Christa Hoeffler

I enjoyed this. You've picked up on something I hadn't noticed, and make a persuasive case for it. I'm not entirely sure what it means. This might be something peculiar to Fielding, but then again it might have something to do with eighteenth-century patriarchal attitudes more generally. I suspect that in criminal matters women probably were treated more lightly when it came to punishment (though I have no evidence for that), so it would be interesting if that kind of predisposition were extended from law to fiction. Human nature, perhaps? Men, being more threatening than women, would be more liable to stronger punishments.

This is really more of a thematic than a pattern essay, though it does involve arguing for a pattern. I rather doubt that this is a pattern Fielding intended readers to find (more power to you!)—as opposed to instances where he uses patterning to elicit a certain kind of response from his readers. But perhaps you think otherwise? How could we make such an argument? Perhaps by finding some authorial commentary or other device that would direct readers to thinking about a pattern of "poetic justice" meted out in terms of gender.

Such justice is usually portioned out in the form of marriages, so you could zero in on the status of marriages at the end of the story as a way of getting at a *pattern* indicating Fielding's intentions—as opposed to his practices. Death, the other way of meting out justice, would work the same way. Come to think of it, that might be the way to go. "The several marriages and deaths [as opposed to the vaguer "outcomes"] form a pattern in which we can discern Fielding's notion of poetic justice at work."

If intended poetic justice doesn't line up with the actual practice, then you have a case for arguing that unconscious prejudices are at work.

You could improve this essay by "salting" your argument with a few quotations. You don't have very much space, and it's not a case of needing more evidence, but you *could* improve the style and add some zip by selecting some quotable words or passages to liven things up. It's usually a good idea to let your author speak as well as yourself. Well done! Grade: A-

Jay Laiche

I like the way you set this up. I really like your thesis, that the three episodes move Tom and Sophia closer together. But you don't really make this case, except insofar as they move the plot along, and the plot leads to the marriage. Perhaps that's not fair. You flirt with stronger things but don't carry through. The argument should be made stronger: "while Tom's indiscretions seem to separate him from Sophia, in fact they have the opposite effect." In the first case, Molly arouses Sophia's love through jealousy (you are good on that), and in the second, the affair at Upton results in Tom's abandoning his original intention when he chooses to pursue Sophia instead (you seem to miss this, but the argument could be made).

The problem comes with the third episode, where Fielding throws a curve ball at which you swing and miss (I think). Yes, this episode looks like the other two, but it is different because, on the one hand, Tom is *not* interested in her sexually; and on the other hand, Sophia is much *more* upset about Lady B than the previous rivals. I really don't see how the Lady B episode brings the two lovers closer together. Quite the contrary, this is where things begin to get scary as the tension rises. It is as if the appearance of infidelity is worse than the thing itself (Fielding's point, perhaps?)

Yes, it's true that Lady B leads Tom to Fitzpatrick, and Fitzpatrick leads Mrs. Waters to Tom, bringing about the resolution. But the flirtation with Lady B does not lead to a reconciliation with Sophia, who all but refuses to be reconciled on account of it. Something different happens the third time, but something which you could argue was set up by the two earlier instances of the incontinence pattern.

In sum, I think you are on the right track when you connect the three episodes to Sophia specifically. That's not so obvious. But I don't think you've got it worked out yet. But a good line of inquiry, Sir! Grade: B+

Angela Romaine

Well, there's not much to disagree with here. On the other hand, not much to applaud: you argue that the hero of the novel acts heroically, which is what we might expect, no? You've set the bar too low for yourself and written an essay on a thesis that really needs no demonstration. But you also throw out something to suggest where you might go with this.

"The evolution of the pattern…" Yes! Show us whether and how the pattern changes or develops over the course of the novel. Battestin argues that Tom learns prudence over the course of time. This doesn't seem so obvious to me, but it is something worth arguing about because it is not so obvious one way or that other.

