A Comparison of the Country Squires in Addison and in Fielding

John G. Sheridan

Loyola University Chicago

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A COMPARISON OF THE COUNTRY 
SQUIRES IN ADDISON AND IN FIELDING

By

John G. Sheridan

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Loyola University
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To show that Addison's conceptions of a country squire are more intensive and idealistic than those of Fielding, and that Fielding's concepts are more extensive, human, and detailed.
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CHAPTER ONE

A Brief Review of Eighteenth Century Rural Life with Special Emphasis on the Status of The Squire

The word "squire" or "esquire" has passed through various stages in the development of its modern connotation. Etymologically, it is said to be derived from the old French escuyer or the Spanish escudero. And under these forms it generally implied an attendant of a knight. It was the duty of this attendant to carry the sword and the shield of his master at a tournament, or on a battle-field. In this sense, Sancho Panza was the esquire of Don Quixote. The esquire or squire of this type ranked immediately below the knight bachelor, and his office was looked upon as the apprentice stage of knighthood. The title was considered as one merely of function, not of birth, and was not hereditary. Gradually as time went on, this original significance fell into disuse, and the word began to mean a title of honor, referring to the rank between that of a knight and a gentleman or valet. Thus, in England, during the early eighteenth century, it was used both as a courtesy title, and as the designation of the chief landed proprietor of a district, who was frequently the lord of the manor. Quite often this squire presided over one of the law courts in his neighborhood and was known as the magistrate or constable or justice of peace.
Naturally, all the lesser proprietors of his parish or district looked up to the august and dignified figure of the squire, and prided themselves as the yeomen or "gentlemen" of his locality.

With the Restoration dramatists the country squire rose to a place of preeminence as a comic type. The sharp satirical wit of these robust, bantering playwrights was leveled unsparingly at the defenseless figure of the country gentleman, until they had erected in their collective imagination a conventional stock type, who was the perfect representation of boorish, ridiculous rusticity. And the strength of that character as a set type lay precisely in this dramatic synthesis: the squire was never an individual; and though the character appeared under various names in many plays, his characteristics of speech and conduct were cut from the same pattern. Whatever, therefore, difference is found in these pictures of the squire, is accidental; and the essential outline is common to them all.

This burlesquing, for burlesquing it was, of the country squire is not without adequate explanation. The portrayal of the refined and somewhat foppish Londoner needed a foil to emphasize its elegance and to provide comic relief and dramatic variety. The city, rather than the country, served as a setting for the plays, and so it was frequently necessary to bring the squire to town. Here he became the target of
every schemer and the sport of every wit. His condition at the conclusion of the play was usually one of two kinds. Either he was thoroughly embarrassed and gave vent to an outburst of anger, or, like Old Bellair in Etherege’s "Man of Mode," he was soon reconciled for having been made the butt of their humor and found solace in a toast or a dance.

If the squire was capable of polite behavior or intellectual acuity at all, it was never evident in his dramatic portrait. No circumstances go unseized that will in the least bring out his gross ignorance and his rustic credulity. And what is worse, to the playwright’s mind, at any rate, is his boring tediousness; consider this passage from "The Man of Mode:"

Belinda: I have been so tired with two or three country gentlemen, whose conversation has been more unsufferable than a country fiddle . . . They have asked me a thousand questions of the modes and intrigues of the town, and I have told 'em almost as many things for news that hardly were so when their gowns were in fashion.

Mrs. Loveit: Provoking creatures! How could you endure them?!

In Shadwell’s "Squire of Alsatia," Belfond, senior, expresses amazement with the question, "How long may a man live in ignorance in the country?" His own schooling was

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2 Thomas Shadwell, Complete Works, Vol. IV, p. 211.
merely a matter of learning samples of grain, sheep tending, and the other tasks of the rural life. He admits as much, confessing that he has been educated like "a Grasier, or a Butcher." Squire Empty, in Taverner's The Maid the Mistress, rebels at the term rustic and makes it clear that he holds both the rank and the reputation of a "gentleman bred and born," since he "can drink claret and stalebeer," and "play at bowls and take snuff . . . and smoke tobacco" with the elite of the "side-box beaux." The pictures at the gallery tempt him to look "with as much eagerness as if they were as many monsters brought from Afriick," and it seems that he "never saw London" in the past. The dialogue between Mrs. Millamant and Sir Willful Witwoud, in Congreve's "The Way of the World" (1700) brings to mind the disagreements between Squire Western and his sister and illustrates the amusing technique of the dramatist to secure his effect:

Mrs. Millamant: Natural, easy, Suckling.
Sir Willful: Suckling! no such suckling neither, cousin, nor stripling: I thank Heaven, I'm no minor.
Mrs. Millamant: Ah, rustic, ruder than Gothic!
Sir Willful: Well, well, I shall understand your lingo one of these days, cousin; in the meantime I must answer in plain English."6

3 Ibid., p. 263.
5 Ibid., pp. 38, 40.
6 Types of English Drama, 1660-1700. Stevens, p. 358.
We see the same figure shocking the company by entering the drawing-room shod in his hunting boots, and embarrassing Lady Wishfort exceedingly by asking her to help him remove them. The discomfited lady's only explanation of such horrifying conduct on the part of her guest is, "My nephew's a little unbred; you'll pardon him, madam." It seems to be her hope that a trip abroad will refine his manners. Though he is already over forty and untravelled, he still has hopes of improving his education with the study of French, that is, if "the peace holds and taxes abate."

As a lover, the squire is hardly at his best. Sir Willful is thoroughly confused with the problem of proposing to Mrs. Millamant and his reaction is one of relief when he finds he will not have to go through with the marriage. Squire Trelooly in "The Plotting Lovers," of whose wit it is said that "there is no coming near him, his skull is so thick;" and Squire Daudle in "The Hasty Wedding," "a pert, brick, presuming fellow, who values himself much upon his intriguing, in which he always miscarries," are two thick-witted young would-be gallants who are made ridiculous by their rustic love-making. Even the older squires are portrayed as being very susceptible to the charms of the ladies of London. Sir

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7Ibid., p. 355.
8Shadwell, Works, IV, p. 294.
Sampson Legend, in Congreve's "Love for Love," and old Bellair in Etherege's "The Man of Mode," both have an eye for the young beauties whom they meet, while the gay country knights of Etherege's "She Wou'd if She Cou'd," Sir Oliver Cookwood and Sir Joslin Jolley, are elevated to ecstasys by any petticoat wearer. Poor exponents of the art of love-making, their crude attempts are more representative of rural roughness than urban unctuousness.

Even when the country gentleman is in his own environment, he appears to little better advantage. Sir Tunbelly Clumsey, in Vanbrugh's "The Relapse," is an inhospitable, choleric and vulgar squire who looks up his pretty daughter in the house to keep her from her suitors. He has a dearth of manners, not even troubling himself to ask his guests to sit at dinner, but his obsequiousness and politeness to the town beaux is an indication that he holds them in respect. "A Box of ceremony" is his comment upon the doings at his daughter's wedding and this is an apt description of his own behavior. Mr. Sullen, in Farquhar's "The Beaux Stratagem," is the epitome of boorishness and discourtesy. He is careful never to say an agreeable word to anyone and feels content only when surrounded by his companions, of whom Gibbet (a highwayman, incidentally) says that they are "such a parcel of scoundrels... that... I was

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ashamed to be seen in their company." Like many of the other squires his name is a one word description of his pre-
dominant characteristic.

The conclusion is, then, that the squire as depicted in the drama before Fielding is distinctly a type and not an indi-
vidual. His time in the country is occupied with the bottle and the chase; his time in the city is similarly occupied with
the exception that the boisterous spirits he displays in the hunt are accentuated in the narrow confines of the drawing-room.
His usual function in the scheme of London society is to serve as a dupe for its intrigues. There is no difficulty in finding
him out, since he shuns solitude, particularly in his drinking habits. Even the disagreeable Mr. Sullen has no difficulty in
this respect. He is without manners, culture, or refinement; his speech is coarse and vulgar. Sometimes his hearty, spirited
exuberance and quick, virile wit are not at all unlikeable.

These qualities are more in evidence if the squire is portrayed as an older man. Vanbrugh, in Polydorus Hogstye, has painted a
fairly complete portrait of what is objectionable in the squire as he is found in drama: "Gentleman: I breed my eldest son -
a fool; my youngest breed themselves; and my daughters have -
no breeding at all." 12

To the credit of the dramatists it must be admitted that

11Stevens, p. 407.
the foregoing didn't stand as the model of all the squires. Old Bellair, Sir Willful, and Sir Oliver Cockwood, for example, despite some disgusting faults, are occasionally humorous.

Although the drama was the chief literary medium for the portrayal of the squire, the essay and the novel also made use of this colorful character. The "fine old gentleman" was either a victim of satire or a paragon of virtue depending upon the whim of their creator. Roger Solmes in Clarissa Harlowe is one of many examples. But despite their variety in name and number, they all have characteristics in common, whatever individual differences their creators may have seen fit to give them.

The historian, Macaulay, even though he is recording facts and not fiction, also has the same concept of and attitude toward the squirearchy. Peculiarly enough, he bases his diatribe on records the exact nature of which he neglects to divulge. Since he had a reputation for being extremely well read, Macaulay, most probably, laid the foundation for his ideas of the English country squire of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries on that gentleman as he was portrayed in the drama and the fiction of the period. This is the natural thing to do, for one always looks to the literature of an age for a knowledge of the customs, culture, and ideals of a people. During the Restoration period the squire was delineated often and quite fully, and from these complete and frequent sketches
we are able to formulate a fairly composite photograph of him as he appears in the fiction and the drama of the period. But to rely upon literature alone for a knowledge of the men of the time is a rather dangerous practice, since most of the writers had personal views which they could scarcely keep from biasing their portrayals of this particular member of society. The letters, records and diaries of the time would furnish a much more dependable source of information; and, if we wish to see the country squire as he was in fact, we must not be satisfied merely with the sketch of him as he appears through the eyes of some writer of plays, essays, and fiction; we must probe into the less imaginative forms of literature and history.

On the country squire there have been made some excellent studies, based principally upon authentic letter-books and diaries, and from these we may attempt to see that gentleman as he was in fact - not in fiction.

Macaulay, in his History of England from the Accession of James II, has a rather uncomplimentary passage on the English country squires, that is too long to quote here. But the substance of it has been condensed by P. H. Ditchfield in an article called "Lord Macaulay on Squires and Parsons." Ditchfield summarizes Macaulay thus:

Macaulay begins by contrasting the modern country gentleman, educated at Eton and Oxford or Cambridge, spending much of his time in London and possessing a noble country seat, with his prototype ... who was comparatively (the writer asserts) a poor man, did not travel on the continent, had no house in London,
and seldom visited it. Macaulay seemed to imagine that London was the only centre of light and refinement, and that no one could be a gentleman without paying constant visits to it. The squire of pre-Revolution times received his education from grooms and gamekeepers and could scarcely sign his name. If he went to school and college he soon forgot his academical pursuits in handling pigs, drinking with drovers, hunting, and in unrefined sensuality. His language was that of ignorant clowns, interspersed with oaths, coarse jests, and scurrilous abuse in provincial dialect. His home was a fourth-rate farmhouse, with farm litter under the windows of his bedchamber and cabbages close to his hall door. Coarse plenty loaded his table. He drank too much, and he drank beer. His wife cooked the midday dinner, and the squire and his guests spent the afternoon in drinking ale and smoking tobacco. His opinions upon religion, government, etc., were those of a child. He hated Frenchmen, Italians, Scotchmen, and Irishmen, Papists and Presbyterians, Independents and Baptists, Quakers and Jews, and Londoners. The squire did not differ much from a rustic miller or alehouse keeper, unlettered and unpolished, but he was still a gentleman.

He was a member of a proud and powerful aristocracy. He had great family pride, was skilled in heraldry, a magistrate, an officer of the trained bands, had fought in the Civil War, though his military dignity might move the mirth of gallants who had fought in Flanders. He was a plebian in his low tastes and gross phrases, a patrician in matters of heraldry and in maintaining the honour of his house. He was a Tory, disliked courtiers and ministers, the scandals of Whitehall, and Stuart ingratitude.

