

Rise of the novel

Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)

- Novelist, journalist, and entrepreneur, born in the year of the Restoration; as the son of James Foe, a butcher
- Daniel altered his surname to the more aristocratic sounding “Defoe” (in 1703), the year he began write for a living
- Defoe entered trade and travelled extensively in Europe, and took part the Monmouth rebellion (he was a committed anti-Jacobite, or enemy of James)
- During the Glorious Revolution he joined the army of William III
- Defoe was always attracted by trade and mercantilism in practice and writing

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Defoe’s Early Works

- Earliest and greatest of the Grub Street hacks
- Highly journalistic writing
- Essay on Projects (1697)
- Practical proposals for the establishment of a society
- To encourage polite learning, to refine the English language, proposals for reforming the banking system, for the management of insurance, etc
- The True-Born Englishman (1701)
- Defoe’s first literary success
- Verse satire

Attention to detail

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The Shortest Way with the Dissenters (1702)

- Sub-title: “Proposals for the Establishment of the Church”
- Satire on Anglican Tories & the Parliament
- Neither the Tories nor the Dissenters were amused
- For this he was tried, pilloried and fined
- In response he wrote “Hymn to the Pillory”
- Reading the Hymn, people threw flowers at him instead of stones etc
- Inspired Swift’s A Modest Proposal

Note these points!

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The Review

- In 1704, with the help of the politically moderate Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, Defoe published the thrice weekly newspaper The Review (1704-1713)
- Defoe’s articles in The Review were on an impressive variety of topics ranging from the commercial to the moral
- Supported Hanoverian succession

- Later Defoe edited *Mercator*; a trade journal, and wrote other works on trade

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Venture into Fiction

- After 1720 Defoe ceased to be politically controversial in his writing and produced a conduct book as well as works of historical interest
- In 1706, at the age of 46 he made his first venture into his fiction with the pamphlet, *A True Relation of the Apparition of one Mrs. Veal* (1706)
- A realistic account of a supernatural occurrence
- Mrs Bargrave meets Mrs Veal's ghost a day after the latter's death

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The Novels

- In the following years he produced a flow of important fictional works
- *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)
- *The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (1719)
- *The Serious Reflections of Robinson Crusoe* (1720)
- *Memoirs of a Cavalier* (1720)
- *Captain Singleton* (1720)
- *The Journal of the Plague Year* (1722)
- *Moll Flanders* (1722)
- *Roxana, or The Fortunate Mistress* (1724)

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Defoe's Contribution

- He wrote numerous works in his last years, on a variety of subjects: On the treatment of servants, Travel, Utopian proposals, Trade
- Altogether he has over 500 publications to his name and was phenomenally industrious.
- Is the most prolific author in the language
- He was recognizably unlike most of his contemporaries in his plain style of utilitarian clarity

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Defoe as a Novelist

- Established realism as the main principle of fiction
- Style derived from common man's speech
- Plain narration, realistic portrayal of social and material reality (external realism)
- Little interest in character
- Robinsonades
- *Swiss Family Robinson* (Johann Wyss)

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Defoe's Fiction

- Defoe is sometimes called "Father of the English novel"
- Wrote fiction in the latter half of life, at great speed (which is his fault)

- Robinson Crusoe (1719)
- Real-life adventures of Alexander Selkirk
- External realism
- Middle-class view of the relation between man and nature
- Narrated in first person as if it were an autobiography
- The shipwrecked sailor rebuilds in isolation the entire material and moral civilization he had left behind
- Reveals middle-class values
- Commonsense & prudence of Crusoe (rather than heroism or adventurousness)

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Robinson Crusoe (1719)

- Main Events in the Plot
- 1659—Crusoe's voyage to Africa ends in disaster; Crusoe survives a shipwreck
- 1659-1664—Stranded on Island; Crusoe survives alone, using resourcefulness and ingenuity
- 1664—Crusoe rescues a native, whom he names Friday
- 1669—Crusoe and Friday help British sailors overthrow mutineers
- 1687—Crusoe returns after 28 years on the island

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Robinson Crusoe (1719)

