

INTRODUCTION

18th century literature

LITERARY MOVEMENT& PERIODS

Ancient Period -
Medieval Period -
Renaissance -
Enlightenment -
Romantic period -

THE RESTORATION

The Restoration refers to the restoration of the monarchy when Charles II was restored to the throne of England following an eleven-year Commonwealth period during which the country was governed by Parliament under the direction of the Puritan General Oliver Cromwell. This political event coincides with (and to some extent is responsible for) changes in the literary, scientific, and cultural life of Britain.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT(REASON)

- ◉ European politics, philosophy, science and communications were radically reoriented during the course of the “long 18th century” (1685-1815) as part of a movement referred to by its participants as the Age of Reason, or simply the Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers in Britain, in France and throughout Europe questioned traditional authority and embraced the notion that humanity could be improved through rational change.
- ◉ The Enlightenment produced numerous books, essays, inventions, scientific discoveries, laws, wars and revolutions. The American and French Revolutions were directly inspired by Enlightenment ideals and respectively marked the peak of its influence and the beginning of its decline. The Enlightenment ultimately gave way to 19th-century Romanticism.

CHARACTERISTICS

- Importance of human reason (Reason was an unchanging, uniquely human characteristic that served as a guide for man).
- Empirical philosophy (that knowledge about the world was through the senses and by applying reason to what we take in through our senses).
- observing human nature and nature which were considered unchanging and constant.
- Emphasis on the original writings produced by classical Greek and Roman literature.

THE AGE OF SATIRE

Satire: a literary work holding up human vices and follies to ridicule or scorn.

Satire was the most popular literary tool that was utilized by writers of the time.

With the help of satire, writers were better able to educate the public through literature. Its function was to acknowledge a problem in society and attempt to reform the problem in a comical manner while still educating the public.

Pioneers of the Novel

A decorative graphic consisting of a solid teal horizontal bar. Below this bar, on the left side, is a rectangular area filled with a fine, light-colored grid pattern. This grid pattern extends horizontally across the page and then turns downwards, forming a stepped, architectural-like structure that continues towards the right edge of the slide.



Daniel Defoe (1660-1731)

Daniel Defoe was born in London. He was a merchant, a manufacturer, a public official and an editor before becoming a writer at the age of fifty eight. *Robinson Crusoe*, his first book was published in 1719 followed by *Moll Flanders* in 1722. Defoe is considered to be the first true master of English novel. It was he who introduced the ‘journalistic first person narrative’ creating fiction to be a fact to the readers. He was the first writer to have introduced the technique of realism. Despite the story of *Robinson Crusoe*, the character being fictitious, the style of first person narration brought out the element of realism. Defoe is also called as the founder of the modern novel. Though the novel had no real plot but just an account of chronological sequences of events, some literary critic considered *Robinson Crusoe* to be the first modern novel.



Samuel Richardson (1689-1761)

Samuel Richardson was born in 1689 in Derbyshire in London. He worked as a printer of the Journals of the House of Commons and Law Printer to the King.

During his youthful stage he had experiences of writing love letter for three girls through which he understood the ways of femininity and utilized the same knowledge in his epistolary novel *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* published in 1740.

Richardson believed that the novelist had dual purpose of writing novels; to inform the readers and impart morality. The whole of the novel of *Pamela or Virtue Rewarded* is the exchange of personal letters between the girl Pamela and her parents.

Richardson had been credited to have created novel of character by exploring the psychological development in Pamela. In contrast to Defoe who explored the physical development of character in *Robinson Crusoe*.



Henry Fielding (1707-1754)

Henry Fielding was born at Sharpham Park near Galstonsbury in 1707 . He studied law. Fielding is considered as the father of English novel. He was influenced by picaresque tradition of writing. He is known for novels such as *Shamela* ,*Joseph Andrews* (1749) and *Tom Jones* (1742). He popularized the aspect of realism, characterization and craftsmanship of novel . Through his novel he presented a true and realistic picture of human nature.

Fielding's first novel was *Shamela* written as a parody to Richardson's *Pamela* for he considered it to be hypocritical morality. In doing so he popularized comic novel. He continued to mock at Richardson's Pamela by presenting a contrasting situation with a young man (Joseph)being pursued by a rich lady in *Joseph Andrews*. Fielding thus laid foundation for comic novels.



Laurence Sterne (1713- 1768)

Laurence Sterne was born in 1713 in Ireland. He graduated from Cambridge and became a priest.

Sterne's approach to writing novels was far different and unique compared to his contemporaries. He experimented writing novels in a different style rather than the conventional method with beginning, middle and end. Sterne employed autobiographical but non linear narrative techniques by frequently skipping and jumping ahead of time and shifting back in time creating fragmented narration. He introduced a method of progression by sensory suggestion and momentary reaction to immediate experience which influenced modern writers such as Joyce and Woolf who used stream of consciousness as narrative technique.