The rise of the novel

Bartholomew Dandridge, A Lady reading Belinda beside a fountain, 1745. Yale Center for British Art, New Haven
1. The rise of the novel

The increase of the reading public in the Augustan Age was due to:

- The growing importance of the middle class
- The individual's trust in his own abilities
- The practice of reason and self-analysis

Most readers were middle-class women. They used to borrow books from circulating libraries.
2. The novelist

• The spokesman of the middle class.

• The fathers of the English novel:
  
  • Daniel Defoe \( \rightarrow \) the realistic novel
  
  • Samuel Richardson \( \rightarrow \) the sentimental novel
  
  • Henry Fielding \( \rightarrow \) the mock-epic novel
  
  • Jonathan Swift \( \rightarrow \) the satirical novel
To be understood widely → he wrote in a simple way.

Realism → not only linked to the life presented, but to the way it was shown.

Speed and copiousness → his most important economic virtues since it was the bookseller and not the patron who rewarded him.
4. The characters

- The Hero: A bourgeois, self-made, self-reliant man
- The mouthpiece of the author
- The reader is expected to sympathise with him

- All the characters had contemporary names and surnames → *Robinson Crusoe*
- Struggled for survival or social success

"Only Connect ... New Directions"
5. The setting

- Chronological sequence of events
- References to particular times of the year or of the day

“I was born in the year 1632, in the city of York”

(Robinson Crusoe)

- Specific names of towns and streets
- Detailed descriptions of interiors to make the narrative more realistic
6. The narrative technique

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<th>3RD-PERSON NARRATOR</th>
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<td>Daniel Defoe</td>
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<td>Jonathan Swift</td>
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<td>Samuel Richardson</td>
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<td>Letters exchanged between the main characters</td>
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7. Themes

1. Real life

2. Everything that could affect social status

3. The sense of reward and punishment linked to the Puritan ethics of the middle class