The English Novel

Part I

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Tim Spurgin grew up in Mankato, Minnesota. He graduated magna cum laude from Carleton College, where he wrote his senior thesis on the role of Realism in the English and American novel. During his senior year, he was also elected to Phi Beta Kappa and chosen as the student commencement speaker. On the encouragement of his teachers at Carleton, he applied for and received a Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities. He went on to do his graduate work at the University of Virginia, earning an M.A. and a Ph.D. in English literature. Dr. Spurgin's doctoral dissertation focused on the novels of Charles Dickens. Since 1990, he has taught at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. His teaching includes courses on Romanticism and contemporary critical theory, as well as a course on the English novel. While at Lawrence, Dr. Spurgin has received two awards for teaching: the Outstanding Young Teacher Award and the Freshman Studies Teaching Prize. He has twice served as director of Lawrence's freshman program, recognized as one of the best in the nation, and has three times received the Babcock Award, voted by Lawrence students to the person who "through involvement and interaction with students has made a positive impact on the campus community." Dr. Spurgin's writing has appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Dickens Studies Annual*, and *Dickens Quarterly*. He lives in Appleton with his wife, Gretchen Revie, and their wheaten terrier, Penny.

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Scope:

The novel is the most popular literary form of the last 250 years. Novels are indeed ubiquitous. They are sold not only in bookshops but also in airports, supermarkets, and drug stores. We read them in school and on vacation, turning to them for both intellectual stimulation and emotional satisfaction.

The novel is also an especially important and influential form. To the extent, for example, that we see society as complex and interconnected or view human personality as the product of early childhood experience, we are—whether we realize it or not—registering the impact of such writers as Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, Henry James and Virginia Woolf.

This course is an introduction to the form of the novel and, in particular, to the English novel tradition. No prior knowledge of the texts or authors is assumed. The course has an unusually wide sweep, beginning in the 1740s and closing in the 1920s. As a result, we'll be able to trace the history of the form from its beginnings to what can fairly be described as its culmination in the work of the early-20th-century Modernists. The course will survey a number of important writers, but it will also give special consideration to a few who made major contributions to the development of the form.

Though our approach is largely historical and chronological, we will return to a few enduring questions: What distinguishes the novel from other kinds of writing? How has the novel form been shaped by larger social and cultural forces? And what distinguishes the English novel tradition from the French, Russian, or American traditions?

In distinguishing the novel from other forms, we might note two of its most striking features. The first is the novel's preoccupation with social values and social distinctions. A great novel often seems to describe an entire society, creating a vivid image of the relationships among whole classes of people. It's no wonder that novels are frequently described as the forerunners of modern ethnographies and social histories.

Equally important to our ongoing definition of the novel form is its interest in human psychology. Whereas plays and films are often forced to concentrate on externals—how a character moves or speaks—novels are free to probe the inner recesses of both mind and heart. By the end of a novel, we may have developed a deep sympathy and, perhaps, some kind of identification with the characters. In addition to examining human communities, then, the novel explores the nature of consciousness itself.

To define the novel in these ways is to recognize its relationship to larger social forces. The rise of the novel through the 18th and 19th centuries coincides with major historical developments—urbanization and democratization, industrialization and globalization, to name a few. These developments heighten conflicts between established elites and the growing middle class. They also raise urgent questions of personal identity, social responsibility, and moral virtue—the very sorts of questions that turn up in so many of the greatest English novels. That the novel provided compelling responses to such questions is evidenced by its enormous and enduring popularity. No form could have established itself so quickly and so powerfully without addressing the deepest needs of its audience.

The English novel tradition is not the only one to concern itself with the relationship between society and the self. Such concerns can also be seen to dominate the French, Russian, and American traditions. Yet if the English tradition shares much with its Continental and American counterparts, it also possesses a number of distinguishing features. Perhaps the most obvious aspect of the English tradition is its virtual obsession with courtship, love, and marriage. Almost all of the greatest English novels of the 18th and 19th centuries are love stories, and some of the great Modernist novels of the early 20th century are dominated by issues of love and marriage.

Another distinguishing feature of the English tradition, especially as it unfolds in the 18th and 19th centuries, is its striking preference for comedic plots. Unlike the works of Flaubert, Tolstoy, or Melville, the overwhelming majority of English novels from this period end happily. By the close of a novel by Fielding or Austen or the early Dickens, each of the characters has found his or her proper place in society. These characters not only end up where they belong but also get what they deserve. Virtue is rewarded, and vice is punished—which is to say that a larger sense of poetic justice prevails.

As the 19th century moved on, English novelists began to experiment with other sorts of endings. By the time Thomas Hardy published *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in 1891, the old conventions and forms had become increasingly untenable. For about a century, it had been possible for English writers to imagine a satisfying resolution to social

conflicts. By the time we get to Hardy, after decades of industrialization and the reorganization of English society along modern lines, that possibility had vanished.

In tracing the emergence and consolidation of various approaches to stories and storytelling, we will, of course, fashion a story of our own. The last large movement in that story will focus on the great modern novelists of the 1910s and 1920s. Like their 18th- and 19th-century predecessors, these writers were responding to larger social forces, including those associated with the horrors of the First World War. Yet even as modern novelists create disturbing images of social fragmentation, they deepen our understanding of the individual personality, fashioning character studies of unsurpassed emotional complexity.

The course ends by bringing the story up to date. The final lecture is largely devoted to living novelists, such as Salman Rushdie, Ian McEwan, and Zadie Smith. In the works of these writers, as well as those of Austen, Dickens, and Woolf, we can see why the novel remains a form of unrivalled popularity and undeniable importance.

Lecture One
Definitions and Distinctions

Scope: These first two lectures offer an overview of the entire course and a working definition of the novel itself. Our definition begins with several key points: Novels are works of fiction; they are written in prose; and they are usually at least 150 to 200 pages long. As we refine this basic definition, we will see how the novel differs from other kinds of writing. We will start by distinguishing between the novel and the amatory tales popular through the early decades of the 18th century, focusing on the amatory tale *Love in Excess*, written by Eliza Haywood, a trailblazer among British women writers. We will find that such tales rely on stock characters and formulaic plots, while most novels work to create a sense of particularity. Though the characters in a novel may remind us of people we have met in life, they are often sharply distinctive. In the end, their feelings and actions are not examples of recurring patterns but products of particular environments and circumstances. We will also compare the novel to the romance, a form of crucial importance in the 16th and 17th centuries. Whereas the characters in a romance tend to be larger-than-life figures—giants, princes, wizards—the characters in a novel are ordinary people. We will conclude that although novels now enjoy great popularity, the romance and amatory tale have not died out. Both forms are still with us, alive and well in the works of writers from J. K. Rowling to Barbara Cartland.

Outline

I. This course is an introduction to the form of the novel and, in particular, to the tradition of the English novel—subjects whose importance would be hard to overstate.

- **A.** Throughout the West, and in other parts of the world as well, the novel has been the most popular literary form of the last 250 years.
- **B.** The novel is also an especially significant form, in that it has shaped Western understandings of human society and human psychology.
- **C.** Novels are not the only sources of such ideas, but they are the most popular and probably the most influential.

II. In this lecture and the next one, we'll review some of the defining features of the novel form and the English novel tradition in particular.

- **A.** This course traces the development of the English novel from its beginnings in the 1740s to its culmination in the 1920s.
- **B.** Because the novel is the most flexible and inclusive of all major literary forms, it can be difficult to decide which writers should be treated in a course like this one.
  - **1.** There is a case to be made for the inclusion of such writers as Mary Shelley, Robert Louis Stevenson, or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.
  - **2.** Nevertheless, most critics agree that the English novel tends to focus on private and personal matters—notably, the choice of a husband or wife.
  - **3.** Thus, despite the popularity of science fiction or mystery stories, the most appropriate subject for this course is the work of such writers as Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Henry James.
- **C.** Though we will spend a good deal of time on literary matters, our approach will be multidisciplinary, taking in historical and psychological issues as well.
  - **1.** We will see that the rise of the English novel through the 18th and 19th centuries coincided with a number of major historical developments, including urbanization, industrialization, and democratization.
  - **2.** As we turn to the novelists of the 20th century, we will see that their works were also influenced by larger forces, including those created by the First World War.
  - **3.** To the extent that our novels take up questions of personal identity, social responsibility, and moral value, they bear the stamp of these historical movements.

III. With this overview in mind, we can begin to define the novel form.

A. Most textbooks tell us that a novel is a work of fiction, almost always written in prose, at least 150 to 200 pages long.

B. The textbook definition also distinguishes novels (as works written in prose) from classical epics. The *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and *Aeneid*, for example, are all very long poems.

C. Because the novel is a long form, it can cover a period of years, following the characters through a number of major changes.

D. Similarly, because the reading time of a novel may be far longer than the running time of most plays and movies, novels give us the opportunity to develop close, even intimate relationships with both the characters and the narrator.

IV. If we want to work toward a more precise definition of the term, we will need to go beyond the textbooks and distinguish the novel from earlier forms of writing. We'll also need to consider at least a few concrete examples.

V. Our first example comes from a work called *Love in Excess; or The Fatal Enquiry*.

A. This work, written by Eliza Haywood and published in three parts from 1719 to 1720, was among the most popular books of the early 18th century.

B. Haywood's life remains something of a mystery. Our best guess is that she was born around 1693.

1. We do know that she was an incredibly prolific writer.

2. In the 1740s, she produced the first English magazine by and for women, covering politics, science, literature, and fashion.

3. Haywood was one of a number of women writers active in this period. We may sometimes think of the great 19th-century women writers as pioneers, but the trail was actually blazed by such people as Haywood at least a century before.

C. *Love in Excess* offers a perfect occasion for further reflection on the meaning of the term *novel*.

1. For one thing, it meets the definition given in the textbooks: It's a work of fiction, in prose, about 230 pages long.

2. What's more, it's identified on the title page as a novel: *Love in Excess; or The Fatal Enquiry: A Novel*.

D. However, no modern critic or scholar would ever call it a novel. Why not?

1. The main reason is that we learn relatively little about Haywood's characters. After listening to a number of their speeches, we find that they all sound more or less the same. None of them has a distinctive voice or particular point of view.

2. In short, the qualities associated with the form of the novel—specificity, particularity, and concreteness, especially in the portrayal of major characters—just aren't present in *Love in Excess*.

E. To get a sense of what's missing from *Love in Excess*, and what's typically present in a good novel, we turn our attention to set of passages from *Daniel Deronda*, George Eliot's last novel, a work originally published in 1876.

1. We see from the passages that in this work, the setting is detailed and specific. This is not just any old place but a particular place—a fashionable casino.

2. Similarly, the characters are not just stock figures who behave and speak in predictable ways.

3. *Daniel Deronda*, then, is a novel—a form that usually means to show us a particular place at a particular time, maybe even a particular moment in history

F. To be sure, the comparison of our two examples is more than a little unfair.

1. George Eliot is one of the most important novelists in the entire tradition, and *Daniel Deronda* has one of the best openings of all time.

2. In spite of that, the comparison is instructive. Most authors and critics agree that a novel should look more like *Daniel Deronda* than like *Love in Excess*.

G. But how, then, would critics classify *Love in Excess*? And how would they explain the evolution of the novel form in the period between Haywood and Eliot?

1. For an increasing number of current scholars, works like *Love in Excess* are best identified as *amatory tales* or *amatory fictions*.

2. The term *amatory tale* (which Haywood never would have heard or used) helps to distinguish works like *Love in Excess* from works written 20 to 50 years later, such as *Pamela* by Samuel Richardson or *Evelina* by Frances Burney.
3. Despite their occasional failings, *Pamela* and *Evelina* clearly count as novels by current standards. More often than not, these works are trying to particularize and specify.
4. The term *amatory tale* is nevertheless useful because it points to the most interesting feature of Haywood's story, the theme of love and sexual passion, and makes that a defining feature.
5. With this new term in hand, scholars have also been able to show that many amatory tales were published in the period from, say, 1680 to 1740.

VI. Equally important to our understanding of the novel form are its differences from the traditional form of the *romance*.

A. The romance may date back to antiquity, though the most familiar examples are probably the medieval stories of King Arthur and his knights.

B. Romances vary widely, but they do have some common features.

1. The setting of a romance is usually remote and, perhaps, exotic, like that of a fairy tale.
2. The characters in a romance are also sketched broadly—handsome prince, beautiful princess—and may include larger-than-life figures, such as giants and wizards.
3. Finally, there's often some sort of magic in a romance. The romance is a form that has no trouble with the supernatural or the metaphysical.

VII. In addition to our definitions of *novel*, *amatory tale*, and *romance*, we might also consider a basic chronology—a small-scale history of the relationships among those three forms.

A. It's clear that the romance was stripped down and streamlined into the amatory tale, and it's also clear that the tales were then developed into the first novels.

B. Of course, it's not quite as simple as that—because the forms of the romance and amatory tale are very much alive and well.

1. The Harry Potter books draw on the long tradition of the romance, as do the works in the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy.
2. As for the amatory tale, consider British author Barbara Cartland, who is said to have produced 700 different love stories in the latter half of the 20th century.

VIII. In this lecture, we've tried to develop a feel for what might be called the *novelistic*. If we haven't emerged with a hard and fast definition of the form, we have may have gained a sense of its relationships to other kinds of writing.

Essential Reading:

Terry Eagleton, "What Is a Novel?" in *The English Novel: An Introduction*.

Ian Watt, "Realism and the Novel Form," in *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding*.

Supplementary Reading:

J. Paul Hunter, "What Was New about the Novel?" in *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction*.

John Richetti, *The English Novel in History, 1700–1780*.

Questions to Consider:

1. When you hear the term *novel*, what works or examples come to mind? How do you understand the differences between the novel and earlier forms, such as the romance or the amatory tale?
2. Why might readers prefer novels to romances or amatory tales? How important, in your reading experience, is a sense of specificity or particularity? Do you like to feel that the characters are particular people dealing with particular circumstances?

Lecture Two
The "Englishness" of the English Novel

Scope: We will begin this lecture by refining our definition of the novel. More specifically, we will identify the novel as a form with two major dimensions: one sociological, the other psychological. A great novel can seem to take in an entire society, exposing the hidden connections among entire classes of people. At the same time, novels can give us a vivid sense of how particular individuals think and feel. By the time we have finished reading a novel such as Ian McEwan's *Saturday*, we may feel that we know the main character better than we know our own friends and neighbors. Once we have defined the novel in this way, as a form preoccupied with the relationship between individuals and their larger social world, we will be ready to consider some of the most distinctive features of the English novel tradition, including its preoccupation with courtship and marriage and its traditional preference for comedic plots. As a final illustration of these differences, the lecture will compare two novels focused on the life of a writer—one French, Balzac's *Lost Illusions*, and the other English, Dickens's *David Copperfield*. Whereas the English hero eventually finds a way to combine personal fulfillment with professional success, the French protagonist is destroyed by his quest for fame and social distinction.

Outline

I. In our last lecture, we arrived at a basic definition of the novel and considered some of the ways in which it differs from other forms of writing. In this lecture, we will refine our understanding of the novel form.

- **A.** We will begin by identifying the novel as a form with two major dimensions: one sociological, the other psychological.
- **B.** We will then go on to ask ourselves what might distinguish the English novel tradition from other national traditions. Are there themes or structures that tend to recur in English novels, and if so, what are they?

II. The sociological dimension of the novel is crucially important, because novels are almost always concerned with social distinctions, social hierarchies, and social values.