But he was loyal to Charles, and would have been to James II if the latter had not outraged his strongest feelings in attacking the Church of England, which he ardently loved, though (according to the traducer) he did not understand her creed and habitually disobeyed her precepts.  

Ditchfield, in this summarization, certainly is true to the sentiments that Macaulay wished to express, and all that he lacks is the historian's admirable phraseology and well-balanced sentences. But Ditchfield heartily disagrees with the opinion of his predecessor, for he says:

But it is all specious and false. There were doubtless, some obscure country squires who answered in some measure to this description, some few boors — and indeed I have found such in Sussex whose habits are revealed by their diaries; but to apply this wholesale condemnation to the generality of the country gentlemen of England ... is utterly misleading and preposterous. 14

Immediately Ditchfield begins a refutation of each separate charge of Macaulay. In contrast to Macaulay's statement that the squire was a boor, ignorant, and uncouth, with low tastes, Ditchfield would have it that the old manor-houses of England are sufficient proof that the country squires had an excellent sense of architectural beauty, etc. Then he says:

But they were poor, and, therefore, to be despised, according to Macaulay. But is that so? According to statistics, after the Restoration the average income of the knights and squires was estimated at four hundred to eight hundred pounds a year. But the purchasing power of money in those days was at least four times as great as it is now, and you must multiply the above incomes by four if you would arrive at a just estimate. An income of sixteen hundred pounds or thirty-two hundred pounds, if not princely, is fairly ample ... Macaulay did not think it worth while to mention the immense sacrifices which the squires had made ... Many of them had garrisoned their houses for the King during the Civil War, and seen them battered down by Cromwell's cannon ... No wonder

14 Ibid., p. 79.
that many of the Squires of the Restoration period were poor men . . . Still with an income of sixteen hundred pounds a year, according to the present value of money, they were not exactly such paupers as Macaulay painted them.15

In contrast to Macaulay's charge that they never visited London, Ditchfield says that "Contemporary writers tell us that they were always riding post to the metropolis;" yet he does agree almost entirely with the historian concerning the vocabulary and dialect of the squire:

But then he spoke like a labourer. He was guilty of speaking the dialect of his district. That may have grated on Macaulay's fastidious ears. But in his dealings with his farmers and his labourers, in his conduct on the Bench, how was the squire to make known his commands, examine witnesses, hear grievances, settle quarrels, if he did not know the language of the people? I have known many a squire of high degree in the present civilized age who could talk the distinct provincialisms of his county with pride and zest . . . He could talk as broadly as the labourer in the cottage, and as correctly as a lord in a drawing-room.16

To decide which one of these two historians is the more accurate would be a difficult task. Undoubtedly Macaulay has a reputation that easily surpasses that of Ditchfield, but the latter, on the other hand, is the only one who has divulged the records on which he bases his statements and corrections. Even early in the eighteenth century, there certainly must have been young squires who went to Oxford and Cambridge, for there are numerous attestations of their attendance there. And many squires had fine libraries, possessed a taste for literature.

15 Ibid., pp. 80, 81.
16 Ibid., pp. 81 ff.
and even occasionally dabbled in the fine arts. Thus Ditchfield tells us that the following books were found in the squire's library - Vox Clamantis, The Compleat Angler, and The Gentleman's Calling. There was one called The Institution of a Gentleman, in which the squire was advised that "a man cannot be a gentleman who loveth not hawking and hunting." From the presence of this book in so many libraries, we may conclude that field sports were at this time a common diversion among the squirearchy and the aristocracy in general.

In the seventh chapter of Ditchfield's book - The Old English Country Squire - there is an excellent expression of the side of the question that was neglected by Macaulay. And from a reading of the two historians it is apparent that there must have been several types of squires living in England during the seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries. No doubt there were country gentlemen who spent what was left of the morning, after they had arisen, in the hunt; and whiled away the afternoons in drinking with their fox-chasing friends. But, on the other hand, there certainly were numerous squires who had excellent educations, spent some of their leisure time in hunting, and when they were not active on the magisterial bench, indulged their literary tastes and, for the most part, lived sober, rational, charitable lives.
CHAPTER TWO

Squires in the Works of Addison

Probably the only reference of a possible knowledge of country squires in the life of Joseph Addison is the line of Swift in the "Libel on Delany." Swift says that Addison was left in distress abroad and became "travelling tutor to a squire." But the truth of this statement has been so frequently called into question by many critics that it probably is not true. Where it was that Addison derived his knowledge of country squires would be hard to say. No biographical material touches on this point at all. But certainly in his supposed visit to the country, the visit in which he met the Tory Fox-hunter, there seems to be at least one small evidence of his acquaintance with country gentlemen. The portrait thus drawn is described in the twenty-second number of The Freeholder and is said to be "an admirable portrait halfway between Sir Roger de Coverley and Squire Western."[17]

This Tory Fox-hunter is quite similar to the stock type character of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in that he does not appear to have travelled, for he naively admits that he would never have come up to London had

he not been subpoenaed to it, as he had naturally an aversion to the place. He implies the amount of reading he does and the kind that it is when he says that they in the country "never see how things go except now and then," in Dyer's Letter, and I read that more for style than for the news." Perhaps the only other writing that the Fox-hunter has any knowledge of is his "almanack" and there certainly are no traces in his conversation or behavior that would indicate a wider acquaintance with any form of literature. Besides being very poorly read, he seems to be rather gullible and an easy tool of political propaganda, for he displays an unbelieving astonishment when he learns that he has been both imposed upon and duped by those who had deceitfully described to him the evil and destruction caused by the Whig régime. As for foreign travel, he thinks that it is good for little more than to teach a person "to jabber French, and to talk against passive obedience;" and what is much more serious, he has never known "a traveller in his life who had not forsook his principles, and lost his hunting seat."

It seems that Addison, like his Restoration models, considered the main characteristics of his squires to be their

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18 Addison, in The Freeholder, No. 44.
19 Addison, in The Freeholder, No. 22.
20 Ibid.
interest in fox-hunting, and their activity in country politics, and their rather sketchy idea of religion. The very name that Addison gives to his country squire - the Tory Fox-hunter - is an indication that the author considers him primarily a sportsman. And in several issues of The Freeholder he reveals sportsmanlike inclinations, since he exhibits an unusual fondness for his hunting dog, and greets several of his fellow hunters with loud halloes and whistles along the road. He even travels all the way to the London which he abhors, so that he may serve as a character witness for one of the rebels, simply because he knows him to be a very fair sportsman. The religious views of this gentleman are admirably epitomized by Addison when he says:

In short, I found by his discourse that he had learned a great deal of politics, but not one word of religion, from the parson of his parish... he had scarce any other notion of religion, but that it consisted in hating Presbyterians.21

and when, in the city, his pocket is picked and he loses his purse and precious "almanack." he is quite sure that only a cardinal would have done it; and the cardinal could be none other than "a Presbyterian in disguise."22

The Tory Fox-hunter, with astonishing naïveté, dates all the misfortunes, both public and private, from the time of the accession of the Whigs to power. And he even holds them

21Ibid.
22Addison, in The Freeholder, No. 44.
responsible for the prevalence of poor weather since the advent of Charles the Second. 23 Despite his deep faith in the English navy he is convinced that any further development of England as a nation of shop-keepers would be its very ruin, so that he roundly curses the merchants and the directors of the Bank of England as direct causes for the failing glory of the English nation. 24 He has a narrow, ingrained prejudice against foreigners and foreign goods that seems to have been typical of the country squire of the eighteenth century; and he vehemently denounces all treaties and alliances with foreign powers. 25

But it is the immortal Sir Roger de Coverley, however, the grand old knight of The Spectator papers, whose coming finally furnishes us with a complete and appealing picture of a country squire, and whose character is elevated above the conventional stock type. Since he was sketched by several hands, 26 it is rather remarkable that the finished portrait should be so consistent, so logical, and so engaging. Indeed, the various constituent elements of his personality are delineated so skillfully, yet so sympathetically, that the result-

23 Addison, in The Freeholder, No. 22.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid.
Addison, Steele, Budgell, and Tickell all tried their hands at describing Sir Roger.
ing product is amazingly alive and human. Sir Roger is never a vehicle for good-natured satire on the country squires; rather he is an individual whose idiosyncrasies and whimsicalities serve only to accentuate his appeal.

It is to Addison and Steele that by far the greatest amount of credit is due for the creation and the existence of Sir Roger de Coverley; but to Addison alone the greatest share of credit must go, for it was he who supplied the greater part of the background and the development of this famous character. With this second creation of Addison's in the field of the country squire it will be interesting to compare his first conception. The Tory Fox-hunter is an object of the author's light satire. Addison himself has told us what he thinks of his type as a whole:

For the honor of his Majesty and the safety of his government, we cannot but observe, that those who have appeared the greatest enemies to both, are of that rank of men who are commonly distinguished by the title of Fox-hunter.27

In general, Sir Roger represents a happy exception to the former method of depicting characters ideally but scarcely humanly. Addison seems to be anticipating the method of the later novelists who had ideal characters in their works, but they incarnated these ideals in flesh and blood.28 Thus

27Addison, in The Freeholder, No. 22.
Sir Roger is portrayed so naturally that numerous conjectures have been raised as to the identity of the original character. For instance, in 1783, Tyers declared that Sir John Packington, Bart., of Westwood, in Worcestershire, was the prototype of Sir Roger. But a comparison between the lives of these two country gentlemen scarcely warrants that conclusion. From The Spectator, Sir Roger was obviously a disappointed bachelor; Sir John Packington was twice married. Sir Roger was a mere observer of politics; Sir John was a Member of Parliament for his shire from the time he reached his majority until his death. He was a lawyer, too, but Sir Roger abhorred any form of litigation. This conjecture of Tyers, together with the one that assumes that Addison's own father was the original Sir Roger de Coverley, has been denounced by so many critics, that it is evidently false. We may safely conclude that Sir Roger had no actual prototype. Rather he represents an ideal member of a genial type of men. Then, too, since The Spectator always avoided personalities, it is not likely to have drawn a portrait of an individual squire. Nor must we associate with that worthy knight the famous old country dance that was the conclusion of every ball, even though the story states that "his grandfather was the inventor of that famous dance that was called after him." The name of the dance was originally "Roger a Calverly;" and was really called after Sir Roger of
Caverley, who lived in the time of Richard I at Caverley in Yorkshire. But the only connection of our Sir Roger with this dance or this ancient namesake is actually an imaginary one, said to be the invention of Dean Swift.

In regard to Sir Roger de Coverley, the article in the Dictionary of National Biography by Sir Leslie Stephen reads:

Addison's greatest achievement is universally admitted to be the character of Sir Roger de Coverley. Sir Roger is the incarnation of Addison's kindly tenderness, showing through a veil of delicate persiflage. Sir Roger was briefly sketched by Steele in the second Spectator. He is portrayed most fully in a series of fifteen Spectators by Addison, in July 1711, which describes a visit to his country-house. Six essays by Steele are interspersed; but only two of them, in which Addison permitted Steele to tell Sir Roger's love story, are of any significance. Budgell describes a hunting-party in one number. Sir Roger then disappears till he comes to London to see Prince Eugene in January 1712. Addison takes him to the Abbey in another paper, the eighteenth of March; to Phillip's "Distressed Mother", in a third, the twenty-fifth of March; and to Vauxhall in a fourth, the twentieth of May. After this, Steele introduced him (to Addison's vexation, it is said) to a woman of the town, the twentieth of June. On the twenty-third of October Addison describes his death: "I killed him," he told Budgell, "that nobody else might murder him."29

Perhaps Addison, when he so violently killed off his creation, had some reason similar to Cervantes, who disposed of his hero with "para mi sola nacio Don Quixote, y yo para el."

