist, Blifil. Samuel Taylor Coleridge had called the plot of Tom Jones one of the three most perfect plots in the world. However, this has long been contested. There are several coincidences in the novel which seem contrived and mar the flow of the narrative.

4.5 TOM JONES AS A BILDUNGSROMAN

A novel is a *bildungsroman* when its protagonist or central character undergoes evolution through various life changing experiences that educate the character and helps him/her attain a maturity of thought and action. *Tom Jones* depicts the journey of its protagonist from innocence to experience and ignorance to knowledge. Tom, supposedly an illegitimate child, undertakes a journey from ignorance of his origins, battling the stigma of being a 'bastard child' till the revelation of Squire Allworthy being his maternal uncle, that brings to him the knowledge of his ancestry. Simultaneously the reader is also shown Tom's evolution from a state of naivete and innocence about the complicacies of men through various experiences that make him understand such complicacies. The novel traces Tom's journey from a baby discovered on Squire Allworthy's bed wrapped in linen to marriage with his love Sophia Western and fatherhood. Along the way, Tom encounters different experiences that leave a lasting

impression on him, and that contribute towards his growth as an individual. Like the heroes of the epics, Tom too saves damsels in distress, withstands temptation (though he falls prey to them too), fights evil and eventually contributes towards restoration of order and peace. Of course, unlike the epics Fielding's presentation is playful and ironic. Also, through Tom Jones' adventures, the reader witnesses a maturation and/or evolution of Sophia's characters too.

Some of the recurring motifs of the bildungsroman include identity, education, relationship of love, and the pursuit of meaning of life. All these motifs are found in Tom Jones. For example, Tom struggles with the question of his identity through much of the novel. Besides his struggle with the identity of an illegitimate child, Tom also struggles with knowing himself. Identity is constructed both by the gaze of the society and/or the people around one and by ones understanding of oneself. The mistakes and errors of judgement Tom makes added to his naivety of the complications of human thought and human relationship lead him to trouble and presents him in an unfavourable light. But these experiences as well as the mishaps and misadventures also prove educational, for he learns life's lessons from them and attempts to rectify his mistakes. Tom's journey of love with Sophia Western is a roller coaster one that ultimately leads to a happy conclusion. This journey of love is intimately intertwined with Tom's growth and evolution as an individual. Parallel to Tom's journey is Sophia's journey of self-understanding and evolution—though this is given less focus by the novelist. And yet, it cannot be denied that along the way Tom and Sophia both undergo various experiences that make them realise each other's worth and that contributes to their individual growth. Like Tom who leaves Squire Allworthy's home, Sophia too runs away from home to escape an impending marriage with Blifil and at the same time follow Tom's trail. There are many hits and misses as the lovers cross each other's paths and

there are many misunderstandings too, but eventually the misunderstandings are cleared, the lovers understand themselves and each other better; and Sophia forgives Tom's mistakes and the lovers reconcile. In this journey through the novel, Tom begins to understand the meaning of life. Despite the mistakes he makes Tom begins to value his life and his relationships.

4.6 SUMMING UP

In this unit we have discussed in details the summery of the novel. For your benefit we have separately discussed all the books in which the novel is divided. In this unit we have also tried to see *Tom Jones* as a *bildungsroman* novel where the protagonist goes through the ups and downs of life and action to come up as a complete human being. Hope after reading this unit you will be able to learn in elaborate details the happenings in Tom Jones' life, the action of various characters and their impact in making Tom Jones.

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UNIT 5: CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE TEXT

UNIT STRUCTURE

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit we have done an extensive reading of Tom Jones with a considerably finer details of the summery. A text can be read from different point of view. Reading any text from various angles helps in exploring meanings that are not apparently visible or intelligible in the mere plot or storyline alone. In this unit we are going to read *Tom Jones* in all possible ways, explore the possibilities of meaning in its art of characterisation, theme, narrative techniques etc. Hope elaborate details of all these and many more aspects of the critical analysis will help you to understand the novel with much clarity.

5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit you will be able to learn

- different characters of the novel in details
- important female characters
- theme of marriage, law, sexuality etc. in *Tom Jones*
- narrative techniques used by the novelist
- allusions and references in the novel

5.2 TOM JONES AS A STUDY OF HUMAN NATURE

The prime moral focus of *Tom Jones* is the exploration of human nature. In this novel Fielding depicts the diversity in human nature that abounds in society. Of course, as the narrator mentions in the opening chapter of Book I, his intention is not to pronounce judgments on human nature. On the contrary he presents the diverse shades of human nature in order to enable the reader to make his choices and observations. Fielding's characters are humane, with their follies and foibles that render them true to life. Fielding's characterization depicts human beings with a capacity for good and evil. There is no whitewashing of any character. Even the protagonist is depicted as having flaws or as committing follies though the narrator attempts to either justify Tom's actions or defend him. This underlines the fact that human nature contains within itself potentials for good and evil; of course, the extent to which every individual has the good and the bad in him/her may vary depending on the genotype and phenotype of the individual. But there is no individual who is without a fault; and the novel depicts this aptly. The only character that can be termed some kind of an exception is the character of Sophia Western. Of course, her character is not fleshed out as well as that of Tom. She seems a stereotype of an innocent, angelic yet defiant young girl, who loves

Tom with all her heart and yet is not blind to his mistakes (whether real or perceived). And yet, judged from the perspective of the eighteenth century, both Tom and Sophia seem like rebels; particularly Sophia because she refuses to be bogged down by her circumstances and instead is defiant.