- **A.** Novelists seem to be especially attentive to issues of social status, noting what matters and how one gets ahead in particular communities.
- **B.** In my view, novelists noticed these things long before they were codified by sociologists. Novelists also noticed the social phenomenon later labeled as *status incongruence*, that is, the possibility of conflict or tension among different factors in the status equation.
- **C.** This is not to say that all novelists explore such issues in exactly the same ways.
  1. Many novels, such as those by Jane Austen, are focused rather narrowly, concentrating on the members of a family or the residents of a small town.
  2. Other novels take advantage of the form's length, taking in dozens of characters and moving from the top to the bottom of the social ladder. A novel such as Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, published in monthly installments during 1847 and 1848, may seem to describe an entire society, uncovering relationships among classes of people.

III. In addition to exploring these sociological issues, the novel also delves into human psychology, providing vivid images of how individuals think and feel.

- **A.** Whereas plays and films may be forced to concentrate on externals—how a character moves or speaks—novels are free to probe the inner recesses of both head and heart.
  1. Some of the most important scenes in a novel may involve no dialogue at all. In such scenes, a character may be sitting quietly, reflecting on his or her thoughts.
  2. Because the novel can go slowly, such scenes may allow us to trace very subtle shifts in feeling or mood. A recent example, one that illustrates the continuing vitality of the novel tradition, comes from Ian McEwan's *Saturday* (2005).
  3. The central character is Henry Perowne, a middle-aged neurosurgeon. Perowne is usually on the left politically, but recently, in the course of his medical practice, he has treated an Iraqi expatriate—a professor who is still suffering the aftereffects of torture at the hands of Saddam Hussein's regime.

4. In a passage from *Saturday*, Perowne examines the question of the war from all sides.

B. This passage provides an excellent example of the novel's interest in the inner workings of the human mind. By the time we finish reading a novel like *Saturday*, we may feel that we know the characters better than we know our own friends and neighbors.

IV. The sociological and psychological dimensions of the novel form are closely related.

A. Indeed, the novel's close attention to the relationship between society and the self or the individual is one of its defining features.

B. Novelist Jane Smiley puts it well when she describes the form as being "first and foremost about how individuals fit, or don't fit, into their social worlds."

V. Having defined the novel in this way, as a form preoccupied with the relationship between self and society, we can appreciate the most distinctive features of the English novel tradition.

A. Perhaps the most obvious aspect of the English tradition is its virtual obsession with courtship, love, and marriage.

1. Almost all of the greatest English novels of the 18th and 19th centuries can be described as love stories.
2. Love and marriage also loom large in the novels of the 20th century, dominating such Modernist classics as *Sons and Lovers* (1913), *Ulysses* (1922), and *To the Lighthouse* (1927).
3. This is really quite unusual. Major works in other traditions (*The Brothers Karamazov*, *Moby-Dick*) are not best described as love stories.

B. Even more important to the English tradition, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries, is its striking preference for comedic plots.

1. Comedic endings are indeed happy endings. But there's more to such endings than meets the eye.
2. In comedic endings, as characters are fit into the larger social order, a sense of harmony and reconciliation is achieved.
3. Because virtue is rewarded and vice is punished, a sense of poetic justice also prevails.
4. Thus, comedic endings offer us a vision of the world as well-ordered and generally sympathetic to human needs and desires.

C. Taken together, the dominance of the courtship plot and the comedic ending account for much of what we might call the "Englishness" of the English novel tradition.

VI. To flesh out our sense of these matters, we compare two novels based on the life of a writer—one French, Balzac's *Lost Illusions* (1837–1843), and the other English, Dickens's *David Copperfield* (1849–1850).

A. Although these novels are roughly contemporary, and although they share an interest in the literary life, Balzac's depiction of the literary world is much more detailed, and much more unsettling, than Dickens's.

1. By the end of Balzac's story, the central character has been destroyed by his pursuit of fame and fortune.
2. Balzac's point is not that the character should have held fast to his original ideals but, rather, that idealism is dangerous. It sets you up for a fall.
3. Dickens's hero, by contrast, emerges triumphant. He refuses to negotiate with publishers and pays no attention to reviewers. He's devoted exclusively to his art.
4. At the end of the novel, he returns home, not to be lionized, but to marry his childhood sweetheart.

B. The difference in these endings suggests the larger differences between these two literary traditions.

1. In the French novel, society overwhelms and undermines the individual.
2. In the English novel, society provides for the hero. The world of *David Copperfield*, though not without its difficulties, is finally a hospitable and satisfying one.

VII. Let us now look ahead to upcoming lectures. The lectures in our first part will cover a period of about 130 years, ending with the death of Dickens in 1870.

A. We'll start by considering the origins or rise of the novel in the middle of the 18th century, when our focus will be on two strikingly different figures: Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding.

B. In subsequent lectures, we'll consider the emergence of several different kinds of novels, including the gothic novel of Ann Radcliffe, Sir Walter Scott's historical novel, and the multiplot novels of Thackeray, Eliot, and Dickens.

C. By the time we get to 1870, we'll begin to see some testing of limits, as such writers as Thackeray, Dickens, and Emily Brontë work to complicate the conventional comedic ending.

Essential Reading:

Honoré de Balzac, *Lost Illusions* (translation by Kathleen Raine).

Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*.

Supplementary Reading:

David Lodge, *Consciousness and the Novel*, chapter 1.

Ian McEwan, *Saturday*.

Questions to Consider:

1. England has often been described as a nation preoccupied with issues of rank, social standing, and class. Based on your knowledge and experience, do you think that description is accurate? Do you think that other nations (including the United States) share the English preoccupation with class and status?
2. Why might English writers and readers have been drawn to comedic endings? What social values are reinforced or encouraged by such endings?

Lecture Three
Historical Context of Early English Fiction

Scope: In the last two lectures, we have sought to define the novel form and to distinguish it from other kinds of writing. In this lecture, we will place the earliest English novels into a wider historical context. We begin by observing that the English novel emerged in the middle of the 18th century during a period of convulsive social change. Throughout this period, England developed the world's first capitalist economy and began to grapple with issues of urbanization, industrialization, and globalization. These developments had an enormous impact on the English imagination, raising questions of personal identity, social responsibility, and moral virtue. The presence of such questions is felt in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, a work often described as the first English novel. In this work, Richardson creates an explosive image of class conflict, pitting a young servant girl against her domineering and sometimes abusive master. The fact that the novel culminates in the marriage of these characters shows that Richardson hopes not merely to reflect social change but also to influence it. In the end, he wants to convince his middle-class readers that assimilation and social reconciliation are not only possible but also desirable.

Outline

I. The English novel emerged in the middle of the 18th century and took shape during a period of convulsive social change.

- **A.** In this period, England developed the world's first capitalist economy.
- **B.** In this period, England also began to grapple with issues of urbanization, industrialization, and globalization.

II. To understand such changes—and assess their impact on our novels—we must first review the emergence of new economic structures and social values.

- **A.** In the country, the rural economy was becoming more centralized.
  - **1.** Common lands were being enclosed or appropriated by the wealthiest families, and as a result, subsistence farming and self-sufficient living were no longer options for rural people.
  - **2.** These details are important, because one characteristic of a capitalist economy, according to some economic historians, is that it offers most people little choice but to work for wages.
- **B.** In the city, partly because of these developments, populations were rising dramatically.
  - **1.** By 1750, the population of London had reached 750,000—making it the largest city in the West, perhaps twice as large as Paris.
  - **2.** In the 1780s and 1790s, as textile producers opened larger factories, the population of industrial cities, such as Manchester, began to explode.
- **C.** Through all of this, England also experienced an early form of what we now call globalization.
  - **1.** The growth of England's first modern industry, textiles, depended on international trade.
  - **2.** Cotton had to be imported from the West Indies and other parts of the world. It was processed in England, then shipped back out again in the form of cloth and other goods.

III. Taken together, these developments had an enormous impact on the English national imagination.

- **A.** The English had always liked to imagine their society as one dominated by communal values.
  - **1.** Especially important to this image was a sense of communal solidarity and mutual obligation.
  - **2.** English society was hierarchical, with clear divisions between rich and poor, but those at the top were able and willing to accept responsibility for the welfare of those at or near the bottom.
- **B.** With the emergence of a new social order, this traditional image would prove difficult to maintain.
  - **1.** Rural landlords were often accused of placing their own interests ahead of those of their tenants, not least because of the highly controversial enclosure of common lands.
  - **2.** The situation in London and other cities was even more chaotic. Newcomers to the city might arrive with no idea of where they would be living or working.

IV. These sweeping changes raised questions of personal identity, social responsibility, and moral values.

A. In a society where economic self-interest is an increasingly important motivation for personal behavior, what kind of behavior is considered worthy and admirable?

B. At a time of increasing class conflict, what happens to traditional images of social cohesion and shared responsibility?

C. Finally, as traditional moral authorities appear less reliable, how can one develop a sense of right and wrong? Which values should be upheld, and why?

V. These questions reverberate throughout the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, shaping all the novels in our course. Their presence can certainly be felt in Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740), a work often described as the first English novel.

A. To see why *Pamela* has earned that distinction, we might contrast Richardson's work with Eliza Haywood's *Love in Excess*, the amatory tale we considered in an earlier lecture.

1. Although the two works share many of the same themes and situations, Haywood's characters are types, while Richardson's people are distinctive and complex—not least because their feelings are so often in conflict.

2. Our relationships to the characters are also very different. In Haywood, we wonder what the characters will do, while in Richardson, we also share in their feelings and participate in their development.

B. In *Pamela*, Richardson pits an innocent servant girl against her domineering and sometimes abusive master.

1. At the beginning of the story, Pamela is 15 years old. She has worked for several years in the service of a wealthy woman, and her talents and intelligence have not gone unnoticed.

2. Her lady has just died, however, and there is some question about what will happen next. Because her parents are in financial trouble, the idea of returning to live with them is unappealing to her.

3. Complicating Pamela's situation is the presence of her lady's son, "Mr. B," who soon makes it clear that he would like her to become his mistress.

4. Though Pamela is attracted to Mr. B, she refuses to give in to him. Even after she is offered a handsome financial settlement, she insists on maintaining her virtue.

C. As he fleshes out this basic situation, Richardson creates an explosive image of class conflict.

1. Though a servant, Pamela represents the middle class, drawn to a master she no longer really trusts. At times, she appears morally admirable—at other times, merely self-righteous.

2. Mr. B stands in for the ruling classes. Grasping and possessive, impatient and explosive, he may nevertheless prove capable of reform.

3. This conflict proved irresistible to Richardson's audience, igniting debates throughout the country.

4. Our interest in the debate is sharpened by the form of the work, because *Pamela* is an epistolary novel, told through the heroine's letters and diaries.

D. The ending of the novel suggests that Richardson was hoping not merely to reflect social change but also to influence it.

1. The ending is comedic: Pamela and Mr. B eventually do get married, and she becomes the lady of the house in which she once worked as a servant.

2. As Pamela demonstrates her worth and value to Mr. B, we begin to see that social assimilation and reconciliation are not only possible but desirable for all parties.

3. Pamela benefits from the marriage in obvious ways, but Mr. B benefits as well, earning a chance to fulfill his social obligations. Inspired by Pamela's goodness, he may finally live up to his duty as lord and master.

4. Thus, although Richardson often protests against the abuses of the ruling class, he eventually reaffirms the traditional values of communal solidarity and mutual respect.

5. In the end, he wants to convince his middle-class audience to hope and, perhaps, even to work for the rehabilitation of those older structures. Like most of the novelists we will study, he is a reformer, not a revolutionary or a radical.

Essential Reading:

E. J. Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: The Making of English Society, 1750 to the Present Day.*

Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*.

Supplementary Reading:

Margaret Doody, *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson*, chapter 3.

Ellen Meiksins Wood, *The Origin of Capitalism*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Can you see why the emergence of capitalism might have threatened traditional English values? Why, for example, might capitalism appear to undermine a sense of communal solidarity?
2. Does the plot of *Pamela* sound at all familiar? What modern stories might have been inspired, however indirectly, by Richardson's novel? Do recent variations on the story follow Richardson in affirming the values of assimilation and reconciliation?

Lecture Four
The Rise of the Novel—Richardson and Fielding

Scope: To appreciate the historical forces at work in the earliest English novels, we might consider the striking contrasts between two early masters of the form, Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding. If Richardson represents the rising middle class—anxious, ambitious, and self-righteous—then Fielding appears almost aristocratic, confident, and secure in his own social position. In *Pamela*, we experience an intimate connection to Richardson's central character, largely because the story is told through her letters and diaries. In *Tom Jones*, by contrast, we view the characters from a distance, eventually discovering that our most important relationship is to the novel's learned and worldly narrator. Though both works end in reconciliation and marriage, they do not endorse the same social values. Whereas Richardson rewards his heroine with promotion into the gentry, Fielding can be said to close ranks, revealing that his wayward hero has been a gentleman all along. To say that class conflict is a central issue in early English fiction, then, is not to suggest that all of our writers offer a unified response to it.

Outline

I. In thinking about the relationship between history and literature, especially in the 18th century, we must attend to several complications.

- **A.** We must not only acknowledge the complexity of the historical situation but also consider the wide variety of responses it inspired.
- **B.** That sort of variety is certainly evident in the striking contrasts between Samuel Richardson (1689–1761) and Henry Fielding (1707–1754), two of the first great masters of the novel form.

II. Comparisons between Richardson and Fielding are inevitable given that both of them produced their major works in the 1740s.

- **A.** Richardson is the author not only of *Pamela* (1740) but also of *Clarissa* (1747–1749), an even more ambitious and controversial work.
  - **1.** *Clarissa* may be the longest novel in the English language: A recent paperback edition is 1,500 pages long.
  - **2.** Unlike *Pamela*, *Clarissa* does not have a happy ending. The story turns on an act of rape and ends with the death of the heroine. This fact makes it one of a handful of early English novels ending in tragedy.
- **B.** Fielding is the author of two great novels: *Joseph Andrews* (1742), an unauthorized sequel to *Pamela*, and *Tom Jones* (1749), universally regarded as his masterpiece.
  - **1.** Fielding's novel begins with the discovery of an infant boy—later named Tom Jones—in the bed of a country gentleman.
  - **2.** The aim of the story is twofold: first, to discover the truth about Tom's origins and, second, to trace his moral development.
  - **3.** Although Tom is good-natured, he lacks prudence. As he journeys through the English countryside and into London, he succumbs to many temptations.
  - **4.** By the end, Tom has realized his mistakes and won the heart of the beautiful and virtuous Sophia Western. He has also been identified as the nephew of the gentleman in whose bed he was first discovered.

III. Richardson and Fielding are in many ways polar opposites.

- **A.** Richardson is the perfect representative of the rising middle class.
  - **1.** The son of a cabinetmaker, he had little formal education and was apprenticed to a printer at the age of 17.
  - **2.** By his early 30s, he was running his own successful printing business and, by his late 40s, publishing his own writings and assembling his own literary salon.
  - **3.** Richardson was nothing if not upwardly mobile, and when *Pamela* became a commercial success, he also became the target of considerable abuse.

4. According to his critics, chief among them Fielding, Richardson was graceless, priggish, and ultimately hypocritical: His heroine may insist on preserving her virtue, but her real aim is wealth and advancement.