To do this, you would tick off your list of heroic deeds to establish the pattern (just what you already do, only more compactly). Then select, perhaps, one from each of the three parts of the novel and compare them to see whether anything changes in Tom's behavior. Or just two. For example, you compare the Black George or Molly Seagrim episode at the beginning with the Nancy Miller episode at the end. Tom's motives are similar (he's our boy!) but is his *behavior* different in some way? I'm inclined to think that it is. He seems, well, more grown up and responsible, even if he is still impulsive. *Has* he changed? How does the later instance of the pattern differ from the first? Look at the details, quote some passages, and shape an argument to the effect that the pattern has indeed "evolved" or changed in some way.

Is this something that Fielding expects us to notice? Has he put in some little clues to tip us off? Read carefully and see what you come up with. This is a strong and obvious pattern, which leads me to suspect that there will be some subtle little variations in it. Grade: B

Samantha Freeburn

Britomart, Tom is not! You are right to see in these episodes the old romance device of "testing the hero." But I can't help but think that there is something lacking in your analysis: for if Tom fails all the tests, why would he get the girl? There has to be something more going on. Have we missed something by jumping at the obvious?

I expect that this could be approached in several ways. For starters, the tests seem to have less to do with Tom's love than with Tom's fidelity. Then too, they may have more to do with his prudence (or lack of it) than even with his fidelity.

Notice also that these tests involve the heroine as well as the hero. She has to judge Tom's behavior—does she get it right? Is there a test for her too, perhaps?

For both characters, the "tests" seem to involve issues of appearances (as we've been talking about in the afternoon class, we're getting out of allegory and into psychology and subjectivity as ways of marking character in narrative).

By the bye, notice how—contrary to what we might expect—it is Tom's failure in the first "test" that *arouses* Sophia's love via jealousy. The unexpected outcome of the second test is that instead of running away from Sophia (his original intention) Tom decides to pursue her after the Upton episode. And finally, it seems from the third episode that Sophia is more concerned about the *appearance* of infidelity that the fact of it. She can forgive Tom for actually sleeping with Molly and Mrs. Waters, but not for writing that letter to Lady B, even when she understands what happened. So it's not just the literal "test" we need to be concerned with, but issues of motives and appearances. Very "novelistic," though you are quite right to spot old the "romance" device of the test.

If this were *Gawain* instead of *Tom Jones*, the *fact* might matter more than the *motive*—though even there, there are complicating factors when the test turns out to be not what it seems. So too here? This is the scary part: these episodes are not just tests for Tom and Sophia, but tests for us, the poor reader. The first two instances of the pattern have the unexpected effect of bringing Tom and Sophia closer together. But *not* the last, which is a more complicated business since Tom does not fail and Sophia, arguably, does when she loses faith in her "knight." Plainly the first two episodes set up the curve-ball Fielding throws with the third.

How does the sequence work as a sequence, 1-2-3? Instead of using your quotations for narrative summary, select passages that get into issues of interpretation, passages where the particular use of words and rhetorical devices matter. Grade: B+

Nick Allen

I like what you are doing here and yet I am not completely satisfied (so what else is new?) The topic is a fine one and goes to the heart of the novel. Your insights are good. But I think you could do more with it by sharpening up the argument and shifting the emphasis from character analysis and morality to Fielding's narrative techniques *specifically*. Make more of the "pattern" business than you do, do more with formal analysis.

I think I would start by laying down the pattern. Since this is such a short essay, perhaps this takes the form of a catalogue of six or eight incidents where Tom has to make a moral decision where character and circumstances are at issue. Very brief; all you need to do is to establish that there is a sequence of parallel events. Then go with just two, or perhaps, to be elegant, three—one from each part of the novel.

Since you want to argue that Tom develops, use your episodes to show in very specific terms what has changed over the course of the sequence, what Tom has learned, or not, from experience. What precisely establishes the pattern as a pattern? What makes your episodes notable events within it?

