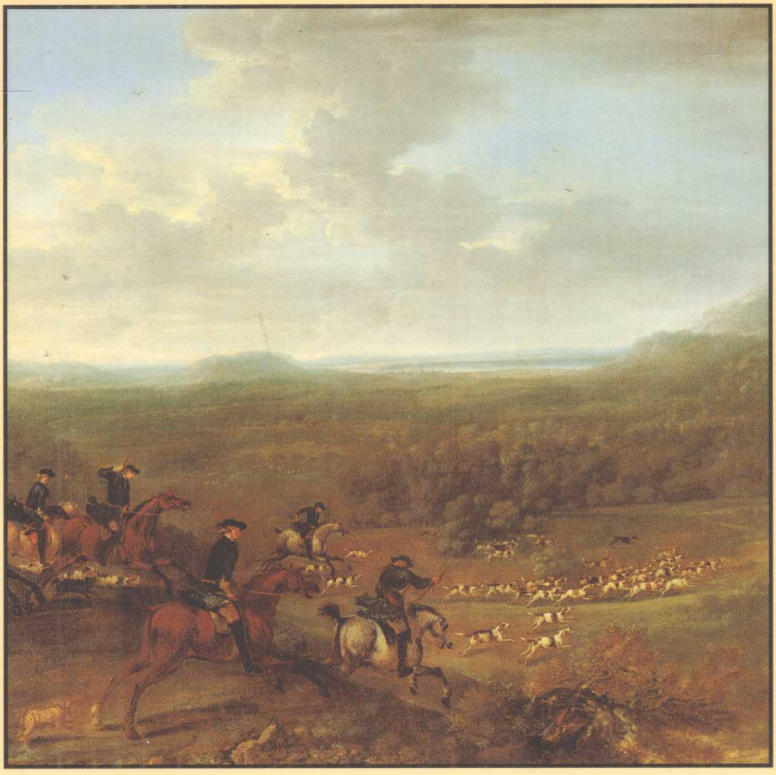
# TOM JONES

## HENRY FIELDING



EDITED BY SHERIDAN BAKER

**A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION**

SECOND EDITION

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

# Henry Fielding
# TOM JONES

THE AUTHORITATIVE TEXT

CONTEMPORARY REACTIONS

CRITICISM

Second Edition

*Edited by*

SHERIDAN BAKER

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# Preface

*Tom Jones*, in 1749, was an immediate success. It dropped from sight for a while in the nineteenth century, when Victorian elegance passed it under the table as too coarse for the ladies. But in the 1880's, Fielding's novels began to reappear, in handsome editions. The twentieth century reclaimed *Tom Jones* completely, crowning its recognition in the twentieth-century way, with a motion picture, and one of the best ever made from a novel.

Actually, Fielding is somewhat off the modern beat. In spite of our many comics, we are not really attuned to comedy, especially to Fielding's amused distancing of life's ups and downs. We are not used to observing life from the outside. We want the inside story, the hidden streams of consciousness. And we are no longer disposed, as George Eliot remarked a century ago, to take time for Fielding's sociability.

Nevertheless, *Tom Jones* prevails. It draws together the forces of its time, just before they diffused in other and soggier directions. It culminates Fielding's new species of comic philosophical realism, evolved through two decades as playwright, essayist, pamphleteer, and, finally, lawyer. It universalizes the contemporary English scene, in part by putting behind it the learning of the ages. It makes the English novel thoroughly literate for the first time. It marries comedy and romance, by the grace of the classics, to produce a peculiarly fresh and ironic wisdom.

*Tom Jones* is a comic romance, in spite of its epic dimensions. Across the tops of its pages, lest we forget, marches not "The History of Tom Jones" but "*The* HISTORY *of a* FOUNDLING." Our hero is of unknown and mysterious origin. Rendered comic and swathed in lenient irony, this is the quintessential tale of romance, the oldest story in the world—that of an unknown but excellent nobody who becomes somebody at last. Tom Jones is young Mr. Commoner Everyone, representing the mythic mystery of everyone's birth, of everyone's natural nobility (at least in his own dear eyes), of everyone's search for identity.

Not that Tom cares, or thinks of himself. But the reader, true to the ways of romance, vicariously fulfills what may be his deepest psychic need, to find his identity, and with it the dream of recognition, riches, and the beautiful princess. His personal excellence is rewarded, having survived all tests by the world's ogres. And all the while, Fielding's unique comic irony silently tells us that we really cannot have our cake and eat it, that even as we enjoy the dream we know it cannot last.