B. In striking contrast with Richardson, Fielding appears almost aristocratic, confident of his literary abilities and social skills.
1. Fielding certainly had reason to be confident. His family connections were good, and he enjoyed the benefit of a splendid classical education at Eton.
2. His writings are filled with classical allusions and are designed to give the impression that he was a gentleman.
3. Certainly by comparison with Richardson, whose work he often parodied, Fielding seems at ease with himself, comfortable with people from almost every walk of life.

IV. As we might expect, the works of these writers are also strikingly different.

A. Whereas Richardson is invariably serious and solemn, Fielding is witty, ironic, and occasionally bawdy.
1. Richardson occasionally pokes fun at Pamela, but he usually treats her predicament seriously, suggesting that her life depends on the preservation of her virtue.
2. Although Fielding does not approve of Tom's indiscretions, which include drinking and brawling, he refuses to judge his hero too harshly, making it clear that Tom never means to hurt other people.

B. The two authors also relate to their readers in different ways.
1. In *Pamela*, we experience an intimate connection to Richardson's central character, largely because the story is told through her letters and diaries.
2. In *Tom Jones*, we view the characters from a distance, eventually discovering that our most important relationship is to the novel's worldly and learned narrator.

C. Finally, although both stories end in marriage, the authors do not endorse the same social values.
1. In Richardson, with the promotion of Pamela into the gentry, the emphasis is on social mobility and the eventual reconciliation of class conflicts.
2. In Fielding, the stress falls differently. As *Tom Jones* comes to a close, its wayward hero is revealed to have been a gentleman all along.
3. Whereas Richardson marries a rich man to a poor girl, creating an image of a new social harmony, Fielding marries a rich man to a rich girl, reinforcing existing class divisions.

D. The differences between these endings do not stop there, for each author seems to understand his ending in a different way.
1. Richardson seems torn between providing a strong sense of closure and acknowledging the difficulty of the social issues he is attempting to surmount.
2. The marriage of Pamela and Mr. B is followed by a number of scenes in which Pamela's new position is threatened, not only by her husband, but also by his family and friends.
3. The novel itself is followed by a sequel, known as *Pamela in Her Exalted Condition*, in which Mr. B hovers on the brink of an affair with a beautiful countess.
4. Thus, although Richardson is eager to present his readers with a perfect comedic ending, he also fears that such an ending would be unrealistic.
5. For his part, Fielding exhibits no such conflicts, assuring us that his hero and heroine "preserve the purest and tenderest affection for each other" and explaining that "such [was] their beneficence to those below them, that there is not a neighbor, a tenant, or a servant, who doth not most gratefully bless the day when Mr. Jones was married to his Sophia."

V. Thus, to say that class conflict is a central issue in early English fiction is not to suggest that our writers offered a unified response to it.

A. Richardson's response is uncertain and conflicted, which might be a reflection of his own difficult social position: He is not sure where he fits.

B. By contrast, Fielding is unambiguously conservative—and quite comfortable with the idea of a stratified society.

Essential Reading:

Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*.

Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*.

Supplementary Reading:

Terry Eagleton, "Samuel Richardson and Henry Fielding," in *The English Novel: An Introduction*.

Irvin Ehrenpreis, *Fielding: Tom Jones*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the legacies of Richardson and Fielding? What forms and techniques have they passed on to later writers?
2. When you hear someone talking about "middle-class values," what exactly comes to mind? What values or attitudes—good and bad—tend to be associated with the middle class? What about the upper classes? How do the two groups tend to view each other?

Lecture Five
After 1750—Sterne, Burney, and Radcliffe

Scope: By 1750, it was clear that a new literary form had begun to take shape in England. Although critics did not agree on what to call the new form, they believed that it was distinguished by its use of realistic situations and settings. The form was especially popular with young women, and its effects on inexperienced readers were often cause for worry. After reviewing early responses to the novel form, we will turn our attention to three writers from the second half of the 18th century: Laurence Sterne, Frances Burney, and Ann Radcliffe. Each of these writers takes a different approach to novel writing and suggests new possibilities for the form. In *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne exposes the limitations of novelistic Realism, suggesting that the illusion of reality is created through omission and distortion. In *Evelina*, Burney portrays the experiences of an innocent young woman, reflecting the fears and fantasies of her middle-class readers. And in such Gothic novels as *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe explores extreme states of emotional conflict. Having considered the very different achievements and legacies of these three writers, we can identify the period from 1750 to 1800 or 1810 as one dominated by experimentation.

Outline

I. By 1750, such critics as Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) agreed that a new literary form was emerging.

- **A.** These critics did not agree on what to call the new form, but they did believe that it could be distinguished from earlier kinds of fiction by its commitment to Realism.
- **B.** The new form was said to be especially popular with young women; the potential that it might prove harmful to such readers was often cause for worry.

II. These ideas provide a backdrop for the work of Laurence Sterne (1713–1768), Frances Burney (1752–1840), and Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823).

- **A.** In considering these writers, we will have a chance to bridge the gap between early novelists, such as Richardson and Fielding, and later ones, such as Scott and Austen.
- **B.** We will also begin to see the period from 1750 to 1800 as one dominated by different kinds of experimentation. Sterne, Burney, and Radcliffe are all strikingly different, with each suggesting new possibilities for the development of the novel form.

III. In *Tristram Shandy* (1759–1767), Sterne considers the limitations of novelistic Realism.

- **A.** The novel is a fictional memoir, and Tristram's stated intention is to "do exact justice" to his own life and opinions.
  - **1.** Almost from the start, Tristram finds this task to be impossible, because he can't help getting sidetracked or falling into digressions.
  - **2.** Without these digressions, Sterne suggests, Tristram's story would be incomplete; with them, it often appears chaotic.
  - **3.** Thus, Sterne reveals both the costs and the benefits of conventional forms of narration, suggesting that the effect of Realism is created largely through omissions and distortions.
- **B.** Yet if Sterne questions the idea of Realism, he also creates a vivid image of life's complexity and absurdity. In its own very strange way, *Tristram Shandy* may be even more realistic than the work of either Richardson or Fielding.
- **C.** Sterne's unusual approach to storytelling not only had an enormous impact on his contemporaries but also influenced the work of later writers from Italo Calvino to Kurt Vonnegut and David Foster Wallace.

IV. In *Evelina* (1778), Frances Burney tells the story of a young woman who is leaving home and moving into society for the first time.

- **A.** In many ways, the novel offers reassurance to its female readers.
  - **1.** Although Evelina is often plagued by unwelcome advances and surrounded by unworthy suitors, her story ends happily, with her marriage to a nobleman.

2. At the end of the novel, as a kind of prelude to the marriage, Evelina is also reunited with her estranged father—who is also a nobleman.

B. The novel also addresses other social issues, reflecting the fears and fantasies of its middle-class audience.
1. Evelina makes two visits to London, where she is repeatedly embarrassed by her ill-mannered relatives.
2. At these moments, we are made to feel that Evelina is being dragged down by friends and family; she seems to belong with finer people, including her future husband.
3. Thus, even as Burney acknowledges her readers' fears of embarrassment, she also indulges their desire for social recognition and advancement.

C. Burney's novels were very popular, winning the admiration of Jane Austen in particular. Eighteen editions of *Evelina* were published in Burney's lifetime.

V. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Ann Radcliffe dramatizes the experience of psychological conflict and trauma.

A. Like many authors of Gothic fiction, Radcliffe places her characters and readers in unsettling situations—appearing to depart from the conventions of novelistic Realism.
1. Instead of placing her story in an English town or village, she takes us to France and Italy, countries that many of her readers still associated with medieval superstition.
2. Similarly, instead of focusing on contemporary life, Radcliffe and her characters seem to be preoccupied with the secrets of the past.

B. As Radcliffe moves out of England and into the past, she takes us into something like a dream world, exposing her heroine to extreme forms of emotional and psychological distress.

C. Over the course of the story, as secrets are uncovered and mysteries resolved, the past loses its hold on the present—and something like sanity and order is restored.
1. Each of the work's most mysterious and troubling events is shown to have a reasonable explanation.
2. The heroine is eventually freed to marry her sweetheart, a Venetian nobleman, and to take her rightful place in society.
3. In the end, then, Radcliffe affirms the importance of Realism and effectively embraces the form of the novel.

D. Like Sterne and Burney, Radcliffe has had an enormous influence on later writers.
1. Her most obvious influence is on the tradition of Gothic fiction, which includes writers from Mary Shelley to the Brontës to Stephen King.
2. In her concern with the relationship between past and present, and her negotiation of the boundaries between the romance and the novel, Radcliffe also helped to inspire the historical fiction of Sir Walter Scott.

VI. The legacies of these three writers, though obviously very different, all attest to the vitality of the novel form in the decades following 1750.

A. In these decades, basic assumptions about the novel—and its differences from other forms—were indeed beginning to take shape.

B. At the same time, the novel form itself remained unstable; instead of a single dominant approach to storytelling, the period gave rise to a number of competing possibilities.

Essential Reading:

Frances Burney, *Evelina*.

Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*.

Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.

Supplementary Reading:

Jerrold E. Hogle, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, introduction.

Kristina Straub, "Frances Burney and the Rise of the Woman Novelist," in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do recent debates over rap music or video games resemble early discussions of the novel? If so, should we be surprised?
2. How often do recent horror films or stories follow Radcliffe in providing a logical explanation for apparently irrational events?

Lecture Six
Scott and the Historical Novel

Scope: Sir Walter Scott cannot be credited with inventing the historical novel, but he certainly deserves to be viewed as its greatest practitioner. Over the course of his prolific career, Scott also elevated the status of the novel form in England, where it had often been regarded as disreputable and dangerous. For those achievements alone, he would be important to our course. We have other reasons to examine Scott closely, however, and they will be the main focus of this lecture. Writing in the 1810s and 1820s, at the height of the Industrial Revolution, Scott uses such novels as *Waverley* to press a number of urgent questions: How do societies grow and change over the course of time? What happens when traditional ways of life must give way to larger historical forces? What are our obligations to the past, and what about our duties to the present and the future? Scott's responses to these questions are complex and, at times, uncertain; although he always sides with the forces of modernization, he also acknowledges the intense appeal and enduring value of longstanding traditions.

Outline

I. Sir Walter Scott was born in Edinburgh in 1771 and died at Abbotsford, his country home near the River Tweed, in 1832.

- **A.** Through his father and grandfather, Scott was connected to an intellectual movement now known as the Scottish Enlightenment.
- **B.** Scott began his own literary career as a collector of traditional Scottish ballads and an editor; he later became a successful poet in his own right.
- **C.** He seems to have begun experimenting with fiction as early as 1805. After numerous fits and starts, his first novel, *Waverley*, was published in 1814.
- **D.** *Waverley* sent Scott down an entirely new path. Between its publication and his death in 1832, he published more than 20 works of fiction, including *Old Mortality* (1816), *Rob Roy* (1817), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), and *Ivanhoe* (1819).
- **E.** He was made a baronet in 1820—hence the "Sir"—and he died after suffering a series of strokes, at the age of 61.

II. Scott did not invent the form of the historical novel, as he was quick to admit, but he can be viewed as its greatest practitioner.

- **A.** Starting with *Waverley*, Scott uses his fiction to preserve the manners and customs of vanishing societies.
- **B.** He pays careful attention to dialects, costumes, and other details, supplementing his stories with historical notes on a variety of topics.
- **C.** The result is a highly realistic re-creation of the past, one that engages the reader both intellectually and emotionally.

III. Because of his evident seriousness of purpose, Scott helped to elevate the status of the novel in England.

- **A.** Despite the achievements of earlier novelists, the novel form was still regarded as disreputable and dangerous.
- **B.** By focusing on the adventures of young men, and by placing his heroes in the midst of momentous political events, Scott suggested that the novel form might have enormous appeal for male readers.
- **C.** Through the early decades of the 19th century, though other sorts of fiction would also become popular, the historical novel remained the most prestigious.
  1. As the Victorian Age unfolded, almost every major English novelist would try his or her hand at the historical novel.
  2. Scott's influence was felt across the world, inspiring the historical fiction of James Fenimore Cooper in the United States, Victor Hugo in France, and Leo Tolstoy in Russia.

IV. In considering Scott's contributions to the development of the English tradition, we must recognize the power of his writing and the depth of his historical reflections.

A. Scott is drawn to societies in transition, focusing most often on conflicts between traditional ways of life and new social orders.

B. Through his depictions of past conflicts, Scott raises many of the most pressing questions of his day.

1. How do societies grow and change?

2. Is change always positive? What is lost and what is gained as a result of such changes?

3. What are our obligations to the past, and what are our duties to the future?

C. These questions had special significance for readers living through the convulsions of the Industrial Revolution.

1. For these readers, the costs and benefits of industrialization and modernization remained unclear.

2. Such readers would find in Scott both a way of honoring the past and a means of reconciling themselves to the future.

V. A perfect example of Scott's complex approach to history can be found in *Waverley*, a novel centered on the Jacobite uprising of 1745.

A. The "Forty-Five" was a turning point in the history of both England and Scotland.

1. At issue was the claim of the exiled Stuart family to the throne of England. The Stuarts had ruled Scotland from the 1370s and England from the ascension of James I in 1603.

2. Their rule ended in 1649, but they were restored to the throne in 1660. They remained highly controversial, and by 1688, they had been pushed out again.

3. The deposed monarch, James II, eventually fled to France, and it was the claims of his line that the Jacobites were agitating for in 1745.

4. Although the Jacobites enjoyed early success under the leadership of Charles Edward Stuart, grandson and heir to James II, they were defeated at Culloden, crushing the hopes of a Stuart restoration.

B. The defeat of the Jacobites in the "Forty-Five" signaled the beginning of the more complete integration of Scotland and England into the new political entity of Great Britain.

VI. In thinking about the consequences of the "Forty-Five," readers are guided by the experiences of Scott's impressionable hero, Edward Waverley.

A. Though an officer in the English army, Waverley is attracted to both the land and people of Scotland. We share his fascination with them, not least because of the Highlanders' devotion to traditional ways of life and their close connection to nature.

B. We understand why Waverley is drawn into battle on the Jacobite side, especially when we consider his encounter with Charles Edward Stuart, who appears as a character in the novel.

C. Yet even at this early stage, we can sense that something is not quite right.

1. As the story goes on, the Highlanders begin to seem more and more like zealots. And those who aren't zealous seem to be mere opportunists—which may be even worse.

2. Waverley eventually realizes his mistakes and regrets his hasty alliance with the Jacobites, whom he comes to see as dangerous and dishonest.

3. Things end happily for Waverley: After being pardoned for his flirtation with treason, he inherits a fortune, marries a Scottish woman, and settles down with her in the Lowland village of Tully-Veolan.

D. Thus, Scott provides us with a classic comedic ending. Virtue is rewarded and vice punished. Sympathetic characters achieve personal fulfillment. And more importantly, an entire society is reintegrated and restabilized—restored to something more like sanity.

VII. Waverley's later realizations about the Highlanders do not cancel out their initial appeal, and our most powerful memories of the book may be of the chapters in which Waverley enters into the romantic world of the Highlanders.

A. In short, we can describe Scott's view of historical change as many-sided.

1. In the defeat of the Stuarts and the Highlanders at Culloden, Scott explains, much was gained—including the spread of peace, tolerance, and a commitment to the use of reason.

2. Although the gains outweigh the losses, Scott refuses to pretend that the losses are insignificant. He acknowledges that the life of a modern man such as Waverley will never be as exciting or as intense as that of a Highland chieftain.

B. Thus, Scott's fiction satisfies our need for a pragmatic acceptance of the present and future without denying our keen interest in the glories of the past. It is for this reason, as much as any other, that he exerted such a powerful influence on the readers of his day.

