

Comment on the role of fate in fielding's novel tom jones

Literature



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This essay aims to explore Henry Fielding's art of moral teaching in "The history of Tom Jones, a Foundling", as the author originally entitled it, and the role and function of fate in characters' lives. In this writing Fielding does not try to create utterly good or evil characters; instead he simply depicts them as what they are. "It is identical to a soap opera" (A book review). This book deals with everything from treachery to lust to deceit. "Acquired a discretion and prudence very uncommon in one of his lively parts"- This is a quote from Squire Allworthy to Tom.

I believe Fielding wrote that novel to entertain, to inspire hope in the people of this time. He wanted them to go for their dreams and never to give up. But most of all this is for entertainment. Humans like to see lives that are in more turmoil than their own. He achieves this by using characters that seem to be imaginable, interweaves their lives and after that lets everything to their own fate. Everything changes from the beginning of the novel to the end. It has a happy ending and finally I can say that fate appears with its benevolent role in the characters' lives.

When the reader believes that they have something pinned, Fielding puts in another twist that sends your senses spiraling. The author names the theme of the story: human nature. He intends to represent human nature initially in its plain and simple form as found in the country and later as it is in the courts and cities. The climax reveals the ultimate fate of Tom and Sophia and the heir of the Allworthy's estate. In the eighth chapter, the story of Molly, Sophia and Tom is example of the ill-affected role of fate in the novel. Molly is pregnant but Tom is a straightforward man who does not run away from his deeds.

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He could have left Molly to her own oate, but doesn't. While Tom is being defiled thus, Sophia is tormented by thoughts of Tom. We see throughout that Sophia often reigns in her passion and tries to be in control of herself always. She has to combat with force. Sophia flees from her home and from the fate of marrying the detestable Blifil. She exhibits in her running away far from her ill-fated life a courage that we might not have credited her with. Another character in the novel that has a close contact with the protagonist's fate is Allworthy.

He is responsible for Tom Jones' fate to a large extent. It is he who has the power to raise Jones to the position of a rich heir or to drop him to the level of a homeless pauper. Ultimately the Squire is benevolent to Jones and thus so is Jones's own fate. Throughout the novel fate doesn't play a benevolent role but the outcome is positive one. All misunderstandings are cleared up and the protagonist's reputation is restored. „ He became, one cannot doubt, a useful citizen, a faithful and unselfish husband, and a good Christian.

He was one of those scapegraces who repent sincerely and are spared by fate as far as the world can see. "(5). At the end of the novel, when Sophia and Tom are already together, fate is finally well-meaning and we can talk about benevolence. It plays with the characters in the whole book and it makes the story intriguing and enthralled. The author converses with his reader often. He is aware of his novel as a work of art that may be criticized by others. He does not wish for his story to be criticized unnecessarily.

In Book Ten the author hits out at the entire exercise of futile criticism. Fielding satirizes social conventions quite often through his novel. He seems to be parodying social, artificial and futile conventions. Commentators on the <https://assignbuster.com/comment-on-the-role-of-fate-in-fieldings-novel-tom-jones/>

novel generally preferred Richardson's serious, unambiguous piety to Fielding's comic moral vision throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. His sympathy with the lower classes and his critical depiction of the justice system won him the scorn of most of his contemporaries, who found his writing coarse and his characters base.

Not until early in the twentieth century did critics begin to appreciate Fielding's literary skill, which had in part been overshadowed by inaccurate biographies portraying Fielding as a licentious drunkard. More recent criticism has explored Fielding's complex value system: Martin Price suggests that Fielding's so-called low characters contribute to his definition of virtue. He remarks that "Fielding can reward his heroes because they do not seek a reward." (M. Price on H. Fielding, p. 1).

Price is accurate when he observes that "Fielding controls his characters by limiting them" ("Bloom's literary criticism", p. 32), but *Western* is a grand exception being out of control and extravagant, beyond all limits. "No other eighteenth century novel can accommodate *Western*, which is another example for the power of "Tom Jones" (H. Bloom). To Johnson, Fielding's characters were "characters of manner" but in Richardson they were "characters of nature" (Harold Bloom, p. 29). and Martin Battestin examines the character of Sophia *Western* as an example of Fielding's nuanced moral code.

Tom Jones", though treated in this way, is as a matter of fact written with a deliberate purpose, which is to teach moral lessons on the form of burlesque.

In addition to achieve this purpose of moral teaching and make the story colorful and dramatic, Fielding plays with the fate of characters and entertain
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with their lives. Soon after its 1749 publication, Tom Jones was condemned for being “lewd,” and even blamed for several earthquakes. But what really riled its critics was its supremely funny satirical attack on eighteenth-century British society and its follies and hypocrisies – which, of course, are very much like our own.