29 Budgell's Bee, Vol. I, p. 27.
Whether Addison ever filled in the complete delineation he originally had of Sir Roger is difficult to say. Despite the fact that the old knight is pictured as having anything but a normal imagination, Addison seemed to take as little advantage of this idiosyncrasy as he possibly could. Rather he handled his character with a gentleness that happily saves Sir Roger from being classified with those numerous boorish, bragging squires. Addison concentrates so much of his efforts on the finer side of human nature that the slight irregularities in his hero seem to be not so much the effects of a mind straying away from the ordinary methods of acting and speaking, as is frequently the case with numerous persons rendered eccentric by the presence of some fixed idea; but rather his deviations seem to have been induced by his rusticity, naïveté, and negligence common in those of his state of life. Contrary to this general sentiment, Dr. Beattie, in his preface to the works of Addison, had said:

I cannot admit that there is in this character any thing of rusticity (as that word is generally understood) or any of those habits or ways of thinking that solitary grandeur creates. No man on earth affects grandeur less, or thinks less of it, than Sir Roger; and no man is less solitary. His affability, good humour, his affection to his friends, respect to his neighbours, and gentleness and attention to his dependents, make him a very different being from a rustic, as well as from an imperious landlord, who lives retired among flatterers and vassals. Solitary grandeur is apt to engender pride, a passion
from which our worthy baronet is entirely free; and rusticity, as far as it is connected with the mind, implies awkwardness and ignorance, which, if one does not despise, one may pity and pardon, but cannot love with that fondness with which every heart is attached to Sir Roger.

This opinion, even though it seems to be founded more on sentiment than on reason, yet appears to be the closest to the real truth.

When we first meet Sir Roger in The Spectator papers, he is at home at Coverley Hall. Here he is surrounded by a group of servants who have an affectionate love for their master. We are told that he seldom changed them, and that they considered him the best master in the world. Some of them had grown old in his service; and, if he was at this time in his fifty-sixth year, then they surely must have known him and worked for him a long time. When he came home from London, their joy knew no bounds; several of them could scarcely refrain from tears at the sight of their returned master.

Unfortunately, Sir Roger de Coverley is only too true to the type of country squire with no very thorough education. In one of the Spectators he will not suffer himself to be insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table; and, when he is

choosing a chaplain, he wants one "rather of plain sense than
of such learning." In regard to the literary reading of his
friend, The Spectator himself reveals just where Sir Roger
stands when he writes that "could he believe that Sir Roger had
ever read Shakespeare, he might think that he had taken a hint
from Theseus in A Midsummer Night's Dream." In another paper
we find that the knight's reading is limited to Baker's
Chronicle, with "other authors, who always lie in his hall win-
dow . . . and The Supplement;" and, on another occasion, he
ingenuously relates that while still a schoolboy he had read
the life of Hector at the end of a dictionary. Yet there
are amazing passages of philosophical wisdom in the sayings of
such a poorly read, old gentleman. At one time he gives quite
a lengthy discourse on the passions, nature, and the reason;
and every bit of it is entirely in the abstract. However,
this paper is one of the early ones, written before Sir Roger
was as yet fully outlined. At that time Addison was merely
using his friend as a vehicle to promulgate his own thoughts.
We have no other example of this form of inconsistency in any
of the later copies. When the old knight is selecting his

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31 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 106.
32 Ibid., No. 116.
33 Ibid., No. 269.
34 Ibid., No. 335.
35 Ibid., No. 6.
chaplain, we are enabled to view another facet of his personality; and we notice that, for one who is supposed to be poorly read, he has an excellent judgement in the matter of homilies and eloquent divines. He desires his chaplain to do his preaching from a selection of the sermons that he considers the best. These include the masterpieces of the most eminent divines then living - Tillotson, Saunderson, Barrow, Calamy, and South.  

And the old knight's idea is to have a chaplain "of plain sense" to deliver these selected sermons in turn on the Sundays throughout the year. Sir Roger has a decided respect for learning, too, as is evident from the naive awe with which he looks upon the learning and cleverness of the widow and her remarkable (to him) ability to carry on a pedantic conversation. He hints, on one occasion, that it is "this barbarity" that has kept him from pressing his suit with the object of his desires.  

And yet, the reader readily senses that the baronet takes a secret pride in her talents. From none of his actions or his speech can we tell that he has travelled. And even though the first essay on him tells us that he has a house in town, yet his utterly unsophisticated comments at Spring Gardens, at the theater, and at Westminster Abbey tend to show that

36 Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 106.  
37 Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 113.
he never strayed very far or very long from his simple country estate. But in these narrow limits to his existence he has not developed the rustic habits or the overweening pride in himself and his ancestry that other knights seem to have done.

Sir Roger is as far removed from the boorish type of squire as possible and he never exhibits the common tendency to hard-drinking. And, in contrast to the typical squire, Sir Roger is proud of his ancestral line, but not excessively proud; moreover, he has taken the ideals of his forbears and set them up as his own standard of living. In his younger days, he claims to have been quite a man about town, a friend of all the wits of the day, and the conqueror of the offensive bully Dawson. But in all his dealings, all his words and actions, he displays an innate refinement and a chivalry that forever sets him far above the hard-drinking, boorish, inordinately proud squires of his day.

Hunting and country sports form a distinctive part of his life. Even during his youth he had shown an aptitude for the various forms of rural diversion. His exploits were known to one and all, as, for instance, the time when he shot forty covey of partridges in a single season. His horses were considered the finest and the best managed in the country, and the very walls of his house were dotted with the numerous

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38 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 116.
trophies of his hunts. Incidentally we are told in the same issue that Sir Roger interested himself in hunting as an outlet for his resentment against the "perverse widow." And, for what amounts to an indisputable proof of his zeal for fox-hunting, and, at the same time, of the amount of resentment against the widow that requires an outlet in that sport, we can point to the famous hunt that required about fifteen hour's hard riding, carried him through at least half a dozen counties, killed his brace of geldings and above half his dogs. On this same point there is an interesting detail in the de Coverley Papers that has a parallel in Don Quixote in England by Fielding. In the essay of The Spectator No. 116, Sir Roger mentions the fact that he has sent to other counties to get foxes for his own; and then turned them loose for his hunting. Fielding has the same idea in one stanza of Squire Badger's song:

A brushing fox in yonder wood
Secure to find we seek;
For why? I carried, sound and good,
A carload there last week.

And later on in life, when his passion for "the perverse widow" has abated somewhat and he begins to talk disparagingly of her, his hunting ability seems to remain with him, even though he no longer indulges in that sport as an outlet for his
resentment against her. The Spectator tells us that a hare is not yet safe that sits within ten miles of Sir Roger's house. The old man has now secured for himself a pack of stop-hounds, and interests himself in attuning their voices, so that they may bark or bay harmoniously. Even in his old age he is still an ardent huntsman, for during the Spectator's visit he goes afield nearly everyday; and it is on one of these occasions that we get a glimpse of the tender side that underlies his sporting pursuits. Sir Roger, at the end of the hunt, staunchly refuses to allow the hare to be killed, because it has afforded him with so much diversion; and has it taken to his orchard to gambol with the other hares that have escaped a similar fate. From this appealing picture we are given a most unusual touch of the old knight; and even though we completely detested that gentleman for a thousand other reasons, yet I believe that this one picture of him would entirely redeem his charming personality.

When he was not engaged in hunting, the eighteenth century squire was chiefly absorbed in local politics. Running true to form, Sir Roger is "a justice of the quorum and fills the chair at a quarter session with great abilities." Further-

42 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 115.
43 Ibid., No. 116
more, he brought renown on himself by his exposition of the Game Act at the County assizes.\(^{44}\) Although the Whigs disgust him, his feelings do not carry him to the extremes of the Tory Fox-hunter. Once, however, in the opinion of the Spectator, he is guilty of excess, when he would rather brave discomfort than take advantage of the hospitality of a Whig inn.\(^{45}\) When he is informed that the silver head of the statue of Henry the Fifth was surreptitiously removed from Westminster Abbey, the unsupported conclusion that a Whig committed the outrage immediately leaps to his mind. He advises the keeper to be careful or the body will vanish also.\(^{46}\) It is incredible to him that the Widow prefers Sir David Dundrum, who is his elder by six months and "a noted Republican into the bargain."\(^{47}\) He considers country squires as "the ornament of the English nation, men of good heads and sound bodies."\(^{48}\) Like all the country gentlemen he has no use for trade and merchants. This quotation is found in one of his many tiffs with Sir Andrew Freeport:

\(^{44}\)Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 2.  
\(^{45}\)Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 126.  
\(^{46}\)Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 329.  
\(^{47}\)Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 359.  
\(^{48}\)Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 34.
And at best, let frugality and parsimony be the virtues of the merchant, how much is his actual dealing below a gentleman's charity to the poor, or hospitality among his neighbors? Similar to the Tory Fox-hunter, he has a deep trust in the English navy; and though stubborn and unyielding in his fidelity to his country, he must be credited with an intense loyalty of the kind that was prevalent among Englishmen of his type and time:

The Knight ... made several reflections on the greatness of the British nation: as, that one Englishman could beat three Frenchmen; that we could never be in danger of Popery so long as we took care of our fleet; that the Thames was the noblest river in Europe; that London bridge was a greater piece of work than any of the seven wonders of the world; with many other honest prejudices which naturally cleave to the heart of a true Englishman.

Yet the knight realizes the evils of partisan politics and believes that it is the cause of much tension and animosity among the countrymen; and what is even more to be lamented, it tends "to the prejudice of the land tax, and the destruction of the game." The Spectator observes that the Squire is inclined to subordinate his politics to his more immediately personal interests with the remark that he "is a much stronger Tory in the country that in town;" and Sir Roger admits this "is absolutely necessary for the keeping up of his interest."

Addison, in The Spectator, No. 174.
Addison, in The Spectator, No. 383.
Addison, in The Spectator, No. 125.
Addison, in The Spectator, No. 126.
These characteristics, interesting though they may be, are only secondary in a study of the character of Sir Roger. What interests us most are the more subjective and individual qualities of the man himself, as distinguished from the typical and common characteristics of the country squire. It was the genius of Addison and Steele to make their character something more than just another gentleman and sportsman. Their Sir Roger is a kind, friendly old gentleman, who is an early type of the "good-natured man" of the eighteenth century. This more human Sir Roger is revealed best in his own surroundings among his dependents and menials, safeguarding their interests large and small.

Sir Roger is first presented to us as "a gentleman very singular in his behavior," but the word singular is used to sum up his good qualities rather than the opposite. These singularities of behavior flow from his prudence, and his "humor creates him no enemies," as "he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms, makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him." As proof of this, the knight is universally loved and respected. He is a paragon of virtue to his servants, and they revere him.

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53 Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 2.
accordingly. His tenants are well satisfied in their sufficiency, and the farmer's sons are glad to have the chance to open a gate for him as he passes by. That the esteem they have for him is more than an ordinary one is manifested by the remark of The Spectator that "all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company." His amiability and pleasant disposition win him a circle of friends, and his gentle, odd humour and companionability are never without their winning attractiveness. His benevolence is not of the stern, rigid type, but is blended with prudence, gentleness, and kindness. Still it is characterized, not by softness, but justice; and he "receives a suitable tribute for his universal benevolence to mankind in the returns of affection and good-will, which are paid him by everyone that lives within his neighborhood." Being blessed with a serenity founded on a happy disposition of mind, he rejoices in the contentment and tranquillity of others, so that he is truly the object of the admiration and affection of all who know him.

54 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 116.
55 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 2.
56 In giving alms to a beggar, Sir Roger rebukes him for not going to work, but gives him six-pence just the same. Spectator, No. 269.
57 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 122
Unlike the other squires in literature, Sir Roger is a devoted and loyal church-goer. Though he dozes off sometimes during the sermon, he will tolerate none of it in his tenants and besides, keeps a rigorous account of their attendance at divine service. He is a generous contributor to the church and; in order to encourage his tenants to be more faithful in their attendance, and to assist devoutly at the services, he donates a common-prayer-book to each of them, together with a hassock. That their rendition of the psalms may be more acceptable, he even employs a singing master.58 He esteems his chaplain and is very intimate with him. Though this may not seem unusual, it really is, as the Spectator observes, because in the neighboring village the squire and his chaplain were continually at loggerheads and this sort of thing seems to be the custom in the country rather than the exception.59

Addison's Squire may have the above mentioned qualities to a majestic degree, but at the same time, like the other squires, he is rustic and credulous. It is this blend of the common squire with the individuality of Sir Roger that gives Addison's character its unusual naturalness. Because of his environment and the meagerness of his learning, it is not to be expected

58 Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 112.
59 Addison, in *The Spectator*, No. 112.
that Sir Roger should be remarkable for his intellectual acumen or ready wit. But in the absence of these mental gifts he is not as a consequence dull. Rather he is remarkable for the charm of his simplicity and naivete. The Spectator says that the knight's speech at the assizes was intended not particularly "to inform the court," because it was very "little to purpose," as to manifest the talent and dignity of the squire. 60 In interceding between Will Wimble and Tom Touchy, Sir Roger, after mature thought, very discerningly rules that much is to be "said on both sides," and both of them are left well pleased. 61 Sir Roger is in a quandary as to how to dispose of Moll White, the witch. Solely because of the eloquence of the chaplain, Sir Roger desists from holding her over to the county session, and the squire is forced to satisfy himself with the grave admonishment to her "to avoid all communication with the devil." Sir Roger's naive comments at the theatre and at Westminster, and his easy informality with the coachman, the one-legged boatman at Spring Garden, the guide at the Abbey - in fact, with most anyone favorably inclined to conversation - are evidence enough to the spontaneous candor of his character.

