


# THE RISE OF THE NOVEL



The prose of the world

- 
- The novel is a worldwide cultural instrument which helped redefine
    - the time and space where we live
    - the way we speak and talk
    - how we feel
    - what we do



# A Definition

According to the dictionary a novel is

- a fictional prose narrative of considerable length, typically having a plot that is unfolded by the actions, speech, and thoughts of the characters
- the literary genre represented by novels

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# Another definition

A novel (from French “nouvelle” and Italian “novella,” which mean new) is an extended, generally fictional narrative in prose. Until the 18th century the word referred specifically to short fictions of love and intrigue as opposed to romances, which were epic-length works about love and adventure. During the 18th century the novel adopted features of the old romance and became one of the major literary genres.



# When & Where

- 1st half of 18th century in England
- Prototypes of the novel date back to the Elizabethan literature
  - Sir Thomas Malroy's *Le Mort d'Artur* (1485)
  - Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* (1588)
  - John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678)
  - Aphra Behn's *Oronooko, or The Royal Slave* (1688)



# Origins

The dominant genre in world literature, the novel is a relatively young form of imaginative writing. Only about 250 years old in England—and embattled from the start—its rise to pre-eminence has been striking. After sparse beginnings in 17th century England, novels grew exponentially in production by the 18th century and in the 19th century became the primary form of popular entertainment.



# Why

- The rise of the novel coincides with the rise of the middle classes in Western Europe
- Profound social and economic changes brought the novel into popular prominence
  - advances in the technology of printing
    - made written texts available to a growing population of readers
  - changes in modes of distribution and in literacy rates
    - brought books and pamphlets to populations excluded from education working-class men and women of all classes
  - authors became free agents in the literary marketplace
    - dependent on popular sales for success and sustenance
    - reflecting the values of a middle-class readership



# Antinovel campaign

- Attacks on the new genre
  - Identified with French romance
  - Derided as a sensationalistic import
  - Considered antithetical to English values
- Campaign outcomes
  - Selective legitimation of novels that displayed non-romantic features
  - The novel as a genre developed and was valued according to these features





# Features

- Realism and drama of individual consciousness has precedence over external drama
- Focus on experience of the individual as subject matter
- Exploration of individual consciousness and perception



# Realism

- Synonymous with veracity
- Denial of fictionality
- Particularity of description
- "Photographic" attention to detail (verisimilitude)
- Rejection of fabulous imaginings and idealism of romances



# Subject matter

- Significant choices in subject matter
  - appearance of probability in character, setting, and event.
  - logical cause-and-effect sequencing
  - solidity of detail in order to achieve the reader's willing suspension of disbelief
- Focus on middle-class protagonists



# Hybrid genre

## The novel

- encompasses many different sub-genres
- is always in search of a definition
- battled with other genres from the very beginning
- different theories on its rise

# Who



**DANIEL DEFOE**



**HENRY FIELDING**



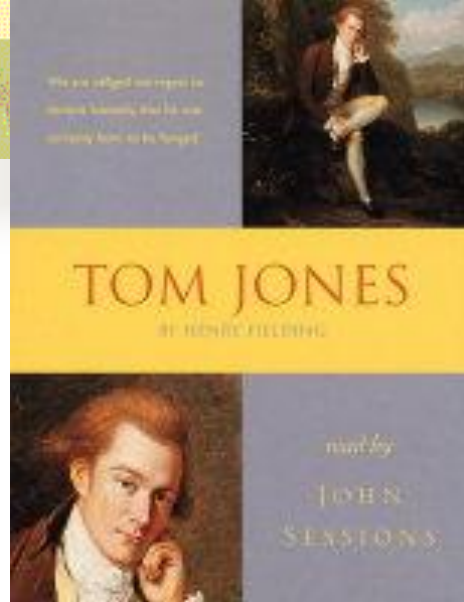
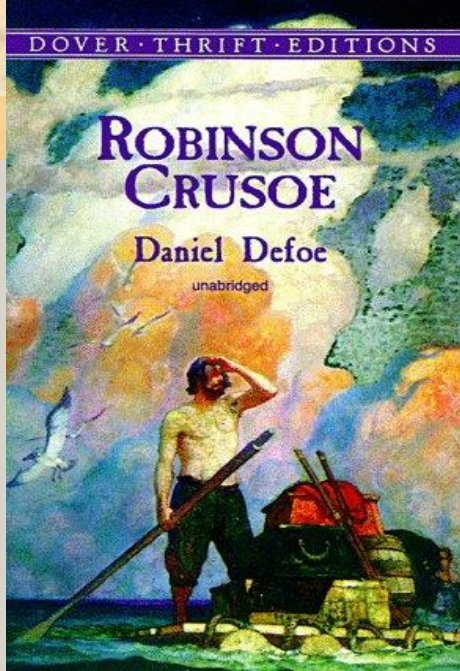
**SAMUEL  
RICHARDSON**