This is pretty standard stuff. Make the analysis specific to Fielding by developing what you have to say about the roles of the narrator and reader. Perhaps the point is that in the Black George episodes Fielding tells us everything we need to know about the characters involved. But the author raises the bar as the story progresses, taking off the training wheels as it were, so that by the time we get to Nightingale judgments are harder to draw.

It's fine to pull in the quotations about not rushing to judgment, but shrewder to show us how Fielding teaches this point by setting us up to fail using previous episodes in the sequence to establish false expectations. For example, Nightingale seems rather like the Man of the Hill insofar as he is a mixed character, yet the Nightingale episode turns out very differently. The narrator is such a big deal in this novel, perhaps more could be made out of him—taunting us, giving the right advice in the wrong place, distracting us, falling strangely silent, etc.

Perhaps the argument might have something to do with the parallel instructional process adopted in this didactic novel: we, like Tom, learn things the hard way by getting fooled, and are also taught to judge persons based on their intentions (benevolent or otherwise) more than on their actions. If that's Fielding's larger program, how does it play out in the details of scenes that operate as part of a sequence? Probably too much for a short essay. Need to pare things down and make every word count. I enjoyed this—has me thinking! Grade: A-

Jonathan Wolfe

"Lost and found" seems more like a metaphor (yours) than a pattern in the book. You use it to link disparate things together, but for what purpose? What do the things you discuss have in common that would assist readers in understanding the novel? It all seems very general, nor do you site any instances where the narrator is developing "lost and found" as a topic, or calling our attention to it. I'm not yet persuaded.

But the money angle does seem promising. For starters, here we see "lost" and "found" in more concrete terms, and it may be that the passages involving money do amount to a kind of pattern—that one has a bearing on the other, and that this is something Fielding wants us to notice. The incidents you mention, the loss of Tom's and Sophia's banknotes are obviously put in as parallels. But are they part of a larger pattern? I would start there and look for other passages where fortunes are lost and found—the gamblers in the Man of the Hill episode, Mrs. Fitzpatrick's misfortunes, Tom's "luck" with Lady B—rack your brains. Once you have, say, four to six examples of money suddenly appearing or disappearing, you have something to work with. It's not necessarily a pattern until you can find the string to link these beads together. My guess is that it would have something to do with prudence, a big theme of the novel, but it remains to be worked out in detail. That's your business as a reader: find the pertinent details to enable us to see how the pattern "works" as a pattern by ringing changes on a theme. Grade: B-

Brayden Burleigh

This is the thing! You have a good, clearly-constructed argument that not only identifies a pattern but which describes variations in the pattern as it develops over the course of the novel. You also show how the pattern relates to the development (if that is the word) of Blifil's character.

You have the form of the argument down perfectly. I think the substance could be developed a little more to bring out the notion of escalation. You might, for example, argue that Blifil's stories turn on circumstances. There isn't much in the way of circumstances in the first instance—just Blifil's word and knowledge of his character—but rather more in the second (the physical evidence you discuss, the witness—more elaborate than before). In the third episode the circumstances involving the duel and Blifil's story are much more *numerous*, but also more *complex*. Perhaps you make the point that the additional complexity, as well as Blifil's perfidy, is what get's him into trouble because it is much harder to control all of this evidentiary matter. There's another easy point to make: the three episodes escalate in the nature of their consequences. Not much hangs on the loss of the bird, while there is a whole estate involved in the second, and Tom's very life hanging in the balance of the third.

(Do you think Fielding might be patting himself on the back for being a better story-teller than Blifil? Notice the parallel with the growing complexities and escalation of circumstances in the novel as a whole.)

You've done good work with this. Grade: A-

Kendall Pace

Oh, this is the thing! You've found a pattern that is not so obvious, you discuss the incidents in some detail, and you link them up to the novel as a whole. QED. I particularly like the way you bring in the narrator and the reader, as opposed to just doing character analysis—that's the thing! That's what is special about this novel.