Essential Reading:

Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*.

Harry E. Shaw, *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors*.

Supplementary Reading:

Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background, 1760–1830*, chapter 4.

Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800–1900*, chapter 1.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the current status of historical fiction? Do historical novels continue to be regarded as especially prestigious, and if not, why not?
2. What questions do we tend to ask about the past and its relation to the present and future? What sorts of answers do we find most reassuring, and why?

Lecture Seven
Austen and the Comedic Tradition

Scope: This lecture is the first of two on Jane Austen, the most beloved of all English novelists. In this lecture, we will focus on the sociological dimensions of Austen's work, noting her responses to larger historical forces and commenting on her use of comedic endings. Although Austen's work is often described as timeless, it is actually rooted in a specific time and place. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen comments on the phenomenon of social mobility. In addition, Austen wonders how traditional elites can be protected from their own worst impulses, and in arranging her comedic endings, she uses marriage as a metaphor for political and social regeneration. The happy couple at the end of *Pride and Prejudice* serves as an example of how wealth and privilege can be combined with a sense of duty and humility. Although earlier writers had tried to create similar effects, none of them had managed the task as skillfully as Austen. As a result, her novels would become classic expressions of the emerging comedic tradition in English fiction.

Outline

I. This lecture is the first of two on Jane Austen (1775–1817), the most beloved of all English novelists.
- **A.** In this lecture, we will focus on the sociological dimensions of Austen's work, noting her responses to larger historical forces and concluding with some ideas about her use of comedic endings.
- **B.** In the next lecture, we will turn our attention to the psychological dimensions of Austen's fiction, exploring her treatment of what later writers would call the "inner life."

II. Austen was born in Hampshire, the daughter of a clergyman and the sixth of seven children.
- **A.** She began her first serious writing projects when still in her 20s, producing early versions of what would later become *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Northanger Abbey*. She returned to these works in her 30s, revising them for publication.
- **B.** She never married and probably never had a really serious romance—a painful irony, given her perceptive treatment of courtship and marriage.

III. At first, it may seem surprising to suggest that Austen is responding to historical forces, because her work is often described as timeless.
- **A.** That description is not entirely inaccurate, given that Austen seldom mentions major historical events or contemporary controversies.
- **B.** Compared with Scott, who lived and wrote at the same time, her settings and situations may seem trivial.
- **C.** We will see, however, that as Austen works through her stories, she confronts many of the most pressing social issues of her day.

IV. In *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Austen is preoccupied with the phenomenon of social mobility.
- **A.** The family of Elizabeth, or Lizzy, Bennet, Austen's heroine, is a good case in point.
  - **1.** Lizzy's father is a gentleman. He lives on the family estate, which provides him with an annual income of £2,000.
  - **2.** Lizzy's mother is from a slightly lower class. Her "people" are professionals and merchants—respectable and decent but not quite on Mr. Bennet's level.
  - **3.** When we look at Lizzy's parents, we can see subtle examples of social mobility: He has married down, while she has married up.
- **B.** There's more to the story than that, for although Mr. Bennet is indeed a gentleman, his position is in no way secure.
  - **1.** The family estate can be passed on only to male heirs—and the Bennets have had only daughters, five of them.
  - **2.** The business of the novel, as Mrs. Bennet realizes, is to get at least a few of those daughters married off to reasonably wealthy men.

C. Thus, although the novel presents us with some conspicuous examples of upward mobility—one local merchant has recently been knighted, for instance—looming in the background is the awful possibility of downward mobility.

V. Austen also responds to a number of other developments.

A. She seems to feel that the ruling and elite classes are in some danger of losing their moral authority.

1. In *Pride and Prejudice*, the major representative of the country's ruling class is Mr. Darcy, the novel's eventual hero.

2. Darcy does not make a good first impression. He is fabulously rich—one of the wealthiest men in the country, as a matter of fact—but also cold and distant.

3. In the middle of the book, Darcy proposes to Lizzy—but because his proposal is not a flattering one, she wastes no time in rejecting him.

4. Later, when Lizzy visits Darcy's estate and meets his servants, she learns that he is a generous master and landlord. His housekeeper tells an astonished Lizzy, "I have never had a cross word from him in my life, and I have known him ever since he was four years old."

5. Eventually, Lizzy and Darcy do get together, but his cold exterior is a serious problem, especially in a period when the authority of the ruling classes is being challenged.

B. Through the story of Darcy and Lizzy, *Pride and Prejudice* dramatizes the question of how to shore up the authority of the ruling class.

1. If England is to remain in the hands of people like Mr. Darcy, Austen seems to reason, then those people must not only accept their responsibilities to others but be seen and known to accept them as well.

2. What Austen wants, in the end, is a society that honors the traditional political values and mythologies of English history—that is, the mythology of connectedness, shared responsibility, and mutual respect.

3. Through the union of Darcy and Lizzy, Austen creates an image of political and social regeneration, suggesting that the couple is destined to provide leadership for the rest of the community.

4. In addition to personal fulfillment and happiness, Darcy gains from his marriage to Lizzy a sense of humility and, perhaps, a sense of humor—valuable assets for a man in his position.

VI. Because Austen's novels end in this way, they may be the perfect embodiments of the English comedic tradition.

A. Austen concludes by placing her most sympathetic characters into secure and satisfying positions, giving them what they want as well as what they need and deserve.

B. Moreover, she creates powerful images of a society rescued from the twin threats of fragmentation and internal collapse.

C. Earlier novelists, including Richardson, Fielding, and Burney, had tried to do the same thing. But none of them had managed the task as elegantly or effectively as Austen.

1. While Richardson finds it difficult to wrap up his stories and Fielding relies on familiar plot devices, including the revelation of his hero's honorable birth, Austen concludes more naturally.

2. Her heroes and heroines appear to work things out on their own and for themselves, overcoming obstacles (some external, others internal) through dialogue and eventually reaching a position of mutual understanding.

D. In future lectures, when we think of comedic endings and the role of marriage, we should remember Austen in particular.

Essential Reading:

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*.

Marilyn Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*, introduction and chapter 9.

Supplementary Reading:

Claudia L. Johnson, *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel*, chapter 4.

Robert M. Polhemus, *Erotic Faith: Being in Love from Jane Austen to D. H. Lawrence*, chapter 2.

Questions to Consider:

1. What accounts for the enduring popularity of Austen's fiction?
2. What has changed, not only for the main characters but also for the societies they inhabit, by the end of a novel such as *Pride and Prejudice*?

Lecture Eight
Austen and the History of Consciousness

Scope: This lecture, our second on Jane Austen, will begin by acknowledging her consummate skill as a storyteller. Austen has often been praised for her use of dialogue and her handling of dramatic scenes. She is also thought to be a master of narrative construction, gifted with an impeccable sense of how to shape and structure a story. Yet her greatest achievement, and her most important contribution to the development of the novel, may be her innovative treatment of human consciousness. To see what makes Austen both special and important, we will contrast her work with that of Richardson and Fielding. As we consider passages from *Pamela*, *Tom Jones*, and Austen's *Emma*, we will see that Austen gives us a vivid sense of what her heroine is thinking and feeling. Indeed, through her inventive use of what we now call *free indirect discourse*, she paves the way for generations of later writers and provides a compelling image of consciousness itself.

Outline

I. This lecture begins with questions about the literary reputation of Jane Austen.

- **A.** Austen's first great admirers were other writers, including her most distinguished contemporary, Sir Walter Scott.
- **B.** These writers admired Austen's masterly use of dialogue and her handling of dramatic scenes, and they were right to do so.
  - **1.** The scenes in earlier novels were often longer and more shapeless than the ones in Austen.
  - **2.** Austen's skill as a dramatist is one reason why her novels have so often been adapted for the screen, because much of the dialogue for the movies can be taken directly from the books.
- **C.** Austen's admirers also viewed her as a master of narrative construction, gifted with an impeccable sense of how to shape and structure a story.
  - **1.** Among the earlier novelists, her only rival in this area was Henry Fielding.
  - **2.** Both Fielding and Austen share a delight in symmetry, balance, and order; yet in Austen, those effects are never distracting or intrusive.
  - **3.** When reading Austen, even though we always know that we are dealing with a work of art, the impression or effect of Realism is not spoiled.

II. Yet Austen's greatest achievement may lie in her innovative explorations of human psychology and human consciousness.

- **A.** In *Emma* (1815), Austen is clearly concerned with the process of psychological development.
  - **1.** The opening paragraphs of *Emma* are among the most famous in all of literature, and they provide a basis for everything that happens in later chapters of the novel. Here is the first sentence:

    > Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition, seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence; and had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her.

  - **2.** As the next chapters play out, we see that Emma's judgment is clouded by vanity and self-delusion. Her efforts at matchmaking prove disastrous and nearly spoil her own chance at happiness.
  - **3.** By the end, those clouds have parted; Emma has seen the light and learned the truth about herself and her world. She ends the novel married to Mr. Knightley, the wealthiest and most intelligent man in her neighborhood.
- **B.** At particular points in *Emma*, Austen also provides a vivid image of the mind in action.
  - **1.** Over the course of a single scene, Emma might wrestle with a number of different emotions.
  - **2.** As she gathers new impressions and takes in more information, she is often forced to reconsider her judgments—sometimes revising them, sometimes not.
  - **3.** The result is not a summary of her mental deliberations but an exciting dramatization of them.

III. Austen's achievements become more obvious when we contrast her work with that of earlier novelists.

A. As we consider these contrasts, we might remember that Austen was a devoted and passionate reader of novels.
  1. By the time she began to do her first serious writing, the novel was already a well-established form.
  2. She came from a family of voracious readers, and she was encouraged to discuss contemporary fiction with her parents and siblings.
  3. Interestingly, her reading was not limited to the classics; she devoured almost everything, including works that other readers might have regarded as somewhat disreputable.

B. From Samuel Richardson, Austen learned the importance of creating a strong bond between her characters and her readers.
  1. Because Richardson tells the story through letters and journals, he allows us to watch as Pamela struggles to make sense of her contradictory feelings for Mr. B.
  2. Although Austen was intrigued by Richardson's work and borrowed his epistolary format for her initial experiments with fiction, she seems to have wanted to avoid the emotional volatility of his characters, viewing it as a threat to her control of the story.

C. In Fielding, she found an interesting but imperfect alternative to Richardson.
  1. Fielding not only created plots of great complexity and beauty but also reconceived the role of the narrator.
  2. For these reasons, unlike Richardson, he never seemed to lose control of his stories or his characters.
  3. For the same reasons, however, he never really succeeded in creating a strong emotional connection between his characters and his readers.

D. In such novels as *Emma*, Austen builds on the achievements of Richardson and Fielding, developing a way to combine emotional immediacy with narrative control.
  1. Austen achieves this feat by having her narrator borrow the language or vocabulary of her central characters.
  2. This technique allows the narrator to remain on the scene, as a more or less reliable source of information, without crowding Emma out of the picture.

IV. Austen could not have realized it at the time, but she was setting the stage for generations of later writers.
  A. The technique she developed is now called *free indirect discourse* or *free indirect speech*.
  B. Her technique is the basis for later forms of interior monologue and stream-of-consciousness narration.
  C. For that reason, more than any other, she remains not only beloved but admired as one of the most important figures in the development of the English novel tradition.

Essential Reading:

Jane Austen, *Emma*.

Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, chapter 9.

Supplementary Reading:

David Lodge, "Composition, Distribution, Arrangement: Form and Structure in Jane Austen's Novels," in *After Bakhtin: Essays on Fiction and Criticism*.

Kathryn Sutherland, "Jane Austen and the Invention of the Serious Modern Novel," in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1740–1830.*

Questions to Consider:

1. What sorts of things might we expect novelists to notice or value in the work of their fellow writers?

2. In recent years, biographers and historians have begun to employ free indirect discourse or free indirect speech when describing the motives and actions of historical figures. Is there any danger in that? Should this technique be confined to works of fiction?

Lecture Nine
Dickens—Early Works

Scope: In this lecture, we will focus on the early works of Charles Dickens, covering the period from 1833 to 1846. Dickens's initial publications were urban sketches, and they offered early signs of his obsession with London. As he tried his hand at longer works of fiction, Dickens experimented with many styles and forms. Each of his early works took him in a new direction, and at times, he seemed unsure of what he wanted to do or where he wanted to go. By the time he finished *Martin Chuzzlewit* in the summer of 1844, he had reached a turning point in his career and was poised on the verge of his greatest achievements in fiction. After lectures on Thackeray and the Brontës, who presented him with the first serious competition of his career, we will return to Dickens, surveying those achievements and concluding the first part of our course.

Outline

I. Charles Dickens is the most important single figure in the history of English fiction, and because his achievement is so enormous, we will need to divide his career in two.

- **A.** In this lecture, we will consider his earliest works, following his progress from 1833 to 1846.
- **B.** In a later lecture, we will consider the great achievements of his later years—a period that includes *Dombey and Son* (1847–1848), *David Copperfield* (1849–1850), *Bleak House* (1852–1853), and *Great Expectations* (1860–1861).

II. Dickens's life story is at least as remarkable as the stories contained in his novels.

- **A.** He was born in 1812 and died in 1870. His origins were middle-class, but he also experienced poverty firsthand, when his father was arrested and imprisoned for debt.
- **B.** Before his father's arrest, Dickens had begun to dream of achieving some sort of distinction in life. Those dreams were shattered as he was sent off to work in a factory.
- **C.** Scholars and biographers agree that Dickens's experience of neglect and poverty was formative, serving as the basis for much of his later fiction.

III. Dickens began his career as an urban journalist, producing sketches and stories for several London publications.

- **A.** He was one of the first major writers for whom urbanization was an established fact. By the mid-1830s, when he published his first book, the population of London was already well over 1.5 million people.
- **B.** In a passage from a sketch called "Gin-Shops" (1835), we can see the beginnings of his later view of the city.
  - **1.** He begins by telling us that his aim is to "sketch the bar of a large gin-shop"—but then explains that we cannot get to our destination without passing through a "filthy and miserable" neighborhood called the "Rookery."
  - **2.** At first, we may be surprised by Dickens's juxtaposition of the "wretched" Rookery with the "splendid" interior of the gin-shop; later, we realize that the two places are closely connected, with the slums providing customers for the gin-shop—and alcoholism keeping those customers in poverty.
  - **3.** For Dickens, it's the business of the writer to expose such connections, to represent the city as a whole, instead of focusing on particular neighborhoods or classes.
- **C.** Dickens learned a great deal from writing the sketches, but he did not master the arts of extending a narrative or developing a character.

IV. In the first decade of his career, as he tried his hand at longer works of fiction, Dickens experimented with many different styles.

- **A.** Each of his early works took him in a new direction, and at times, he seemed unsure of what he wanted to do or where he wanted to go: Should he be a journalist? An editor? A playwright?
- **B.** Through much of this period, he was not usually regarded as a novelist.
  - **1.** Contemporary reviewers still associated the form of the novel with Sir Walter Scott, whose stories had always spanned three separate volumes.

2. Publication in three volumes was encouraged by the owners of circulating libraries—institutions a bit like modern video stores—and it would remain dominant for much of the 19th century.
3. Dickens's use of serial publication allowed him to operate outside this system, yet it also made his works somewhat difficult to classify. Because his early works didn't look much like novels, they were often identified as miscellanies or magazines.

V. To flesh out our understanding of this situation, let's consider Dickens's first attempt at a longer, more substantial work of fiction: *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–1837).