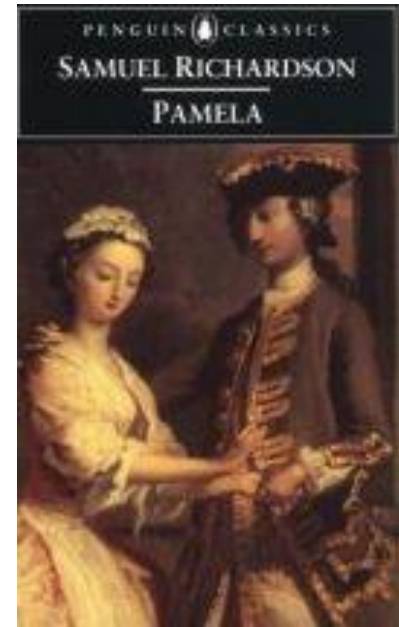
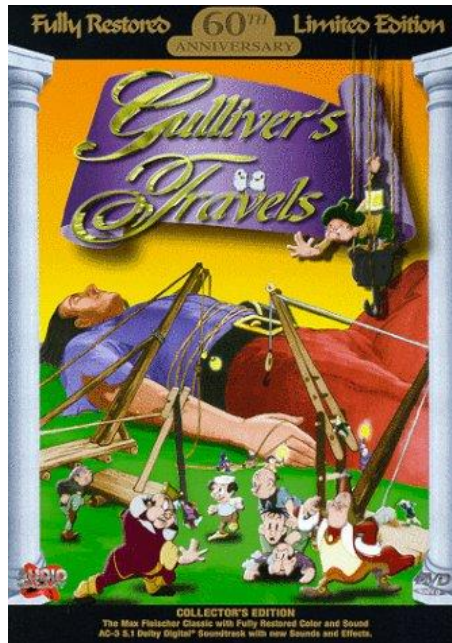
**LAURENCE  
STERNE**



**JONATHAN SWIFT**



# What



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# The mode of the future

Richardson and Fielding created a consciousness among readers and potential writers that a significant and lasting form had come about and that literary careers could be built upon the genre.



# How

- Realistic novel
- Philosophic novel
- Epistolary novel
- Epic novel
- Experimental novel (meta-novel)
- Buildungsroman
- Gothic Novels





# Realistic novel

## **Robinson Crusoe (1719)**

- Regarded as the first novel in English
- A fictional autobiography by a first person narrator
- This device, presenting an account of supposedly factual events, is known as a "false document", and gives a realistic frame to the story
- First of an endless series of novels in all world literatures up to modern times



# Philosophic satiric novel

## Gulliver's Travels (1726)

- A satire on human nature
- A parody of the "travellers' tales" literary sub-genre
- A philosophical novel
- Almost unique in England
- A satirical view of the state of European government, and of petty differences between religions
- An inquiry into whether man is inherently corrupt or whether men are corrupted
- A restatement of the older "ancients v. moderns" controversy
- French equivalents
  - Voltaire's *Candide* and *Zadig*
  - Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*



# Epistolary novel

- Enjoyed its greatest popularity in England and France from the mid-1700s to the end of the century
- Plot is advanced by letters or journal entries of one or more characters
- Montesquieu in France *Lettres persanes*
- **Richardson's *Pamela* (1740)**
  - the first example of the epistolary novel
  - the first mature novel to be written in English
- Rousseau's *La Nouvelle Héloïse* (1761)
- Laclos 1782 *Les Liaisons dangereuses*
- Goethe *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1744)
- Foscolo *Le ultime lettere di Jacopo Ortis* (1802)