Readers have responded to the essential powers of *Tom Jones* from the first, and have repeatedly tried to describe its unusual quality. It seems both simple and complex, and it has left some readers baffled, and bored, and angry. The reactions of Fielding's contemporaries, here selected and ap-

pended, will convey some sense of this, and the critical essays will suggest how persistently *Tom Jones* has teased us into thought. It has moved the critics to the most fundamental of literary questions—the meaning of plot and characterization, of art and artistry, of comedy, of irony, of style, of how and what literature really means, after all, as it relates its fictions to us.

This new Norton edition again follows Andrew Millar's fourth and last printing of *Tom Jones* during Fielding's life, dated 1750 but published Monday, 11 December 1749, advertised as "A *new Edition*," "Carefully revis'd and corrected / *By* HENRY FIELDING, *Esq*;".[1] Unfortunately, early scholars backed the slightly shortened and imperfect third edition as definitive, and several modern editions have followed suit. But the fourth edition presents the best text, not only in its corrections of many small errors, but in representing Fielding's fullest and final intention. The present edition reproduces the fourth edition, except that it emends typographical and other errors (footnoted in the text when significant); modernizes the long eighteenth-century *s*, which looks like an *f* to modern eyes; and deletes the quotation marks that head every line of a long speech in eighteenth-century texts. I have not normalized alternate spellings (*Kitchen* for *Kitchin*, *Miss* for *Mrs.*, *Hero* for *Heroe*, *Pettyfogger* for *Petty-fogger*, for example) since they may reflect Fielding's own inconsistencies.

The most prestigious modern scholarly edition, the Wesleyan, building upward from the first edition to produce an "eclectic" text, differs from Fielding's fourth edition in a number of details,[2] in normalizing some spellings, in some editorial choices, and most mistakenly, I believe, in naming Fielding's highwayman "Enderson" instead of Anderson (see my Textual Appendix, p. 642 ff.).

SHERIDAN BAKER

1. *The London Evening-Post*, No. 3450, 12 December, a Tuesday-Thursday-Saturday paper repeating its advertisements of 28 and 30 November announcing, a week too soon, publication "Next Week." Martin Battestin, quoting *The General Advertiser*, Monday, 11 December, a daily, which fixes the date of publication with its initial advertisement but omits "Carefully revis'd and corrected," reads "New" and "HENRY FIELDING" (Wesleyan ed. [1975], p. 1i; *Henry Fielding: A Life* [London and New York, 1989], p. 452). Elsewhere, I am deeply indebted to Eleanor Hutchens for pointing out some of my errors and considerations in the first Norton edition, and especially to Hugh Amory for pointing out a number of errors in both the Norton and the Wesleyan editions.
2. The paperback reprint brings forty-one of these details—by no means all—into agreement with Fielding's fourth.

# Contents

# The Text of TOM JONES

THE

# HISTORY

OF

# *TOM JONES,*

A

# FOUNDLING.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By HENRY FIELDING, Esq;

——*Mores hominum multorum vidit*——

*LONDON:*

Printed for A. MILLAR, over-against *Catharine-street* in the *Strand.*

M.DCC.L.

# NOTE

The title-page of *Tom Jones*, fourth edition, on the preceding page is reproduced in exact size from the copy owned by the Beinecke Library, Yale University, which copy also provides the text for the present edition. The editor wishes to express his gratitude to the Beinecke Library and its staff for their permission and generous cooperation.

The title-pages of the other three volumes that make up the fourth edition are identical with this, which heads volume one, except that each volume's number—"VOL. II.," for instance—replaces the words "IN FOUR VOLUMES."

Fielding's motto comes from Horace, who is paraphrasing the opening of the *Odyssey* (I. 1–3) in his *Ars Poetica*, 141–42:

> Dic mihi, Musa, virum captae post tempora Trojae
> Qui mores hominum multorum vidit et urbes.

"Tell me, Muse, of the man who, after the times of captured Troy, saw the customs of many men, and their cities" (all translations are the editor's, unless otherwise noted). Fielding, perhaps with a touch of irony, thus casts Tom Jones as something of a young and modern Odysseus, discovering the ways of the world as he wanders to find his proper home.

Horace's couplet is actually a prominent example in William Lily's *Grammar* (1723–24 ed., p. 71), from which Fielding learned his Latin at Eton—it was the standard textbook throughout England for more than three centuries, beginning with its publication in 1527, four years after Lily's death. Many of Fielding's Latin quotations are among Lily's examples, especially those of Partridge, the schoolmaster, which Fielding's readers would recognize with amusement.

To the Honorable

## George Lyttleton, *Esq*;[1]

One of the Lords Commissioners of the TREASURY.

Sir,

Notwithstanding your constant Refusal, when I have asked Leave to prefix your Name to this Dedication, I must still insist on my Right to desire your Protection of this Work.