A. After a shaky beginning, *Pickwick* enjoyed enormous success, forging a lasting bond between Dickens and the English reading public.

B. At no point in the course of *Pickwick*'s run was Dickens expected to produce anything like a novel. *Pickwick* was always supposed to be a series of episodes, not an extended narrative.

VI. As Dickens worked on his next two books, he often seemed eager to establish himself as a novelist.

A. Though he first conceived of *Oliver Twist* (1837–1838) as a political satire, he later tried to turn the work into a novel, adding a love story and deepening the mystery surrounding Oliver's birth.

B. In *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–1839), which follows the adventures of a young man and culminates in his marriage to his sweetheart, Dickens seemed to take another step in the direction of the novel.

C. Nevertheless, these works lacked the coherent plots of such works as *Tom Jones* and *Waverley*; thus, they, too, were viewed as serials or miscellanies.

D. Dickens's early works were largely improvised. He would begin with ideas for a few characters or situations and, perhaps, with some sense of the ending, but he made up the rest on the fly.

VII. Over the next few years, Dickens would continue to experiment, producing some of the most varied and unusual works of his career.

A. In *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–1841), he drew much of his inspiration from fairy tales. The result was enormously popular but also difficult to classify; critical responses were deeply divided.

B. In *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), his fifth major work, Dickens finally came up with something unmistakably novelistic.

1. *Barnaby Rudge*, a historical novel modeled on the works of Scott, dramatized the Gordon Riots of 1780.
2. Though Dickens hoped that *Barnaby Rudge* would secure his reputation as a serious writer, it actually had a different effect, alienating both readers and critics.

C. In *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843–1844), Dickens returned to contemporary subjects, once again focusing on the life and adventures of a young hero.

1. Dickens tried to give *Chuzzlewit* the coherence lacking in his earlier work, paying greater attention to character development and centering the story on the larger theme of selfishness.
2. Though not a failure on the order of *Barnaby Rudge*, *Chuzzlewit* was not successful. Sales of the opening installments were low, and reviews were mixed.

VIII. By the time *Martin Chuzzlewit* completed its run in the summer of 1844, Dickens had reached a turning point.

A. His initial attempts at novel-writing had been unsuccessful, and as one London paper reported, it was becoming "the rage to decry [him]."

1. Dickens's disappointment was deepened by the fact that he felt and knew himself to be making progress, to be growing and developing as an artist.
2. As he worked on *Chuzzlewit*, Dickens had begun to develop his understanding of the novel form, in which a narrative could be both disciplined and expansive, coherent and freewheeling.

B. In our next two lectures, we will consider the work of writers often viewed as rivals to Dickens. After those lectures, we will return to Dickens himself, surveying his later works and assessing his most impressive achievements in the novel form.

Essential Reading:

Charles Dickens, "Gin-Shops," in *Sketches by Boz*; *Oliver Twist*; *The Pickwick Papers*.

Supplementary Reading:

Kathryn Chittick, *Dickens and the 1830s*.

Grahame Smith, *Charles Dickens: A Literary Life*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of serial publication? Why do you suppose it isn't used more often today?
2. How should we understand the relationship between popularity and artistic success? Many have assumed that a writer must choose one or the other. Is that choice really necessary? Are artists always compromised by their attempts to please the public?

Lecture Ten
Novelists of the 1840s—Thackeray

Scope: In the next two lectures, we will turn our attention to the 1840s, a decade in which several new novelists burst upon the scene. Among the most important of these figures was William Makepeace Thackeray. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* is the first great multiplot novel of the Victorian Age, and in its use of converging and diverging storylines, it lays the foundation for many later works. The book's famous subtitle, "A Novel Without a Hero," suggests its subversive tone, for instead of creating obvious moral distinctions among his central characters, Thackeray imagines a fictional world in which anyone can be the object of ridicule—or the focus of sympathy. The novel's muted ending provides further evidence of Thackeray's innovative approach to the form. Virtue is rewarded, and vice punished, but not in the ways one might expect.

Outline

I. With this lecture, we turn our attention to the 1840s, a decade that was especially important to the development of the English novel.

- **A.** In this decade, as Dickens was beginning to establish his approach to the novel form, several new novelists burst upon the scene.
- **B.** For more sophisticated readers, such writers as William Makepeace Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, and Emily Brontë seemed to offer an interesting and attractive alternative to Dickens.
- **C.** As we will see in a later lecture, these writers probably also inspired and goaded Dickens into even greater achievements.

II. The novels of the 1840s responded to a number of historical developments.

- **A.** The decade of the 1840s was a time of political upheaval. This was the period of the Chartist movement, organized around a "People's Charter" calling for universal suffrage and voting by secret ballot.
- **B.** The decade was also one of economic upheaval.
  - **1.** From the 1820s through the 1840s, railway lines were extended across the nation, and a new phase of the Industrial Revolution was beginning.
  - **2.** The English economy was also experiencing an unprecedented volatility, suffering especially severe slumps in the early years of the decade.
- **C.** Finally, the 1840s saw widespread suffering, with the Irish potato famine of 1845–1851 killing as many as a million people, and the cholera epidemic of 1848 claiming about 50,000 lives.

III. Before turning to Thackeray's fiction, let's consider the events of his life.

- **A.** Thackeray was born in 1811, and he died in 1863. He spent his first few years in Calcutta, where his father worked for the East India Company and later collected taxes.
- **B.** He left Cambridge without taking his degree, largely because of a financial crisis brought on by gambling, and he started his literary career as a journalist and editor.
- **C.** His domestic life was marked by bitter disappointment because of the complete mental breakdown of his wife, which occurred only four years into their marriage.

IV. Thackeray's breakthrough came with *Vanity Fair* (1847–1848), a novel published in monthly installments.

- **A.** Thackeray's novel is set in the period of the Napoleonic Wars, and the battle of Waterloo (1815) provides the backdrop for some of his most important scenes.
- **B.** Yet even as Thackeray creates his own version of the historical novel, he explores contemporary issues, giving special attention to the emergence of a new class of capitalist financiers.
  - **1.** This new group is represented by Amelia Sedley, the daughter of a wealthy London stockbroker. Throughout the novel, Amelia is contrasted with Becky Sharp, an orphan descended from two bohemian artists.
  - **2.** Before long, Amelia's father is forced to declare bankruptcy and auction off his possessions. The family's financial collapse nearly prevents Amelia's marriage to her childhood sweetheart, George Osborne.

3. In the meantime, Becky marries Rawdon Crawley, son to Sir Pitt Crawley, in whose home she has been serving as a governess. Neither couple has any money—and eventually both George and Rawdon find themselves in the army.
4. George dies at Waterloo, and Amelia devotes the rest of her life to her young son.

C. As the stories of these characters are intertwined, larger questions take shape.
1. Are newly rich financiers and businessmen asking for trouble? What happens—to them and their families—when their fortunes take a turn for the worse?
2. Can we find any reliable source of moral or personal value? Are all classes equally corrupt? And if so, does that corruption infect every single individual?

V. Thackeray's success was well-deserved: *Vanity Fair* was one of the most innovative novels of the age.

A. *Vanity Fair* is the first great example of the Victorian multiplot novel, pointing the way toward many later works, including some of Dickens's greatest achievements.
1. In earlier works, such as *Tom Jones* and *Waverley*, we chart the development of a single character or protagonist. In a multiplot novel, we are introduced to several clusters of characters, watching as their stories come together over hundreds of pages.
2. This multiplot structure was especially popular in the middle decades of the 19th century and seems to reflect a mid-Victorian desire for social coherence and wholeness.

B. *Vanity Fair* also seems intended for an audience of adults.
1. Earlier novels had often been designed for all ages, avoiding subjects that might embarrass or confuse younger readers.
2. *Vanity Fair*, though never improper, deals more directly with matters of sex and betrayal than Dickens's early works.
3. The novel also refuses to idealize marriage and motherhood, suggesting that a doting mother may do her children more harm than good.

C. Thackeray's novel rejects dominant assumptions about novelistic characterization and plotting.
1. The book identifies itself as "a novel without a hero," and it probably does without a villain as well.
2. In Thackeray's world, everyone can be the object of ridicule—or the focus of sympathy—including the narrator and the reader.

D. Thackeray makes his most striking departure from novelistic conventions by refusing to provide us with a conventional comedic ending.
1. Like most of the novels that came before it, *Vanity Fair* ends with a long-awaited marriage between Amelia and her childhood friend Captain Dobbin.
2. Yet unlike those novels, *Vanity Fair* does not suggest that this marriage offers a solution to the couple's problems or stands as a reward for their enduring virtues.
3. Neither, in its final images of a widowed and perhaps lonely Becky, does the novel suggest that all of its characters' vices will be punished. Poetic justice is upheld here, but not in the ways that experienced novel-readers would have come to expect.

Essential Reading:
William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*.
Kathleen Tillotson, *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties*.

Supplementary Reading:
Peter Garrett, *The Victorian Multiplot Novel: Studies in Dialogical Form*, introduction and chapter 3.
Peter Shillingsburg, *William Makepeace Thackeray: A Literary Life*.

Questions to Consider:
1. How is the society portrayed in *Vanity Fair* different from the ones portrayed by Jane Austen? What new sorts of people and situations are beginning to appear?
2. How often do we encounter books or movies or TV shows that do without a hero or a villain? How often do we encounter stories that end without rewarding virtue or punishing vice?

Lecture Eleven
Novelists of the 1840s—The Brontës

Scope: Appearing in 1847, the same year as Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* take the English novel in new directions. The Brontës' works are often passionate and angry, echoing the revolutionary sentiments of the 1840s. The Brontës also challenge the limitations of earlier love stories, endowing their fiction with the intensity of Romantic poetry and modeling their male characters on the heroes of Lord Byron. Yet if the Brontës have much in common, they are also sharply distinct. Where Charlotte is fundamentally conservative, creating secure social positions for such characters as Jane Eyre, Emily is truly daring. In *Wuthering Heights*, she confounds the usual novelistic distinctions between love and hate, birth and death, creation and destruction, creating one of the few 19th-century English novels with the scope and shape of a tragedy.

Outline

I. Appearing in 1847, the same year as Thackeray's *Vanity Fair*, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* take the English novel in new directions.
- **A.** The Brontës' works are often passionate and angry, echoing the revolutionary sentiments of the 1840s.
- **B.** Their writing also borrows heavily from the works of the Romantic poets, and their male characters strongly resemble the heroes of Lord Byron.
- **C.** Though the sisters were devoted to each other, their works are ultimately quite distinct. In this lecture, we will focus on their differences as well as their similarities.

II. The Brontës grew up in Haworth, a small town in Yorkshire.
- **A.** There were six children in the family, two of whom died in childhood after contracting tuberculosis at school.
- **B.** Four children survived to adulthood: Charlotte, the eldest (1816–1855); Branwell, the only brother (1817–1848); Emily (1818–1848); and Anne (1820–1849).
- **C.** The children lost their mother at an early age, and they became exceptionally close, reading and writing stories for one another and exploring the moors together.

III. From childhood, the Brontës dreamed of literary fame but also feared the consequences of public exposure.
- **A.** Their first publication was a collection of poems. They chose to publish under ambiguous pseudonyms—Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell—hoping to divert attention from themselves.
- **B.** In 1847, when Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* became a literary sensation, readers and reviewers were eager to know the author's true identity.
- **C.** The Brontës soon revealed their identities to their publisher, though Charlotte insisted that she be "forever known" to the public as "Currer Bell."
- **D.** Even more reclusive than Charlotte, Emily had few friends outside her immediate family. Of the sisters, she was the one most attached to the pseudonyms.
  - **1.** Emily died a year or so after publishing *Wuthering Heights*. Branwell had preceded her in death, and Anne would follow her soon—all dying within a span of just nine months.
  - **2.** Charlotte continued to write, publishing two more novels before her own death in 1855.

IV. As one might expect, Charlotte and Emily share many concerns.
- **A.** Their novels respond to the social upheavals of the day, echoing the revolutionary sentiments of the late 1840s.
  - **1.** *Jane Eyre* not only protests against the class system but also insists on the equality of men and women.
  - **2.** Heathcliff, the central figure of *Wuthering Heights*, rejects all social values. What matters to him is not wealth or status but his intense attachment to Catherine Earnshaw.
- **B.** Both Charlotte and Emily challenge the limitations of earlier love stories, endowing their fiction with the intensity of Romantic poetry.

1. Their male characters are descendents of the Byronic hero, difficult and dangerous yet powerfully attractive.
2. Jane's master and future husband, Mr. Rochester, can be violent and domineering. Because he has married for money rather than for love, he feels himself undeserving of happiness.
3. Heathcliff is even more complex. He can be cruel as well as loving, and the other characters often describe him as a monster or a ghoul.

V. Despite their many similarities, the sisters are fundamentally different from each other.

A. Although Charlotte is capable of expressing anger, she is cautious and conservative by nature.

1. At the beginning of the story, Jane Eyre is an orphan. She has no money and no home of her own—and she is keenly aware of her dependence on others.
2. As governess to the children of Mr. Rochester, Jane is in a complicated position—neither a member of the family nor really one of the servants.
3. After falling in love with Rochester, Jane discovers that he is married to another woman. Although he offers to live with her in a kind of marriage, she rejects this offer.
4. By the end of the novel, Jane and Rochester have been reunited. What's more, Jane has gained a fortune of her own—inheriting a large sum of money from her uncle.
5. Thus, Charlotte upholds the comedic conventions of the English novel: By the end of the story, her angry, outcast heroine has been promoted into the ruling class.

B. By contrast, Emily Brontë is much more daring.

1. Her vision is broader, taking in two families and two generations. The action of the novel spans a period of decades, starting in the early 1770s and ending around 1802.
2. The central action of *Wuthering Heights* is Catherine Earnshaw's decision to marry Edgar Linton instead of Heathcliff.
3. Unable to accept this decision, Heathcliff runs away. When he returns after three years, having gained a fortune of his own, he devotes his life to revenge.
4. Later, after most of his own contemporaries are gone, he continues to seek power over their children, eventually tricking Catherine's daughter into marrying his own son.
5. At the end of the novel, however, Heathcliff and Catherine seem to be reunited in death. Significantly, there is no suggestion of poetic justice in Heathcliff's death.

VI. Though both works are impressive, *Wuthering Heights* is ultimately the more distinctive of the two.

A. *Wuthering Heights* confounds the usual novelistic distinctions between love and hate, birth and death, creation and destruction.

B. Emily Brontë's major characters transcend conventional notions of good and evil, and the death of those characters is a precondition for the survival of the rest.

C. A century earlier, Richardson had produced a great tragic novel in *Clarissa*, and about a half century later, Hardy would produce tragic novels, including *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*. Between Richardson and Hardy, *Wuthering Heights* stands as one of the few Victorian novels with the shape and scope of a tragedy.

Essential Reading:

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*.

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*.

Supplementary Reading:

Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*.

Lucasta Miller, *The Brontë Myth*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why might an author decide to use a pseudonym? Does the sex of the author still factor into our judgment of a book? Are male writers still given a latitude or freedom denied to female writers?
2. Does the figure of the Byronic hero continue to attract our attention? How often, in contemporary movies or books, do we encounter dangerous yet attractive men?