# Epic novel

Tom Jones (1749)

- Comic romance rooted in the narrative conventions of romance and epic
- Un-heroic hero - 'ordinary' person
- Omniscient, meddling, third person narrator
- Wide social range topics
- Direct show and discussion of narrative devices
- Paved the way for Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and William Thackeray



# Experimental novel (meta-novel)

## Tristram Shandy (1759)

- One of the greatest comic novels in English
- Rambling plot
- Meddling and maddening third person narrator
- Digressions as important as main plot
- A forerunner for many modern narrative devices
  - stream of consciousness
  - self-reflection
  - modernist and postmodernist writing



# Buildungsroman

A German word for "novel of education" or "novel of formation", a novel which traces the spiritual, moral, psychological, or social development and growth of the main character from (usually) childhood to maturity.



# Features

- The hero or heroine leaves home for a real or metaphoric journey due to some form of loss or discontent
- The process of maturity is long, arduous, and gradual
  - clashes between the protagonist's needs and desires and the views and judgments of social order.
- In the end the spirit and values of the social order become manifest in the protagonist who
  - accommodates into society.
  - assesses his/her new place in that society



# Examples

- The full bloom of Bildungsroman is in 19th century European literature
- Almost all 18th century English novels can be considered bildungsroman
  - Robinson Crusoe is certainly a good one
  - Pamela is another good example
- All Jane Austen's novels are bildungsroman
- One of the best bildungsroman is Goethe's Wilhelm Meister





# Gothic Novels

- Combined fiction, Romanticism, horror, and touches of the supernatural
- Over-dramatic, not necessarily realistic
- Relied heavily on suspense
- Considered “trashy” and “low-brow” they were the least realistic and solely for entertainment
  - considered a waste of time and energy, possibly even corruptive

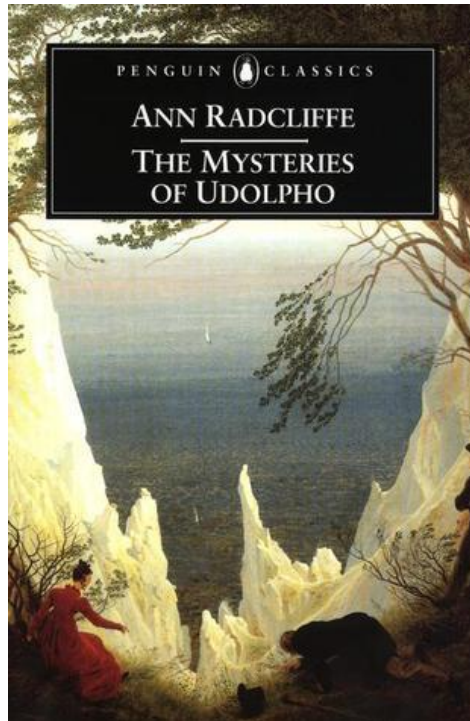
# First Gothic Novel: The Castle of Otranto