The novel also highlights the follies of naivety. Tom is naïve and that leads him to misjudge people and situations, as well as succumb to what the narrator terms 'desires of the flesh'. Squire Allworthy and Squire Western too make errors in judging people or else they are overtly generous, something the narrator particularly criticises Allworthy for.

Another motif pertaining to human nature that recurs through the novel is that of hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is witnessed in various characters in the novel, irrespective of the social strata the characters belong to. Characters are shown to profess certain ideas and ideals that are not revealed through their actions. On the contrary, they are shown to behave in the completely opposite way. In Tom Jones Blifil, his mother Bridget Allworthy, the servant Mrs. Wilkins, and Reverend Thwackum are some of the characters embodying hypocrisy. Tom makes several impulsive decisions which turn against him in due course of time. However, he also displays many positive qualities that negate or compensate for his weakness or his wrong actions. Fielding depicts human nature in both its strengths and weaknesses. The novel also highlights the virtue of actions over words. Squire Allworthy and Tom engage in generous actions while the likes of Thwackum and Square engage in hollow talks on virtue alone. Blifil is menacing and all his actions are aimed at harming Tom. A wide gamut of human emotions is explored in the novel through diverse shades of human nature. This novel is a pioneer in the exploration of human nature through fiction. For unlike the other pioneers of this genre like Samuel Richardson the characters, particularly the protagonists are not unidimensional nor flat characters.

5.3 MARRIAGE IN TOM JONES

Only two marriages are shown to take place in the novel—that of Bridget Allworthy and Captain Blifil early in the novel and Sophia Western and Tom Jones at the end. Of these, the former is a hasty and unhappy one, one that is driven by ulterior motives while the latter is a culmination of self-realisation and steadfast affection of the lovers despite adverse circumstances. And therefore, unlike Bridget Allworthy and Captain Blifil, Tom and Sophia's marriage can be termed a happy and successful one as it takes place after the lovers have withstood numerous challenges. Squire Allworthy considers himself to be married despite being a widower, since he loves his deceased wife too deeply to think of marrying again. Squire Western's opposition to Tom and Sophia's marriage early in the novel is indicative of the class difference that existed in English society. Though Western loves Tom's company, his low-born status is a stigma that remains attached with him till the discovery of his noble birth. Squire Western is a contrast to Allworthy in his thoughts on marriage since Allworthy, though not denying the importance of money and physical attraction, believes that they do not comprise the sole basis for a marriage. In the novel marriage is presented as a social sanction that legitimizes a relationship. A child born out of wedlock lives with the stigma for the rest of his life; something Tom struggles through much of the novel. In contrast Master Blifil as a child born after marriage of Bridget and Captain Blifil is viewed with respect. It is ironical that Bridget Allworthy turns out to be the mother of both Tom and Blifil—born out of an affair and a socially sanctioned marriage respectively. There are several potential marriages that are thwarted due to various reasons, the most prominent being Blifil and Sophia's marriage. Blifil initially wants to marry Sofia out of

lust and to defeat Tom and after Sophia runs away from her father's home to avoid getting married, Blifil's desire to marry her becomes stronger due to hatred.

5.4 LAW IN TOM JONES

The novel is replete with references to lawyers, attorneys, legal hearings and pseudo-hearings, technical questions related to law as well as matters of law and questions of evidence. The motifs of mercy and justice that are recurrent in the novel can be termed aspects of the legal presence in the novel. Early in the novel the reader is told that Master Blifil does not have the virtue of mercy that Tom has, though he demonstrates the virtue of justice which is said to be a 'higher' one. Thwackum and Square too talk about mercy though their focus is always on the deliverance of justice; but this justice is one that conforms to their notions of what justice is in a particular situation and that serves their self-interests. This also highlights the hypocrisies of the characters. There are instances in the novel when Tom's decision of following his heart and showing mercy holds him in good stead in the eyes of other characters and even of the reader and at other times, lands him in trouble. Even when he appeals to Sophia to forgive him for his affair with Lady Bellaston, he appeals to her mercy and not justice. Allworthy and Western are justices of the peace while attorney Dowling plays an important role in the plot progression though a minor character. Both Allworthy and Western make bad judgments in spite of their good intentions or having a good heart. Allworthy delivers lengthy lectures on chastity and virtue, to Jenny and then to Tom at two different junctures of the novel. But these lectures sound ineffective to the reader. Squire Allworthy shows mercy more than justice in many of the judgements he passes. There are quite a few occasions in the

novel when he delivers a verdict on a character based on his/her actions—whether Jenny Jones or Molly Seagrim or Tom or Blifil. Squire Western on the other hand proves himself to be a judge who does not or cannot attain a balance of judgement. The word trial appears on very few occasions in the novel and there is only one formal trial in the novel—when Squire Western has Tom tried for possessing Sophia's muff. In fact, this is meant to evoke humour because the trial takes place at an inn, the Upton Inn over a trivial matter like the possession of a muff. There are numerous words belonging to the legal register that found elsewhere in the novel that allude to the trial. For example, Mrs. Wilkins assuming the gravity of a judge and delivering her monologue on chastity of women before Squire Allworthy or Tom and Blifil appearing before the 'court' of Squire Allworthy and Thwackum after Tom was provoked by Blifil to beat him. In the novel all the major characters and even many of the minor characters are seen to form their own opinions about others and thereby pronounce their judgments on people. Of course, these 'judgments' are mostly ironic since many of these characters turn out to be hypocrites or shallow. In the novel it is said that fear is prone to 'conclude hastily' from a 'slight Circumstance' without examining the 'Evidences'. Interestingly, with the narrator acknowledging the reader's participation in the assessment of the events, the reader too is placed in the position of a judge of the events presented by the narrator before the reader. At the same time by choosing what the reader would get to learn about which character the narrator also plays the role of a lawyer while the audience is the judge who would arrive upon a decision or a judgement based on the 'evidences' presented by the narrator.