Lecture Twelve
Dickens—Later Works

Scope: This lecture resumes our study of Dickens, covering the period from 1846 to 1870. This period begins with *Dombey and Son*, Dickens's first mature work, and includes great novels, such as *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, *Great Expectations*, and *Our Mutual Friend*. Throughout this period, Dickens continues his exploration of London, asserting the interconnectedness of the city's widely separated neighborhoods and social classes. At the same time, Dickens creates increasingly conflicted characters and endings, raising questions that neither he nor his characters can answer. If in his early books, Dickens explores the mysteries of London, he examines in these later works many of the deepest mysteries of life. With this achievement, he completes the most impressive body of work in the history of English fiction and gives us a fitting end to this first series of lectures.

Outline

I. In this lecture, we will return to Charles Dickens, taking up the second phase of his long career, from 1847 through 1870, the year of his death.

- **A.** During this period, he produced many of his greatest novels: *Dombey and Son* (1847–1848), *David Copperfield* (1849–1850), *Bleak House* (1852–1853), *Little Dorrit* (1855–1857), *Great Expectations* (1860–1861), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–1865).
- **B.** This period also included some of the major events from Dickens's personal life: the collapse of his marriage, an affair with an actress, and the incredible success of his public reading tours.

II. In our first look at Dickens, we noted that his earliest works did not always appear to be novels, and we acknowledged the shortcomings of these works.

- **A.** Dickens began to solve these problems in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, centering the novel on the theme of selfishness, and he made further progress in writing *Dombey and Son*.
- **B.** Most scholars agree that *Dombey* is the first work of Dickens's artistic maturity. The novel shows his determination to create a coherent plot and reflects significant changes in his working methods.
- **C.** *Dombey* centers on the life of Paul Dombey, a wealthy London merchant.
  1. The first major event is the birth of Dombey's son—and the subsequent death of his wife in childbirth. Later events include the death of Dombey's son, his own remarriage, and his estrangement from his daughter, Florence.
  2. The work was a critical and commercial success, a confident return to form after the disappointments of *Barnaby Rudge* and *Martin Chuzzlewit*.

III. We noted previously Dickens's preoccupation with London, particularly his image of the city as connected and coherent despite its surface chaos. His later elaboration of this theme may be most evident in *Bleak House* (1852–1853).

- **A.** After moving us through a beginning passage composed mainly of sentence fragments that introduce us to the filth, mud, and fog of the city, Dickens goes on to present to the reader three distinct worlds.
  1. First, we visit the legal world, the Court of Chancery, in which disputes about wills and estates are to be settled. In practice, and in the novel as well, proceedings in Chancery could take decades.
  2. Next, we visit the world of fashion, dominated by Lady Dedlock, whose husband's family is said to be "as old as the hills, and infinitely more respectable."
  3. Finally, we are introduced to the domestic world of Esther Summerson, a young woman who is eventually employed as housekeeper of Bleak House.
- **B.** These worlds are so different that they cannot be described by a single narrator. The stories of the legal and fashionable worlds are told by a third-person narrator, while the story of Esther's domestic world is told by Esther herself.
- **C.** Slowly, the novel's major locations and characters are shown to be intimately connected.
  1. Lady Dedlock turns out to be Esther's mother, and a law clerk, found dead of a drug overdose at the end of chapter 10, is revealed to be her father

2. The mystery of Esther's birth is unraveled by characters from every level of society—a police inspector (one of the first fictional detectives) and a homeless boy play especially important parts.

D. Although we might criticize Dickens for relying on these coincidences, we see that his version of the multiplot novel responds to the pressures of living in an increasingly fragmented society. Beneath the chaos of a city like London, there is an underlying order.

IV. In the 1850s, Dickens experienced great changes in his personal life.

A. In 1858, he separated from his wife of 22 years, and his relationship with a young actress became the subject of scandal and gossip for the rest of his life.

B. At that time, he also began a series of exhausting but quite successful public reading tours, not only making Dickens a fortune but strengthening his bonds with the public.

V. Through his later novels, Dickens created increasingly conflicted characters and endings, opening up problems that neither he nor his characters could solve.

A. At the end of an early work, such as *Oliver Twist*, the main character is finally safe and secure.

B. In *Great Expectations*, the situation is much different.

1. Like Oliver, Pip is an orphan, exposed to dangers and temptations. Raised by his sister and her husband, he is adopted by a mysterious benefactor and sent to live as a gentleman in London.
2. Pip assumes that his benefactor is Miss Havisham, a wealthy local woman, and he falls in love with Estella, the beautiful girl who lives with her. Pip's dreams are shattered when he learns that his benefactor is actually a criminal.
3. As the story unfolds, Pip is also forced to admit that Estella is incapable of returning his love. He knows that he should give up his quest for Estella, but that knowledge does not help him control his own desires for her.
4. Though Pip eventually finds his way to a respectable life, he never recovers from his disappointments and failures. This is especially evident in Dickens's original ending to the novel, which suggests that Pip will never marry.
5. In a revised ending, though Dickens suggests a possible reunion between Pip and Estella, the situation remains uncertain. Even if the characters do get together, it will be as survivors of a great trauma.

C. Dickens creates similar feelings at the end of *Bleak House*, *Little Dorrit*, and *Our Mutual Friend*. In those conclusions, marriages are celebrated, virtue rewarded, and vice punished, yet the possibilities for fulfillment and happiness appear limited.

VI. If Dickens begins to explore the mysteries of London in his early books, he examines in these later works many of the deepest mysteries of life.

A. Why do we want what we cannot have? How can we understand the wrongs done to us? Can we ever break free of the past, or are we compelled to live in its shadows?

B. With this achievement, Dickens completes the most impressive body of work in the history of English fiction and gives us a fitting end to this first series of lectures.

Essential Reading:

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*, *Great Expectations*.

Supplementary Reading:

J. Hillis Miller, *Charles Dickens: The World of His Novels*.

Edmund Wilson, "Dickens: The Two Scrooges," in *The Wound and the Bow*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What are the signs of artistic maturity? Do artists tend to get better as they grow older and gain experience? What is usually lost and what usually gained over the course of an artist's career?
2. What kinds of endings now seem most satisfying to us? Are happy endings always unrealistic? Are sad or unhappy endings always depressing?

Timeline

1719–1720 ..... Eliza Haywood, *Love in Excess*

1740 ..... Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*

1745 ..... Jacobite uprising

1747–1749 ..... Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa*

1749 ..... Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*

1750 ..... Population of London approaches 750,000

1759–1767 ..... Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy*

1776 ..... American Declaration of Independence

1778 ..... Frances Burney, *Evelina*

1789 ..... Storming of the Bastille, start of the French Revolution

1794 ..... Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

1808 ..... Ludwig van Beethoven, *Symphony No. 5*

1813 ..... Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

1814 ..... Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*

1815 ..... Napoleon defeated at Waterloo

1815 ..... Jane Austen, *Emma*

1826 ..... James Fenimore Cooper, *Last of the Mohicans* (U.S.)

1832 ..... First Great Reform Bill

1836–1837 ..... Charles Dickens, *The Pickwick Papers*

1837 ..... Victoria takes the throne

1837–1843 ..... Honoré de Balzac, *Lost Illusions* (France)

1847 ..... Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

1847 ..... Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*

1847–1848 ..... William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

1848 ..... Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*

1849–1850 ..... Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*

1851 ..... Population of greater London reaches 2.6 million

1851 ..... Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick* (U.S.)

1852–1853 ..... Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*

1857 ..... Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* (France)

1859 ..... Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*

1860 ..... George Eliot, *Mill on the Floss*

1860–1861 ..... Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

1861–1865 ..... American Civil War

1865–1869 ..... Leo Tolstoy, *War and Peace* (Russia)

1871 ..... Population of greater London reaches 3.8 million

1871–1872 ..... George Eliot, *Middlemarch*

1875–1877 ..... Leo Tolstoy, *Anna Karenina* (Russia)

1880 ..... Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (Russia)

1880s–1890s ..... Scramble for Africa

1881 ..... Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

1884 ..... Henry James, "The Art of Fiction"

1884 ..... Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (U.S.)

1885 ..... Emile Zola, *Germinal* (France)

1890 ..... Thomas Hardy, "Candour in English Fiction"

1891 ..... Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

1899 ..... Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

1899 ..... Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*

1901 ..... Death of Queen Victoria

1903 ..... Henry James, *The Ambassadors*

1908–1912 ..... Development of Cubism by Picasso and Braque

1910 ..... E. M. Forster, *Howards End*

1912–1920 ..... Constance Garnett, translations of Dostoevsky

1913 ..... Igor Stravinsky, *The Rite of Spring*

1913 ..... D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*

1913–1927 ..... Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past* (France)

1914 ..... James Joyce, *Dubliners*

1914–1918 ..... First World War

1915 ..... Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*

1915 ..... D. H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow* declared obscene

1916 ..... James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

1917 ..... Russian Revolution

1918 ..... Voting rights granted to women age 30 and over in the United Kingdom

1920 ..... D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*

1922 ..... James Joyce, *Ulysses*

1925 ..... Charles Chaplin, *The Gold Rush* (U.S.)

1924 ..... E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*

1925 ..... F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (U.S.)

1927 ..... Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

1928 ..... Voting rights granted to women age 21 and over in the United Kingdom

1929 ..... William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (U.S.)

1939 ..... James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*

1939–1945 ..... Second World War

Biographical Notes

Jane Austen (1775–1817). Perhaps the most beloved of all English novelists. Her work has attracted a wide range of admirers—it has been the subject of innumerable film and television adaptations—and scholars have credited her with developing new techniques for the representation of consciousness. Austen was born in Hampshire, the sixth of seven children. Her father was a clergyman. She grew up in a family of devoted novel readers and showed an early talent for satire and parody. Austen began her first serious literary projects while in her 20s, producing early versions of what would later become *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Northanger Abbey*. She returned to these works in her 30s, revising them for publication—*Sense and Sensibility* appeared in 1811, *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813—while also writing three new works: *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), and *Persuasion*, published posthumously, along with *Northanger Abbey*, in 1818. She never married, though she did accept one proposal, from a wealthy young man six years her junior, only to think better of her acceptance the next day.

Pat Barker (1943–). Among the greatest living practitioners of historical fiction, celebrated for the *Regeneration* trilogy (1991–1995), a series of novels set during the First World War. Born in Yorkshire, Barker was raised by her maternal grandparents. Her grandmother worked in a fish-and-chips shop, and her grandfather, a veteran of World War I, was a laborer. She was educated at the London School of Economics and worked as a teacher before devoting herself to writing. Inspired by a creative writing course with the novelist Angela Carter (1940–1992), Barker began to explore the realities of working-class life, eventually producing such novels as *Union Street* (1982) and *Blow Your House Down* (1984). She turned to historical fiction in *Regeneration* (1991), a novel focused on the wartime experience of poet Siegfried Sassoon (1886–1967). The next two novels in the trilogy are *The Eye in the Door* (1993) and *The Ghost Road* (1995), a work that earned her the Booker Prize in 1995 for the best full-length novel written by a citizen of the British Commonwealth. Barker's novels are known for their vivid accounts of war and for their interest in issues of class, sexuality, and psychology.

Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855). The author of three novels, she is best known for her first book, *Jane Eyre* (1847). Jane's story is, in many ways, autobiographical, based on Brontë's experiences at school and her later work as a teacher and governess. Brontë was born in Yorkshire, in the town of Haworth. Her father was a clergyman, originally from Ireland; her mother died in 1821, when Charlotte was only 5. There were six children in the family, but only four survived to adulthood. Brontë sought literary fame much more eagerly than her sisters Emily and Anne. All three of the sisters published their works under ambiguous pseudonyms, inadvertently sparking debate about their real identities. Reviewers and readers were especially eager to know if they were male or female—the pseudonyms had left this unclear—with one reviewer arguing that *Jane Eyre* would be praiseworthy if the work of a man but "odious" if that of a woman. The great success of the novel was almost immediately followed by unimaginable tragedy, as Charlotte suffered the loss of all three of her siblings (Emily, Anne, and brother Branwell) within a period of about nine months. She married her father's curate in 1854. Weakened by illnesses brought on by pregnancy, she died of tuberculosis less than a year later. During her lifetime, she also published *Shirley* (1849), a historical novel about the industrial revolution, and *Villette* (1853), a work based on her experiences (and her passionate love for her teacher) in Brussels.

Emily Brontë (1818–1848). The author of the most unusual and perhaps the most remarkable of all Victorian novels, *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Along with her surviving sisters, Charlotte and Anne, and her brother Branwell, Emily spent much of her childhood writing. She devoted enormous energy to the creation of an imaginary island called Gondal, continuing work on these stories well into her 20s. Invariably described as the most reclusive of the sisters, the adult Emily spent only two long periods of time away from home: In 1838 and 1839, she worked briefly as a teacher, and in 1842, she attended school with Charlotte in Brussels, an experience she seems to have hated. She died of tuberculosis, which she may have aggravated at her brother's funeral only a few months earlier. Family members would later recall her emotional intensity, her love of music, and her devotion to animals. She is now regarded as an important Victorian poet as well as a major novelist.

Frances Burney (1752–1840). One of the most important novelists of the second half of the 18th century and a major influence on later figures, including Jane Austen. Like Austen, Burney grew up in a family of readers and writers. Her father was the author of a four-volume history of music, published in the 1770s and 1780s, and the friend of such literary men as Samuel Johnson. Her mother died in 1762, when Burney was about 10. In her early 20s, she and her family moved into a house once occupied by Isaac Newton, whose observatory had been set up in the attic. Burney published her first novel, *Evelina*, anonymously in 1778. She followed up on its success with

another novel, *Cecilia*, in 1782. Starting in 1786, she worked as second keeper of the robes to Queen Charlotte, spending much of her time at Windsor Castle. She found the job exhausting and boring and was more than happy to leave it in 1791. Married in 1793 to a refugee from the French Revolution, she had one child, a son. Burney survived breast cancer, living for 30 years after a painful mastectomy, and was preceded in death by both her husband and her son. Along with *Evelina* and *Cecilia*, she is best known for another novel, *Camilla* (1796), and for her journals, which first appeared in print in the 1840s.

A. S. Byatt (1936–). Rose to fame with *Possession* (1990), a novel tracing the fortunes of two couples, one from the 19th century and the other from the 20th. In both her fiction and her critical writings, she is fascinated by relationships between past and present. Byatt was born in Yorkshire, and she later attended both Oxford and Cambridge. Aside from *Possession*, she is best known for *Angels and Insects* (1992), a book consisting of two stories set in the Victorian Age, and for a series of four novels dealing with the life of Frederica Potter, a character who seems in many ways to resemble Byatt herself. The novels in this series are *The Virgin in the Garden* (1978), *Still Life* (1985), *Babel Tower* (1996), and *A Whistling Woman* (2002). Byatt has also published two critical studies of Iris Murdoch and a book on the Romantic poets William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Of particular interest to us is another recent volume, *On Histories and Stories* (2000), in which she says, "narration is as much part of human nature as breath and the circulation of blood." Byatt's sister is the novelist Margaret Drabble.

Joseph Conrad (1857–1924). A crucial figure in the transition to Modernism, valued for his reflections on the nature of storytelling and his portrayal of European imperialism. Though his parents were both Polish, he was born in the Ukraine and given the name Józef Theodor Konrad Korzeniowski. When he was about 5, his parents were exiled to a remote village in northern Russia, where both of them would die. Conrad went to sea at the age of 16, visiting the West Indies and Venezuela while serving in the French merchant marine. He sought work on British ships in 1878 and became an English subject in 1886. The most important journey of his career came in 1890, when he sailed to the coast of Africa and steamed up the Congo River. This journey would become the basis for his most famous and influential work, *Heart of Darkness* (1899), which would later serve as the basis for the film *Apocalypse Now*. Closely associated with other major figures, including Henry James and Ford Madox Ford, Conrad would also publish several other important works of fiction, including *Almayer's Folly* (1895); *Lord Jim* (1900); *Nostromo* (1904); *The Secret Agent* (1907), now celebrated as one of the first novels to take up the issue of urban terrorism; and *Under Western Eyes* (1911).