- Themes
- Survival and Self-Reliance
- Novel examines human behaviour in isolation; middle class values
- Faith and Providence
- Crusoe's spiritual journey and interpretation of events
- Reflection of British Colonial Expansion
- Novel mirrors 17th-century colonial ambitions; Crusoe rules over native populations
- Commentary on Slavery
- Crusoe's relationship with Friday critiques slavery
- Economics
- Crusoe's resource management and trade

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Other Novels

- Duncan Campbell
- Sometimes considered to be written by William Bond
- Story of a deaf and dumb soothsayer from Scotland
- Captain Singleton

- Protagonist is an Englishman stolen from his family as an infant and raised by Gypsies, who becomes a pirate; Defoe comments on mercantilism of his day
- Memories of a Cavalier
- Historical novel set during the Thirty Years' War and the English Civil War
- Moll Flanders
- Picaresque novel
- Purports to be the memoirs of a prostitute
- Whig views
- Moll has no moral sense, but dies a penitent

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Picaresque Novel

- Derives from Spanish picaresque: a rogue
- An autobiographical chronicle of a rascal's travels and adventures as s/he makes his/her way through the world more by wits than hard work
- Episodic, loose structure
- Highly realistic: detailed description and uninhibited expression
- Satire of social classes

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Other Novels

- Colonel Jack
- Roxana: The Fortunate Mistress
- Unnamed prostitute who takes several names, including "Roxana"
- Fall from wealth into prostitution; accumulates wealth from clients; attains sexual freedom but is finally exposed by one of her many children
- Journal of the Plague Year
- Minutely realistic account of the Great Plague of 1665

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Defoe's Style

- Loose and unequal structure
- Style unpolished
- At its best, excellent realism
- Grasp of details
- Swift narrative method
- Plain, matter-of-fact style

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)

- First British novelist to combine material facts with the complexities of human personality
- Novelist and printer in London

- At school nicknamed “Serious” and “Gravity”, he entertained his schoolmates with moralistic tales recollected from his reading
- From the age of thirteen, served as an apprentice as a writer of love letters (loving letters written to relatives) for servant girls
- This laid the foundations of his epistolary style
- He also wrote prefaces and dedications to booksellers
- Also completed Daniel Defoe’s A Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain which was published anonymously

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Later Life

- Richardson prospered, owned other homes, and was elected Master of the Stationers Company
- Among his circle of admirers and friends were women, an insight into whose psychology he quickly gained
- This included the Bluestocking ladies
- Called them “the little spitfire”
- In later life he became quite vain and suffered from ill-health

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Richardson’s three novels

- All the three novels were epistolary
- Pamela
- First part 1740, second part 1741-42
- Made him famous
- Clarissa (1747-48)
- Consolidated his reputation as a celebrant of female virtue and a subtle psychologist
- The History of Sir Charles Grandison (1754-55)
- A portrait of male virtue
- Upon the suggestion of Samuel Johnson he wrote an index for his novels that is for short called Collection

Attention to detail

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Pamela: Virtue Rewarded

- Based on a real story he had heard
- Best-seller, yet controversial
- Epistolary technique
- Focus on morality
- Realism
- Richardson’s class view: worth depended on individual effort rather than status; yet he admired status
- Basic problems with Richardson’s worldview: a reformed rake makes a perfect husband, but a girl who has lost her virtue (even in the most minimal technical sense) is undone forever

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Prefaces

- There are three Prefatory writings at the beginning of the novel.
- “Preface by the Editor”
- Establishes that this is not a novel that Richardson has written about fictional characters but rather a collection of real letters that he has edited.
- Also gives moral justification of his publication of these letters: to inculcate “Religion and Morality” in “the Minds of the Youth of both Sexes” through an entertaining narrative.
- Prefatory Material 2
- A letter to the Editor from “J.B.D.F.” (claims to be a French translator).
- He applauds the distinctive quality of Pamela’s writings
- Echoes the Editor’s moral purpose and supports the illusion that the story really happened: “the Story must have happened within these Thirty Years past” and that the Editor has “been obliged to vary some of the
- Prefatory Material 3
- A letter to the Editor from an “affectionate Friend”
- Gives compliments regarding the work’s ability to provide “Entertainment,” “Instruction,” and “Morality”.