- By Horace Walpole, 1764



# Most Famous Gothic Novel of the Late 18th Century: Mysteries of Udolpho

- By Anne Radcliffe, 1794



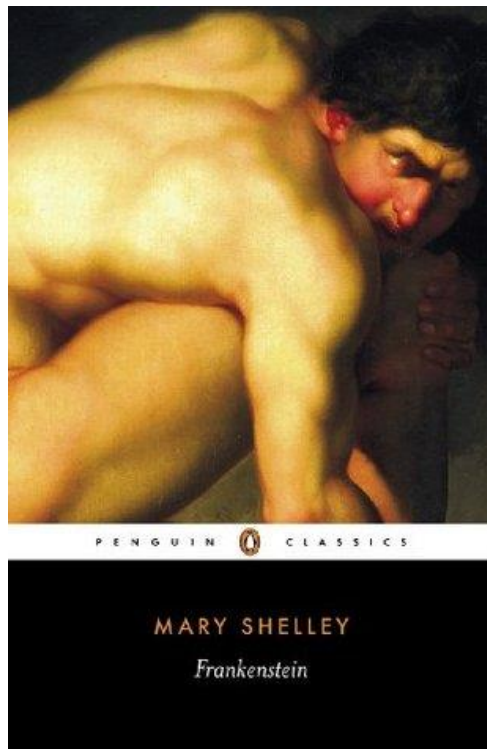


# Other Early Gothic Novels:

- The Recess by Sophia Lee
- Romance of the Forest by Anne Radcliffe
- A Sicilian Romance by Anne Radcliffe
- The Italian by Anne Radcliffe
- Castle of Wolfenbach by Elizabeth Parson
- Mysterious Warnings by Elizabeth Parson
- Clermont by Regina Maria Roche
- The Necromancer by Francis Lathom
- Orphan of the Rhine by Eleanor Sleathe
- Horrid Mysteries by Carl Grosse
- The Monk by M G Lewis

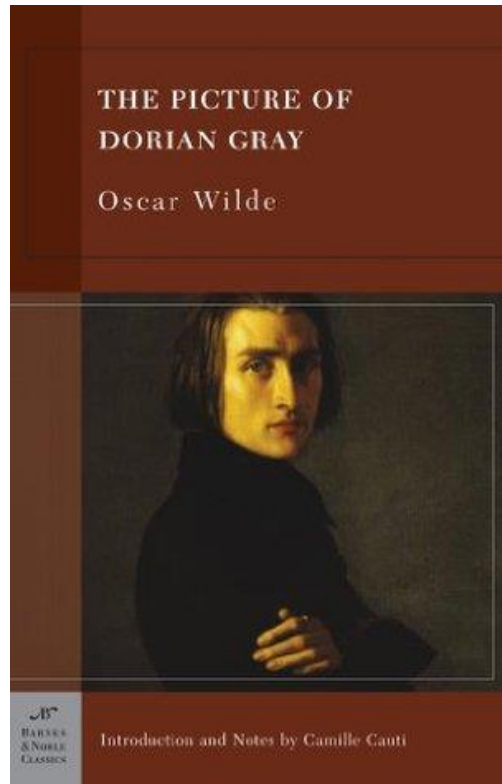
# Most Famous Gothic Novel of the Early 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Frankenstein

- Mary Shelley, 1818



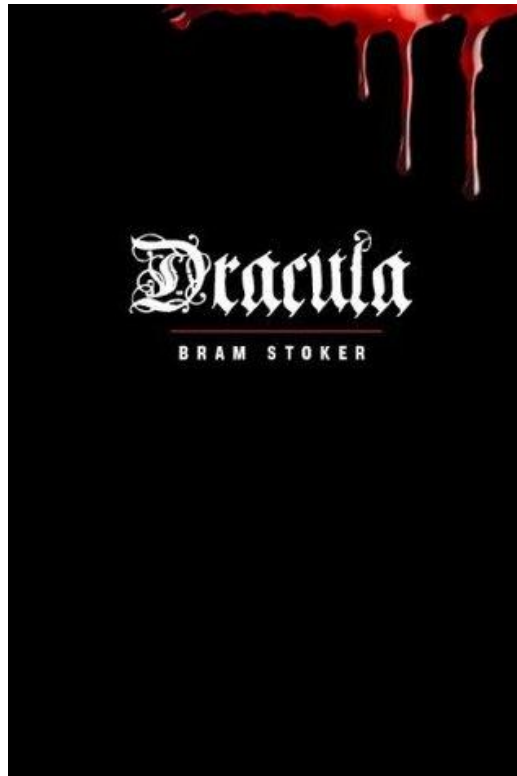
# Most Famous Gothic Novel of the Late 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Picture of Dorian Gray

- By Oscar Wilde, 1890



# Most Famous Gothic Novel of the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century: Dracula

- By Bram Stoker, 1897





# Thanks to Gothic novels, we now have:

- Horror (Stephen King)
- Thriller (Tom Clancy, James Patterson)
- Suspense (John Grisham, Kathy Reichs)
- Mystery (Agatha Christie, Arthur Conan Doyle)
- Sci-Fi (H G Wells, Philip K Dick, Isaac Asimov, George Lucas)
- Fantasy (J R R Tolkein)
- Adventure (J K Rowling)
- Paranormal (Stephanie Meyer, Cassandra Clare)





# Bibliography

- Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*
- J Paul Hunter, *Before Novels*
- Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel*