STRUCTURE OF TOM JONES

It is commonly agreed among critics that Tom Jones is one of, if not the, the most perfectly crafted English novels ever written.

- It is divided into 18 books;
- Each book is divided into chapters;
- Chapter one of each book is a digression or some sort or a hint of what is to come, such as “Book XVI, chapter one: “of Prologues,” or “Book IV, Chapter 1, “Containing Five pages of paper.”

Furthermore:

- The action in the first 6 books takes place in Somerset—the country.
- The action of the next 6 books takes place on the road to London.
- The action of the last 6 books takes place in London—the city.

RE: READINGS FOR EACH CLASS

April 19: Will cover Books 1 through 6—where the action is in the country
Class discussion will focus on the following:
⇒ Book I—chapters 2, 3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 13
⇒ Book II—chapters 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
⇒ Book III—chapter 3
⇒ Book IV—chapters 2, 3, 5, 6
⇒ Book V—chapters 7, 8, 9, 10
⇒ Book VI
Characters:

- The Narrator is a singular character who has the tone of an author. The Narrator guides the reactions of the reader, comments on an action that has just taken place, and, in general, sees himself as a companion to the reader. At the end of the novel the narrator comments: “If I have been an entertaining Companion to thee, I promise thee it is what I have desired.”
- Many of the characters are paired. Thus we have good boy/bad boy; good girl/bad girl. These are not obvious pairings but are realized as the story goes on.

Use of the mock heroic:

“Mock heroic” can be defined as: a form of satire that adapts the elevated heroic style of the classical epic poem to a trivial subject. Thus Book X, Chapter II begins:

“Now the little trembling Hare, which the Dread of all her numerous Enemies, and chiefly of that cunning, cruel, carnivorous Animal Man, had confined all the Day to her Lurking-place, sports wantonly o’er the Lawns: Now . . . In plain English, it was now Midnight.”

Flag Raising Concepts

- Fielding’s use of “good nature”;
- Appearance vs. reality situations;