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The Plot

- Elements of literature as education and literature as entertainment
- In Bedfordshire Squire B. bent on seduction, then rape, of the 15-year-old maid Pamela
- With the compliance of the housekeeper Mrs Jervis, does everything to bring her under his physical power
- She resists; wants to go home to her parents, but keeps postponing it
- Finally leaves reluctantly
- Yet she willingly returns when he sends for her, all respect and admiration for him (so is Richardson)
- Imprisons her in his Lincolnshire estate under the care of Mrs Jewkes
- Finally, when he convinces her that her successful resistance has led him to offer marriage, she accepts his proposal with humble love and gratitude

Note these points!

Psychological Realism

- Epistolary form gives access to character’s feelings and dilemmas.
- Focus on character and motivation
- Techniques of sentimentality and flashback.
- Deep insight into the female psyche.
- Unlike Defoe or Swift, representation of interior life.

Note these points!

Pamela: Counter-Texts

- Its heroine figured on fans, on china, in epigrams and poems, and its story was dramatised almost immediately. Pamela was a hit – perhaps the first ‘best-seller’. This meant that it was subjected to rigorous refutation, criticism and mockery. Counter-texts of Pamela appeared.
- An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews (1741) by Henry Fielding

- Anti-Pamela: or, Feign'd Innocence Detected (1741) by Eliza Haywood
- Memoirs of the Life of Lady H-, The Celebrated Pamela. From her Birth to the Present Time (1741), anonymous
- The History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and of his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams (1742) by Henry Fielding

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Pamela Part II

- Added in 1742
- Purpose: to replace and disown the continuations written by detractors
- A dull marriage manual showing the ideal couple in action
- Perfect felicity of their marriage broken only once when Squire B became involved with a widowed countess
- Pamela's letters full of wisdom on everything from the state of drama to Locke's view on education

Attention to detail

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Clarissa, or, The History of a Young Lady

- Subtler & profounder than Pamela
- Virtuous, beautiful Clarissa Harlowe's family is newly rich and desires class upgradation.
- Family urges Clarissa to marry old and ugly Roger Solmes
- Desperately she runs away with Robert Lovelace, a rake and enemy of the family, who keeps her prisoner in many places including a brothel
- Lovelace has a growing passion for her and rapes her; she becomes mentally ill
- She escapes from Lovelace, is protected by the poor Smiths, admired for her virtue by John Belford and others, prepares for her death and dies like a true Christian
- The novel illustrates Ars moriendi—the art of dying like a true Christian
- Her family is overcome by remorse, and the villains get their deserving end

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Sir Charles Grandison (1754-55)

- Harriet Byron is pursued by Sir Hargrave Pollexfen
- She rejects him, and he kidnaps her
- Sir Charles Grandison comes to her rescue; takes her to his country house as his sister.
- Sir Charles Grandison, presented as a truly virtuous character, becomes the protagonist
- Because of his integrity, he feels obliged to Lady Clementina.
- Only when Lady Clementina refuses him, does he feel free to propose to Harriet.

Epistolary Novel

- A novel written in the form of letters, diaries, or other documents.
- Letters may be from one or multiple characters
- Direct access to characters' thoughts and feelings
- Sometimes creates suspense through delayed information

- Developed realism
- Characteristics
- Intimate, personal narrative
- Multiple perspectives and voices
- Non-linear narrative structure
- Reader becomes a voyeur, reading private correspondence
- Examples
- Samuel Richardson's Pamela (1740)
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Julie, or the New Heloise (1761)
- Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818)
- Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897)

Tobias Smollett (1721-1771)

- Smollett was the first of the Scots novelists
- Was also a travel writer, critic, political controversialist, unsuccessful playwright and poet
- Quarreled with many contemporaries, and vented his anger in his writings
- Best known for his picaresque novels
- Translated Le Sage's Gil Blas
- Picaresque novel
- Roguish hero has a series of violent adventures at sea and land
- Social life of the time is realistically depicted.
- Episodic plot, hasty movement of action
- Early play The Regicide is about James I of Scotland

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Early Years

- Smollett wrote an opera Alceste, set to music by Handel
- When the piece was not performed, Handel adapted the music to Dryden's "Song for St. Cecilia's Day"
- Became a medical doctor but gave up the profession and made his living as a hack writer
- In 1756 appeared a compilation of travelogues, A Compendium of Authentic Voyages in seven volumes, of which Smollett is believed to be the editor