Thus we have seen the background that Fielding had at his

60 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 122.
61 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 122.
disposal, aside from his own observation in his depiction of the country squire. In our examination of the literature of the period before Fielding, we see, generally, a double picture of the country gentleman: first, he is a boisterous, bluffing, alcoholically inclined country bumpkin, with little or no formal schooling or background, and secondly as a genial, courteous, well-wishing, if somewhat simple, gentleman whom everyone holds in love and respect. The characterizations themselves range from Vanbrugh's creation of Polydorous Hogstye - a rough, beastly, and despotic squire, on to the less sharp portrayals of Sir William Willful and Addison's Tory Fox-hunter - still ignorant and boorish, but hearty and on the whole well disposed men, to Sir Roger, courteous, sensitive and kindly despite his country manner and guilelessness. In Tom Jones, Fielding has gone to some length to present a faithful picture of these antithetical squires. They are Western, not so disgusting as Hogstye but a member nevertheless of that general class, and Allworthy, an even more rarefied ideal than Sir Roger. He colors the characters to detail with the fine shades of his expert brush, so that they become very individualistic, but each is founded on the general character of his class.
CHAPTER THREE

Squires in the Works of Fielding

Fielding, in his early portrayals of squires, followed the general outlines sketched by the Restoration dramatists. Several of his country gentleman are held up to ridicule by reason of his clever caricature on their vices and imperfections. He makes little more than a slight attempt to depict fully their characters; but merely introduces them as stock types for satirical and humorous purposes.

For instance, in Pasquin, Fielding uses Sir Henry Foxchace [sic] and Squire Tankard as vehicles for his ridicule of the bribery and corruption among politicians. Fielding readily agrees with his fellow dramatists by emphasizing the boorish manners in these characters. Into a drawing-room filled with members of society comes Sir Harry, who greets the company with a startling, "Halloo, hark forwards." And this country gentleman, during the ensuing scene, keeps the entire room in a state of nervous apprehension with his vulgar language, and boisterous, ill-mannered way of interrupting the conversation. Peculiarly enough, his companion, Squire Tankard, goes through his first scene without contributing a single word.

to the frequently broken conversation. In his next scene, this apparently strong silent squire bursts forth into a half drunken, half patriotic declaration that, "a man who won't get drunk for his country is a rascal." To eradicate any doubt one may have as to his patriotism, he immediately proceeds to get so drunk that he insists upon paying the debts of the nation should he and Sir Harry be elected in the coming election. Sir Harry is too exaggerated and too conventionalized a character to have any distinct personality of his own, but he certainly represents a sharply etched portrait of a boorish, boisterous, rustic gentleman. He too, like his colleague, Squire Tankard, is patriotic in his own peculiar way, for he loudly declaims the foreign elements that are creeping into England:

Those were glorious days when honest hospitality flourished; when a country gentleman could afford to make his neighbours drunk, before your damned French fashions were brought over . . . why, how do you think this money is spent? . . . in houses, pictures, lace, embroidery, nick-nacks, Italian singers and French tumblers.

This ill-formed prejudice of his, his interest in politics because there is a possibility of his becoming a distinguished personage through election to office, and his speech marked

63 Ibid., p. 1037.
64 Ibid.
as it is by vulgar language and sporting terms, are practically the only indications we have of his character; and, judging from them, Squire Tankard is just a laughing-stock for the audience at the play.

In Love in Several Masques (1727) there is another squire, the bilious and irascible old guardian of Helena - Sir Positive Trap. This gentleman is much more fully delineated than Sir Harry Foxchace or Squire Tankard, for in the very beginning of the play his characteristics are pointed out by Merital when he says:

The young lady's guardian, Sir Positive Trap, by name, is an old precise knight, made up of avarice, folly, an ill-bred surliness of temper, and an odd, fantastic pride, built upon the antiquity of his family, into which he enrolls [sic] most of the great men he ever heard of. 65

Although this is the opinion of a spurned suitor who was quite ready to seize upon any explanation for his unsuccessful suit, yet this description of Sir Positive Trap is almost entirely correct. For instance, the exaggerated pride that he takes in his supposed genealogy is quite evident in many of his speeches. He actually implies that Helena is not worthy to be a descendant of the ancient family that claims Hercules as one of its illustrious members, that has "had at least fifty knights of the shire, deputy lieutenants, and colonels of the militia in

65 Complete Works, p. 796.
"it" and whose escutcheon, of a "lion rampant, with a wolf couchant, and a cat courant, in a field gules" is "a coat of arms" that "the Grand Mogul" himself might envy. Sir Positive Trap wants Helena to marry Sir Apish Simple and forget all about her lover Merital, just because that worthy is not the son of a baronet. Sir Positive reminds her that "the Simples and the Traps are the two ancientest houses in England;" the reader is all too frequently told the same thing. Is it any wonder that Macaulay was led to believe that the excessive family pride of the squires of the time was one of their chief defects? In this same man, Sir Positive Trap, there is an intermingling of respect for title and respect for wealth, for, when he is trying to persuade Helena to accept Sir Apish Simple, the following revealing dialogue takes place:

Helena: Don't tease [sic] me so, dear uncle. I can never like a fool. I abhor a fop.
Sir Positive: But there are three thousand pounds a year, and a title. Do you abhor these, hussy?
Helena: His estate I don't want, and his title I despise.
Sir Positive: Very fine! despite a title, hussy, you are no Trap! 67

Strangely enough, his exaggerated pride in his title, causes him to show his distaste for the rank of lord, and to add another name to his long, illustrious family tree:

66 Complete Works, p. 804.
67 Complete Works, p. 801.
Here is a lord, then! and what of that? an old English baronet is above a lord. A title of yesterday! an innovation! who were lords, I wonder, in the time of Sir Julius Caesar? and it is plain he was a baronet, by his being called by his Christian name."

Similar in this respect is Fielding's later creation, Squire Western, who despises lords in any form. Squire Western is also foreshadowed, when Sir Positive Trap uses all the means in his power to marry off his ward to Sir Apish Simple; but Squire Western, even at his very worst, never goes as far as Sir Positive, when the latter declares that he hopes "to see the time, when a man may carry his daughter to market with the same lawful authority as any other of his cattle." Squire Western certainly wandered far enough out of the narrow path of virtue, but he never degenerated quite that far. Perhaps, though, Sir Positive Trap would never have spoken in such an uncivilized way if Helena were actually his own daughter. Curiously, this declaration of Sir Positive Trap has a similar counterpart in the words of Richard Steele, to the effect that "care must be taken to secure our daughters by law, as well as our deer; and that some honest gentleman of a public spirit, would move for leave to bring in a bill for the better preserving of the female game." Despite Sir Positive's contempt for the women

68 Complete Works, p. 804.
69 Complete Works, p. 801.
70 Steele, in The Spectator, No. 326.
of his day and "although," as Merital says, "he" is "monstrously morose" . . . "to the rest of the world," yet we notice that Lady Trap is far too good for him, and manages him without experiencing much difficulty. As she herself says at the close of one of the scenes in the play: "It is strange that women should contend for wit in a husband when they may enjoy such an advantage from having a fool." But taken all in all, Sir Positive exhibits very few of the conventional qualities of the average country squire. True he does show quite decidedly that he has practically no education or refinement, but we are never given a glimpse of him as a hunting enthusiast, a hard-drinker, a magistrate, or a political meddler. Rather he is an ill-mannered, blustering, uncouth old busybody, loved by no one, not even his own wife; and, therefore, he serves as a mere tool for satire or comic relief.

But Fielding, in Don Quixote in England (1733) give us a squire that "out-Herods" any previous ones. Squire Badger is drawn for us as the most despicable country gentleman ever to be called by that name. Our first glimpse of him comes when he is going courting accompanied by his hunting dogs. Don Quixote mistakes him for a giant at the head of his army, and calls him "the giant Toglogmoglogog, lord of the island of Gogmogog."
Don Quixote can scarcely believe that any man would dare take hounds with him when he went to visit his mistress; the astonishment of this gentleman is furthered when Fielding uses Sancho Panza as his mouthpiece for:

Sir, your true English squire and his hounds are as inseparable as the Spaniard and his Toledo. He eats with his hounds, drinks with his hounds, and lies with his hounds; your true arrant English squire is but the first dog-boy in his house.

Probably an expression of Fielding's disapproval of the boorish type of squire is Don Quixote's contemptuous reply: "'Tis pity then that fortune should contradict the order of nature . . . these squires should sow that corn which they ride over."74 Fielding leaves out no vice that ever existed in the character of a squire before. Badger stands before us with all the bad traits of the squirearchy, and not one saving grace. He has no sooner appeared on the scene than he calls for a "hearty pot" and looks around for some one to drink with him. His conversation throughout the play is as racy as possible and filled with expressions from his intimacy with the stable and the kennels. True it is that he seems to be rather hospitable when he is looking for a drinking companion, but that kind of hospitality is offensive to nearly everyone. He proceeds to get fairly well intoxicated, and, as we naturally expect from his braggadocio

73 Ibid.
74 Ibid.
type, he soon becomes violent and abusive. But, when he wants
to start a fight with Don Quixote, he suddenly has a change of
mind, and soon shows no pugilistic inclinations at all. Perh-
haps, his rapid change of heart is explained by the stage
direction: "Don Quixote enters, armed \textit{cap-a-pie}, his lance in
his hand."\textsuperscript{75} Then, after a night's hard drinking, Squire
Badger finds the table as conducive to sleep as a feather bed,
and, in the morning, resents being disturbed.\textsuperscript{76} Never once in
his delineation does Fielding relax his vigorous sketching, but
skillfully satirizes the Squire at every opportunity. In one
part of the play, Squire Badger is extremely polite to Don
Quixote; but, after they quarrel, he soon becomes headstrong
and abusive. He is easily duped, too, for John, the servant
of Harlove, fools him by pretending to be a gentleman dressed
as a lackey because it is fashionable:

\begin{quote}
John: He is a gentleman, sir, universally esteemed
in the beau monde.
Badger: Beau monde! Pray, what's that?
John: Beau monde, sir, is as much as to say, a man
of figure: When you say he is a man of the beau
monde, you mean just such a person as I am.
Badger: You will pardon the ignorance of a country
gentleman.
John: Oh, sir, we of the beau monde are never of-
fended by ignorance.
. . . . . . . .
Come, sir.
Badger: After you, sir; I am not quite unbred.\textsuperscript{77}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{75}Ibid., 999.
\textsuperscript{76}Ibid., 1003.
\textsuperscript{77}Ibid., 999.
And later on, when Badger is persuading Sir Thomas to drink with him, he says:

Nay, Nay, you may e'en sneak off when you please; my lord and I here are very good company by ourselves.

Pray, my lord, go first; I'd have you think I have got some manners." 78

The clever satire of Fielding on the country squire probably reaches its peak in this play, but even this remarkable dramatic satire is only a foreshadowing of the heights which he attained as a novelist. His Squire Badger, in this play, is so rude, so blustering, so offensively boastful, that he leaves the reader with a lasting impression of the utter depravity and uncouthness of his social class. He, too, as had Steele and Sir Positive Trap, has an unchristian attitude toward women, for he is ludicrously happy to discover that Dorothea "sings like a nightingale," not because he has any appreciation of music, but rather because "that is a very fine quality in a wife; for you know the more she sings, the less she'll talk." 79

As for his own taste in music, it would seem to center around boisterous drinking and hunting songs, into which he bursts on the slightest provocation. And, incidentally, there is a distinct similarity between the ensuing quotation and the insistence of Squire Western to go hunting despite all his wife's

78 Ibid., 1001.
79 Ibid., 998.
entreaties, and his returning to drink all through the night. The song is Air VIII in the play, and the second and fifth stanzas of it are as follows:

The wife around her husband throws
Her arms, and begs his stay;
My dear, it rains, and hails, and snows;
You will not hunt today.
But a hunting we will go.

