

Joseph Andrew (1742) by Henry Fielding (1707-1754)

Lead question: *how in Joseph Andrews does Fielding go beyond Shamela's travesty of Pamela to offer an alternative positive model of novelistic fiction?* [Consider the four key terms of the title page: history, adventures, 2 protagonists, 'imitation in the manner of Cervantes' (1)]

I: **Reading:** How do characters imitate what they have read or been taught? Joseph, Parson Adams, Leonora, Mr. Wilson, ...? What is wrong with the way they read?

II: **The example:** How do characters fail to be exemplary? Abraham Adams as a one of a kind 'original'; Joseph an unformed ingénue... only gradually gathering character. If we can't arrive at a moral life through imitation of examples, how are we to do it?

III: **Fathers and guides:** Why is Adams a flawed father figure? How does he fail as a guide? Then what does Adams become for the fiction? Is the narrator a reliable guide?

IV: **Why does the narrator trick the reader?:** Why does the narrator warn his reader early on that neither his main character (Joseph) nor this book is "easily to be seen through" (41)? Why does Joseph Andrews resist Lady Booby's efforts to seduce him?

(a naïve who does not understand (24) → letter to his sister Pamela (26) shows he does understand through plays → in 2nd attack, Joseph appeals to his virtue and Pamela's example (35) → {after warning that it will be "a sagacious reader who can see 2 chapters before him" (41)}, that Joseph is in love with Fanny (42)

How do you explain the opacity of Joseph's character here? this narrative?

Is JA being duplicitous with Lady Booby? With himself? Is his desire for Fanny unconscious?

QU: Why is the narrative refusing to do what *Pamela* attempts: to achieve in unmediated relationship between character and representation of the character to the reader? *If Joseph Andrews is not a mimetic alternative world, what is it?*

V: **Fielding and Cervantes and Bakhtin:** how does Fielding do the opposite of Richardson's *Pamela*—purify language and idea? What is the effect of introducing many different genres of speech and writing into the text? Bakhtin values the novel's *heteroglossia*—introducing "another's speech in another's language:" linguistic traits of Slipslop's overly ambitious diction, of Pamela's stiff propriety, or of the novelistic rhythms of Leonora's intrigue are all subject to parodic stylization; Fielding's reader is obliged to negotiate a broad spectrum of different types of writing and speech (letters, poems, embedded novels and memoirs, sermons, critical essays, mock-epic, etc.) → Why does *Joseph Andrews* articulate a dialogic—and often antagonistic—relation with an untotizable variety of heteroglot genres, speech, and writing.

The theme and image of the body: How does the centrality of the body (both sexual and muck covered) disenchant the story? De-idealize love? Why the centrality of the road, the encounter with the other, and the body?

VI: **Author as illusionist and entertainer; a performance without a performer:** Fielding the author NOT = witty and knowing narrator within the text; not communication but dissemination;

Why put Joseph and Fanny in deep disguise (they don't know who they are)?

Why scare the reader with the possibility that Joseph and Fanny are siblings?

Why have the text rely upon improbable coincidences? (the Peddler, the Andrews, and Mr. Wilson all arrive at the moment they are needed to unravel the mystery of origins)

Why does Fielding contrive a happy ending for Joseph Andrews?

NOT because poetic justice should mirror the automatic calculus of virtue and rewards in this world:

There are a Set of Religious, or rather Moral Writers, who teach that Virtue is the certain Road to Happiness, and Vice to Misery in this World. A very wholesome and comfortable Doctrine, and to which we have but one Objection, namely, That it is not true. (*Tom Jones*, XV: i, 783)

BUT, precisely because the non-correspondence of virtues and rewards in this world, the artificial construct called *Joseph Andrews* will give its readers the gift of wish fulfillment, the pleasure of an entertainment with lots of scares but a finally happy ending. It is not a mirror of the world but an entertainment as gift.

Fielding's method over the course of the novel is artful and performative:

In Champion No. 69 (April 22, 1740) Fielding makes the spectacular entertainments of John Rich (1682-1761) the hinge of his satire on the "Grand" political "Pantomimes played on the stage of life." His description of the predicament of the "Spectator" of "one of Mr. Rich's entertainments" corresponds very closely to the predicament of the readers of Joseph Andrews:

we see things only in the light in which that truly ingenious and learned entertainmatic [sic] author is pleased to exhibit them, without perceiving the several strings, wires, clock-work, etc. which conduct the machine; and thus we are diverted with the sights of serpents, dragons, and armies, whereas indeed those objects are no other than pieces of stuffed cloth, painted wood, and hobby-horses, as such of his particular friends as are admitted behind the scenes, without any danger of interrupting his movements, very well know.(37)