

The Rise of the English Novel

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Categories of 18th Century Novels

- Two Broad Categories:
- Picaresque vs Bildungsroman
- Narrative Structures:
- Pseudo-Auto-biographies (first person) and Biographies (third person narrator)
- Travel Adventures
- Crime Stories
- Love Stories
- Epistolary Novels (letters)

Classic Novels

- Daniel Defoe, Moll Flanders (picaresque) and Robinson Crusoe (travel adventure)
- Henry Fielding, Tom Jones (picaresque-bildungsroman-satire)
- and Joseph Andrews
- Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels (satire)
- Samuel Richardson, Clarissa (moral failing of a young woman and failure of her education)
- Laurence Sterne, Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy (autobiographical form)
- France:
- Pierre Charles de Laclos, Les Liaisons Dangereuses (bildungsroman)
- Voltaire, Candide (satire)
- Alain-Rene Lesage, Gil Blas (picaresque)

18^t century English Novel Defined

- *The Rise of the Novel*, Ian Watt, 1957.
- Characteristics of the Novel: Realism
 - 1) Realistic Characters; “primary criterion was truth to individual experience”; Character Names, rather than Types
 - 2) Particular circumstances rather than universal
 - a) particularized setting; Time and Place
 - b) plot that unfolds in causal manner
 - 3) Referential rather than ornamental use of language: descriptive and denotative rather than poetic

Growing, but Limited Reading Public (Watt)

- Early 18th century: 43,000 copies of newspapers sold weekly
- 1753, 120,000 newspapers weekly; increase of 300%
- Many people read the same copy; according to Addison and Steele, 20 per copy
- At most, half a million out of a population of 6 million were regular readers; 1/12.
- Three fourths of the poor could not read at all

Growth in Printing

- “In 1724: 70 presses in London
- 1757: 150-200 Presses; which matches the growth in the reading market
- Estimated growth in annual publication of new books was fourfold.
- By 1780s there were many street shop signs with words rather than just symbols

Education and Literacy

- Lower class children left school by age 6, if they attended at all
- Schools cost 2-6 penny/wk.
- Charity schools taught little 3Rs
- Bernard Mandeville, “Essays on Charity and Charity Schools,” 1728: “Reading, writing and arithmetic, are ... very pernicious to the Poor...Men who are to remain and end their days in laborious, tiresome and painful station of life, the sooner they are put upon it at first, the more patiently they’ll submit to it for ever after.”

Cost of Books

- Average salaries:
- Laborer: 10 shilling/wk
- Skilled Journeyman: 1 pound/wk
- Freeholder farmer: 1 pound/wk
- Alexander Pope's translation of the *Iliad*, 6 guineas (little more than 6 pounds) – Enough for a poor family to live on for a year
- Cost of a novel: more than an average workers weekly salary!
- Ballads = penny
- Pamphlets = threepence to a shilling
- Newspapers = one penny

Libraries!

- Spread of libraries occurs after 1740
- Within a decade there are 8 libraries in London
- Subscription cost: half a guinea to a guinea year
- Or, one penny a volume
- Novels were the preferred stock in libraries
- Women were the primary clients

Change in Readership and Patronage

- Rise of Manufactured goods meant more leisure for middle class women: no need to spin, weave, make bread, beer, candles and soap.
- Change in taste: Novel satisfied this demand
- No longer were writers patronized by Aristocracy: book sellers controlled the market
- Speed and volume were rewarded by booksellers
- Prose replaced verse
- Less learned readers wanted to be entertained; didn't care about classics; Wanted something NEW

Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*, 1722

- Autobiographical Confession of a female thief and prostitute and worse
- Similar to criminal biographies sold at the gallows
- Born to a woman convicted of theft; abandoned her to go to America as an Indentured Servant
- In Newgate, in fear of gallows, she repents
- Journeys to America herself as a servant
- Moral Fable of Redemption

Moll And Women

- Young ladies in service and young gentlewomen readers:
- 1) One of the first female protagonists of literature who could be a “real” woman
- 2) How love and money are intertwined. The Age of Reason was also the Age of Laissez-Faire Business, and even sex and love had a price
- 3) The story of Moll is one that women knew could be their fate if they were not prudent.

Moll as a Prostitute



Moll about to be arrested for stealing



Moll in Brideswel Prison



Moll Dying of Syphilis



Moll Dead at 23



Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*, 1748

- Tom Jones: Foundling; Raised by a Gentleman, Squire Allworthy
- Step Brother, Blifil
- Teachers: Square and Thwackum
- Loved by all the ladies
- Has to learn that Honor does require some self-restraint!
- Wins the girl and the love of his adopted father after many troubles and trials and mistakes
- Noble Heart triumphs over the cold calculation of Philosophy or Religion or Bourgeoisie Values

Miss Bridget, “Winter’s Morning”; Book 1, chapter 11



MORRIS

Appeal of Tom Jones to the Ladies

- Fielding called Tom Jones a history and at times it reads like a mock-epic, but more than anything, it is a romantic-comedy.
- In the end the handsome, charming young man marries the beautiful and kind lady and live happily ever after
- Despite the protagonists faults, or even because of them, you can't help but love Tom and Sophia
- Satire on Fathers who try to control the marriage of their daughters

Summary

- While there are other novelistic traditions, the 18th century in England saw the origins of the Realistic Novel
- Unlike the literature of France and the art of the Rococo, it showed the full range of people as they are, not idealized, universal Types
- Interest in Social Issues
- Interest in the roles and challenges of women and the poor
- Realism of the Novel reflects the Realism of the English painter Hogarth
- Indicates to us that women of the middle class in the 18th century, as women today, were concerned with issues unique to women, children, and society at large