At length, his strength to faintness worn,
Poor Reynard ceases flight;
Then hungry homeward we return,
To feast away the night.
Then a drinking we will go.80

So, with a description of Sir Harry Fookchace, Squire Tankard, Sir Positive Trap, Sir Apish Simple, and Squire Badger we cover all the squires depicted in the plays of Henry Fielding. They have been silly, credulous, boorish, hypocritical, despicable, ignorant, hard-drinkers, lazy sportsmen - the objects of laughter and satire. Fielding had so far been essentially a man of the town; and these rustics offered an excellent target for his frequent satire. Probably he had not so far really known a squire in real life, and consequently he formed in himself a complete aversion to them. For eight years now Fielding had been writing for the stage, caricaturing the false heroics and the sentimentality of the withering drama that had preceded him, and using his dramatic pen to pick small bits out of the political strategy of Robert Walpole. In 1737 the Licensing Act forced him to discontinue his play-writing; and, when

80Ibid. 997.
Richardson's *Pamela* appeared, he found a new mode of expression. At about this time, too, Fielding married Charlotte Craddock, his first wife. The *Dictionary of National Biography* tells us what soon happened to him:

The lady was one of three sisters living on their own means at Salisbury... He inherited an estate of about two hundred pounds a year at Stower in Dorsetshire. His extravagances and conviviality, according to Murphy, 'entirely devoured' his wife's 'little patrimony' 'in less than three years'... It is probable that Booth's account in *Amelia* of his life in the country represents the facts: that Fielding was extravagant, and that neighbouring squires disliked and misrepresented the Londoner, who certainly had an eye for their foibles.

But after this experience in the country, Fielding immediately assumes a better role as a delineator of squires. He now seems to have a much more comprehensive conception; a more distinct idea of them; he talks now as one who really understands. His two chief creations in the realm of the squirearchy are Squire Western and Squire Allworthy. Both of these are not types; they are almost human. Fielding has breathed into them a spirit that far surpasses his former dramatic attempts.

Not that I would have you believe that Squire Western does not conform to the general type of loud, boisterous, wrangling squires, for he really does. But the portrayal does not stop...

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81 "Henry Fielding," in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.
there; it goes on with a wealth of detail to make the Squire seem not exactly perfect, but certainly human and alive. His introduction to the reader is curious, too, for, although Squire Allworthy is introduced per longum et latum, Western is brought in as a sort of afterthought, without even the distinction of a name. He is, at first, "one of those gentlemen who are called preservers of a game." He is said to be one of that class of men referred to by Horace as "feras consumers nati," and by Fielding as "born to consume the beasts of the field." Typically, he resents any encroachment on his property, and vociferously declares against the poaching of the hapless Tom Jones. Thereafter, Squire Western leaves the story, until we are informed that "an action was brought against the game-keeper by Squire Western (the gentleman on whose manor the partridge was killed)." Thus Fielding casually introduces the figure whose personality will dominate the entire novel, and then unexpectedly drops him for the time being. But Fielding knew very well what he was doing; he knew that this momentary forgetfulness would be the prelude to a stronger renewal of that character. When Sophia refuses to

marry Blifil, something amazing happens to the Squire's personality. We are told that "from then one, he is a veritable whirlwind of contending passions." 

Fielding follows the traditional outlines of the squire when he portrays Squire Western as having practically no education. The Squire's untrained mind is completely obfuscated by the cultured discourse between Thwackum and the parson; and he hastens to change the subject as quickly as possible "Drink about... Fox of your laws of nature! I don't know what you mean, either of you by right and wrong!" 

The poor Squire is sometimes taken entirely unawares by his sister who naturally looks down on him from her position as a bluestocking and something of an interested observer of politics. After one of her unintelligible talks, he cries out in despair:

Sister... I have often warned you not to talk the court gibberish to me. I tell you I don't understand the lingo, but I can read a journal or the London Evening Post. Perhaps, indeed, there may be a verse which I can't make much of because half the letters are left out; yet I know very well what is meant by that, and that our affairs don't go so well as they should do, because of bribery and corruption.

This quotation shows the narrow confines of the Squire's sources of knowledge. His type of literature is similar to that of the Tory Fox-hunter and Sir Roger de Coverley of Addison.

86 Tom Jones, Bk. IV, ch. 4, p. 105.
87 Ibid., Bk. VI, ch. 2, p. 200.
His daughter, Sophia, heartily deplores the illiteracy of her father, and declares that he daily improves in ignorance. On one occasion, she says that she cannot cope with his "more than Gothic ignorance!" Like Squire Badger, Western has a liking for music; and each afternoon, when he has become completely inebriated, he has Sophia play for him on the harpsichord. Like Badger, too, he prefers the lighter forms of music, such as "Old Sir Simon the King," "Saint George he was for England," "Bobbing Joan," and several others.

Squire Western follows the traditional pattern of the usual Jacobite squires in his narrow, ingrained prejudices. Like the Tory Fox-hunter, he heartily detests anything that pertains to the courts, the Presbyterians, and the house of Hanover. His chief aversion centers around lords of any description. At one time he upbraids the messenger of Lord Fellamar with the blunt:

Looke, sir . . . I would not marry her to a lord upon any account; I hate all lords; they are a parcel of courtiers and Hanoverians, and I will have nothing to do with them.

Another instance of his scorn for the members of this sort of nobility occurs when he agrees to marry Sophia to Blifil even though his estate is small in comparison to some of the others in the kingdom, for, says the squire, "Most o' zuch great estates be in the hands of the lords, and I heate the very name

88 Ibid., Bk. VII, ch. 3, p. 249.
89 Ibid., Bk. IV, ch. 5, p. 111.
90 Ibid., Bk. XVI, ch. 2, p. 284.
of them mun." Amazingly similar to the Tory Fox-hunter, Squire Western also thinks that the Hanovers are responsible for all the bribery and corruption of the times, and we find him saying, on one occasion, that he is a "true Englishman, and not of your Hanover breed that eat up the nation." In the same strain he had previously said:

Do you think no one hath any understanding unless he hath been at court? Pox! the world is come to a fine pass indeed, if we are all fools, except a parcel of round-heads and Hanover rats. Pox! I hope the times are a coming that we shall make fools of them, and every man shall enjoy his own . . . the country interest may succeed one day or other for all that.

But it is as a magistrate that Western displays the most childish intelligence. The whole affair is done, no doubt, to allow Fielding to portray the good heart of the Squire. When Mrs. Western demands that "justiceship" be exercised on Mrs. Honour, the clerk of the court who, we are told, possessed one trait "which no clerk to the justice of the peace ought ever to be without, namely some understanding in the law of the realm," advises Squire Western against sending the mail to the bride-well. Then Western, for no apparent reason, decides to take the clerk's advice; and Mrs. Honour goes free. Although this incident is a minor one, it serves to show the utter lack of

91 Ibid., Bk. VI, ch. 2, p. 201.
92 Ibid., Bk. VII, ch. 3, p. 250.
93 Ibid., Bk. VI, ch. 14, p. 240.
94 Ibid., Bk. VII, ch. 9, p. 268.
capacity for their office that so many of the country squires had; and it stands in sharp contrast to the outstanding abilities of Squire Allworthy in the exercise of the same magisterial powers.

In nearly every scene in which he appears, Squire Western demonstrates an astounding lack of feeling and refinement, especially when he is taken unawares or has become excited over something. Fielding rarely lets his charge enter the picture, unless he is in a state of agitation. Fielding is merely following the tradition of the Restoration dramatists when he brings his character to London, a place where the good squire admits, he has been only twice before in his whole life, and then he remained there for but a fortnight at a time. In the big city Squire Western does very little to improve his manners and deportment. Here he is every whit as hot-headed and blustering as at home; he is not one to be hemmed in and restricted by polite society and decorum. At one point he declares that he will get Sophia from Lady Bellaston, even though he is forced to seek the services of the law to obtain his end. When he reaches Lady Bellaston's mansion, he breaks in like an invading army, and announces his arrival in a voice of such stentorian timbre that the entire house seems to have difficulty in weathering the blast. There are several instances of his impetuous actions and words. But frequently the interest of the reader

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95 Ibid., Bk. XV, ch. 6, p. 257.
has its source in the quaint Somerset dialect of the Squire. His conversation has a charm, all its own; and it is only when his language degenerates into the very lowest forms of grossness and depravity that we find it anything but pleasing. His speech, scarcely that of the fashionable drawing-room, is frequently spouted forth with little regard for the sensibilities of the others present; at times it is coarse and profane; but there is hardly any occasion on which the squire has spoken to offend deliberately his hearers or to show himself to be the master of the contractions, syncopations, and elisions of the stable and the kennel. Rather he generally speaks in the peculiar dialect of Somerset that he knows, and has found most useful in speaking to his tenants and the defendants and plaintiffs who come before his bench.

His habitual drinking and hunting have a marked effect on his speech. Much of his time is spent in the field, and it is almost entirely due to a mutual love for riding and hunting that the squire and Tom Jones become fast friends. This mutual attraction for sports also enables Tom to see a great deal of Sophia, for his father brings her along during his rides and hunts; and thereby the main plot of the story is actuated. As a fox-hunter, Squire Western is no beginner; rather he is presented to us as an expert along that line— one who was capable of encouraging his hounds with a ingeniously voiced "hallo." And we are told that he is fonder of his horses and his dogs
than any other thing on earth, for even his daughter Sophia, whom he loves dearly, is allowed only a second place in his affections. This hapless young lady is compelled by her father to accompany him on his many hunts, so that he may have the double enjoyment of his dogs and her—at the same time. When Tom Jones is ill, he is treated to a serenade every morning by the squire under his window; and the old gentleman never forsakes his habit of greeting one and all with his expertly trained hunting hallo. But the outstanding instance of the Squire's love for the sport comes to light when the Squire, pursuing his fleeing daughter and speaking all manner of threats, is, at the same time, heard to be bewailing the loss of such a fine day for hunting. Then he meets some enthusiastic crony of his and, forgetful of his lost daughter and his threatened vengeance, joins in the hunt with astonishing eagerness and dispatch.

Squire Western is quite a drinker, too. He is outlined according to the traditional conception of the hard-drinking type of squire. On one occasion he tells us that beer may be regarded as a sort of panacea, which he ardently declares to have "more virtue in it than was in all the physic in an apothecary's

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96 Ibid., Bk. IV, ch. 13, p. 136.
98 Ibid., Bk. XII, ch. 3.
shop." During his years of drinking he has built up a resistance worthy of any "three-bottle" squire, and we are given only one glimpse of his completely hors de combat. And even on this occasion Fielding assures us that this misstep off the narrow path of virtue may be explained away by "the violent fatigue of mind as well as body that he had undergone ... without the least derogation from his honor."100

But in his dealings with his daughter, Squire Western appears under a new light; and, in a similar way, he is revealed by his treatment of his wife. Towards Sophia he manifests as much paternal affection as a man of his character is capable of, but this affection is qualified by its subordination to his love for his dogs and horses. His deportment, however, is not a good indication of his attachment, for a good many of his actions conceal it. Likewise, in his former treatment of Sophia's mother, the Squire reflected the contempt of his age for women. The book tells us that this lady had been a sort of faithful servant all the days of her marriage; and that he, in turn, had appeared to the unobserving eye as an almost model husband:

He very seldom swore at her (perhaps not above once a week) and never beat her: She had not the least occasion for jealousy, and was perfect mistress of her time; for she was never interrupted by her husband, who was engaged all the morning in his field exercises, and all the evening with bottle companions ... When he repaired to ... bed, he was generally so drunk that he could not see, and in

100 Ibid., Bk. XII, ch. 2, p. 103.
the sporting season he always arose ... before it was light.101

On numerous occasions the Squire shows his preference for his dogs over his daughter, but there is one instance in which he tempers his feeling for the canines by admitting that he would rather hear her voice than "the music of the best pack of hounds in England."102 But she takes only a second place in his affections when we read that "he scarce ever permitted her to be out of his sight unless he happens to be engaged with his horses, dogs, or bottle."103 And in a different vein on the same subject we read later that just as the Squire "loves her more than he did any other, so he was really jealous that she had loved her mother better than him," and we are informed that she was seldom forced to ask any favor twice, "as he loved her with such an ardent affection, that, by gratifying her he commonly conveyed the highest gratification to himself."104

According to this sentiment, the Squire must have injured himself most cruelly when he refused Sophia's request - that she be not forced to marry one whom she does not love. Her father is far from content with the way things are going after he has refused her, for he soon locks her up, swears at her, browbeats her savagely, and makes her entire existence a miserable affair.

