

# Literary History: A Systematic Approach

## Lecture 8: The Rise of the Novel (c. 1680-1750)

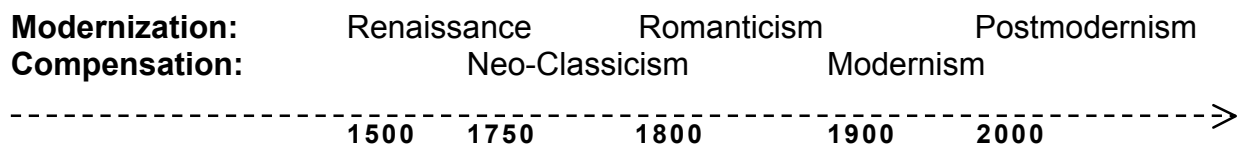
### 1) Functions of Literature

### 2) Prose as a Novel Signifying Practice

### 3) The Rise of the Novel

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### 1) Functions of Literature



Modernization	vs.	Compensation
the influx of subjectivity resulting in/ counterbalanced by <b>poetic form</b> a) as imported from (oral) tradition b) as 'liberated' by writing/ printing (innovation, de-familiarization) leading to <b>reflexivity/                      intransparency</b>	vs.	the persistence of a longing for <b>objectivity</b> resulting in the emergence of <b>prose</b> as a flexible, open-form signifying practice which seemingly maintains the clarity and control of direct interaction in writing leading to <b>an evasion of reflexivity/                      the illusion of transparency</b>

## 2) Prose as a Novel Signifying Practice

Verse is not removed from the configuration of signifying practices that make up communication. It is just that its extension is restricted. The domain of signifying practices is remapped. Prose appears and claims a territory of its own. (xvii)

[P]rose withholds itself from view [...] it becomes identified with the linguistic substratum so that whereas one recognizes that it emerges relatively late, it presents itself as prior to verse or any specific discourse. It can thus claim a foundational role and functions as the ground of reference, a sort of degree-zero of language for all further elaboration. [Thus,] verse is seen as developmentally second. But we know it to be developmentally first. Well then, if verse is first *and* verse is second, where is prose? [...] Prose is meant to have no place; prose does not happen. Prose is what assigns place. (197)

(Kittay/Godzich 1987, xvii/197)  
(see also Starr 2004)

### MONSIEUR JOURDAIN

Well, what do you know about that! These forty years now, I've been speaking in prose without knowing it!

(Moliere, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, 1670)

### John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* [1690]. Oxford: Clarendon 1894. ["On the Abuse of Words"]

Since wit and fancy find easier entertainment in the world than dry truth and real knowledge, figurative speeches and allusion in language will hardly be admitted as an imperfection or abuse of it. I confess, in discourses where we seek rather pleasure and delight than information and improvement, such ornaments as are borrowed from them can scarce pass for faults. But yet if we would speak of things as they are, we must allow that all the art of rhetoric, besides order and clearness; all the artificial and figurative application of words eloquence hath invented, are for nothing else but to insinuate wrong ideas, move the passions, and thereby mislead the judgement [...] and therefore, [...] they are certainly, in all discourses that pretend to inform and instruct, wholly to be avoided ; and where truth and knowledge are concerned, cannot but be thought a great fault, either of the language or person that makes use of them. [...] I cannot but observe how little the preservation and improvement of truth and knowledge is the care and concern of mankind; since the arts of fallacy are endowed and preferred. [...] Eloquence, like the fair sex, has too prevailing beauties in it to suffer itself ever to be spoken against. And it is in vain to find fault with those arts of deceiving, wherein men find pleasure to be deceived. (Vol. II, 146-7)