To you, Sir, it is owing that this History was ever begun. It was by your Desire that I first thought of such a Composition. So many Years have since past, that you may have, perhaps, forgotten this Circumstance: But your Desires are to me in the Nature of Commands; and the Impression of them is never to be erased from my Memory.

Again, Sir, without your Assistance this History had never been completed. Be not startled at the Assertion. I do not intend to draw on you the Suspicion of being a Romance Writer. I mean no more than that I partly owe to you my Existence during great Part of the Time which I have employed in composing it: another Matter which it may be necessary to remind you of; since there are certain Actions of which you are apt to be extremely forgetful; but of these I hope I shall always have a better Memory than yourself.

Lastly, it is owing to you that the History appears what it now is. If there be in this Work, as some have been pleased to say, a stronger Picture of a truly benevolent Mind than is to be found in any other, who that knows you, and a particular Acquaintance[2] of yours, will doubt whence that Benevolence hath been copied? The World will not, I believe, make me the Compliment of thinking I took it from myself. I care not: This they shall own, that the two Persons from whom I have taken it, that is to say, two of the best and worthiest Men in the World, are strongly and zealously my Friends. I might be contented with this, and yet my Vanity will add a third to the Number; and him one of the greatest and noblest, not only in his Rank, but in every public and private Virtue. But here whilst my Gratitude for the princely Benefactions of the Duke of *Bedford*[3] bursts from

1. George, Lord Lyttelton (1709–73), Fielding's classmate at Eton, Member of Parliament, Lord Commissioner of the Treasury (1744–54), minor essayist and poet, supported Fielding with several gifts of money during the writing of *Tom Jones* and prompted Fielding's appointment as Justice of the Peace for Westminster, in London (soon extended to include the county of Middlesex), on 25 Oct. 1748. One of the models for Squire Allworthy. "Lyttleton" was a frequent misspelling of Lyttelton's name, which remains misspelled in all four editions of *Tom Jones*.
2. Ralph Allen, postmaster of Bath, who had made a fortune (about £12,000 a year) by organizing a rural postal service and whose generosity to Fielding began shortly before *Joseph Andrews* appeared in 1742 and continued after Fielding's death in gifts to his family. The principal model for Allworthy.
3. At Lyttelton's suggestion, Bedford had arranged for Fielding's commission as Justice of the Peace for the City of Westminster, in central London, and, six months later, had assigned him a lease on "several leasehold messuages and tenements" so that Fielding could qualify as Justice of the

my Heart, you must forgive my reminding you, that it was you who first recommended me to the Notice of my Benefactor.

And what are your Objections to the Allowance of the Honour which I have sollicited? Why, you have commended the Book so warmly, that you should be ashamed of reading your Name before the Dedication. Indeed, Sir, if the Book itself doth not make you ashamed of your Commendations, nothing that I can here write will, or ought. I am not to give up my Right to your Protection and Patronage, because you have commended my Book: For though I acknowledge so many Obligations to you, I do not add this to the Number; in which Friendship, I am convinced, hath so little Share: Since that can neither biass your Judgment, nor pervert your Integrity. An Enemy may at any Time obtain your Commendation by only deserving it; and the utmost which the Faults of your Friends can hope for is your Silence; or, perhaps, if too severely accused, your gentle Palliation.

In short, Sir, I suspect, that your Dislike of public Praise is your true Objection to granting my Request. I have observed, that you have, in common with my two other Friends, an Unwillingness to hear the least Mention of your own Virtues; that, as a great Poet says of one of you, (he might justly have said it of all three) you

*Do Good by stealth, and blush to find it Fame.*[4]

If Men of this Disposition are as careful to shun Applause, as others are to escape Censure, how just must be your Apprehension of your Character falling into my Hands; since what would not a Man have Reason to dread, if attacked by an Author who had received from him Injuries equal to my Obligations to you!

And will not this Dread of Censure increase in Proportion to the Matter which a Man is conscious of having afforded for it? If his whole Life, for Instance, should have been one continued Subject of Satire, he may well tremble when an incensed Satirist takes him in Hand. Now, Sir, if we apply this to your modest Aversion to Panegyric, how reasonable will your Fears of me appear!

Yet surely you might have gratified my Ambition, from this single Confidence, that I shall always prefer the Indulgence of your Inclinations to the Satisfaction of my own. A very strong Instance of which I shall give you in this Address; in which I am determined to follow the Example of all other Dedicators, and will consider not what my Patron really deserves to have written, but what he will be best pleased to read.