101 Ibid., Bk. VII, ch. 4, p. 251.
102 Ibid., Bk. XVI, ch. 2, p. 286.
103 Ibid., Bk. IV, ch. 10, p. 129.
104 Ibid., Bk. IV, ch. 10, p. 128.
just because she has opposed his will. But the old Squire scarcely knows any better way of acting. For the most part, he has been brought up in an existence that tended to augment the incipient pride he must have originally had. Every one has kowtowed to him for so many years. Now that whether he was serving as magistrate on the Bench, or leading an enthusiastic band of sportsmen, or buying drinks for the one and the many, or violently upbraiding someone in his own mansion, he has come to think that his will is a sort of divine right. Naturally then, at the time when we are introduced to Squire Western, he is nothing more or less than a hot-headed, impulsive, undisciplined old tyrant. And even the most cursory glance at the letters, diaries, etc., of the period immediately show the reader that it must have been a tradition or custom of the age for a father and mother to take full responsibility for the future husband and the arrangements for the marriage of his daughter. And, furthermore, the daughter readily complied with the choice and the desires of her parents. So we would judge the Squire rather rashly, if we were to presume that he acted very harshly, when he refused the daring request of his daughter to release her from marrying one whom she does not love. Certainly, from the consideration of the fortune that she would find herself mistress of, the match is a very advantageous one, for it is quite evident that Blifil is a man of wealth. And the marriage would also be an advantageous one,
since we notice that Blifil is referred to as an "honest, country gentleman," and that Sophia's own mother had married her father's choice, even though it was against her will. Obviously, this paternal pre-arrangement of the match must have been the conventional thing. Are we to wonder, then, that Squire Western, the very antithesis of finesse and tact, sets about rectifying what he thinks is a frightful state of affairs with the same indomitable vigor that he pursues his hounds? On the same point, Fielding tries to justify the actions of his character: "We are not to arraign the squire of any want of love for his daughter; for in reality he had a great deal; we are only to consider that he was a squire and a sportsman."

Squire Western later appears as a loveable character, when he states that, if Sophia will but do as he desires, she will find that there is "narrow a father within a hundred miles o' the place that loves a daughter."

This curious intermingling of harshness and affection in the Squire is, perhaps, best defined by the author in two descriptions. Fielding says of him that "he had not the least command over any of his passions; and that which had at any time the ascendant in his mind hurried him to the wildest excesses;" and that "he conducted every scheme he undertook in

105 Ibid., Bk. XII, ch. 2, p. 102.
106 Ibid., Bk. XVIII, ch. 8, p. 380.
107 Ibid., Bk. VI, ch. 7, p. 217.
such a manner, as if the success of that alone was sufficient to constitute the whole happiness of his life. Indeed, Squire Western rarely takes enough time to think: matter out, but usually gets one idea on a subject, impulsively sketches a method of bringing it into effect, and then pig-headedly rushes it to its conclusion. In the beginning of the tale, Tom Jones finds himself quite an object of the Squire's fondness; but, as soon as he chances to oppose that gentleman's desires and plans, he hears himself picturesquely, heartily, and frantically cursed. And, aside from all opposition to his sovereign will, he often is influenced by some particular whim of the moment; at one time he is seen capering about and dancing, and another, he is blasting out the most terrible curses, or, possibly, weeping as though his heart would break. Can we help thinking that he is any other than a human being? Can we avoid classifying him as far removed from the standardized type of squire so frequently depicted in the literature of the period? He is no country gentleman with one or two characteristics magnified and caricatured; he is no mere etching of a person; he actually lives. With extreme cleverness, Fielding, knowing full well that most human beings are prone to practice only too few of the principles and ideals they have, has outlined for us a man who, since he has slight knowledge of right and wrong, and accordingly, is entirely human. Squire Western scarcely confess to Field-
ing's axiom of the wise man - "Never to buy at too dear a price," for he is generally paying, due to his mixture of honesty and impetuosity, for actions expensive to his own happiness and that of others. But, despite nearly all former characterizations of his social class, he definitely is honest, and honest even though it hurts him. From the time that he gave his word to Blifil and Squire Allworthy concerning the marriage, he thenceforth promptly rejected any other arrangement, even though it appeared extremely advantageous. Toward his sister, Miss Western, his attitude is one of greed and respect. He does everything in his power to keep in existence their family ties, although they are rather slender most of the time. His idea seems to be, to run as little risk as possible of losing her fortune that some day ought to be his. He shows practically no affection for her, but he has a magnificent control of his temper and actions when she is present. His diplomacy in his relations with her is admirably expressed by Fielding:

The squire, though perhaps he had never read Machiavel, was, however, in many points, a perfect politician. He strongly held all those wise tenets which are so well inculcated in that Politico-Peripatetic school of Exchange-alley. He knew the just value and only use of money, viz., to lay it up. He was likewise well skilled in the exact value of reversions, expectations, etc., and had often considered the amount of his sister's fortune, and the chance which he or his posterity had of inheriting it. This he was infinitely too wise to sacrifice to a trifling resentment.

109 Ibid., Bk. VI, ch. 3, p. 206.
But beyond this shrewd business sense of the Squire, so characteristic of the citizens of the "nation of shop-keepers," there lies no other miserly or avaricious quality.

Squire Western seems a good deal like Sir Roger de Coverley in his attitude toward religion and church. Several times we read that he "very often" goes to the church services. But distinctly implied in this connection is the feeling that he periodically neglects his duty. Perhaps his dogs and horses take up too much of his time. Toward his parson he acts in a manner characteristic of most of the landed gentry of his age. Sir Leslie Stephen says of the eighteenth century clergyman that "The ordinary parson, though he might be thoroughly respectable and amiable, was dependent upon the squire as his superior upon the ministers." And this is just the case between Parson Supple and Squire Western, for the clergyman is forced to put up with a great deal of abuse. This poor fellow is dominated by the Squire, and pushed around and treated with astonishing disrespect. Typical of Squire Western's relations with his chaplain is: "At'nt in pulpit now? when art a got up there I never mind what dost say; but I won't be priest-ridden, nor taught how to behave myself by thee."

One element in the character of Squire Western has evoked a controversy. Some would have it that the Squire displayed in

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112Tom Jones, Bk. XV, ch. 5, p. 253.
his squabble with Captain Egglane certain actions inconsistent with his character as it was ultimately portrayed. Partisans of this sentiment line up behind Sir Walter Scott. And opposed to them are those who stand behind the arguments of Wilbur L. Cross on the subject. First of all, "Scott considers it certainly unreasonable that Squire Western should have "taken a beating so unresistingly from the friend of Lord Fellamar," and then goes on to say that the passage is probably an interpolation. Incidentally, some contend it is not an interpolation since it appears in the first edition of the works. Contrarily, Cross hastens to defend the portraiture of the Squire:

Western, though no coward, was never very brave. He could threaten, browbeat, and even use his fists or his whip on Somerset boys and schoolmasters; but the situation was not quite the same in London. He did not know the ways of the town. .. unarmed at the time, he was taken off his guard when Captain Egglane boxed his ears with a cane ... Had he been armed, he would have retaliated; in fact, he immediately challenged the Captain to fight him ... either with bare fists or single sticks. The invitation was declined ... Fielding knew the English Jacobite better than Scott; he knew that beneath his noise and bluster there was no uncommon bravery.

And, in addition to this excellent defense of the drawing of the Squire, there is an incident in the book that would tend to show the same thing. It occurs when Tom Jones is fighting Blifil.

Squire Western rushes right into the battle in which he sees two men attacking one, despite the fact, as Fielding tells us, that one of them had a courage "as strong as his faith and his body was no less strong." 115

In nearly every respect Squire Western possessed the outlawish traits of the squires that preceded him in literature, but his outline is filled in with such a wealth of detail that it easily surpasses all its models. Even though the portraiture of him does contain details that are often seemingly inconsistent, yet its etcher had such a unified concept of the whole that the work is astonishingly true to life. His models all were patterns - ill-mannered, without education and travel, prejudiced, misogynists, lovers of the hunt-patterns, a knowledge of which certainly entered into his own drawing. But the unrefined characteristics of his predecessors in literature grate upon the nerves of the reader, whereas those of Squire Western seem to have some justification, merely because we feel that we actually know him. One of the details by which Fielding causes us to think that we are acquainted with this gentleman is the instance in which we are told that toward his sister he stands "more in awe than of any other human creature, though he would never own this, nor did he perhaps know it himself." 116

116 Ibid., Book XVI, ch. 4, p. 292.
By this statement, Fielding has revealed one more detail in the personality of the Squire, which leads the reader to believe that he now knows the character of that gentleman better than he does himself. And so it is by such clever devices as the one pointed out that the author creates a squire that effortlessly surpasses similar characters. Then, too, in preceding squires, the reader met men who were politicians, magistrates, heavy-drinkers, ardent sportsmen; but in the case of Squire Western we are introduced, not to a member of a general class, but to one who belongs to a small subdivision of a general class. Thus, our country gentleman is interested in just so much politics, and we are told precisely how much. We know, not only that he was a heavy-drinker, but also that he was one who loved to listen to his daughter play on the harpsichord, while he was inebriated. As a sportsman he was not just an ardent one; rather he was an ardent sportsman who loved his dogs and horses better than his own daughter; and, even though he was highly pleased with Tom Jones, on one occasion, yet he merely goes far enough to offer him any horse in his stable, "except only the Chevalier and Miss Slouch." Squire Western is more than an uneducated squire; he is one who proudly classes himself far above the educated. When he is speaking of Milton, he says: "Damn Milton! if he had the impudence to say so to my face, I'd lend him a douse thof [sic]

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117Ibid., Book VI, ch. 14, p. 239.
he was never so great a man."118 When the Squire goes to London, he naturally shows himself a dolt, but Western has sufficient common sense and intuition to avoid being made a fool of by Lord Fellamar and Lady Bellaston. Ordinary squires are prone to swear and curse in thundering tones, but our subject confines his swearing and cursing to the soft, flowing dialect of Somersetshire. In regard to Squire Western, Dobson has said: "His foaming impulses and his quick subsidings, his tears, his oaths, and his barbaric dialect, are all essential features in a personal portrait."119 But, despite all his imperfections, his vulgar language of the stable and the kennel, despite his selfishness and pride, his rusticity and ignorance, his brutality and boisterousness, we cannot help liking the Squire. As we leave him at the end of the story, playing with his little grand-daughter in the nursery, and confiding that her "tattling... is sweeter music than the finest cry of dogs in England," we realize that, as one critic so paradoxically wrote, "if none of them [the other country squires in English literature] have been so gross, none of them have been so real and human."120

118 Ibid., Book VI, ch. 14, p. 239.
119 Dobson, H. Fielding, p. 177.
120 Cross, II, p. 212.
Squire Allworthy proves to be the exception that proves the rule. If it were not for his title, one would have difficulty in classifying him as a squire at all; for he has little or nothing in common with that body of men from which the picturesque squire in literature was drawn. He bears some resemblance to Sir Roger de Coverley, but there is likewise a marked difference. Both were examples of the "good-natured man"; and, as such, were distinguished by benevolence, which, unfortunately, sometimes drifted into sentimentalism. Squire Allworthy lacks the warm humanity that makes Sir Roger a lovable figure. He is even more thoroughly virtuous than a character in a morality play, who, at least, was completed with an exposition of one of the virtues. But the good Squire is a lifeless paragon of every virtue conceivable, and his flawless character stands out in greater prominence because of the contrasting tendencies of his associates in the book.