I think there is perhaps a little room for improvement by way of adjusting the emphasis. What makes this a really good and sophisticated argument is your treatment of the subject of virtue. So be a little more explicit about how Fielding is calling into question the "action-figure" notion of heroism. It's not that he condemns it, but it is something he plays with as a kind of literary convention. See if you can capture something of this tone in your opening paragraph where you discuss how HF refers to Tom as his "hero." Perhaps we are meant to see that Tom's heroism, while attractive, is also a little perfunctory, like making a heroine beautiful as well as virtuous. All very easy, that.

The more challenging thing is the work left for the reader, which is to figure out that real heroism has less to do with good deeds than with good intentions. You make this point in closing, but I think you should make the point more strongly and in connection with your discussion of the episodes. I'd use Fielding's old word, "benevolence" to describe what you call "kindness." It means good-will, which in the novel becomes, by the end, the standard by which we are taught to judge actions and to distinguish between the Toms and the Blifils, who while they may do similar things, will do them for very different reasons.

First rate paper: you really "get" Fielding! Grade: A

Beth Cameron

Could it be your finding difficulty in discovering a meaningful "moral" in these episodes is a function of barking up the wrong tree? I wouldn't use the word "revolutionary" to describe Fielding's treatment of women's sexuality; it seems more a matter of degree than of kind, though his frankness was objected to be some in his own time, and by most in the nineteenth century.

Does the maiden-matron-crone paradigm really work? You don't do much with it, and the fit doesn't seem particularly good since Molly is not a maiden and Lady B is probably younger than Mrs. Waters (who is old enough to be Tom's mother). The sequence would seem to involve a social class as opposed to age series. But more pertinent may be the fact that Tom is in love with Molly, in lust with Mrs. Waters, and largely indifferent to Lady B.

I think you miss a trick by not attending more to how Sophia responds to these episodes. This is the interesting part, no? It is Tom's encounter with Molly that arouses Sophia sexually to the point that she becomes jealous and aware of her love for him (Fielding does *not* smirk at or condemn Sophia's sexual desire for Tom). Sophia gets angry over the Mrs. Waters episode, but that quickly passes. The business with Lady B., however, gets her *really* angry, so much so that she all but rejects Tom even after she knows the facts of the matter. There is then, an inverse relationship between the degree of Tom's affection for the "other woman" and the intensity of Sophia's reaction to it. This seems to call for some explanation. Sophia is the "internal reader" who judges Tom's behavior, and since she is "wisdom," there seems to be a crux here that might be more interesting to write about than the double standard with respect to sex.

Though that too, can be made interesting, given the way Fielding plays with reversing gender roles. Tom's body is described in ways more commonly seen for women's bodies—he is the "object of the gaze" etc. etc. In the Lady B. episode the conventional gender roles are reversed; while not unheard of, there are not many such sexual predators in 18th and 19th century fiction. Fielding, while he might not place chastity at the apex of the virtues, does think it applies to both sexes. Since he was hardly a feminist by the standards of his time or of ours, his unconventional handling of sexuality calls for explanation. Maybe it is simple hypocrisy, but I would consider other possibilities before jumping to that conclusion. Grade: B+

Reece Prothero

Oh dear. I suppose it was on page two that I began to realize that this was not going anywhere. If you were busy and just wanted something to hand in, enough said. If you were having difficulties deciding how to manage this assignment, you should have asked me for assistance. I can give you a leg up. If you haven't read the novel, well, Lord help you! Grade: B-

Amanda Speirs

This is more of a character analysis than a pattern analysis sort of essay. I'll grant you that "consistency of character" involves patterns though. If that is the object, the thing to do would be to line up some episodes, say three, and show how consistency of character plays out in ways that might not be obvious to the reader. As it stands, this essay is much too general, more assertion than demonstration. Go with either Tom or Allworthy but not both since that's too much to cover in any detail.

The trick to making this work would be to set up one episode to establish the paradigm (or rather, you might choose one that *Fielding* uses to set the norm for the character's behavior), one that works a variation on it, and one that appears to violate the norm but which you (clever reader) can show really confirms the pattern if we stop and think about it. Three is usually a convenient number, especially here since the novel has three parts and you could select an episode from each.