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In the 1750s

- His first novel, Roderick Random, appeared in 1748
- This was followed by Peregrine Pickle (1751) and Ferdinand, Count Fathom (1753, a novel with Gothic elements)
- Produced translations of Don Quixote with explanatory notes in 1755
- This was an inadequate work for he lacked sufficient knowledge in the Spanish language

- In 1757 his comedy *The Reprisal* was staged at Drury Lane by Garrick

Attention to detail

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The Adventures of Roderick Random (1748)

- First novel
- In the preface, acknowledges debt to *Gil Blas* and explains his purpose
- Episodes of Smollett's own life
- Based on his naval experience and theatrical disappointments
- Added innumerable other and violent episodes
- Characters like Crab, Potion, and Squire are living portraits
- Young Scottish hero; his father has disappeared; has a series of misadventures in London; finally marries his sweetheart; reunites with father and lives happily ever after in Scotland
- Contains an attack on Garrick as the character Marmoset

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Other Works

- *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751)
- Longest and most rambling of his novels
- The famous comic character Commodore Trunnion (hero is brought up by him)
- *The Adventures of Ferdinand, Count Fathom* (1753)
- *History of a scoundrel*, in the style of Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*
- However, Smollett abused & maligned Fielding and accused Fielding of stealing from him
- Several journalistic projects from translating *Don Quixote* to compiling a continuation of Hume's *History of England*

Attention to detail

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Other Novels

- *Adventures of Launcelot Greaves* (1760)
- Imitation of Cervantes
- Sir Launcelot is an eighteenth-century gentleman who rides about the country in armour, attended by his comic squire, Timothy Crabshaw, redressing grievances
- Based on *Don Quixote*
- *The Expedition of Humphrey Clinker* (1771)
- Last and most popular novel
- Epistolary
- His last novel, *Humphry Clinker*, was published in 1771

Henry Fielding (1707-1754)

- Born of aristocratic descent; pursued legal studies
- Tory views

- Younger sister Sarah also renowned writer
- Legitimate fame is as a novelist
- But in his early career, he was a writer of comedies, satirical plays, and also a journalist and magistrate
- In drama, caricatured sentimental comedy
- Wrote around 25 plays between 1728 and 1737
- These did not conform to the prevailing style but followed several forms – from the ballad opera to the conventional five act comedy
- Major play is Tom Thumb (1731)
- The Historical Register for the Year 1736 another dramatic satire came just before the Licensing Act of 1737

Attention to detail

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Tom Thumb: A Tragedy (1731)

- Revised as The Tragedy of Tragedies
- A low tragedy about a character who is small in both size and status who is granted the hand of a princess in marriage
- A burlesque of the traditions of heroic drama
- Set in the absurd court of King Arthur humorously
- Attacks Robert Walpole

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Entry into Prose

- Used the pseudonym Captain Hercules Vinegar to attack Walpole's government
- Fielding did very good stylistic parody (parody of the style of another writer)
- The popularity of Richardson's Pamela prompted Fielding to reply with a skillful parody entitled An Apology for the Life of Mrs. Shamela Andrews (1741)
- Here he makes the innocent virtue of Richardson's heroine appear scheming
- This short piece was followed up with his funniest novel Joseph Andrews (1742)

Attention to detail

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Joseph Andrews (1742)

- First full-length novel of Fielding
- Written in imitation of the manner of Cervantes, author of Don Quixote
- Neoclassical elements
- Picaresque
- Rejection of letter-method
- Humour
- Genial & half-contemptuous insight into human nature

Attention to detail

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Joseph Andrews

- Hero is supposed to be Pamela's brother, a footman in the household of Lady Booby
- Joseph's misadventures problematize Richardson's moral world and offer an alternate view of morality
- In the opening chapter, Fielding claims that books communicate valuable patterns of virtue to a wide public. He mockingly lists several biographies, including those of Colley Cibber and Pamela Andrews (Richardson's Pamela), as examples of male virtue and female chastity. Fielding then introduces his own work by remarking that it was by keeping his sister's excellent example of virtue before him that Joseph Andrews was able to preserve his own purity.
- By referring to the poet laureate Colley Cibber (already attacked by Pope in The Dunciad in 1728), Fielding places Pamela within an entire culture of literary abuses in the mid-18th century

Attention to detail

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Joseph Andrews

- While Pamela is seduced by Squire Booby (called Mr B. by Richardson), another member of the household, Lady Booby attempts to seduce Joseph
- In situations similar to Pamela's, he resists due to his Christian commitment to chastity before marriage, and Lady Booby dismisses him
- Joseph embarks on a series of adventures along with his sweetheart Fanny Goodwill and their mentor Parson Adams
- Fielding treats male chastity in the manner of female chastity
- Unlike in Richardson, virtue and reputation are not the same thing in Fielding—virtue is an innate disposition and intention; publicly approved signs of morality bear little relation to it

Note these points!