Fielding surprises us with his introduction of Squire Allworthy after having given us what we thought was his conception of a squire in the pictures of Sir Positive Trap and Squire Badger. It seems almost contradictory to have a Squire introduced to us as a man "who might well be called the favorite of both nature and fortune; for both of these seem to have contended which should bless and enrich him most."121 Squire

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121Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 2, p. 3.
Allworthy's character is summed up in the following: "he has a solid understanding, a sound institution, and a benevolent heart." Fielding never permits the squire to step out of this rigid character.

It is evident at once that there is a difference between the background of Allworthy and that of the other squires. He is a man of exquisite taste; his house is a monument to Gothic architecture. "There was an air of grandeur in it that struck you with awe, and rivalled the beauties of the best Grecian architecture; and it was as commodious within as venerable without." The same taste is evident in his grounds "owing less to art than to nature," an exception in an age when gardens ran to clipped hedges and Greek statuary. The house is in keeping with the character of the man, unadorned and yet impressive. It is always open to worthy men regardless of their position.

The general impression seems to be that Allworthy frequented the company of men of good taste, and yet the men of his household do not seem to carry this stamp. His conversation manifests so much culture and discernment, that Fielding's words are particularly apt:

Though he had missed the advantages of a learned education, yet, being blest with vast natural abil-

122Ibid.
123Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 4, p. 8.
124Ibid.
ities, he had so well profited by vigorous though late application to letters and by much conversa-
tion with men of eminence in this way, that he was himself a very competent judge of most kinds of literature.125

Fielding does not tell us why Allworthy was denied the opportunity of a better education. It is hard to reconcile this with the fact that the Squire was a man gifted with "a solid understanding" and favored by fortune "with the inheritance of one of the largest estates in the country." But although Allworthy for some unknown reason was denied the benefits of travel and education in his youth, he is nevertheless a re-
fined, cultivated man.

Particularly in his attitude toward women is the Squire above reproach in his chivalrous behavior. Not even when his moral sense is offended by the lapse of Jenny Jones does he forget his superior code of manners; moreover, he promises to respect her desire of secrecy regarding the paternity of Tom. His finesse and gentleness in handling this ticklish situation could hardly be duplicated by a man of inferior breeding. How different would be the reaction of Squire Western to a like situation? Allworthy, though Blifil's lies find him an easy mark, is discerning enough to sense something deeper in Sophia's

aversion to the proposed marriage than is at once evident. Consequently he resolves to do his utmost to prevent the match:

But I declare . . . I will never give my consent to any absolute force being put on her inclinations, nor shall you ever have her, unless she can be brought freely to compliance. 126

This interest in Sophia's marriage is unusual. An explanation may be that, because his own married life was so happy, he wishes Sophia's to be similar. In England in the eighteenth century, the marriage question was entirely left to the parents, and the bride's inclinations went unnoticed. The weighty, in fact almost the only problem of marriage, was the question of the settlement. Having seen, therefore, the attitude of the squire towards two women of different social ranks, we are left with the conclusion that Allworthy's courtesy toward women was a universal one, unqualified by their rank or position.

Fielding also cites Allworthy's talent as a perfect host in proof of his refinement. It is stated that "neither Mr. Allworthy's house nor his heart, were shut against any part of mankind, but they were both more particularly open to men of merit." 127 Everyone is allowed complete freedom to come and go as he pleases. The Squire never intrudes himself on his

126 Ibid., Bk. XVI, ch. 6, p. 304.
127 Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 10, p. 23.
guests, thereby causing them any discomfort. He desires that
his guests remain "within the restrictions only of law, virtue,
and religion."128 In this respect Allworthy is similar to Sir
Roger de Coverley.129

The good Squire is very much attracted to piety. When we
are first introduced to him he is at prayer in his room, "a
custom which," the author assures us, "he never broke through
on any account."130 Fielding is lightly satirical in his
apology for the squire's rapt devotion. He calls it the "whim-
sical" notion the good squire has of eternity being a place
where he hopes to be joined eternally with his good wife.131
Fielding says:

His mind was, indeed, tempered with that philosophy
which becomes a man and a Christian. He affected
no absolute superiority to all pleasure and pain,
to all joy and grief, but was not at the same time
to be discomposed and ruffles by every accidental
blast, by every smile or frown of fortune.132

He is concerned with the problem of death in only the slight-
est possible way; it fails to terrify him, because, like Cato.

129 Sir Roger, "who is very well acquainted with my humour,
lets me rise and go to bed when I please, dine at his own table,
or in my chamber, as I think fit, sit still, and say nothing,
without bidding me be merry." The Spectator, No. 106.
130 Tom Jones, Bk. I, ch. 3, p. 5.
131 Ibid., Bk. I, ch. 2, p. 4.
132 Ibid., Bk. VI, ch. 3, p. 205.
he knows neither guilt nor fear. That his religious faith was more than a pretense and was a result of much philosophical speculation is evident in his dying speech. Here he advises the calm acceptance of death, and impresses the reader with his sincere goodness, despite the defects of a too tedious moralizing and the improbability of such sustained vocal energy in a dying man. His stoic acceptance of death is unusually courageous. As a philosopher he is concerned more with moral implications. He is not entirely a consistent character, because the details of his outlined personality were never filled in by Fielding.

The Squire's chief character trait is his benefaction. His intelligence, refinement, and religious enthusiasm are all important, but the novelist is concerned with him especially as the "good man" of the eighteenth century. We cannot go too deeply into the matter here since it was related to some of the most controversial and philosophical questions of the eighteenth century. One of the most typical movements of the century was sentimentalism. A "good man" was a benevolent man, one whose naturally good instincts were not corrupted by moral weakness or the evils of society. Shaftesbury was a leading spokesman of those who believed in the "good man" in opposition
to Hobbes, who, while maintaining the ascendency of the pas-
sions, denied the presence of good instincts and social love.
Benevolence was defined as a good passion, fundamental in human
nature because it is based on man's moral sense. So paramount
was this passion of benevolence that it furnished its own re-
ward, "an inward rapture."

In Squire Allworthy this benevolence was the result of
wisdom. As Fielding says: "I must . . . introduce a digression
concerning true wisdom, of which Mr. Allworthy was in reality
as great a pattern as he was of goodness." Fielding evidently
intended to make Allworthy his example of a truly wise man,
so that his wisdom is not only the guiding factor in an under-
standing of his character but a strong indication and exposi-
tion of the author's views. It is frequently doubtful as to
what extent an author has inserted his own ideas into the con-
versation of one of his characters, but in this instance Field-
ing makes it plain that he is giving his own opinions. He says:

Wisdom . . . only teaches us to extend a simple
maxim universally known and followed even in
the lowest life, a little farther than that life
carries it. And this is not to buy at too dear
a price. 134

133 Ibid., Bk. VI, ch. 3, p. 206.
134 Ibid.
According to Fielding, neither wealth nor enjoyment should be scorned by the wise man. On the contrary, a wise man is the most apt to have in abundance worldly gifts,

for as that moderation which wisdom prescribes is the surest way to useful wealth, so can it alone qualify us to taste many pleasures. The wise man gratifies every appetite and every passion, while the fool sacrifices all the rest to pall and satiate one.\(^{135}\)

If a man, known to be wise, is accused of avarice or hedonism, the explanation is that his wisdom is limited. Allworthy never carries his generosity and charity to extremes. The fastidious care he displays when he settles his estate in his will, his remembrance of everyone, and his apportionment according to merit and needs, exhibit, not only the methodical order of his mind, but his appreciation of the value of money. He admits the value of Sophia's fortune in his consideration of the match between her and Blifil, "which, though he be too sober to be intoxicated with it, he was too sensible to despise."\(^{136}\) Squire Allworthy is never trivial nor is he mercenary; he is in every way sensible. Allworthy is no ascetic philosopher, self-sufficient in his own wisdom, but delights

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\(^{135}\)Ibid.  
\(^{136}\)Ibid., p. 205.
in the simple pleasures of the country gentleman. Fielding says that Allworthy "was naturally a man of spirit; ... he had possessed much fire in his youth and had married a beautiful woman for love."\textsuperscript{137} As we have seen, his house is open always to company, and he always acts the perfect host. He is favorably inclined toward any amusements that are not objectionable to his standards of morals or good taste. He is merciful and wise in his administration of justice; but he never allows his gentleness to distort his judicial sense. He may feel deeply in his heart for a criminal, but nevertheless he preserve his sense of duty intact. Examples of this are his firmness with Partridge and Black George. He is generous to them and their dependents without sacrificing his standards of duty; nor is he guided in this by the good opinion of the world.

In the face of all this, it is hard to understand the squire's failure to recognize the imposition put upon him by others. Some explanations, however, can be offered to defend the Squire from the charge of a too easy credulity. It would seem that a man of Allworthy's character and intelligence would instantly see through the intrigues of Blifil, Thwackum, and

\textsuperscript{137}Ibid., p. 207.
Square. Fielding himself was a fiery opponent of all forms of trickery and dissimulation, and with his penetrating skill he uncovers the secret motives of their hearts. But these characters as revealed to the reader are not necessarily so seen by Allworthy, who views them only when their conduct is guided by the consciousness of his presence. Cross has this to say on the judgment of Squire Allworthy:

He is blinded by the glare of an unblemished character into taking hypocrites . . . for what they seem; only the most conclusive evidence can induce him to change his favorable opinion of men by whom he has been grossly deceived . . . His head is sacrificed to his heart; he is saved from being a fool by a certain quiet humor and a determination when once undeceived, to punish the rascals that have fed upon him. 138

It must be remembered, however, that Allworthy most likely is a good deal of a stranger to the outside world. Since he was not the recipient of a "learned education," and had little opportunity to travel, he must have passed the greater part of his life in the country leading a rather peaceful and uneventful life. He was a man of such a kind and unselfish character that it is only to be expected that he should place more than average trust in others. As the author himself says:

As no man was ever more sensible of the wants or more ready to relieve the distresses of others, so none could be more tender of their characters or slower to believe anything to their disadvantages. 139

139 Fielding, Tom Jones. II, p. 53.
Cross remarks on his "unblemished character." Since he is such an example of an extraordinarily high character, ever prompted by motives disinterested and unselfish, why is it unusual that he should ever be slow to search out deceit in others? Moreover, Fielding is very careful to make it clear that Allworthy has no occasion to conceive such a clear insight into the characters of Thwackum, Square, and Blifil as has the reader, so that the Squire, who, to be sure, realizes many of their defects, nevertheless has no real reason to distrust them. As regards Thwackum, Allworthy is hardly to be blamed if he trusts him at first sight, because he comes on the recommendation of a friend whom Allworthy respects. On his first arrival he seemed to be worthy of Allworthy's faith; but in time the Squire was made conscious of his faults, which, however, were hardly grounds for his dismissal. Fielding's views are clearly elucidated in the following quotation:

For the reader is greatly mistaken, if he conceives that Thwackum appeared to Mr. Allworthy in the same light as he doth to him in this history; and he is as much deceived, if he imagines that the most intimate acquaintance which he himself could have had with that divine, would have informed him of those things which we, from our inspiration, are enabled to open and discover. Of readers who, from such deceits as these, condemn the wisdom or penetration of Mr. Allworthy I shall not scruple to say, that they made a very
bad and ungrateful use of that knowledge which we have communicated to them.\textsuperscript{140}

The defects of Square are likewise evident to Allworthy, but he hopes that "the different exuberance of these gentlemen would correct their different imperfections;" and his scheme to bring this about, although unaffectedly simple, was prompted by a good motive to excuse it. Fielding concludes: "We do not pretend to introduce any infallible characters into this history; where we hope nothing will be found which hath never yet been seen in human nature."\textsuperscript{141} Allworthy should not suspect his nephew Blifil of hypocrisy. Blifil is too clever to be detected; the victim is always Tom, who, through an unhappy chain of circumstances and coincidences, appears as the villain. Blifil is careful to maintain an attitude of devotion and piety to the Squire and his tutors; he never makes a misplay and, in fact, would deceive a man much more used to the ways of the world than his uncle. The Squire is profuse in his sorrow when he becomes aware of his mistake in regard to Tom, but the foundling protests that the deception was clever enough to fool the wisest man.\textsuperscript{142} It seems, then, that Fielding was careful not to leave the impression that the Squire was a credulous man and inserted these incidents to show that there was nothing

\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., III, p. 84.  
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid.  
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., XVIII, p. 392.
in his conduct inconsistent with his characterization as a pattern of virtue.