Allworthy might be a good case. Fielding sets the stage with the foundling episode you describe: this is a benevolent man, if one not inclined to ask too many questions. Or possibly you select the story about the pony. Then you jump to the episode in the middle of the book where Tom is banished, and show how Allworthy, even when he fails in this important judgment, is still acting consistently. Then, from the third part, you might select the scene where he refuses to even to listen to what Mrs. Miller has to say in Tom's favor. That really does seem out of character, so your challenge would be to show that, no, it really is consistent with Allworthy's pattern, as well as illustrating the "no perfect characters" notion. That might be a bit of a challenge, but so much the better. It would make sense that things would get a little more complicated and difficult as the book goes along, but that, given Fielding's love of patterns and consistency, Allworthy's actions at the end would nonetheless mirror those at the beginning. We have seen it all before…. Explain how the variations on a theme of character are worked out, and, presto! You have a pattern essay. You could do the same sort of thing for Tom or Sophia. Grade: B

Conner Fowler

At first I thought this was a bad idea. After all, since every book begins with an essay, that isn't much of a pattern. But you proceed to describe a pattern-within-the-pattern as the essays unfold, and that is really just the right sort of thing. Not such an obvious thing to do for this assignment, but so much the better!

Whether the point you argue is true or not…I'm not so sure. It seems plausible, but there are a lot of essays and one would need to review them all to test the thesis (a good thing to do, but not for a short essay). My own impression is that while the narrative gets more challenging as we go along, the essays simply become more diversified. Some of them, at least, seem to fall into groups of related things. Those in the second half, at least, all seem to have a semi-concealed topical bearing on the book in question. Maybe that's what you mean by becoming more difficult?

So, while this is a great topic to investigate, it's not the best sort of thing to take on for a short essay. There's just too much, resulting in sketchy generalizations and not enough detail to bring out Fielding's wit and cleverness. The way to cut this down might be to limit yourself to parts of three or four essays treating a particular topic and to look for a pattern there: how does the discussion and development of the topic relate to where we happen to be in the course of the novel?

The business about the relation of morality to happy outcomes would be one possibility. I don't think Fielding was being ironic in Essay XV since he tells us earlier that this is one of the things he wants to illustrate in *Tom Jones*. There must be something else going on—better and worse ways of contriving a happy ending, for instance. Another good topic might be discussions of the writer-reader relationship, or ideas about drawing characters. These are all tricky matters and would require more detail to explicate than you provide.

That said though, I'm glad that you took on something ambitious and original. Narrow the scope, add more quotation and analysis, and this could be a very fine essay indeed. Grade: A-

Jacqueline Bailey

This is a promising essay that needs to be whipped into shape—it reads like a collection of detached observations without much structure. Nor do two episodes make a "pattern," right? I think we need at least three of something to call it a pattern. On the plus side, I think you are sharp to zero in on the social-class dimension of "justice."

To make this go, then, I would add a third item to establish a pattern and to bring out the class issue even more. What comes to mind would be one of the "mob" or fight scenes where we see rough justice being administered by persons in low life. The villagers attacking Molly Seagrim for putting on airs, for example. Then you would have an upper-class magistrate, a lower class mob defending "equality," and the Gypsy King to show the operation of authority among uneducated persons. With these three items you would have more of a pattern, maybe even a sequence.

It could be, too, that such scenes are setting up Tom's situation when he is to be tried for murder. Class enters in since Fielding indicates that while murder is murder, vagabonds were treated differently than gentlemen involved in duels—raising subtle issues about Tom's identity. Then there is the "trial of honor" involving Northerton. Officers were supposed to be gentleman, which Northerton obviously is not. If you were reading carefully, you may have noticed that he was a runaway servant and not a "gentleman" at all. Speaking of which, Tom's status as a bastard makes his own class status thoroughly problematic: are justice and judgment matters of nature or nurture?

