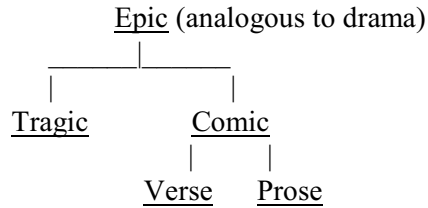


FIELDING'S THEORY OF THE NOVEL

PREFACE

Joseph Andrews is a comic prose epic, according to Fielding.



The comic prose epic's characteristics:

The action is extended, i.e., it has many incidents and characters.

The story and actions are light and frivolous, depicting characters from the lower classes and inferior behavior.

The sentiments and language tend to be ludicrous and low, perhaps with burlesque or parody of higher forms of literature. (Burlesque exaggerates and presents the monstrous and unnatural; our enjoyment comes from the absurdity of the actions and characters.)

Comedy's characteristics:

Comedy is an imitation of nature based on the observation of nature.

It presents the ridiculous, whose sources are affectation., which has two sources:

Vanity.

Hypocrisy.

BOOK I, CHAPTER 1

Biography depicts the actions of great and worthy persons. (The example of their lives spurs us to emulation.)

BOOK III, CHAPTER 1

Fielding, in his text, refers several times to *Joseph Andrews* as a history.

Those texts commonly called histories are misnamed; they are really romances and should be called topographies or chorographies, because they describe cities and countries, not people; note the contradictions the presentation of actions and individuals.

True histories are biographies; they present universal truth by copying nature, though they may contain factual errors.

Extravagant, fantastic romances come from the imagination of the writer and are not based on life or nature.