Without further Preface then, I here present you with the Labours of some Years of my Life. What Merit these Labours have is already known

Peace for the County of Middlesex. A county magistrate was required to have property worth £100, for which sum the rental value of Fielding's lease was sufficient (Wilbur L. Cross, *The History of Henry Fielding*, 3 vols. [New Haven, 1918], II.96–98).

4. Alexander Pope, referring to Ralph Allen, in *Epilogue to the Satires of Horace* 136.

to yourself. If, from your favourable Judgment, I have conceived some Esteem for them, it cannot be imputed to Vanity; since I should have agreed as implicitly to your Opinion, had it been given in Favour of any other Man's Production. Negatively, at least, I may be allowed to say, that had I been sensible of any great Demerit in the Work, you are the last Person to whose Protection I would have ventured to recommend it.

From the Name of my Patron, indeed, I hope my Reader will be convinced, at his very Entrance on this Work, that he will find in the whole Course of it nothing prejudicial to the Cause of Religion and Virtue; nothing inconsistent with the strictest Rules of Decency, nor which can offend even the chastest Eye in the Perusal. On the contrary, I declare, that to recommend Goodness and Innocence hath been my sincere Endeavour in this History. This honest Purpose you have been pleased to think I have attained: And to say the Truth, it is likeliest to be attained in Books of this Kind; for an Example is a Kind of Picture, in which Virtue becomes as it were an Object of Sight, and strikes us with an Idea of that Loveliness, which *Plato* asserts there is in her naked Charms.[5]

Besides displaying that Beauty of Virtue which may attract the Admiration of Mankind, I have attempted to engage a stronger Motive to Human Action in her Favour, by convincing Men, that their true Interest directs them to a Pursuit of her. For this Purpose I have shewn, that no Acquisitions of Guilt can compensate the Loss of that solid inward Comfort of Mind, which is the sure Companion of Innocence and Virtue; nor can in the least balance the Evil of that Horror and Anxiety which, in their Room, Guilt introduces into our Bosoms. And again, that as these Acquisitions are in themselves generally worthless, so are the Means to attain them not only base and infamous, but at best incertain, and always full of Danger. Lastly, I have endeavoured strongly to inculcate, that Virtue and Innocence can scarce ever be injured but by Indiscretion; and that it is this alone which often betrays them into the Snares that Deceit and Villainy spread for them. A Moral which I have the more industriously laboured, as the teaching it is, of all others, the likeliest to be attended with Success; since, I believe, it is much easier to make good Men wise, than to make bad Men good.

For these Purposes I have employed all the Wit and Humour of which I am Master in the following History; wherein I have endeavoured to laugh Mankind out of their favourite Follies and Vices. How far I have succeeded in this good Attempt, I shall submit to the candid Reader, with only two Requests: First, That he will not expect to find Perfection in this Work;

5. Fielding's imagination has added "naked" to Cicero's misquotation of "a short sentence of Plato, which I have often seen quoted" (*The Champion*, 24 Jan. 1740)—probably in Sidney's *Apology for Poetry*: "if the saying of Plato and Tully be true, that who could see virtue would be wonderfully ravished with the love of her beauty." Plato, however, says: "But we cannot see *Wisdom* with the eyes [as we can Beauty]—how passionately would we have desired her, if she had granted such a clear image of herself to gaze on" (*Phaedrus* 250D; my italics). Cicero paraphrases this "as Plato says," in *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* (II.xvi.52—see below, p. 659); but in *De Officiis* (I.v.15) he shifts to *Virtue*, which Sidney, and then Fielding, have picked up: ". . . the very face, as it were, of Virtue herself, which, if the eyes could see, as Plato says, would excite a most wonderful passion for Wisdom." Fielding later equates virtue and wisdom (below, p. 507). See also Battestin's note, below, p. 739.

and Secondly, That he will excuse some Parts of it, if they fall short of that little Merit which I hope may appear in others.

I will detain you, Sir, no longer. Indeed I have run into a Preface, while I professed to write a Dedication. But how can it be otherwise? I dare not praise you; and the only Means I know of to avoid it, when you are in my Thoughts, are either to be entirely silent, or to turn my Thoughts to some other Subject.

Pardon, therefore, what I have said in this Epistle, not only without your Consent, but absolutely against it; and give me at least Leave, in this public Manner, to declare, that I am, with the highest Respect and Gratitude,

*SIR,*
*Your most Obliged,*
*Obedient Humble Servant,*
HENRY FIELDING

# Contents of *Tom Jones*

## BOOK I.

*Containing as much of the Birth of the Foundling as is necessary or proper to acquaint the Reader with in the Beginning of this History.*

## BOOK II.

*Containing Scenes of matrimonial Felicity in different Degrees of Life; and various other Transactions during the first two Years after the Marriage between Captain* Blifil *and Miss* Bridget Allworthy.