

The Novel: Definitions and Distinctions

- ❖ **Genre:** Fiction and Narrative
- ❖ **Style:** Prose
- ❖ **Length:** Extended
- ❖ **Purpose:** Mimesis or Verisimilitude

“The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the time in which it is written. The Romance, in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen.”

Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, 1785

Verisimilitude

Refers to the illusion that the novel is a representation of real life. Verisimilitude results from:

- ❖ a correspondence between the world presented in the novel and the real world of the reader
- ❖ Recognizable settings and characters in real time

what Hazlitt calls, “ the close imitation of men and manners... the very texture of society as it really exists.”

- ❖ The novel emerged when authors fused adventure and

romance with verisimilitude and heroes that were not supermen but ordinary people, often, insignificant nobodies

Precursors to the Novel

Heroic Epics

Gilgamesh, Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, *Beowulf*, *The Song of Roland*

Ancient Greek and Roman Romances and Novels

An Ephesian Tale and *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, Petronius’s *Satyricon*, Apuleius’s *The Golden Ass*

Oriental Tales

A Thousand and One Nights

Medieval European Romances: Arthurian tales culminating in Thomas Malory's *Morte Darthur*

Elizabethan Prose Fiction: Gascoigne's *The Adventure of Master F. J.*, Robert Greene's *Pandosto: The Triumph of Time*, Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*, Deloney's *Jack of Newbury*

Travel Adventures: Marco Polo, Ibn Batuta, More's *Utopia*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Voltaire's *Candide*

Novelle: Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptameron*

Moral Tales: Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, Johnson's *Rasselas*

The First Novels

Don Quixote (Spain, 1605-15) by Miguel de Cervantes

The Princess of Cleves (France, 1678) by Madame de Lafayette

Robinson Crusoe (England, 1719), *Moll Flanders* (1722) and *A Journal of the Plague Year* (1722) by Daniel DeFoe

Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded (England, 1740-1742) by Samuel Richardson

Joseph Andrews (England, 1742) and *Tom Jones* (1746) by Henry Fielding

Types of Novels

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| ❖ Picaresque | Regional |
| ❖ Epistolary | Social |
| ❖ Sentimental | Mystery |
| ❖ Gothic | Science Fiction |
| ❖ Historical | Magical Realism |
| ❖ Psychological | |
| ❖ Realistic/Naturalistic | |

**Don Quixote*

**by Miguel de Cervantes*

**(1547-1616)*

- ❖ First European novel: part I - 1605; part II - 1615
- ❖ A psychological portrait of a mid-life crisis
- ❖ Satirizes medieval romances, incorporates pastoral, picaresque, social and religious commentary
- ❖ What is the nature of reality?



The Princess of Cleves

**Madame de Lafayette*

- ❖ First European historical novel – recreates life of 16th c. French nobility at the court of Henri II
- ❖ First *roman d'analyse* (novel of analysis), dissecting emotions and attitudes

The Rise of the English Novel

- ❖ The Restoration of the monarchy (1660) in England after the Puritan Commonwealth (1649-1660) encouraged an outpouring of secular literature
- ❖ Appearance of periodical literature:

journals and newspapers

Literary Criticism

Character Sketches

Political Discussion

Philosophical Ideas

- ❖ Increased leisure time for middle class: Coffee House and Salon society

- ❖ Growing audience of literate women

England's First Professional Female Author:

Aphra Behn

1640-1689

Novels

- ❖ *Love Letters between a Nobleman and his sister* (1683)
- ❖ *The Fair Jilt* (1688)
- ❖ *Agnes de Castro* (1688)
- ❖ *Oroonoko* (c.1688)
- ❖ She also wrote many dramas

❖ Daniel Defoe

- ❖ Master of plain prose and powerful narrative
- ❖ Journalistic style: highly realistic detail
- ❖ Travel adventure: *Robinson Crusoe*, 1719
- ❖ Contemporary chronicle: *Journal of the Plague Year*, 1722
- ❖ Picaresques: *Moll Flanders*, 1722 and *Roxana*



Picaresque Novels

- ❖ The name comes from the Spanish word *picaro*: a rogue
- ❖ A usually autobiographical chronicle of a rascal's travels and adventures as s/he makes his/her way through the world more by wits than industry
- ❖ Episodic, loose structure
- ❖ Highly realistic: detailed description and uninhibited expression
- ❖ Satire of social classes
- ❖ Contemporary picaresques: Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*

Epistolary Novels

- ❖ Novels in which the narrative is told in letters by one or more of the characters
- ❖ Allows the author to present the feelings and reactions of the characters, and to bring immediacy to the plot, also allows multiple points of view
- ❖ Psychological realism
- ❖ Contemporary epistolary novels: Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

Pioneers of the English Novel

Samuel Richardson
1689-1761

Pamela (1740) and

Clarissa (1747-48)

- ❖ Epistolary
- ❖ Sentimental
- ❖ Morality tale: Servant resisting seduction by her employer



Henry Fielding

1707-1754

Shamela (1741) *Joseph Andrews* (1742), and *Tom Jones* (1749)

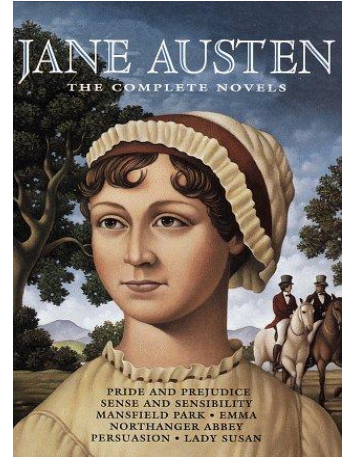
- ❖ Picaresque protagonists
- ❖ "comic epic in prose"
- ❖ Parody of Richardson



The Novel of Manners:

Jane Austen

- ❖ Novels dominated by the customs, manners, conventional behavior and habits of a particular social class
- ❖ Often concerned with courtship and marriage
- ❖ Realistic and sometimes satiric
- ❖ Focus on domestic society rather than the larger world
- ❖ Other novelists of manners: Anthony Trollope, Edith Wharton, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Margaret Drabble



Gothic Novels

- ❖ Novels characterized by magic, mystery and horror
- ❖ Exotic settings – medieval, Oriental, etc.
- ❖ Originated with Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764)

William Beckford: *Vathek, An Arabian Tale* (1786)

- ❖ Anne Radcliffe: 5 novels (1789-97) including *The Mysteries of Udolpho*
- ❖ Widely popular genre throughout Europe and America: Charles Brockden Brown's *Wieland* (1798)
- ❖ Contemporary Gothic novelists include Anne Rice and Stephen King

Frankenstein

by Mary Shelley

1797-1851

- ❖ One of the most famous gothic novels
- ❖ Inspired by a dream in reaction to a challenge to write a ghost story

- ❖ Published in 1817 (rev. ed. 1831)
- ❖ Influenced by the Greek myth of Prometheus
- ❖ *Frankenstein* is also considered the first science fiction novel

Novels of Sentiment

- ❖ Novels in which the characters, and thus the readers, have a heightened emotional response to events
- ❖ Connected to emerging Romantic movement
- ❖ Laurence Sterne: *Tristram Shandy* (1760-67)
- ❖ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774)
- ❖ Francois Rene de Chateaubriand: *Atala* (1801) and *Rene* (1802)
- ❖ The Brontës: Anne Brontë *Agnes Grey* (1847) Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847)