As a comic epic in prose

- In the preface, Fielding calls this novel a "comic epic in prose" (mock-heroic novel)
- Dignity and solemnity of epic
- Variety of characters involved in epic-scale action
- Behind the frivolous tone, there is strict moral responsibility
- Interpolation of sub-stories (three in Joseph Andrews)
- Devices like Aristotelian anagnorisis (Joseph is recognized as the child of Mr Wilson by the strawberry mark which he bears on his chest.)

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Later satirical novels

- His Miscellanies (1743) comprised
- The Life of Jonathan Wild the Great
- A Journey from this World to the Next
- A spirited Lucianic satire which describes the progress of the soul
- Lucian was an ancient Greek satirist
- Lucianic satire employs self-parody
- His greatest literary achievement The History of Tom Jones, A Foundling came in 1749
- Ambitious in scope
- Refreshingly unidealized hero, narrator is virtually a character

Attention to detail

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Jonathan Wild (1743)

- Full title: The History of the Life of Mr Jonathan Wild the Great
- Biography of a notorious highwayman
- Wild symbolised all that was wrong in 18th century culture: crime, corruption, violence
- Presented as if it is “history”, and not romance
- Draws parallels between Jonathan Wild and Robert Walpole
- Turns morality inside out
- Story told as if the narrator agreed with the ideals of unscrupulous egotism
- Attempt to convey moral ideas through irony

Attention to detail

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Tom Jones (1749)

- The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling
- “A foundling” indicates that Fielding will reject normal epic procedure and deal with English society as it is
- Comic epic developed on a more impressive scale
- Moral aim explained in the dedicatory preface to Lord Lyttleton
- Tom Jones is a lusty, imprudent and impulsive picaro, possessing goodness of heart rather than technical virtue
- Fielding insists that nothing in Tom Jones “can offend even the chastest eye on perusal”

Attention to detail

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Tom Jones (1749)

- Autobiographical elements:
- Love and reverence he had for his first wife
- Extensive knowledge of the southwestern England
- Tom Jones represents Fielding, with his careless good nature as well as a profound awareness of poverty and the reversals of fortune
- Tom and Sophia revolt against conventional society (represented by Blifil)
- Tom’s character: full of vigour and life, heroism, reckless of youth, wantonness with women, ultimately his goodness pays

Attention to detail

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Tom Jones

- Plot movement from extreme low to extreme high
- Tom introduced as a bastard, his reputation and his hopes are progressively blackened
- In London he is sexually pursued by Lady Bellaston and even accused of murdering Fitzpatrick and thrown into jail.
- He is also accused of incest with his supposed mother Jenny Jones.
- When Blifil’s villainous plotting and Tom’s true goodness are finally revealed, he reaches the zenith of romantic happiness.
- He is proved to be of high birth and he marries the girl of his choice and he inherits wealth.

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Fielding, the Magistrate

- When his wife Charlotte died, he married her maid, which attracted the derision of his critics
- In 1748 Fielding is appointed as a magistrate
- Had a serious concern for social abuses and judicial corruption
- These concerns are revealed in various essays of this period as well as in the novel *Amelia* (1751)

Attention to detail

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Amelia (1751)

- Last novel; different from any of his other novels
- Satire; autobiographical elements
- Pathos and moral gravity rather than comic violence and irony
- Domestic focus; variety of social abuses depicted
- Heroine *Amelia* good and gentle; her husband Captain Booth is an erring man who is forgiven by her
- Influence of Homer & Virgil
- Critique of legal system in England

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Features of Fielding's Fiction

- Realism
- Energy, openness, in narrative; unlike the bloodlessness in Richardson
- Humour
- Style fresh, natural, easy

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Later Years

- Together with his blind brother John, Fielding is responsible for the first organized detective police force in Britain, The Bow Street Runners
- In 1752 he returned to journalism, an editor of *Covent Garden Journal* under the pseudonym Sir Alexander Drawcansir
- In 1754 he went to Lisbon with his family and died there
- The *Journal of the Voyage to Lisbon* (1755) is an account of his final travels

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Fielding: An Assessment

- Despite a rakish life style, Fielding had a reputation for a generosity of spirit and natural sympathy for his fellow men
- He was a committed critic of society's corruptions and hypocrisy, like his friend and artist Hogarth
- He brought to the novel a new degree of psychological realism and narrative strength
- As a novelist he was influenced by the classical epic prose romances, European picaresque, and Scriblerian satire
- In drama he brought a new sophistication in structure as well as in the representation of comic characters through dialogue

Picaresque Novel

- A novel that follows the adventures of a rogue or vagabond protagonist
- Typically features a series of episodic events

- Derived from Spanish word “pícaro” (rogue) in the 16th-century
- There is satire and social commentary
- Realistic portrayal of life with focus on everyday experiences and moral ambiguity
- Often features a narrator-protagonist who is on a journey
- Examples
- Don Quixote
- Tom Jones
- Oliver Twist
- The Catcher in the Rye

Laurence Sterne (1713-1768)

- Son of an army subaltern, born in Ireland
- Entered Jesus College, Cambridge as a sizar (poor scholar)
- After receiving degree, took holy orders and became a vicar in a Yorkshire parish
- Got married, and his wife suffered an emotional breakdown when he got involved in “sentimental” relationships with some local ladies

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Sterne's Early Works

- His first novel was a satirical allegory called A Political Romance (1759)
- This was a roman a clef (novel with a key, where characters have real-life originals)
- Describes a squabble between a church-lawyer, an archbishop and a dean
- It was suppressed and burned
- The restricted social environment of Yorkshire furnished him with a mass of minutely observed details which he put into his masterpiece published within a year, Tristram Shandy (1759)

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The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman

- First two volumes (sections) published in 1759, which catapulted Sterne to literary fame
- Further volumes (total nine) appeared in subsequent years
- Sterne entered the fashionable society in London, and relished it after his parochial Yorkshire life
- Playing the parts of his own characters, he soon became a cult figure
- Despite the immense popularity of the book in his lifetime, its full significance has been acknowledged only after his death

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Features of the Novel

- Intensely comic, moral, sentimental treatment
- Tone of informal conversation
- “Writing, when properly managed (as you may be sure I think mine is), is but a different name for conversation”
- Mocks pedantry or bookish learning

- Treats sex as absurd and sad

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Features of the Novel

- Occasional peaks of sentimentality bound up with comic and moral elements
- Uncle Toby gently releasing a fly out of the window because he does not want to hurt it
- The paradox of Toby's hobby-horse: his interest in mock sieges is theoretical; he would never apply his principles to war
- Yorick, village parson and close friend of the Shandys; is a representation of Sterne himself
- However, Tristram is also identified with the author
- The concept of the protagonist as hero is subverted

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Features of the Novel

- Hobby horses
- Walter Shandy: philosophizing, theory of names, long noses, etc
- Uncle Toby: theory and practice of fortification
- Tristram: writing
- Breaking up of chronology

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Influence of John Locke's empiricism

- Consciousness of every individual is conditioned by his private train of association
- Every individual lives in a world of his own, with his own "hobby horse" or private obsession, in the light of which he (mis)interprets other people: Human loneliness
- Past exists in present consciousness and colours it (we ARE our memories): Relativity of time

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Critical Reception

- Dr Johnson: "Nothing odd will do long. Tristram Shandy did not last."
- The Russian Formalists used the example of Tristram Shandy to illustrate the concepts of "literariness" and "defamiliarization"
- Victor Shklovsky called Tristram Shandy "the most typical novel in western literature."