All of which is to suggest that the two scenes you discuss could be presented as part of a larger pattern of episodes in which your topic is implicated. You are on to something that could be developed as a *pattern* of episodes involving social class and justice. What, do you think, is the larger point Fielding is trying to make? He detaches "authority" from social class and education, but not necessarily from status—the gypsy was a king, after all. As usual, Fielding leaves us much to think about. Grade: B

Joon Seo

Tom's impulsiveness is an example of the "consistency of character" that Fielding writes about in one of his essays. It's a pattern of sorts, but perhaps not the most interesting sort of pattern to write about for an essay like this. Notice that you are discussing what Tom is doing, not what Fielding is doing.

It might not be too difficult to shift to the other topic, though. Because Fielding's characters are consistent (except when they aren't) he is able to built up certain kinds of suspense for story-telling purposes. When Tom does something impulsively, we think to ourselves, uh-oh, something bad will come of this. Even when it doesn't happen immediately, we sense it coming as with the Mrs. Waters episode. Notice how Tom gets whacked twice for that: we think it's over when Sophia discovers him, but it's not. We are later caught completely off guard when we learn (or seem to learn) that Mrs. Waters was Tom's mother. Yikes! But then it turns out that Mrs. Waters is his salvation in the end, so it's just as well he impulsively rescued her after all.

Notice that "impulsiveness" is not just a character matter; it is a reading matter since Fielding uses narrative patterns to create emotions of anxiety and surprise in the reader. Sometimes we can anticipate what is coming, sometimes not. We must read carefully. Indeed, Fielding is training us not to be "impulsive" readers but to exercise our judgment and even to expect the unexpected. Like Tom, we need to learn to be prudent as well as benevolent. Bring such matters into your essay—describing what *Fielding* is doing, as opposed to what Tom is doing—and you'll get this bumped up to the next level. Grade: B

Andrew Wimbish

Oy, this is not a happy paper. What has happened to your writing? This essay is filled with run-on sentences, bad grammar, malapropisms, and poor style generally. I was having a difficult time following the argument.

The concept, insofar as I can follow it, seems like a good one. The country versus city argument doesn't quite work since the persons we meet in the middle third are country people too. I'd handle it like this: the persons we meet in the "country" portions are neighbors, while those encountered in the "on the road" portion are strangers. Encounters with strangers can be risky for an innocent, untraveled person like Jones.

You could set things up something like this. "Throughout the novel we encounter a series of false guides and advisors. In the first third the faults of mentors like Thwackum, Square, and Black George are obvious enough. But in the middle third Tom encounters a series of false guides who are more treacherous, either because they are outright hypocrites or because they hold morally questionable views. Considered as a group they form a pattern or series of tests, both for Tom and the reader. Tom is sometimes misled and sometimes not, and the same is probably true for the first-time reader of Tom Jones. These tests prepare Tom and the reader for the still darker and more ambiguous city-characters we will encounter in the final third."

That should do it. Work through a series of three examples of different kinds, showing how Fielding runs variations on the common theme. It would be worth thinking about why Tom sees through some of these characters but not others. Grade: B-

Ryan Stebbins

This is more plot-summary and character analysis than the study of a pattern per se. To be sure, women do throw themselves at Tom, and that's a pattern of behavior. But is there a structure here, a pattern behind this pattern of behavior?

Since the novel is divided into three parts, and each features a prominent rival to Sophia, you might consider what each of these three women has to do with the book of which she is a part. What is "country" about Molly, what "on the road" about Mrs. Waters, what is "urban" about Lady B? It is not obvious perhaps, but you could get a good essay out of showing how these ladies become figures for the kind of moral behavior Fielding examines in the three parts of the novel. That would be an example of "structure" as opposed plot summary and character analysis.

Or you could consider them as episodes or stages of development in a journey towards Sophia or "wisdom." Is there a developmental pattern here? How might that work? What does Tom learn over the course of the novel, and how do these episodes mark stages in that process? That would be a different structural way of looking at the relationships.