### [Locke cont'd: "Of the Remedies of the Foregoing Imperfections and Abuses of Words"]

First, A man shall take care to use no word without a signification, no name without an idea for which he makes it stand. [...] Secondly, It is not enough a man uses his words as signs of some ideas : those [ideas] he annexes them to, if they be simple, must be clear and distinct ; if complex, must be determinate, i.e. the precise collection of simple ideas settled in the mind, with that sound annexed to it, as the sign of that precise determined collection, and no other. [...] Thirdly, it is not enough that men have ideas, determined ideas, for which they make these signs stand ; but they must also take care to apply their words as near as may be to such ideas as common use has annexed to them. [...] Fourthly, But, because common use has not so visibly annexed any signification of words, as to make men know always certainly what they precisely stand for : and because men, in the improvement of their knowledge, come to have ideas different from the vulgar and ordinary received ones [...]: therefore, [...] it is sometimes necessary, for the ascertaining the signification of words, to *declare their meaning* [...] Fifthly, [...] in all discourses wherein one man pretends to instruct or convince another, he should use the same word constantly in the same sense. (Vol. II, 148-164)

## 3) The Rise of the Novel

### Classic study:

Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (1957)

- romance vs. novel
- formal realism
- individual experience > common sense, sympathy
- the rise of the middle class/reading public
- larger context: enlightenment rationalism

### Early Examples of the Novel

- Cervantes, *Don Quixote* (1605/15)
- Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, or the Royal Slave* (1688)
- Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719),  
*Moll Flanders* (1722)
- Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (1740),  
*Clarissa* (1747/51)
- Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (1742),  
*Jonathan Wild* (1743),  
*Tom Jones* (1749)  
*Amelia* (1752)
- Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67)

**Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko, Or the Royal Slave* (1688):**

I do not pretend, in giving you the history of this royal slave, to entertain my reader with the adventures of a feigned hero, whose life and fortunes fancy may manage at the poet's pleasure; nor in relating the truth, design to adorn it with any accidents but such as arrived in earnest to him.

[...]

I was myself an eyewitness to a great part of what you will find here set down.

**Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)**

The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner

Who lived eight and twenty years, all alone in an un-inhabited island on the coast of America, near the mouth of the great river of Oroonoke, having been cast on shore by shipwreck, wherein all the men perished but himself. With an account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by pyrates, written by himself

The Preface

If ever the Story of any private Man's Adventures in the World were worth making Publick, and were acceptable when Publish'd, the Editor of this Account thinks this will be so.

The Wonders of this Man's Life exceed all that (he thinks) is to be found extant; the Life of one Man being scarce capable of a greater Variety.

The Story is told with Modesty, with Seriousness, and with a religious Application of Events to the Uses to which wise Men always apply them (viz.) to the Instruction of others by this Example, and to justify and honour the Wisdom of Providence in all the Variety of our Circumstances, let them happen how they will.

The Editor believes the thing to be a just History of Fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it: And however thinks, because all such things are dispatch'd, that the Improvement of it, as well to the Diversion, as to the Instruction of the Reader, will be the same; and as such, he thinks, without farther Compliment to the World, he does them a great Service in the Publication.

I was born in the Year 1632, in the City of York, of a good Family, tho' not of that Country, my Father being a Foreigner of Bremen, who settled first at Hull: He got a good Estate by Merchandise, and leaving off his Trade, lived afterward at York, from whence he had married my Mother, whose Relations were named Robinson, a very good Family in that Country, and from whom I was called Robinson Kreutznaer; but by the usual Corruption of Words in England, we are now called, nay we call our selves, and write our Name Crusoe, and so my Companions always call'd me.

### Typical Examples of Narrator's Discourse in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*:

- "I observed in this last Part of [my father's] discourse, which was truly Prophetick, tho' I suppose my Father did not know it to be so himself; I say, I observed [...]" (p.7)
- "But I was to have another Trial for it still; and Providence, as in such cases generally it does, resolved to leave me entirely without Excuse." (p.13)
- "Any one may judge what a Condition I must be in at all this, who was but a young Sailor, and who had been in such a fright before at but a little." (p.16)
- "As for me, having some Money in my Pocket, I travelled to *London* by Land; and there, as well as on the Road, had many Struggles with my self, what course of Life I should take, and whether I should go Home, or go to Sea." (p.22)

### Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (1740)

Pamela, or  
Virtue Rewarded

In a series of familiar letters from a beautiful young damsel to her parents: and afterwards, in her exalted condition, between her, and persons of figure and quality, upon the most important and entertaining subjects, in genteel life. Publish'd in order to cultivate the principles of virtue and religion in the minds of the youth of both sexes

### Daniel Defoe/Samuel Richardson [empirical authors]

▼ (posing as editors)

#### TEXT:

#### Preface:

'Editor' (D.D./S.R.) > 'implied author function'

(implied author → implied reader)

#### Discourse:

Narrator (Robinson Crusoe/Pamela) → Narratee(s)

#### Story:

Protagonist (RC/P) ↔ other characters (Friday, Mr. B.)