5.6 FORGIVENESS AND GENEROSITY IN TOM JONES

All through the novel, there are numerous examples of forgiveness begged for and granted. Right in the beginning, Squire Allworthy forgives Jenny Jones for not abandoning the child that she gave birth to and simply sends her out of the parish. Tom's generosity makes him shoulder responsibility to save Black George and his family from imminent poverty. Later, believing that he has seduced Molly Seagrim Tom supports her till the revelation of her inconstancy. When Tom acknowledges himself as the father of Molly's unborn child, Squire Allworthy forgives Molly and does not banish her from the parish. He censures Tom for his actions but praises his honesty. In the novel, the character of Squire Allworthy stands for generosity and forgiveness. Allworthy forgives the repentant and is merciful towards the powerless treading the wrong path in life. After the squire, Tom Jones and Sophia Western too represent generosity, despite Tom's constant failings that result in sexual liaisons. Interestingly, Fielding raises questions of generosity and forgiveness in the context of sexual exploits in the novel. Tom's generosity is seen as a root of his sexual indulgences. However, this also suggests the question of whether Tom would be or should be forgiven. Sophia forgives Tom's affair with Mrs. Bellaston but she is upset with him because her name is maligned. Often it seems as if Tom redeems himself of his ethical mistakes because he is the protagonist. Rev. Thwackum professes to teach Christianity to young Tom and Blifil but does not himself practice the Christian values of forgiveness and mercy, particularly in Tom's context. He beats Tom at the slightest pretext without showing any mercy towards the young boy. Wrongdoers are constantly asking for forgiveness or appealing to the mercy of others (i.e. people in more powerful and/or priviledged position), and in all cases they are forgiven. There are different kinds of forgivenesses in the novel. For instance, Tom forgives the highwayman Partridge that leads the latter to reformation. On the other hand, at the end of the novel, Tom forgives both Blifil and

Black George and promises to help them financially in order to enable to re-establish themselves. Allworthy does not support this generosity on Tom's part for he believes that they should be punished, since their natures do not reveal any scope for reformation. Through this, Fielding indicates that forgiveness should not forego an awareness of and understanding of the limits of human character.

5.7 SEXUALITY IN TOM JONES

According to Paul Kelleher, "Tom Jones represents male heterosexual passion as a source, perhaps the source, of moral judgment and ethical conduct, for in its pages, it is sexual passion that infuses law with spirit and duty with blood." (Kelleher,165). Tom's pleasant personality contrasts with the sullen Blifil, who fails to impress Sophia despite her father being in favour of their match. However, at times this aspect of Tom's personality becomes a chink in his armour, as he gets trapped in sexual liaisons. And yet, each time, Tom manages to bring himself out of trouble. At the end, it is Sophia's perception of Tom and her love for him that bear the potential of Tom's vindication. For it is Sophia whom Tom wrongs the most through his sexual liaisons. As the reader learns in Book IV, Sophia's "naked charms" are reserved for the wedding night, though there are glimpses of that charm in Molly's "florid" beauty, despite being devoid of femininity and honour, as in Mrs. Waters and Lady Bellaston's intentional (indecent) exposure for pleasure. And yet, eventually, the virgin heroine is united with her lover and their union is sanctified by marriage. Sexuality is not equated with vice in the novel. Tom engages in sexual acts with different women but he is not presented as vicious ; rather he shows generosity towards women and forgives them even if they have try to harm him in the

slightest way. In an article contributed to *The Champion*, Fielding allegorizes virtue and vice as two women with different moral and sexual characters. In *Tom Jones*, the reader is told, "The wise Man gratifies every Appetite and every Passion, while the Fool sacrifices all the rest to pall and satiate one." (Book VI, Chapter IV) Tom learns through his various liaisons that the world is a dangerous place and in this dangerous place one needs to exercise prudence, or else, thoughtless or impulsive actions may lead to terrible consequences. Though this is true generally too in the novel, in the context of Tom's evolution his experience with members of the opposite sex is significant. Tom cannot be entirely absolved of the accusation of lacking sexual integrity. The sexual awareness that sex is not simply an act of physical intercourse but involves spiritual, emotional, and moral intimacy does not seem to be a part of Tom's understanding of sex. The reader is told that Lady Bellaston is physically repulsive and yet Tom continues his physical intimacy with her. Though this is projected as Tom's 'generosity' the reader has scope to believe that Tom at times lacks a sexual sensitivity that underlines Tom's naivete.Children born out of wedlock also happens because of sexual abandon, without thinking about the consequences.

