

The charge of Immorality OR Tom Jones is an unheroic hero

It is the apparent sexual looseness of Tom that is the target of the charge of immorality. It was Johnson who first disapprove the novel in no uncertain terms. He declared:

“I scarcely know a more corrupt book”

Samuel Richardson expressed himself in equally strong term. He took offence at Tom’s being a bastard and Fielding’s apparently flexible attitude towards his hero’s sexual actions.

All the above mentioned detail suggests that Fielding’s novel intended to sap the foundation of morality. But a careful study of Tom Jones shows that the charge of immorality can not be sustained against Fielding or Tom Jones. It is difficult to find justification in such charges we realize that Fielding’s approach to moral issues is different from conventional stand. It does not mean that his approach is immoral.

Tom is considered to be a mean fellow on the basis of his sexual involvement with Molly Seagrim, Mrs. Waters and Lady Bellaston. On the face of it, it seems as if there were plenty of justification in condemning Tom as a morally bad wretch, and most unworthy of Sophia. As such, it would be easy to condemn Fielding of Moral loity for bringing about reconciliation between Tom and Sophia. It is, however, as incomplete picture.

A careful study reveals that Tom is innocent. In all three cases, he is more the seduced than the seducer. He is quite inexperienced when he gets entangled with Molly Seagrim. Molly, on the other hand knows all the tactics of immoral love affairs.

Next comes Mrs. Waters at Upton. That lady’s lovely manners can not fail to attract Tom’s eyes as she deliberately keeps some parts of her body uncovered. Besides, Mrs. Waters is also experienced lady Tom is now in a state of despair, for he had lost all the hope of having Sophia. Thus, he could not resist.

The involvement with lady Bellastoy does, to some extent, give a feeling of disgust. But it is obvious that he merely suffers her bad breath. So as to get in touch Sophia, and in the process, get some alleviation from his poverty.

Thus, we see that Tom is an innocent boy who was deceived again and again.

As regards various situations and incidents, we may well observe them more than a momentary amusement. They are deep and philosophical. At the bottom of each is realism. He wants us to go deep into the matter, and do not

merely stop at the moral or immoral appearance of an action.

- i. Tom and critics immoral
- ii. Charges of immorality are not justified.
- iii. Tom's immorality on 3 grounds.
- iv. Justification of all the **three**.
- v. other incidents conclusion.