▼ ▲

reader

## First-Person Narration:

- a) **Stanzel:** First-Person Narrative Situation
- explicit narrator as protagonist or witness
  - continuity between level of discourse and level of story
  - shifting relationship between narrating self (I) and experiencing self (I)
  - perspective is limited to the narrator's individual consciousness and feelings *and* to the narrator's position in the world.
- b) **Genette:** homodiegetic narration  
(fixed) internal focalization

## The Limits and Dynamics of First-Person Narration:

- overt homodiegetic narrator
- fixed internal focalization
- narrating self (discourse) ↔ experiencing self (story)

### a) continuity

e.g. *Robinson Crusoe* (1719), *Moll Flanders* (1722)  
*David Copperfield* (1849/50), *Jane Eyre* (1847)  
*Enduring Love* (1997)  
[> the autobiography paradigm]

### b) emphasis on experiencing self

e.g. *Pamela* (1740), *Clarissa* (1747/51)  
[epistolary novels, "letters, written ... to the *Moment*"]  
*Molloy/Malone Dies/The Unnamable* (1950-52)  
[interior monologue, present tense]

### c) emphasis on narrating self

e.g. *Tristram Shandy* (1759-67)  
*Midnight's Children* (1981)  
[digressions, metafictional tendency]

## Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (1742): Preface

[I]t may not be improper to premise a few words concerning this kind of writing, which I do not remember to have seen hitherto attempted in our language. The epic as well as the drama is divided into tragedy and comedy. Homer, who was the father of this species of poetry, gave us a pattern of both these, tho' that of the latter kind is entirely lost; which Aristotle tells us, bore the same relation to comedy which his *Iliad* bears to tragedy. [...]

And farther, as this poetry may be tragic or comic, I will not scruple to say it may likewise either be in verse or prose: for tho' it wants one particular, which the critic enumerates in the constituent parts of the epic poem, namely metre; yet, when any kind of writing contains all its other parts, such as fable, action, characters, sentiments, and diction [...] it seems, I think, reasonable to refer it to the epic [...]

Now a comic romance is a comic epic-poem in prose; differing from comedy, as the serious epic from tragedy: its action being more extended and comprehensive, containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters. It differs from the serious romance [...] in its characters, by introducing persons of inferior rank, and consequently of inferior manners [...] [In the comic species of writing] we should ever confine ourselves strictly to nature from the just imitation of which, will flow all the pleasure we can this way convey to the reader [...] life every where furnishes an accurate observer with the ridiculous.

## Henry Fielding

### The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling [1749]

#### Book I

*Containing as much of the Birth of the Foundling as is necessary or proper to acquaint the Reader with in the Beginning of this History.*

#### Chapter I

*The Introduction to the Work, or Bill of Fare to the Feast.*

An Author ought to consider himself, not as a Gentleman who gives a private or **eleemosynary** Treat, but rather as one who keeps a public Ordinary, at which **all Persons are welcome for their Money**. In the former Case, it is well known, that the Entertainer provides what Fare he pleases; and tho' this should be very indifferent, and utterly disagreeable to the Taste of his Company, they must not find any Fault; nay, on the contrary, Good-Breeding forces them outwardly to approve and to commend whatever is set before them. Now the contrary of this happens to the Master of an Ordinary. Men who pay for what they eat, will insist on gratifying their

Palates, however nice and whimsical these may prove; and if every Thing is not agreeable to their Taste, will challenge a Right to censure, to abuse, and to d-n their Dinner without Controul.