5.8 CHARACTERISATION

Fielding presents a wide spectrum of English society in Tom Jones. His characterization is vivid and the characters are a mix of types and individuals. The characters, in spite of their follies and weaknesses, are vibrant—in their goodness or villainy—and therefore humane. None of the characters in this novel has been painted in fantastical or unrealistic terms though Fielding constantly employs irony in depicting the characters and their actions. He often uses a foil to several characters whether major or

minor—for example, Tom and Blifil, Sophia and Molly Seagrim, and Squire Western and Squire Allworthy. Brief character sketches of the primary characters of the novel are given below—

Tom Jones

Tom Jones is not a hero in the conventional sense. He is a good-hearted yet fallible young man, who commits follies despite his best intentions. Initially Tom is presented as a low-born child: the supposedly illegitimate son of a poor girl Jenny Jones (and therefore the surname 'Jones') and a teacher Patridge. It is only towards the end of the novel that Jenny Jones (who reappears as Mrs. Waters) reveals that Tom is Bridget Allworthy's illegitimate child and therefore heir to the Squire Allworthy's property. Thus throughout much of the novel Tom battles with the stigma of being low born; this particularly becomes a roadblock in his pursuit of Sophia Western's love. Tom is portrayed as a young man with good values which are constantly in conflict with his weak moral constitution. He is generous and helpful, particularly towards the needy and does not hesitate to take the blame upon himself to save a poor and needy person (as he helps Black George for instance). But this generosity in the absence of prudence and sensible judgment of human nature, borders on foolishness and naivete. Tom is also presented as kind and forgiving; for example, he forgives the robber when he admits to attempting his first robbery to feed his hungry family. Like a true hero of an epic, Tom Jones saves his beloved Sophia as well as other women (Molly and Mrs. Waters) from danger. And yet Tom is made humane by his sexual desires.

Squire Allworthy:

As his name implies, Squire Allworthy is a man worthy of veneration for he is presented as worthy from all aspects. He is the benchmark against whom the other characters are to be judged in the novel. He is kind-hearted, noble, generous, and forgiving. Squire Allworthy is a widower who had lost his three infant

children after the death of his wife. Despite this, he does not remarry and considers himself married at the time in which the novel begins, since he loves his deceased wife immensely. The only weakness in Squire Allworthy (that renders him human) is his inability to see through the cunning of others, particularly in crucial situations. Of course, this contributes towards the thickening of action in the plot.

Sophia Western:

She is the embodiment of beauty, purity and goodness in the novel. She is dignified in expressing her emotions before Tom. Though she is deeply attached to her father, she can be resolute and even oppose her father when he insists on getting her married to Blifil, whom she detests. To prevent this, she runs away from home, as she is resolutely in love with Tom. Even when they are children, Sophia is able to discern Blifil's innate selfishness from Tom's inherent goodness. She is one of the few characters who praises Tom's good qualities in public. Unlike the other characters, Sophia is not deceived by the 'serious-looking' Blifil. Of course, Sophia is unrelenting when she hears that Tom has defamed her (though in reality it is Patridge who has done the harm). When she discovers Tom's affairs, she forgives him with all her heart when his innocence is proved; but not without reproving Tom for his moral weakness. Like Squire Allworthy, Sophia's love and regard for Tom remains constant throughout, excepting the brief period of misunderstanding in between and her faith is vindicated eventually when Tom is proved innocent.

Blifil:

Blifil is the antagonist of the novel and this is established at the very outset, when he first appears in the novel. He wears the pretence of seriousness and goodness but is aa hypocrite in reality. He hates Tom and leaves no opportunity of demeaning him in the eyes of people, particularly Squire Allworthy for he wants the

squire's attention and property to himself. The reader does not get much insight into Blifil's character, unlike Tom and has to rely on the narrator's remarks and asides on Blifil, which are, however, substantiated by different incidents in the novel. Like a true antagonist, Blifil creates problems for Tom and makes him fall out of favour with Squire Allworthy, whose support is Tom's greatest strength in the first part of the novel. Sophia's affection for Tom makes him jealous and as Sophia grows up to be beautiful young woman, his lascivious eye falls on her. And yet, he is an unremarkable young man because he fails to impress Sophia (in the few direct efforts that he makes) even after both Squire Allworthy and Squire Western are in favour of his marriage to Sophia. He lies constantly to Allworthy regarding his courtship, giving him the impression that Sophia is pleased with Blifil. Eventually, his villainy and his deceit are proven and Squire Allworthy banishes him forever.

Bridget Allworthy Blifil:

She is Squire Allworthy's sister and mother to Tom and Blifil. Tom is her illegitimate child, a secret that she carries to her grave, resulting in the social stigma on Tom till much later as well as unjust punishment to Jenny Jones, who owns up this 'crime' and Patridge, who remains silent. Bridget's scathing comments on unchaste women and her sarcasm at her brother for giving shelter to an abandoned baby (Tom) shows her hypocritical nature. Her love affair with Dr. Blifil and subsequent romance with his brother shows the inconstancy of her emotions; which contrasts her to Sophia Western's constant love for Tom. Her other son Blifil, born out of her marriage with Captain Blifil, proves to be a hypocrite and liar—qualities he seems to have inherited as much from his mother as his father. In the beginning, the reader is informed that Bridget is neither beautiful nor young; she is thirty years old and Captain Blifil's pretended interest in her is only due to her brother's wealth.

Squire Western:

Squire Western is a typical Jacobite country gentleman of the eighteenth century. His tastes, as reflected in the bawdy songs he loves and his swears, are rustic. He is prejudiced in his notions on class and society (due to which he refuses to hear of Sophia's love for Tom though he himself had always been fond of the latter). His love seems equally divided between his daughter and his horses, and yet his good humour, his shrewdness, and his impulsive and boisterous nature make him a likeable character. He is character of contradictions, though in a different way from he likes of Blifil and Bridget. He threatens the surgeon if he takes a drop of blood in excess from Sophia's arm. But when she opposes his wishes to marry Blifil, he threatens to banish her to the street with no more than a smock, and give his estate to the "zinking Fund.". The revelations of Tom's lineage turns Western into an admirer of Tom and at the end of the novel, the reader finds him happily in Sophy's nursery.