This inclination on the Squire's part to attribute to men only the best of motives is but one facet of that gentleman's charity. In his discourse with the captain, we learn his idea and, what is more, Fielding's idea of what constitutes true charity. It is the captain's contention that Scripture cannot be cited to prove that benevolence, generosity or beneficence constitute charity. Rather, according to him, the highest virtue consists "the forming of a benevolent opinion of our brethren, and passing a favorable judgement on their actions."

By the liberal donation of alms there is danger of fostering vice and encouraging badness, and so such practices should be discouraged. In general, the Squire agrees with the captain, but is not so violent in his denunciation of alms-giving. He believes that a kindly, unselfish attitude should be the foundation of a man's charity, but that it should likewise be manifested in action, and one form of action is alms-giving. There is not much merit in performing an act of duty such as a charitable act because of an "indispensable duty, enjoined by the Christian law, and by the law of nature itself." And furthermore, this duty is so pleasant "that if any duty could be said to be its own reward, as to pay us while we are dis-

143Tom Jones, Bk. II, ch. 5, p. 51.
144Ibid., p. 51 and 52.
charging it, it was this.\textsuperscript{145} The merit of a charitable act comes from the sacrifice of the person performing it, but as regards making someone unworthy the object of your charity, this consideration should not deter the giver. "Nothing less than a persuasion of universal depravity can look up the charity of a good man; and this persuasion must lead him . . . either to atheism or enthusiasm."\textsuperscript{146}

It can truly be said that the Squire lives up to his ideas on charity. His tenderness is so all-embracing that:

\begin{quote}
Nothing but the steel of justice could ever subdue it. To be importunate in any respect was sufficient, if there was no demerit to counterpoise it, to turn the scale of that good man's pity and to engage his friendship and benefaction.\textsuperscript{147}
\end{quote}

He even extends his generosity to those who were unworthy of it. Partridge and his wife would have starved if some "unknown" donor had not provided them with sufficient for their livelihood, for

\begin{quote}
They imagined, and so, doubt not, will the reader, that Mr. Allworthy himself was their secret benefactor; who, though he would not openly encourage vice, could yet privately relieve the distresses of the vicious themselves, when these became too exquisite and disproportionate to their merit.\textsuperscript{148}
\end{quote}

The Squire is careful to hide his charity. His greatness of soul is well known, however, and he is a symbol of benevolence and kindness to everyone who knows him. Mrs. Miller who has

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{145} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 52.
\item \textsuperscript{146} \textit{Ibid.}
\item \textsuperscript{147} \textit{Ibid.}, Bk. III. Ch. 7, p. 88.
\item \textsuperscript{148} \textit{Ibid.}, Bk. II, Ch. 7, p. 58.
\end{itemize}
had occasion to receive the favor of his generosity, speaks of him in words of high praise; Tom refers to his goodness which only "heaven can know [and] which it copied from itself and sent upon earth as its own pattern."\textsuperscript{149} It is because of this reputation for benevolence that the Squire has "thereby disobliged all his neighbours; for it is a secret well known to all great men, that, by conferring an obligation, they do not always procure a friend, but are certain of creating many enemies."\textsuperscript{150} Mr. Allworthy, however, seems only to bring misfortune on himself by his charitable inclinations toward others. The recipients of his good nature are often lacking in gratitude and virtue, and even his own family is instrumental in bringing him sadness. He has his devoted admirers, nevertheless, like Mrs. Miller, but even these are not the reward he seeks. He seeks nothing as a result of his generosity, and in that lies his true nobility.

So, consistently from beginning to end, Squire Allworthy is pictured as a model character. He has a heart "that hungers after goodness,"\textsuperscript{151} and our introduction to him is to one "replete with benevolence, meditating in what manner he might render himself most acceptable to his Creator, by doing

\begin{footnotes}
\item[149] Ibid., Bk. VIII, ch. 4, p. 309.
\item[150] Ibid., Bk. I, p. 22.
\item[151] Ibid., p. 7.
\end{footnotes}
most good to his creatures."\textsuperscript{152} When we leave him at the end, he is still genial and charitable notwithstanding the many disappointments he has suffered from people in whom he had placed his trust. His enemies have received their just deserts, and he is in the circle of his true friends sharing their happiness.

It may be that, because Allworthy's character is without blemish, it is hard to warm to him. Few of his critics evince the admiration of Murphy:

Allworthy is the most amiable picture in the world of a man who does honor to his own species; in his own heart he finds constant and generous actions, and his understanding conducts him with discretion in the performance of whatever his goodness suggests to him. And though, the author has laboured the portrait con amore, and meant to offer it to mankind as a just object of imitation, he has solemnly restrained himself within the bounds of probability ... of strict truth.\textsuperscript{153}

The general opinion is that Fielding has strained his pen to produce a model character and that the result has been a rather wooden figure. Dobson says that Allworthy is a type rather than a character ... that he is stiff and cold, "an impeccable personage."\textsuperscript{154} Cross points out that the Squire is without life, the same statuesque character from first to last.\textsuperscript{155}

\textsuperscript{152}Ibid., p. 9.
\textsuperscript{153}Arthur Murphy, Essay in J. Browne's edition of Fielding's wks., I, p. 65.
\textsuperscript{154}Dobson, Henry Fielding, p. 127.
\textsuperscript{155}Cross, History of Henry Fielding, II, p. 209.
It is true that the Squire is too perfect a figure ever to gain the sympathetic attention of the reader of *Tom Jones*. We may admire him, but there is no feeling that he is one of ourselves, or virtuous, yet human and lovable, as Sir Roger de Coverley.
CHAPTER FOUR

Comparison of the Squires in Addison and in Fielding

During several episodes in both the Sir Roger de Coverley papers and in the works of Fielding, the members of the squirearchy act and talk similarly. Sometimes this similarity is found merely in a line of a song, sometimes it occurs as a reaction to a situation, and sometimes it finds its expression in a dominant virtue or vice. But each time that it appears, the likeness of the portraits is due to a sameness of subject - the squirearchy. What was sketched in all cases was one special social class, and the sketching necessarily outlined like details. But, although all the subjects or what of these pictures were alike, yet the hows or methods of drawing them were quite distinct. To view these methods and subjects in their similarities and dissimilarities would be useful.

In The Spectator, No. 116, Sir Roger remarks that he has sent to other counties to get a supply of foxes, so that the dwindling number of them in his own may not force him to forego his favorite diversion. Henry Fielding in his Don Quixote in England has a song of a fox-hunter that is strongly reminiscent of Sir Roger. Squire Badger sings:
A brushing fox in yonder wood
Secure to find we seek;
For why? I carried sound and good,
A cartload there last week. 156

In the kind and amount of reading they do, the Tory Fox-hunter, Sir Roger de Coverley, and Square Western are similar. Thus, the Tory Fox-hunter remarks that his friends living in the country "never see how things go except now and then in Dyer's Letter, and I read that more for style than for news." 157

By the word style in this passage, the Tory Fox-hunter does not mean literary style, but rather the style or the fashion of clothes. And beyond Dyer's Letter, the Fox-hunter evinces no other literary attainments, except, perhaps, his reference to the prevalence of poor weather, which may be interpreted as spoken in the phraseology of some almanac. Sir Roger's reading and knowledge of literature seems to be limited to Baker's Chronicle and The Supplement, although once there is a rather nebulous observation about "other authors, who always lie in his hall window." 158 The Spectator himself implies a dearth of literary knowledge in his friend, when he writes that "could he believe that Sir Roger had ever read Shakespeare, he might think that he had taken a hint from

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156 Comp. Wks., p. 997.
157 Addison, in The Freeholder, No. 22.
158 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 269.
And in the case of Squire Western, it is probable that he never suspected that John Milton was anyone other than some person in his own district at this time. He talks of him in the same way he would of a fellow sportsman or a poaching parishioner: "Damn Milton! if he had the impudence to say so to my face, I'd lend him a douse thof he was never so great a man." 160

In their hatred of Hanoverians and Presbyterians, The Tory Fox-hunter and Squire Western are quite similar. Of the Tory Fox-hunter we are told:

In short, I found by his discourse that he had learned a great deal of politics, but not one word of religion, from the parson of his parish . . . he had scarce any other notion of religion, but that it consisted in hating Presbyterians. 161

And, while that gentleman is in the city, and his pocket is picked, he is quite sure that his purse and his almanac could only have been taken by a cardinal, and the cardinal could be none other than "a Presbyterian in disguise." 162 In a like strain Squire Western also follows the traditional pattern of the usual Jacobite squires in his narrow, in-

159 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 116.
160 Tom Jones, Bk. VI, ch. 14, p. 239.
161 Addison, in The Freeholder, No. 22.
162 Ibid.
grained prejudices. He heartily detests anything that pertains to the courts, the Presbyterians, and the house of Hanover. His chief aversion centers around lords of any description. At one time he upbraids the messenger of Lord Fellamar with:

Lookee, sir... I would not marry her to a lord upon any account; I hate all lords; they are a parcel of courtiers and Hanoverians, and I will have nothing to do with them.  

In his treatment of his chaplain, Sir Roger de Coverley is certainly similar to Squire Western. The former, we are told, will not suffer himself to be insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table in the words of his chaplain. Rather he wants a clergyman "of plain sense than of much learning." He wants one who will be willing to deliver a sermon from the choice of Sir Roger - a sermon of some one of the eminent divines, such as Tillotson, Saunderson, Barrow, Calamy, and South. Squire Western, in a like vein, also decides what his chaplain shall preach to him. However, he has none of the intimacy with his spiritual adviser that Sir Roger has. Rather the Somerset country gentleman dominates him, and

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163 Tom Jones, Bk. XVI, ch. 2, p. 284.
164 Addison, in The Spectator, No. 106.
165 Ibid.
treats him with astonishing disrespect. At one point, "Squire
Western blurts out to his chaplain: "At'nt in pulpit now?
When art a got up there I never mind what dost say: but I
won't be priest-ridden, nor taught how to behave myself by
thee." 166

Numerous other similarities in the characters, their
actions, their speech, etc., could be shown. But the most
striking thing in any work of Addison or any of Fielding is
the two opposing methods in which the portraits of the squires
can be drawn. The squire could be represented as a member of
a class, with all the various vices and virtues of it, or
he could be outlined in extreme detail - so much so that he
becomes human. Into the first classification, fit Sir Posi-
tive Trap, Sir Tunbelly Clumsev. Sir Apish Simple, Squire
Tankard, Sir Harry Foxchace, the Tory Fox-hunter, Squire
Allworthy, and even Sir Roger de Coverley. Each of these is
just a representative member of his class; each of them, even
after a close scrutiny, still is just a picture of a real
squire. Most of them, it is true, are rather offensive por-
traits, but Sir Roger de Coverley and Squire Allworthy are
always pleasant memories. Both of these are depicted too

166 Tom Jones, Bk. XV, ch. 5, p. 253.
ideally, too faultlessly. They are just intellectual concepts and not real persons. Far more real is the detailed portrait of Squire Western. He is sketched so fully, so extensively that he easily surpasses any portrait or picture. One critic has said:

Squire Western is pure naturalism. Flaubert might have made him more odious; Zola would have made him repulsive: neither could have dealt with him more candidly than Fielding has done. Not a failing is spared; yet neither sympathy nor satire has altered a line of his truth to nature. He is coarse, brutal, selfish, and stupid; yet we might as well try to dislike Falstaff.

In fine, Joseph Addison has given us an ideal character in Sir Roger de Coverley - an ideal in whom the specific traits have been sharpened and crystallized to form an intensified perfection. And in Squire Western, Henry Fielding has infused such a wealth of both undesirable and desirable qualities that the finished product approximates a human person.

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The thesis, "A Comparison of the Country Squires in Addison and Fielding," written by John G. Sheridan, has been accepted by the Graduate School with reference to form, and by the readers whose names appear below, with reference to content. It is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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