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"Postmodern" Elements

- The novel claims to be a biography of the titular character; its style is "progressive-digressive"
- Focus on insufficiency of language and experience (to reinforce which there are frequent references to the empiricist John Locke)
- Erratic narration
- Critiques the unreality of the realistic novel
- The conventions of plot, character and realism subverted
- Typographical idiosyncrasies
- Dark satire, playful vulgarity, mockery of morality and intellectual solemnity, identity as fluid and unstable

- Innumerable allusions and elements of pastiche
- Self-reflexivity and elements of stream-of-consciousness
- Tristram Shandy is a parody of the novel; it is an anti-novel

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A Sentimental Journey (1768)

- A seven months' tour of France and Italy during 1765 resulted in A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy (1768)
- This second novel is as arresting and fragmentary as the first
- A travel book describing intimate glimpses of characters and emotions
- Feeling as the ability to feel oneself in some one else's situation and to be moved by the emotions of others
- It satirizes Smollett as the character Smelfungus
- Shortly after this, he died of tuberculosis and was buried in St George's churchyard
- In his last years, Sterne had kept a journal for a woman called Eliza, the wife of an East India Company officer, which was published with her consent after her death as Letters from Yorick to Eliza (1775)

Transition Poetry

Transitional Poetry

- Reaction against intellectual Augustan poetry
- Deep sense of mystery and wonder
- Renewed impetus on passion, imagination
- Emphasis on originality & inspiration (as against craftsmanship)
- Sentimentalism
- Rural life (against Augustan poetry of the Town)
- Augustan elements in their poetry
- Presented an ordered universe governed by universal laws framed by God
- Formal rules maintained to some extent

Thomas Gray (1716-1771)

- The second most important poet of the 18th century, after the dominant Alexander Pope
- Despite his great talent, Gray wrote only a small body of poetry which he published rather reluctantly
- There was a reclusiveness and timidity that characterized his whole life, partly due to his frail health and homosexuality

Gray's Works

- Pastoral Elegy
- "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard"
- Horatian Odes
- "Hymn to Adversity"
- "Ode on the Spring"

- “Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College”, etc
- Pindaric Odes
- “The Progress of Poesy”
- “The Bard”
- Mock-heroic poetry
- “On the Death of a Favourite Cat”
- Poems on Celtic, Norse, Welsh subjects
- “The Fatal Sisters”
- “The Descent of Odin”

Gray's Elegy

- “An Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard”
- Begins with a contemplation of the landscape
- Moves to a consideration of the ‘short and simple annals of the poor’
- Moral ideas arise from this consideration
- Poet then muses upon human potential and mortality
- Presents the prospect of the poet's own death; Art (this poem) might offer a durable memorial against time
- Deep personal feelings involved

William Collins (1721-1759)

- Among the transitional poets, Collins was second only to Gray in influence
- The son of a poor hatter, William Collins went to London after his Oxford education, determined on a literary career
- In London, he befriended James Thomson, Samuel Johnson and David Garrick
- When he was 17 and still at college, he completed the Persian Eclogues (1742, revised as Oriental Eclogues)
- In London, he published his second and last collection of poems, Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegorical Subjects (1746)

Major Odes

- “Ode to Fear”
- “Ode to Pity”
- “Ode on the Poetical Character”
- “Ode to Evening”
- “Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland” or “Superstitions Ode”

William Cowper (1731-1800)

- An important forerunner of Romantic poetry who wrote about evening life and scenes of English country life
- Melancholy and devout man, retired to rustic seclusion
- Sensitive and disappointed in life

- Tone of morbidity and tragedy in poetry
- Had a landscape painter's eye
- Tremendous popularity in the Romantic period owed to his fervent advocacy of religious and humanitarian ideals, including his support of the anti-slavery movement
- Coleridge called him "the best modern poet"
- Robert Southey wrote the monumental *Life and Works of Cowper* (1837)

Major Works

- *The Progress of Error* and other poems, including eight satires. These were published in 1782 under the title *Poems by William Cowper*
- In 1781, wrote his most substantial work, *The Task*
- A long blank verse poem in six books and nearly five thousand lines
- *The Diverting History of John Gilpin* was also included in this volume
- On a variety of subjects related to country scenes & domestic interiors
- Famous lines: "God made the country, and man made the town."
- Begins as a mock-heroic account of a wooden stool developing into a sofa ("The Sofa", beginning "I sing the Sofa.")
- Includes religious and humanitarian concerns.