You are still writing well, just not finding much of an argument on this outing. Grade: B+

Maegan Stebbins

This is getting there. You've assembled a mighty list of instances where Tom rushes into action impulsively, and correctly note that they are of several kinds and have different outcomes for Tom. But now what? What to make of this?

The challenge is to find the pattern in the pattern. This is not easy. For one thing, to the extent that Tom "learns" prudence that would involve episodes that fall outside the pattern—as when Tom rejects the offer of marriage from Arabella Hunt. To be honest, I'm not persuaded that Tom ever does learn "prudence." The reader learns a thing or two about it, however.

But perhaps Fielding's point has more to do with the passage you quote about the necessity of minding appearances. Might *that* be the pattern within the pattern, the way to make sense of the series? It might be worth considering. Or benevolent motives (dueling is bad, as is fooling around with women you don't love; loving your neighbor as yourself brings eventual rewards).

Were this my essay, though, I would look at these episodes as series of tests for the reader as well as for Tom. We quickly become aware of the pattern of Tom's behavior, but are not always able to anticipate its consequences. I suspect, as we go along and if are paying attention, we do get better at this, even though Fielding contrives always to surprise us. Taking the writer-reader relationship into account, as well as Tom's behavior and the theme of prudence, might make for a pretty slick essay. Grade: A-

Zander Merle-Smith

You are having a difficult time with your prose, and the presentation is not so tidy, but, you know what? I think this is one of the best essays I've read. You really get to the moral heart of the novel here. What kind of justice do we see? It does seem to be delayed much of the time.

My best guess is that Fielding is trying to show us two seemingly contradictory things. Insofar as he is being realistic, he shows us how impulsive acts of benevolence are sometimes immediately rewarded and sometimes not. If we go through life expecting thanks and rewards for good behavior we are likely to be disappointed since good acts are as likely to inspire jealousy and resentment as love.

But on the other hand, I suspect that Fielding is trying to show us that acting benevolently works toward happiness in the long run and by indirect means. Fielding suggests how this operates through his long and complicated plot, through which good things appear to happen on the basis of chance (or providence) but in fact through initially unpredictable chains of cause and effect. It is not a good thing to act on the basis of calculation (like Blifil and the bad folks) but it is, in the final analysis, prudent to act benevolently since unexpected good is likely to come out of our generous acts.

I think something like that is what is going on, and why Fielding had to write such a long and complicated book to illustrate how it works.

While I don't believe you've worked this out, I do think you've asked just the right sort of question, and that in looking for patterns in the novel you are going about answering it in the right way. Grade: B+

Ben Welch

This is the right sort of thing—hypocrisy goes to the core of Fielding's morality and he has a great deal to say about it. I like the idea of the Captain Blifil episode setting up a pattern of hypocrisy, though of course this begins even earlier in the novel, with the birth of Tom. You select good quotations. You express yourself well.

As it stands, the essay is a little on the thin side. Hypocrisy was more than a personal pique with Fielding, so you could bolster the point by saying that Fielding illustrates, time and again, that actions ought to be judged on the basis of intentions. Tom often does the wrong things for the right reasons, for instance. Given this sort of emphasis on intentionality, hypocrisy appears as a blacker mark that it might otherwise, since it involves cloaking bad intentions with the appearance of goodness. In other words, say a little more about the nature of hypocrisy and how it matters.

I think you might do more with the "pattern" were you to argue that it changes or develops over the course of the novel. We encounter a whole raft of hypocrites, of course. Can you discover some theme-and-variation work going on here? For example, are there "country," "on-the-road," and "city" versions of hypocrisy? Since the hypocrites are there to test the reader as well as Tom, do you see Fielding raising the bar, as it were, from the childhood episodes where all is pretty obvious, to more subtle forms of hypocrisy as the novel progress and we've learned to be wary? I'm not sure that this is going on, but it is the sort of thing to look for: find a pattern within your pattern.

That said, I think this is a fine response to the novel. To improve on it, you would simply add some close reasoning and close reading. Grade: A-