To prevent therefore giving Offence to their Customers by any such Disappointment, it hath been usual, with the honest and well-meaning Host, to provide a Bill of Fare, which all Persons may peruse at their first Entrance into the House; and, having thence acquainted themselves with the Entertainment which they may expect, may either stay and regale with what is provided for them, or may depart to some other Ordinary better accommodated to their Taste.

**As we do not disdain to borrow Wit or Wisdom from any Man who is capable of lending us either, we have condescended to take a Hint from these honest Victuallers, and shall prefix not only a general Bill of Fare to our whole Entertainment, but shall likewise give the Reader particular Bills to every Course which is to be served up in this and the ensuing Volumes.**

The Provision then which we have here made is no other than **HUMAN NATURE**. Nor do I fear that my **sensible Reader**, though most luxurious in his Taste, will start, cavil, or be offended, because I have named but one Article. The Tortoise, as the Alderman of Bristol, well learned in eating, knows by much Experience, besides the delicious Calibash and Calipee, contains many different Kinds of Food; nor can the learned Reader be ignorant, that in Human Nature, tho' here collected under one general Name, is such prodigious Variety, that a Cook will have sooner gone through all the several Species of animal and vegetable Food in the World, than an Author will be able to exhaust so extensive a Subject.

An Objection may perhaps be apprehended from the more delicate, that this Dish is too common and vulgar; for what else is the Subject of all the Romances, Novels, Plays and Poems, with which the Stalls abound. Many exquisite Viands might be rejected by the Epicure, if it was a sufficient Cause for his contemning of them as common and vulgar, that something was to be found in the most poultry Alleys under the same Name. **In reality, true Nature is as difficult to be met with in Authors, as the Bayonne Ham or Bologna Sausage is to be found in the Shops.**

But the whole, **to continue the same Metaphor**, consists in the Cookery of the Author; for, as Mr. Pope tells us,

True Wit is Nature to Advantage drest,  
What off' was thought, but ne'er so well exprest.

The same Animal which hath the Honour to have some Part of his Flesh eaten at the Table of a Duke, may perhaps be degraded in another Part, and some of his Limbs gibbeted, as it were, in the vilest Stall in Town. Where then lies the Difference between the Food of the Nobleman and the Porter, if both are at Dinner on the same Ox or Calf, but in the seasoning, the dressing, the garnishing, and the setting forth. Hence the one provokes and incites the most languid Appetite, and the other turns and palls that which is the sharpest and keenest.

**In like manner, the Excellence of the mental Entertainment consists less in the Subject, than in the Author's Skill in well dressing it up.** How pleased therefore will the Reader be to find, that we have, in the following Work, adhered closely to one of the highest Principles of the best Cook which the present Age, or



perhaps that of Heliogabalus, hath produced. This great Man, as is well known to all Lovers of polite eating, begins at first by setting plain Things before his hungry Guests, rising afterwards by Degrees, as their Stomachs may be supposed to decrease, to the very Quintessence of Sauce and Spices. **In like manner, we shall represent Human Nature at first to the keen Appetite of our Reader, in that more plain and simple Manner in which it is found in the Country, and shall hereafter hash and ragoo it with all the high French and Italian Seasoning of Affectation and Vice which Courts and Cities afford. By these Means, we doubt not but our Reader may be rendered desirous to read on for ever, as the great Person, just above-mentioned, is supposed to have made some Persons eat.**

**Having premised thus much, we will now detain those, who like our Bill of Fare, no longer from their Diet, and shall proceed directly to serve up the first Course of our History, for their Entertainment.**