Mrs. Western:

She is Squire Western's sister and is a progressive woman who lives in the city. She, with her refined manners and tastes, is a contrast to her brother. The siblings are often on the opposite sides of an argument with their contrasting views on every matter, from politics to the affairs of the state to life. It is only in the matter of Sophia's marriage to Blifil that the two seem reconciled. Sophia is educated by her aunt and so she too has an influence over her niece's thoughts; something that comes up for approbation when Sophia initially refuses to marry Blifiland afterwards runs away from home to escape the impending marriage.

Jenny Jones or Mrs. Waters:

Jenney Jones is the poor and innocent maid who is made to falsely accept Tom as her child and as a consequence earn ridicule and shame. In making Jenny own the illegitimate child, Fielding shows how the poor are forced by the rich and the powerful to take

on their shoulders the burden of shame for acts committed by the rich themselves. Also, Jenny is accused of giving birth to the child of Patridge, her former master. However, there is only a touch of pity in the author-narrator's voice because Jenny disappears from the parish by eloping with a recruiting officer. Later on, when she reappears as the middle-aged Mrs. Waters, she emerges as a woman with not-so-rigid morals. The reader learns that she had run away from her husband Colonel Waters with another man who tried to rob her mid-way, from which situation Tom saved her. After that, she tries to draw Tom's attention towards her and succeeds too. Eventually it is she who reveals that Tom is Bridget Allworthy's son.

Dr. Blifil:

Dr.Blifil is one of the many visitors to Squire Allworthy who stays behind, living off the squire's generosity. He earns the squire's pity through his story of being forced to choose the medical profession by his father. He dons the pretense of religion and a romance blossoms with Bridget. However, since he is married he cannot marry Bridget and so he summons his brother Captain Blifil to impress Bridget to win her hand. This is both remarkable and surprising because the Blifil brothers never really had a great relationship. Though Dr.Blifil seems like the chief conspirator, eventually he loses out to his brother who not only ill-treats him(after marrying Bridget and becoming rich)but sends him out of his house and the parish, refusing to be moved by Dr.Blifil's pleas. Dr.Blifil's pleas to his brother are surprising and it seems as if there is a secret pertaining to this doctor that Captain Blifil uses to his advantage. This ousted doctor dies at London broken-hearted.

Captain Blifil:

According to the narrator, Captain Blifil is not a distinctively handsome man but he has pleasing manners and he manages to charm Bridget Allworthy soon after he arrives at the

Allworthy estate. He turns out to be more cunning than his brother. The reader learns that Captain Blifil had always been envious of the intellectual capabilities of his brother and so, when he gets a chance, he takes revenge by not only ill-treating him after attaining his objective (and using his brother to attain that objective)of marrying Bridget Allworthy, but also ousts his brother from his house and their lives. Captain Blifil had never really fallen in love with Bridget; but had fallen in love with Squire Allworthy's estate. Since Allworthy had no surviving children and he would never remarry, all the property would have belonged to Captain Blifil. However, the birth and entry of Tom in Allworthy's life threatened to take away a part of Allworthy's property; since the squire doted on Tom like his own son. Captain Blifil is shown as a remarkably smooth-talking man, who succeeds in hiding his real intentions before Squire Allworthy and the rest of the world, except of course, his wife and his brother. His relation with his wife degenerates into hatred soon after his marriage to her and the birth of the son(which seemed to seal the ownership of the property in his hands). He keeps thinking of the squire's death. However, before that really happens, Captain Blifil dies suddenly, and suitably (and quite generously) an epitaph is raised at his grave; provided by his brother-in-law Squire Allworthy.

Square and Thwackum:

Square and Thwackum represent philosophy and piety respectively. Of course, both these characters are hypocritical. They are supposed to guide the young boys Tom and Blifil. However, they constantly appease Squire Allworthy and are appeased by Blifil's supposed goodness. They on the other hand, have a dislike for Tom (for being a 'bastard child', that too low-born).

Molly Seagrim:

She is the daughter of Black George, who is a servant of Squire Allworthy. Molly is a pretty young lady and is quite famous for her beauty. She arrests the attention of Tom which, however, can be best termed infatuation. For afterwards, Tom grows increasingly aware of his affections for Sophia Western and of her beauty. And yet he remains faithful to Molly partly out of guilt and partly due to her death threats to Tom if he ever deserted her. Molly further has no qualms in picking up a fight with women at the Church, who 'throw dirt' upon her for her pregnancy. Molly's affair with Square is revealed and she soon forgets Tom when Square offers her money and other gifts. This shows her inconstancy despite her protestations of love for Tom. It is further revealed by Molly's sister that she had affair with another man and the child Molly is carrying could be as much Tom's as much as that man's.

Partridge or Little Benjamin:

The timid, selfish Latin teacher who is rumoured to be the father of the child Jenny Jones supposedly gives birth to. The root of this rumour is his suspicious wife, with whom he shares a childless marriage of nine years. The wife's suspicions lead to his downfall (and that of his wife too, who dies soon afterwards). Patridge is supposedly a learned Latin teacher, whereas he only makes pretence of learning and is secretly happy when his maid and student Jenny is expelled from his home by his wife, who suspects him to have an affair with Jenny. His spineless character, devoid of self-respect, is established when after the said incident (of Jenny's expulsion), Patridge makes love with his wife to placate her. Afterwards, when his wife, suspecting him to be Jenny's bastard child's father, assaults him on false grounds before the world, he remains silent. When he reappears years later as a barber, little Benjamin meets the penniless Tom, and decides to help him, the reason is to send Tom back to Squire Allworthy in order to win back the squire's favour. As the journey progresses,

Patridge becomes Tom's servant. And at each place that they stop, Patridge tells exaggerated stories of Tom, which ends up harming Tom's reputation and even threatens to end his relationship with Sophia. And yet, Tom good naturedly forgives Patridge and they trudge along.

Besides these, the secondary characters in the novel are—

1. Black George, and his family
2. Mrs. Fitzpatrick
3. Lady Bellaston
4. Mrs. Patridge
5. Parson Supple
6. Northerton
7. King of Gypsies
8. Mrs. Miller
9. Nancy Miller
10. Mr. Anderson
11. Nightingale
12. Mr. Dowling
13. Lord Fellamar
14. Mrs. Arabella Hunt
15. Captain Egglane
16. Mrs. Honour
17. Elder Nightingale

5.9 FEMALE CHARACTERS IN TOM JONES

Henry Fielding and Samuel Richardson have written novels with strong and interesting female characters. However, while Richardson has female characters as titular characters in his novels, like Pamela Andrews and Moll Flanders, Fielding's novels have male characters as titular characters, like Tom Jones, Joseph Andrews and Jonathan Wild (although Fielding's last novel

though unsuccessful was centered on a female character Amelia). Of course, with the evolution of the notion of masculinity and femininity, these gendered divisions have undergone considerable change. In the 1980s, Angela Smallwood argued that the image of the masculine author was a construct of some twentieth century biographies. Viewed in the context of eighteenth century shifts in discourses on gender, Fielding emerges not only as a supporter of female equality but his treatment of female characters reveal a considerable freedom from narrow parochial prejudices regarding women. At the same time, unlike Richardson, Fielding's female characters show a considerable range and depth. This is witnessed in Tom Jones, where the female characters range from a highly virtuous Sophia Western to a hypocritical woman like Bridget Allworthy to a woman with loose morals like Mrs. Bellaston or a tramp like Molly Seagrim who seems determined to make use of her pregnancy to trap Tom. While Sophia and Bridget Allworthy belong to the aristocracy, Jenny Jones, Molly and Mrs. Bellaston or even Mrs. Fitzpatrick are women from the lower rungs of the societal ladder.

In the novel, Squire Allworthy views women with utmost respect. Tom, despite his sexual relationships, is respectful towards women. The reader is given the impression that Tom refrains from engaging his affections with Sophia because he does not want to deceive Sophia since (as he believes) he has seduced Molly Seagrim and so feels responsible towards her. And owing to this Tom continues to support Molly emotionally and materially despite his increasing disenchantment with her. In fact, the reader also learns that Tom, despite being attracted to Molly keeps himself at a distance because he does not want to harm her honour. It is Molly who is shown to not have much worry for her honour. When he learns that Molly is about to be banished to Bridewell, Tom accepts that he is the father of Molly's child, which earns him censure. It is only when Tom becomes aware of Molly's affairs

with Square and other men that he is relieved of Molly's burden and he focuses all his attention on Sophie, with whom he is already smitten. At the same time, there is also a hint of misogyny evinced in Fielding's portrayal of women. For example, the hero of the novel engages in sexual liaisons on several occasions, despite the fact that he is in love with Sophia, the heroine who, however, remains a virgin till the end when she is united with Tom. Of course, Sophia chastises Tom for his 'moral weakness' but she forgives him soon after.

Squire Western's dominating treatment over his daughter can be seen as Fielding's critique of the authoritarian Jacobite rule. However, in this novel, there is also an acceptance of female sexual desires. This is significant in the context of the kind of moralistic heroines like Clarissa or Pamela that Richardson had created. This could be ascribed to Georgian libertinism. Ultimately Fielding's female characters are stereotypes and they can be fitted into certain categories that conform to society's stereotypical understanding and/or gaze towards women. Though Sophia's character seems too good to be true, she is, like Tom Jones, a rebel against the established standards of eighteenth century English society. She is an obedient daughter but does not blindly follow what is laid down to her by her father.

5.10 TOM JONES AS A REFLECTION OF CONTEMPORARY ENGLAND

The temporal setting of the novel indicates a crucial time in England's social history: old standards were not only questioned but modified and incorporated into the evolving discourses of thought. At the same time there was a significant reshaping or reordering of the social order, that was brought into effect by the sudden rise of a moneyed or middle class and a simultaneous decadence of the landed aristocracy. The nobility was beginning to lose its earlier control on the affairs of the society and the

government. They viewed the rising merchant classes disparagingly and were often not viewed favourably in return. The increased affluence of the middle class meant that they too sought the lifestyle of the aristocracy and landed gentry. Thus, the lines demarcating the social boundaries (that had traditionally been rigid) were now beginning to show signs of blurring; thereby giving rise to a hitherto unseen anxiety at the sudden fluidity of the hierarchical structure of English society. The ruling viewed the newly moneyed class as seeking to appropriate their titles and privileges. There were also the accompanying vices of sexual escapades, fleeting affairs, gambling, and moral corruption witnessed in society that resulted in the dubious perception towards title and privilege. Human nature was the focus of much deliberation, and its diverse facets were reflected in the culture in which an individual was nourished. And therefore, the political, moral, and literary discourses of the eighteenth century were concerned with education, manners, refined tastes, as well as social and moral responsibilities. These are amply reflected in the writings of Henry Fielding; and Tom Jones is no exception. Captain Blifil's marriage to Bridget Allworthy is an instance of attempts at upward social mobility. Tom's upbringing at Squire Allworthy's house befits the upbringing of the son of a squire, despite the fact that Tom is born out of wedlock, that too (supposedly for much of the novel) as the son of Jenny Jones and Partridge, who are socially inferior to Allworthy. It is only towards the end when Tom being Bridget's son and therefore heir of Squire Allworthy's estate is revealed that Tom gets his due.

Fielding's mother's family belonged to the landed gentry, legal professionals, and merchants while his father's family was linked to the nobility. Fielding seemed to have greater inclination towards his mother's family. Besides, through his diverse professional experiences Fielding had interactions with people from diverse sections of society. He had a fairly bad reputation for

his dealings with persons of all ranks. All these seem to have helped him in effectively portraying different characters in his plays and novels. This is particularly true of Tom Jones because this novel has characters from across the spectrum of contemporary English society.

At the outset, the narrator asserts that Tom Jones does not tell the 'history' of a particular class of society but of human nature. As the novel demonstrates, nobility, refinement and sound morality are not the possessions of a particular type of people (or a particular class of society) alone. Rather, the novel depicts how social ranks can be superficial and deceptive as far as constancy of values is concerned. In fact, that social rank and status are even interchangeable is demonstrated with Squire Western's change of perception towards Tom and his marriage with his daughter once it is revealed that Tom is Bridget Allworthy's child born out of wedlock, and therefore the heir to Squire Allworthy's property. Characters like Mrs. Wilkins represent the typical domestic servant who survives through her appeasement of her masters. The sinister Irish lord who appears as Mrs. Fitzpatrick's saviour and protector is an allusion to the kind of decadent nobility that makes the reader reminisce Fielding's aristocratic lineage. Throughout the novel, from the moment Tom first appears as an abandoned baby on Squire Allworthy's bed, one witnesses a consistent confusion (which can only be deemed deliberate on the part of the narrator) of class identity. Squire Allworthy adopts the baby and allows him to call him his father. The squire almost reigns supreme over his estate and the people who live in it. Allworthy can banish Jenny Jones from the parish and forgive Molly Seagrim for the same offence, simply because his adopted son claims to be the unborn child's father. It is Allworthy's authority that prevents a hand from whipping Tom unnecessarily. In the novel, it is only when Tom falls out of favour with Squire Allworthy that his misfortunes seem to begin. Fielding draws in the image of a king like Louis XIV, as

if hinting that Allworthy's rule over his little kingdom is divinely ordained. This is significant in the light of the fact that the novel is set against the historical event of the Jacobite Rebellion.

5.11 READER'S RESPONSE AND TOM JONES

The narrator plays a pivotal role in the narrative of Tom Jones. It is him that the reader meets when the novel begins. In other words, the narrator appears in the frame narrative and it is he who unravels the secondary narrative before the reader. However, the narrator appears in many places in the narrative, offering his comments or else hinting at future events. The narrator addresses the reader directly and leaves spaces or gaps where the reader can possibly step in to contribute in the creation of meaning. This is at the base of Wolfgang Iser's theory of reader's participation and reader's response. According to Iser, the reader is to fill the "blanks" (Tom Jones, Book II Chapter I) with certain signs. These signs enable the reader to create meaning since the novel does not state its meaning in the exact terms. The narrator thus guides the reader in the form of introductory essays or prefatory chapters at the beginning of each of the eighteen books. According to Iser, the vacant spaces are also pauses in the narrative where the reader is given an opportunity to reflect upon the happenings that have unravelled before him. Iser writes in The Implied Reader, "They give him the chance to enter into the proceedings in such a way that he can construct their meaning." (Iser, 51) This way the reader ceases to be a mere passive receptor of the text the author has offered, (the erstwhile all-powerful author) with all meanings and interpretations existing a priori. Rather, the reader becomes an active participant.

5.12 NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE IN TOM JONES

The narrative technique of *Tom Jones* is complex yet effective in corelating structure (of the plot) with meaning. The descriptions of the landscape are reflective of the dominant mood prevailing in that setting. The use of mock heroic tone at many places underlines the seriousness of a particular situation. The narrator is an omniscient first person narrator who stands on the diegesis and therefore there is constant intrusion of the narrator into the narrative, through narratorial comments and explanations. The narrator also makes speculations that may or may not be substantiated by the subsequent action of the play. These speculations indicate that the narrator has limited point of view and that makes the narrator seem three-dimensional as a character. The narrator also withholds information at places, which leads to the reader's involvement in deciphering meaning.

There is a profusion of characters in the novel, such that the reader tends to lose himself in the large pool of characters. Fielding's narrator engages in the minutest of details and that adds to the volume of the narrative. But at times, too much description leads to digressions from the main plotline. But these descriptions contribute to the realism of the novel. The introductory chapters are intended to be prefatory in character but each such chapter is not always directly related to the main theme(s) in that Book and often deals with a different literary subject. These chapters assume the nature of an essay; leading to the assumption that Fielding was probably influenced by the periodical essays of the time. In these introductory parts, the narrator presents himself as a deep thinker, contemplating on the art and the philosophy of writing, particularly writing fiction. He dwells upon the narrative methods employed in the narrative, critiques the 'prejudices' of the critics, as well as discusses subject matter of the narrative, and hints at the

superiority of his narrative. In such passages, he addresses the reader directly. Through this, the narrator comes across as a confident and independent writer, who is aware of his role as narrator and the narrative that he is weaving before the reader. And yet the prefatory parts of the novel offer interesting insights into the art of the novel, and this is particularly significant in the light of the fact that Tom Jones comes in the nascent stage of the novel genre.

5.13 ALLUSIONS AND REFERENCES IN TOM JONES

There are many historical, cultural, and literary references in *Tom Jones*. Some of the significant literary allusions in the novel are discussed below:

There are references to Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* though Fielding also mocks the 'Homerican stile', i.e. Homer's style in his epics. While talking about Captain Blifil, Fielding refers to the Roman poet Ovid. While Ovid wrote a long poem on love, titled Art of Love, Captain Blifil, who is also said to be 'poetic' has only one achievement, that of convincing Bridget Allworthy to marry him. The line "Leve fit, quod bene fertur onus" (i.e. A burden becomes lightest, when it is well borne) in Book II Chapter III is from Ovid's Elegies, Book II. Or else, "Si nulluserit, tamenexcutenullum" (i.e. If there be none, wipe away that none) in Book V Chapter VIII is from Ovid's Art of Love, Book I. The line "Ovid tells us of a flower into which Hyacinthus was metamorphosed, that bears letters on its leaves" in Book XVI Chapter III is a reference to the character of Hyacinthus in Greek mythology whom the god Apollo loved and when killed, whose blood was turned by Apollo into a flower. Another allusion is the following—"irritamentamalorum Effodiunturopes, irritamentamalorum" (riches were dug up, the incentives to vice)

from Ovid's Metamorphoses that is found in Book VIII Chapter XII.

The title of Book II Chapter III "a domestic government founded upon rules directly contrary to those of Aristotle" of *Tom Jones* alludes to the Greek philosopher Aristotle and his work *Poetics*. Again, the views on women in Book II Chapter VII in Tom Jones are supposedly in concurrence with Aristotle's view of women. The character of Mr. Square in the novel is said to be a religious person in the Aristotelian mould; and therefore Square's approach to religion is is supposed to be scientific and rational. But Square's approach in the novel is anything but rational or scientific. The line "Whoever demanded the reasons of that nice unity of time or place which is now established to be so essential to dramatick poetry?" in Book V Chapter I alludes to Aristotle's notions of unities of time and place in drama. The line "that it is no excuse for a poet who relates what is incredible, that the thing related is really a matter of fact" in Book VIII Chapter I is an allusion to Aristotle's *Poetics*, Part 24.

There are many references to Shakespeare too in *Tom Jones*. The line "To make a life of jealousy,/And follow still the changes of the moon/With fresh suspicions… To be once in doubt,/Was once to be resolved" in Book II Chapter III is an allusion to Shakespeare's *Othello* (Act III, Scene iii). Again, "Square wiped his eyes, albeit unused to the melting mood. As to Mrs. Wilkins, she dropt her pearls as fast as the Arabian trees their medicinal gums" in Book V Chapter VII is an allusion to *Othello* (Act V Scene II). The phrase "put the world in our own person" in Book VI Chapter I is an allusion to *Much Ado About Nothing*, (Act II Scene I). The line "Life's a poor player, /That storms and struts his hour upon the stage,/And then is heard no more" in Book VII Chapter I is from *Macbeth*, (Act V Scene V) Much of Chapter V from Book XVI has allusions and references to *Hamlet.* The line

"Between the acting of a dreadful thing,/And the first motion, all the interim is/Like a phantasma, or a hideous dream:/The genius and the mortal instruments/Are then in council; and the state of man,/Like to a little kingdom, suffers then/The nature of an insurrection" in Book XV Chapter III is from *Julius Caesar* (Act II Scene I).

There are numerous references to Alexander Pope too in the novel, which includes references to *An Essay on Criticism, The Dunciad (Book I), Homer, Epistle to a Lady, Imitations of Donne* (Satire IV) and *Peri Bathous,* or the *Art of Sinking in Poetry*. The title of chapter XI in Book V "Mr. Pope's Period of a Mile" alludes to Pope's *Imitations of Donne* (Satire IV). Again, the line "Sleepless himself, to give his readers sleep" from Book V Chapter I is an allusion to the line "Sleepless themselves, to give their readers sleep" From *The Dunciad* (Book I). "Mr. Pope's Odyssey" in Book VI Chapter II is an allusion to Pope's translation of Homer's *The Odyssey*. The line "As a genius of the highest rank observes in his 5th chapter of the Bathos, "The great art of all poetry is to mix truth with fiction; in order to join the credible with the surprizing" from Book VIII Chapter I is a quote from Pope's *Peri Bathous*, or the Art of Sinking in Poetry. Again, "what Mr. Pope says of women" in Book XIV Chapter I is a reference to the (lack of) character of women that Pope hints at in "*Epistle to a Lady".*

5.14 *ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS*

1. Fielding's life reveals a bohemianism that is reflected in *Tom Jones*. Discuss.
2. Discuss *Tom Jones* as a bildungsroman.
3. Contrast the characters of Tom Jones and Blifil.
4. Discuss Fielding's characterization in *Tom Jones*.

5. In Squire Allworthy's relationship with Tom Jones, the reader discerns a father-son's relationship. Discuss.

6. What role does the reader play in the perusal of *Tom Jones* ?

7. Sophia and Tom's love story is a departure from conventional eighteenth century love stories. Do you agree? Justify with instances from the text.

8. In the context of the rise of the novel in the eighteenth century England, how and where would you place Fielding's *Tom Jones*?

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