Charles Dickens (1812–1870). Beyond doubt the central figure in the history of English fiction. He was born in Portsmouth, where his father worked as a clerk in the navy pay office. The family settled in London when he was 10, and his father was arrested and imprisoned for debt about two years later. During this period, the young Dickens worked in a factory, pasting labels on bottles of boot blacking—an experience that left him feeling "utterly neglected and hopeless." In his late teens and early 20s, Dickens worked as a law clerk and a parliamentary reporter, eventually trying his hand at other sorts of journalism. His first major work of fiction, *The Pickwick Papers* (1836–1837), would transform him into the most popular and successful writer of his age. He would spend the rest of his life as a kind of public icon, making two trips to America and touring, performing public readings from his own works. His experience of celebrity was not always happy, and in 1858, as he separated from his wife and deepened his relationship with a young actress, his behavior became the subject of gossip and scandal. Dickens's literary career fell into two major phases. In the first half, which took him from 1835 to about 1846, he produced such works as *Pickwick*, *Oliver Twist* (1837–1838), *Nicholas Nickleby* (1838–1839), and *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1840–1841). These works, though brilliant in their own ways, are not best described as novels. In the second half of his career, from 1846 to 1870, Dickens mastered the novel form. Among the works he created in this period are *Dombey and Son* (1847–1848), *Bleak House* (1852–1853), *Little Dorrit* (1857-1857), *Great Expectations* (1860–1861), and *Our Mutual Friend* (1864–1865).

Margaret Drabble (1939–). A novelist known for her interest in women's lives and experiences. Born in Yorkshire, she was educated at Cambridge and enjoyed a brief career as an actor with the Royal Shakespeare Company. (Her first husband, the actor Clive Swift, starred in the British sitcom *Keeping Up Appearances*.) From 1963 to 1969, Drabble published five novels, including the award-winning *The Millstone*. It was an impressive beginning, establishing Drabble as a writer in the tradition of George Eliot and Virginia Woolf, interested in the pressures confronting ambitious women. Drabble's later novels include *The Needle's Eye* (1972), *The Ice Age* (1977), and a trilogy focused on the friendship of three women: *The Radiant Way* (1987), *A Natural Curiosity* (1989), and *The Gates of Ivory* (1991). Her critical writings include essays on classic novelists from Jane Austen

and Emily Brontë to Thomas Hardy. Drabble is also the editor of the indispensable reference work *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Her sister is the novelist A. S. Byatt.

George Eliot (1819–1880). The pseudonym of Mary Ann (later Marian) Evans. Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871–1872) is often described as the greatest of all English novels. Marian Evans was born and grew up in the country, where her father worked as the agent for an aristocratic family. Intensely devout as a young woman, she later came to view the Gospels as "histories consisting of mingled truth and fiction." After translating two important works of biblical scholarship and serving as assistant editor of the prestigious *Westminster Review*, she was encouraged to try her hand at fiction by G. H. Lewes, a writer with whom she lived for about 25 years. Her first sketches were submitted anonymously, and she began using her pseudonym in 1858, partly because she feared public exposure of her unconventional relationship with Lewes. Like Charlotte Brontë, she continued to use her pseudonym long after her real identity was well known. About 18 months after Lewes's death, she chose to marry John Cross, a man 20 years her junior. She died of kidney disease in December of 1880, only a few months after the wedding. Eliot's first novel, *Adam Bede* (1859), was an enormous popular and critical success, establishing her as a major rival to Dickens. Her later works include *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), a fictional treatment of her relationship to her brother; *Silas Marner* (1861); *Felix Holt* (1866); *Middlemarch*; and *Daniel Deronda* (1874–1876).

Henry Fielding (1707–1754). With his great rival, Samuel Richardson, one of the two early masters of the English novel. Born in Somerset and educated at Eton, he had aristocratic connections on his father's side. Fielding enjoyed great success in two fields, literature and the law. His first significant literary achievements came as a playwright. He had a particular gift for satire, directing most of his barbs at Sir Robert Walpole, the Tory prime minister—but his dramatic career was halted by the Licensing Act of 1737, which imposed strict censorship on most of the theaters in London. Fielding responded to this crisis by preparing for the bar exam and turning his attention to prose fiction. In the early 1740s, he produced two hilarious parodies of Richardson's *Pamela* (1740): *Shamela* (1741) and *Joseph Andrews* (1742). *Joseph Andrews* is Fielding's first great novel, as well as his earliest effort to create what he called a "comic epic in prose." It paved the way for the even greater achievement of *Tom Jones* (1749), which contains the first serious reflections on the art of fiction in English. Fielding also served for five years as a magistrate or judge in London, gaining additional fame as the founder of the "Bow Street Runners," the first modern police force in the city's history. His younger sister, Sarah, was a successful novelist in her own right, with her most successful work, *The Adventures of David Simple*, appearing in 1744.

Ford Madox Ford (1873–1939). The author of one of the greatest 20th-century novels, *The Good Soldier* (1915), and the editor of two influential literary journals. Born Ford Hermann Hueffer, he grew up among artists and intellectuals. His father was a German musicologist; his mother, a painter. His maternal grandfather was the Pre-Raphaelite painter Ford Madox Brown. Hueffer wrote his first novel at the age of 18 and later collaborated on two novels with Joseph Conrad. While working as the editor of the *English Review*, he played a major role in the discovery of such new writers as Ezra Pound, Wyndam Lewis, and D. H. Lawrence. Much later, while living in Paris, he employed the young Ernest Hemingway as a subeditor on the *Transatlantic Review*. In 1915, after failing to win a divorce from his wife—he was at the time involved in an affair with another woman—he enlisted in the Army, serving through the years of the First World War and nearly dying in the first battle of the Somme. Ford changed his name in 1919, after returning from the war. He spent most of his later years in America, where he served on the faculty of Olivet College, and France, where he died in 1939. His major works of fiction include the *Fifth Queen* trilogy (1907–1908), a series set during the reign of Henry VIII; *The Good Soldier*; and the novels of the *Parade's End* tetralogy (1924–1928).

E. M. Forster (1879–1970). Author of two important modern novels—*Howards End* (1910) and *A Passage to India* (1924)—as well as *Aspects of the Novel* (1927), a major study of the form. Forster was born in London. His father, an architect, died before he reached the age of 2, and he was raised chiefly by his mother, who sometimes referred to him (only half-jokingly) as "the Important One." He attended Cambridge and joined some of his classmates as a member of the Bloomsbury Group. He traveled widely as a young man, visiting Italy, India, and Egypt. Though not as formally innovative as the novels of Joyce or Woolf, Forster's books should be credited with updating the tradition of the novel of manners. In *Howards End*, he explores the relationship among artists, intellectuals, and businessmen, looking for connections among these apparently separate groups. In *A Passage to India*, he takes on the even more difficult subject of imperialism, suggesting that colonial rule has had dire effects on both Indian and English people alike.

Forster wrote the libretto for Benjamin Britten's opera of *Billy Budd* (1951) and appeared as a witness for the defense in the 1960 censorship trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Because he refused to allow his books to be made into movies, film versions of *A Passage to India* (1984), *A Room with a View* (1985), and *Howards End* (1992) would have to wait until after his death. Published posthumously was his novel *Maurice* (written 1910–1913), one of the earliest sympathetic treatments of gay characters and themes.

Henry Green (1905–1973). The pseudonym of Henry Vincent Yorke, author of nine novels and an important member of the generation following Lawrence, Joyce, and Woolf. He was born into a very wealthy Midlands family. Educated at Eton and Oxford, he left college to work on the floor of his family's factory. His experiences during this period were formative, helping to inspire *Living* (1929), a novel still valued for its close attention to the rhythms of working-class speech. Later in life, Green became an executive in the family firm, often attending to his fiction during lunch hours. His other major works include *Party Going* (1939) and *Loving* (1945), a novel set in an Irish castle in the period of the Second World War. Often reclusive during his own lifetime—the most famous photograph of him, taken by Cecil Beaton, shows the back of his head and shoulders—Green has won the admiration of many other writers. Among his most enthusiastic fans are the poet W. H. Auden and the American novelist John Updike.

Graham Greene (1904–1991). Novelist, screenwriter, MI6 agent, and chronicler of Cold War conflicts in such places as Vietnam and Haiti, Greene's career spans six decades, beginning in the 1920s and ending in the 1970s. The son of a schoolmaster, he had a very difficult childhood and adolescence. At Oxford, he devoted himself to poetry, but negative reviews of his first collection convinced him to try journalism instead. In 1926, at the urging of his future wife, he converted to Catholicism. He disliked being described as a "Catholic novelist" but often centered his stories on feelings of spiritual crisis and guilt. The experience of adultery was an especially compelling subject, occupying Greene in such novels as *The End of the Affair* (1951) and *The Quiet American* (1955). It was also a subject he knew firsthand, having separated from his wife and beginning a long affair with a married woman. His love of the movies, and their influence on his fiction, helps to distinguish him from earlier writers. Through the 1930s, he reviewed more than 400 films and, in the 1940s, began writing screenplays, the best of which is the one for *The Third Man* (directed by Carol Reed and released in 1949). In the 1950s, Greene began writing about other parts of the world, setting novels in Africa, South America, and East Asia. His most important works of fiction include *Brighton Rock* (1938), *The Power and the Glory* (1940), and *The Heart of the Matter* (1948).

Thomas Hardy (1840–1928). A crucial figure in the transition from Victorian to Modernist fiction, perhaps chiefly important for his use of tragic endings. Born in Dorset, the region he would later make famous as "Wessex," Hardy was a sickly child. His father was a stonemason, and he was apprenticed to a local architect at the age of 16. He had good teachers at local schools and enjoyed the opportunity to study Latin. He began adult life as a draftsman in London but dreamed of a career as a writer, thinking first of poetry. His first work of fiction appeared in 1871, and after the great success of *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), Hardy was able to give up architecture and devote himself to literature full-time. Many of his novels were originally published in weekly and monthly magazines, and the sexual content of his stories frequently led to protracted disputes with editors and publishers. By the late 1890s, owing to the financial independence he had gained with such novels as *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), he could afford to retire from fiction writing and devote himself to poetry once again. Hardy published his poetry through the 1910s and 1920s and is now regarded as a crucial influence on later poets, including Robert Frost, Dylan Thomas, and Philip Larkin. His other major novels are *The Return of the Native* (1878), *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895).

Henry James (1843–1916). Known later in life as "the Master" and with good reason. One of the two or three most important figures in the history of Anglo-American fiction, James did much to elevate the status of the novel in the period from 1880 to 1910. Though born in New York City, he spent much of his childhood traveling in Europe. He attended Harvard Law School for a year. Drafted into the army during the American Civil War, he was exempted from service because of a medical disability. While living in Paris during the mid-1870s, he became acquainted with some of Europe's greatest living novelists; his friends in this period included Ivan Turgenev and Gustave Flaubert. James's first major novels were focused on the "international theme," taking their American protagonists to England, France, and Italy. Among such works are *The American* (1877), *Daisy Miller* (1878), and *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), considered by many his greatest novel. James experienced a creative rebirth in the early years of the 20th century, producing three astounding novels—*The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904)—all now famous for their close attention to the workings of human consciousness. He lived in England for more than 40 years and became a British citizen in 1915. Recently, he has become the subject of other

people's fiction, taking the lead role in two interesting novels: Colm Tóibin's *The Master* (2004) and David Lodge's *Author, Author* (2004).

James Joyce (1882–1941). Author of three novels, all Modernist classics. Famous for his depiction of human thought—Joyce is a master of the interior monologue—as well as his experiments with literary form. Born in Dublin, he watched his middle-class Catholic family slide into poverty. After finishing his education at University College, he spent a few months in Paris, returning home after learning that his mother was on the verge of death. In 1904, he left Ireland once and for all, taking his lover, Nora Barnacle, with him. They raised two children together, remaining unmarried until 1931.

Though he spent his adult life on the Continent, settling in such places as Trieste, Zurich, and Paris, Joyce set all his major fiction in Dublin. His first important publication was a collection of stories, *Dubliners* (1914), and his first novel was the autobiographical *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). Though his early work is justly admired, his reputation now rests chiefly on *Ulysses* (1922). A remarkable and still-controversial work, it simultaneously upholds and rejects the tradition of novelistic Realism. Not least of the work's charms is its comedy, for it is not only one of the most challenging novels in the language but also one of the funniest. Joyce's last major work was *Finnegans Wake* (1939), in which he practically invented a language of his own. Whether or not the *Wake* should be described as a novel is an open question. There can be no doubt, however, that it is one of the most inventive works ever published—and a fitting end to a brilliant career.

D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930). One of three writers—the others being James Joyce and Virginia Woolf—whose work is said to mark the appearance of Modernist fiction in England. Lawrence's father was a miner—he worked in the pits from the age of 10—and his mother, a former schoolteacher. His parents were always at odds, and their troubles seem to have affected their son deeply. At his mother's urging, Lawrence attended college and became a teacher himself, all the while hoping for a career as a writer. In 1909, he enjoyed his first real success, when Ford Madox Hueffer (later Ford Madox Ford) offered to publish his poetry in the *English Review*. His first major novel, *Sons and Lovers* (1913), dramatizes the events of his own adolescence, introducing many of the themes—family, work, sexual passion, freedom—that characterize his later fiction. Many of Lawrence's greatest works were the subject of intense battles with editors, censors, and reviewers. *The Rainbow* (1915) was banned as obscene, while *Women in Love* (1920) went three years without finding a publisher. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928) remained controversial as late as 1960, when Penguin Books finally won the right to bring out a British edition. Lawrence's personal life was no less difficult. He met his future wife, Frieda, in 1912, while she was still married to one of his professors. She would leave her husband and three children for him—though not without considerable difficulty. The couple spent the years of the First World War in England, more or less against their will, but they were able to travel extensively in the 1920s. Through these years, they visited Ceylon, Australia, New Mexico, and Italy, where Lawrence died of tuberculosis at the age of 45.

Ian McEwan (1948–). Major contemporary novelist, likely to be remembered for *Atonement* (2001). The son of an officer, McEwan has described himself as an "army brat." He was born in Aldershot and spent parts of his childhood in Tripoli and Singapore. Educated at the Universities of Sussex and East Anglia, he studied creative writing with Malcolm Bradbury (1932–2000) and Angus Wilson (1913–1991). McEwan's career can be divided into two parts. The early works, including *The Cement Garden* (1978) and *The Comfort of Strangers* (1981), often center on acts of grotesque violence—and help to explain why he was once known as "Ian Macabre." Recent works, including *Atonement* and *Saturday* (2005), show a considerable advance in maturity. In *Atonement*, McEwan explores the connection between creation and destruction. In *Saturday*, he considers the relationship between literature and science, taking as his central character a neurosurgeon who admits to disliking fiction. In addition to his nine novels, McEwan has also written screenplays, libretti, and two works for children.