Major Works

- *The Castaway*
- Powerfully detailed description of a sailor washed overboard and left alone in the midst of the ocean to swim vainly for an hour before drowning
- Its last lines are continually quoted by Mr Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse*, a novel much concerned with human loneliness.

Robert Burns (1759-1796)

- Scottish peasant poet, called "Ploughman Poet"
- Wrote in English as well as Scots language
- Born in Ayrshire, Robert and his brother Gilbert were educated by their father, who was financially unfortunate and died fighting a legal battle with his landlord, after which his sons lost their farm
- Burns spent his childhood in poverty and severe physical labour, and in his later life he turned increasingly to the passions of poetry, nature, drink and women

Major Poems

- "To a Mouse"
- "The Cotter's Saturday Night"
- "To a Mountain Daisy"
- "A Red, Red Rose"
- "Despondency: An Ode"
- "Auld Lang Syne"
- Tom o' Shanter

Burns' Poetry

- Burns was proud of his Scottish peasant background and had read widely among the French and English poets
- He wrote in the tradition of Allan Ramsay and Robert Fergusson, Scottish poets whom he admired
- He was skilled in the Scots vernacular
- Many of his celebrated lyrics were based on Scottish folklore and daily life
- His poems about animals are famous, and often anthropomorphic (For e.g., “To a Mouse”)
- He also wrote some vigorous satires on religion, such as “The Ordination” and “The Holy Willie’s Prayer” (a powerful satire attacking religious hypocrisy)
- His rural poems dating from the late 1780s are the best, with a blend of humour and sadness

William Blake (1757-1827)

- Poet and painter; son of a successful London hosier and Dissenter influenced by the Swedish religious philosopher Emmanuel Swedenborg
- Blake never went to school and was educated at home by his mother
- Read widely in literature and languages
- At the age of 14, was apprenticed to an antiquarian engraver, where he was influenced by Gothic art

Major Works

- Poetical Sketches (1783)
- Songs of Innocence (1789)
- Songs of Experience (1793)
- Combined edition Songs of Innocence and of Experience showing the Two Contrary States of the Human Soul
- The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1790)
- Blake’s principal prose work
- Written in imitation of biblical prophecy
- Title is an ironic reference to Swedenborg’s Latin book on afterlife, Heaven and Hell (1758)

Major Works

- Lambeth Books
- Songs of Experience
- The Marriage of Heaven and Hell
- Visions of the Daughters of Albion
- America, a Prophecy
- The First Book of Urizen
- “Prophetic Books”
- The Prophetic Books are a series of lengthy, interrelated poetic works drawing upon Blake’s personal mythology (mythopoeia)
- Milton: A Poem in Two Books, To Justify the Ways of God to Men (1804-1810)
- The most famous part of his poem is when Milton returns to earth and in the person of the living poet, corrects the spiritual error glorified in Paradise Lost

- The preface to Milton includes the famous short poem “Jerusalem”
- The last and the longest of the Prophetic Books is the epic Jerusalem: The Emanation of the Giant Albion (1804-1820)

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Blake’s Personal Mythology

- In The Vision of the Daughters of Albion (1793), Blake introduced the figures of his personal mythology
- Urizen, Orc, etc
- Along with the ideas of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, these symbols are developed in Europe and The Book of Urizen, The Book of Ahania, The Book of Los and The Song of Los

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Blake’s Personal Mythology

- The whole sequence is an inversion of Milton’s Paradise Lost, which Blake denounced for justifying the evil committed by man.
- Blake’s criticism of Christianity is strongest in Europe and The Song of Los
- The Four Zoas appeared in 1797.
- Albion is the primeval universal man whose fall and division results in the Four Zoas. Albion also represents Britain.
Urizen (reason)
Luvah (passion)
Tharmas (body)
Urthonah (spirit)

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Blake’s Last Works

- In 1803, after an unsuccessful association with the patron William Hayley, Blake settled down in London for the rest of his life
- Here he finished his Prophetic Books
- The Ghost of Abel is a minute poetic drama of 70 lines, that questions the views of Byron in 1821
- Auguries of Innocence (written 1803)
- Contains a series of paradoxes which speak of innocence juxtaposed with evil and corruption
- The Everlasting Gospel
- Presents Jesus not as the traditional messianic figure but as a supremely creative being, above dogma, logic and even morality