## Chapter II

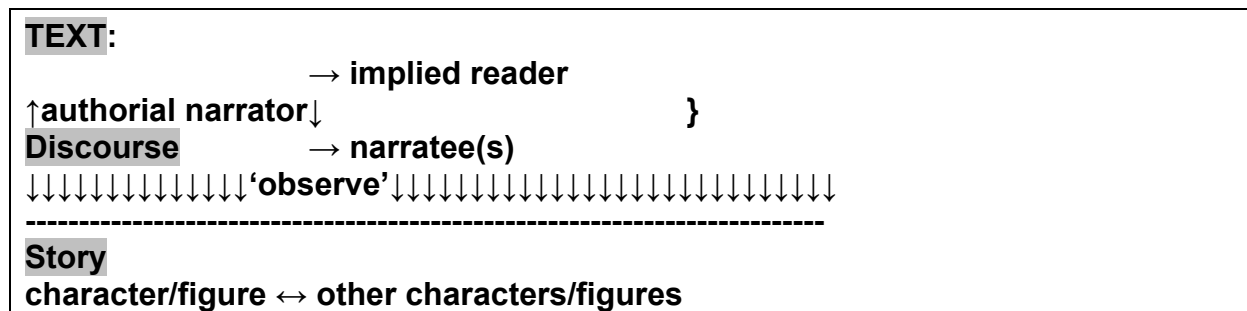
### *A short Description of Squire **Allworthy**, and a fuller Account of Miss **Bridget Allworthy** his Sister.*

In that Part of the western Division of this Kingdom, which is commonly called Somersetshire, there lately lived (and perhaps lives still) a Gentleman whose Name was Allworthy, and who might well be called the Favourite of both Nature and Fortune; for both of these seem to have contended which should bless and enrich him most. In this Contention, Nature may seem to some to have come off victorious, as she bestowed on him many Gifts; while Fortune had only one Gift in her Power; but in pouring forth this, she was so very profuse, that others perhaps may think this single Endowment to have been more than equivalent to all the various Blessings which he enjoyed from Nature. From the former of these, he derived an agreeable Person, a sound Constitution, a solid Understanding, and a benevolent Heart; by the latter, he was decreed to the Inheritance of one of the largest Estates in the County.

This Gentleman had, in his Youth, married a very worthy and beautiful Woman, of whom he had been extremely fond: By her he had three Children, all of whom died in their Infancy. He had likewise had the Misfortune of burying this beloved Wife herself, **about five Years before the Time in which this History chuses to set out.** This Loss, however great, he bore like a Man of Sense and Constancy; tho' it must be confest, he would often talk a little whimsically on this Head: For he sometimes said, he looked on himself as still married, and considered his Wife as only gone a little before him, a Journey which he should most certainly, sooner or later, take after her; and that he had not the least Doubt of meeting her again, in a Place where he should never part with her more. Sentiments for which his Sense was arraigned by one Part of his Neighbours, his Religion by a second, and his Sincerity by a third.

He now lived, for the most Part, retired in the Country, with one Sister, for whom he had a very tender Affection. This Lady was now somewhat past the Age of 30, an *Æra*, at which, **in the Opinion of the malicious**, the Title of Old Maid may, with no Impropriety, be assumed. She was of that Species of Women, **whom you commend** rather for good Qualities than Beauty, and **who are generally called** by their own Sex, very good Sort of Women - as good a Sort of Woman, Madam, **as you would wish to know.** [...]

**empirical author (Henry Fielding)**  
▼ ('copying' himself into the text)



▼ ▲  
**reader**

**Third-Person Narration:**  
**(Stanzel: Authorial Narrative Situation)**

- heterodiegetic narrator  
(overt/personalized ↔ covert/withdrawn)
- combination of
  - external focalization (narrator-focalizer)
  - and
  - internal focalization (character-focalizers)
- ▶ zero (= flexible) focalization
- omniscience/omnipresence
- narratorial functions:
  - 1) presentation of story world
  - 2) direct commentary
  - 3) generalizing commentary
  - 4) reflexive functions

**The Dynamics of Authorial Narration:**

- heterodiegetic narrator
- zero (= flexible!) focalization:
  - external focalization (narrator focalizer) frames
  - passages of internal focalization (character focalizers)
- story world is observed from a 'transcendental' discourse level  
→ omniscience, omnipresence
- overt/explicit/personalized ↔ covert/withdrawn narrators
  - a) overt narrators can cover the full range of narratorial functions  
(presentation, direct, generalizing or reflexive commentary)  
e.g. *Tom Jones* (1749), *Vanity Fair* (1848), *The Satanic Verses* (1988)
  - b) withdrawal of narrator reduces the possibilities for explicit commentary  
until only implicit forms (ironical tone etc.) are left  
e.g. *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *A Passage to India* (1924),  
*The Porcupine* (1992)

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