Iris Murdoch (1919–1999). Novelist, philosopher, and folk hero. Her later struggles with Alzheimer's disease were made famous in bestselling memoirs by her husband, literary critic John Bayley. Bayley's memoirs were themselves the inspiration for a feature film, titled *Iris* (2001), in which Murdoch is portrayed (at different stages of life) by two great English actresses, Kate Winslet and Dame Judi Dench. Murdoch was born in Dublin, and although her family moved to London when she was very young, her Irish identity remained important to her. She read "greats" at Oxford, then went on to work for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. In the mid-1950s, she published two works that demonstrate her commitment to different kinds of moral and intellectual inquiry: a critical study of existentialist philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre and a novel, her first, *Under the Net*. Popular success and fame came to her a few years later, with the publication of *The Bell*. Murdoch wrote 20 novels in all, including *The*

Sea, The Sea, for which she received the Booker Prize in 1978. It seems likely that she'll be remembered as one of the greatest and most important novelists of the postwar period.

Anthony Powell (1905–2000). Important figure in mid-20th-century fiction, known for his 12-volume sequence, *A Dance to the Music of Time* (1951–1975). Powell was born in London, the son of an Army officer, and he was educated at Eton and Oxford. After finishing his degree, he went to work in a publishing house, producing his first novel, *Afternoon Men*, in 1931. In 1934, he married Lady Violet Georgiana Pakenham, daughter of the fifth earl of Longford, who raised two children with him and enjoyed a literary career of her own. Powell served in the army during the Second World War, working as an intelligence officer and liaison to governments in exile. After leaving the service, he began his ambitious series of novels, publishing the first, *A Question of Upbringing*, in 1951. The series traces the experiences of Nicholas Jenkins, a character not unlike Powell himself. Named after a painting by the French artist Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665), the sequence covers more than 50 years of Jenkins's life and is now valued chiefly for its witty commentary on upper-class English society.

Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823). The most popular of the late-18th-century Gothic novelists. She was born in London and moved to Bath at the age of 8. Her father was in trade, managing a showroom for the pottery firm of Wedgwood and Bentley. She spent a good deal of her youth among wealthy relatives—one childhood playmate was the future mother of Charles Darwin—and married William Radcliffe, a journalist, at the age of 23. She published her first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, about two years later. It is said that her husband encouraged her efforts and that she began writing as a way of diverting herself during evenings when he was away. Radcliffe produced five novels in all, the most famous being *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). She did not invent the form of the Gothic novel—credit for that is usually given to Horace Walpole (1717–1797)—but she dominated the field, almost single-handedly creating an enormous audience for horror stories. Radcliffe stopped writing fiction, for reasons that remain somewhat mysterious, while still only 33 years old. Another novel, *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826), was published after her death.

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761). Author of *Pamela* (1740), a work usually regarded as the first English novel. Richardson was born in Derbyshire, the son of a joiner, but he spent most of his life in London. At age 17, he was apprenticed to a printer. By his early 30s, he was running his own printing business, eventually serving as the official printer to the House of Commons. Richardson now seems a perfect representative of the rising middle class, eager to advance himself financially, socially, and culturally. The turning point in his life is said to have come in 1739, when his fellow printers asked him to write a book of sample letters that could be used as templates by newly literate readers. As he worked on this project, Richardson produced two letters that would become the basis for *Pamela*. Breaking off the initial project, he shifted all his attention to the new work, which he finished in two months. The book was an enormous success, inspiring dozens of imitations, theatrical adaptations, and parodies—including two by his greatest rival, Henry Fielding. In 1741, Richardson produced his own sequel to *Pamela*, a work known as *Pamela in Her Exalted Condition*. He went on to write *Clarissa* (1747–1749), one of the very few tragic novels in the early English tradition, and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753–1754), the only one of his works with a male protagonist. He is most famous for his use of the epistolary form—his stories are told through letters to and from the characters—and his obsessive revisions. Eight different versions of *Pamela* appeared during his lifetime, and a ninth followed posthumously. He died from complications of a stroke about a month before his 72nd birthday.

Salman Rushdie (1947–). Arguably the most important British novelist of the last quarter century. Known to most as the author of *The Satanic Verses* (1988) and the target of a death sentence by Iran's Ayatollah Khomeni. Rushdie was born in Bombay and raised in a nonobservant Muslim family. He was educated in England, at Rugby and Cambridge, and earned an M.A. in history. He enjoyed some success with his first novel, *Grimus* (1975), but it was *Midnight's Children* (1981) that established his reputation. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie tells the story of Saleem Sinai, born at midnight on August 15, 1947—the very moment of India's independence from England. Though known for its exploration of Indian history, the work should also be recognized for its boundless humor and energy. Rushdie's mastery of the novelistic tradition is evident throughout the work, and even the briefest list of his literary influences would have to include writers from Laurence Sterne to the Latin American magical realists of the 1960s and 1970s. Since *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie has published a volume of short stories, a book for children, and six novels, including *Shame* (1983), *The Satanic Verses*, *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995), and *Shalimar the Clown* (2005).

Sir Walter Scott (1771–1832). Responsible for the enormous popularity of historical fiction, which dominated the English scene through much of the 19th century. Born in Edinburgh, Scott came down with polio while still an

infant and suffered from lameness in his right leg throughout the rest of his life. His father was a solicitor; his maternal grandfather, a professor of physiology. He studied at the University of Edinburgh and was admitted to the bar in 1792. Scott's first literary production was a three-volume collection of traditional ballads, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–1803). He became a famous poet in his own right, achieving great success with *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) and *The Lady of the Lake* (1810), and was offered the laureateship in 1813. He refused the position and soon went on to publish *Waverley* (1814), the first of his great historical novels. Scott wrote 23 works of fiction in all, including *Old Mortality* (1816), *Rob Roy* (1817), *The Heart of Midlothian* (1818), and *Ivanhoe* (1819). In such works, he frequently returns to conflicts between traditional and modern ways of life, offering a complex account of historical change. Scott was made a baronet in 1820 and spent much of his later life working almost furiously in an attempt to pay off massive debts. After suffering a series of strokes, he died at Abbotsford, his country house near the River Tweed, at the age of 61.

Zadie Smith (1975–). One of the most promising young novelists in England, already famous for her panoramic image of a multiracial, multicultural London. Born to an English father (an advertising executive) and a Jamaican mother (a child psychologist), Smith grew up in the North London neighborhood of Willesden. She attended Cambridge, where she began working on her first novel. Circulated in manuscript, the novel's opening pages set off a bidding war among English publishers. It's easy to see why. Hilarious and compassionate, traditional in form yet very much of the moment, *White Teeth* (2000) marked an astonishing debut. In many ways, the novel is the story of two friends—one English, the other Bengali—whose lives and destinies are increasingly intertwined. Smith followed her initial success with *The Autograph Man* (2002) and *On Beauty* (2005), a novel informed by her experience as a Radcliffe Fellow at Harvard. *On Beauty* is set in the community surrounding an American college, and the central figure is Howard Belsey, a contentious art historian. Smith borrows much of the novel's structure from *Howards End* (1910) and credits E. M. Forster as a major influence on her work.

Laurence Sterne (1713–1768). Author of *Tristram Shandy* (1759–1767), a brilliant and often salacious challenge to emerging notions of novelistic Realism. One of the most innovative writers in the English tradition and an inspiration to later writers from James Joyce to Salman Rushdie. Sterne was born in Ireland, where his father was serving in the army. He was sent to school in Yorkshire, the family's home region, at the age of 10 and eventually earned both a B.A. and an M.A. from Cambridge. He became a clergyman and obtained a reasonably good living, once again in Yorkshire, marrying a few years later. The union was unhappy, and Sterne is known to have had a number of affairs. He published the first two volumes of *Tristram Shandy* in 1759, enjoying immediate and enormous success with the book. He took full advantage of his celebrity, posing for a portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds and appearing at court. Later volumes appeared in bunches: four in 1761; two more in 1765; another, the last to be published, in 1767. It is not certain that Sterne intended to conclude the book with the ninth volume, though American literary critic Wayne Booth made a convincing argument in support of that proposition. In addition to *Tristram Shandy*, Sterne also published *A Sentimental Journey* (1768), a work based on his two tours of the Continent. In an episode he would have enjoyed, his body was stolen from its grave and sold for use in an anatomy class at Cambridge—where the professor recognized the body as Sterne's and had it returned for reburial.

William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863). Major rival to Dickens—their disagreements were both personal and professional—and author of *Vanity Fair* (1847–1848), the first great example of the Victorian multiplot novel. Thackeray was born in Calcutta, where his father worked for the East India Company and later collected taxes. After his father's death in 1815, he was sent to live in England. Along the way, while the ship was in port at St. Helena, the future novelist caught a glimpse of Napoleon in exile. He left Cambridge without taking his degree, largely because of a financial crisis brought on by gambling. His family life was also marked by disappointment. After only four years of marriage, his wife suffered a complete mental breakdown. In 1842, she was placed in an institution, where she lived for another 50 years. Thackeray never remarried and seems to have devoted himself to the care of his two surviving daughters, one of whom became a novelist in her own right. He began his literary career in the 1830s, working as both editor and writer, eventually producing his best work for *Punch*. His real breakthrough came with *Vanity Fair*, a work that he also illustrated. Billed as a "novel without a hero," *Vanity Fair* challenges almost every dominant social value, including marriage and motherhood, imaging a fictional world in which anyone can be the object of both ridicule and sympathy. Thackeray's major works of fiction include *The Luck of Barry Lyndon* (1844, revised 1856), later made into a film by Stanley Kubrick (1975); *The History of Pendennis* (1848–1850); *The History of Henry Esmond* (1852); and *The Newcomes* (1853–1855). He died on Christmas Eve, at the age of 52.

Evelyn Waugh (1903–1966). With Henry Green and Graham Greene, a key figure in the middle decades of the 20th century; he first gained fame for his darkly comic novels but is now best known for a more serious work, *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). The son of an editor and publisher, Waugh was born in London. He was educated at Oxford, where he entered into what one of his biographers has called a homosexual phase. After leaving college, Waugh worked as a schoolteacher and considered becoming a carpenter before beginning his literary career in the late 1920s. Married in 1928 and divorced a little over a year later—his wife had committed adultery—Waugh converted to Roman Catholicism in 1930. His early works of fiction include *Decline and Fall* (1928), *Vile Bodies* (1930), and *A Handful of Dust* (1934). During the war, he served in the Royal Marines, beginning work on *Brideshead* after breaking his leg in parachute training. *Brideshead* announced a new seriousness of purpose, portraying an aristocratic family's return to its Catholic faith. In his later years, Waugh grew increasingly conservative, especially in religious matters, often protesting the reforms enacted by the Second Vatican Council. He seldom attended mass in this period but did go to church on Easter Sunday, 1966. Later that same day, he passed away, the victim of a massive heart attack. He was 62 years old.

Virginia Woolf (1882–1941). Twentieth-century novelist, essayist, and publisher, perhaps most famous for her experiments with stream-of-consciousness narration. She was born in London, where she grew up in a house full of books. Starting at age 6, she was subjected to repeated sexual abuse by her stepbrother. She lost her mother in 1895 and her father, the writer Leslie Stephen, about a decade later. After their father's death, she and her three siblings moved to Bloomsbury, a then unfashionable neighborhood, where they began to assemble the community of intellectuals and artists later known as the Bloomsbury Group. The group's members included novelist E. M. Forster, economist John Maynard Keynes, and writer Leonard Woolf, whom Virginia married in 1912. Leonard Woolf was a famously devoted husband, working with Virginia to found the Hogarth Press and helping her to cope with episodes of depression. Virginia Woolf's initial publications were book reviews—these began to appear in 1905—and she produced her first novel, *The Voyage Out*, in 1915. Her work is generally said to become more ambitious, and more experimental, with the publication of *Jacob's Room* in 1922. Her major works of fiction include *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925); *To the Lighthouse* (1927), which contains a moving portrait of her parents; *Orlando* (1928); and *The Waves* (1931). Her remarkable intellectual productivity is now, unfortunately, overshadowed by images of her mental instability. Although it is true that she took her own life, drowning herself in the River Ouse, it is also true that in her lifetime she published 9 novels, wrote 400 essays, and filled 30 volumes of a diary. Once regarded as somewhat less substantial than her contemporaries, she now stands alongside James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence as a major figure in British Modernism and one of the greatest of all English novelists.

The English Novel

Part II

Professor Timothy Spurgin

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Tim Spurgin grew up in Mankato, Minnesota. He graduated magna cum laude from Carleton College, where he wrote his senior thesis on the role of Realism in the English and American novel. During his senior year, he was also elected to Phi Beta Kappa and chosen as the student commencement speaker. On the encouragement of his teachers at Carleton, he applied for and received a Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities. He went on to do his graduate work at the University of Virginia, earning an M.A. and a Ph.D. in English literature. Dr. Spurgin's doctoral dissertation focused on the novels of Charles Dickens. Since 1990, he has taught at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. His teaching includes courses on Romanticism and contemporary critical theory, as well as a course on the English novel. While at Lawrence, Dr. Spurgin has received two awards for teaching: the Outstanding Young Teacher Award and the Freshman Studies Teaching Prize. He has twice served as director of Lawrence's freshman program, recognized as one of the best in the nation, and has three times received the Babcock Award, voted by Lawrence students to the person who "through involvement and interaction with students has made a positive impact on the campus community." Dr. Spurgin's writing has appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Dickens Studies Annual*, and *Dickens Quarterly*. He lives in Appleton with his wife, Gretchen Revie, and their wheaten terrier, Penny.

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Part II

The English Novel

Scope:

The novel is the most popular literary form of the last 250 years. Novels are indeed ubiquitous. They are sold not only in bookshops but also in airports, supermarkets, and drug stores. We read them in school and on vacation, turning to them for both intellectual stimulation and emotional satisfaction.

The novel is also an especially important and influential form. To the extent, for example, that we see society as complex and interconnected or view human personality as the product of early childhood experience, we are—whether we realize it or not—registering the impact of such writers as Jane Austen and Charles Dickens, Henry James and Virginia Woolf.

This course is an introduction to the form of the novel and, in particular, to the English novel tradition. No prior knowledge of the texts or authors is assumed. The course has an unusually wide sweep, beginning in the 1740s and closing in the 1920s. As a result, we'll be able to trace the history of the form from its beginnings to what can fairly be described as its culmination in the work of the early-20th-century Modernists. The course will survey a number of important writers, but it will also give special consideration to a few who made major contributions to the development of the form.

Though our approach is largely historical and chronological, we will return to a few enduring questions: What distinguishes the novel from other kinds of writing? How has the novel form been shaped by larger social and cultural forces? And what distinguishes the English novel tradition from the French, Russian, or American traditions?

In distinguishing the novel from other forms, we might note two of its most striking features. The first is the novel's preoccupation with social values and social distinctions. A great novel often seems to describe an entire society, creating a vivid image of the relationships among whole classes of people. It's no wonder that novels are frequently described as the forerunners of modern ethnographies and social histories.

Equally important to our ongoing definition of the novel form is its interest in human psychology. Whereas plays and films are often forced to concentrate on externals—how a character moves or speaks—novels are free to probe the inner recesses of both mind and heart. By the end of a novel, we may have developed a deep sympathy and, perhaps, some kind of identification with the characters. In addition to examining human communities, then, the novel explores the nature of consciousness itself.

To define the novel in these ways is to recognize its relationship to larger social forces. The rise of the novel through the 18th and 19th centuries coincides with major historical developments—urbanization and democratization, industrialization and globalization, to name a few. These developments heighten conflicts between established elites and the growing middle class. They also raise urgent questions of personal identity, social responsibility, and moral virtue—the very sorts of questions that turn up in so many of the greatest English novels. That the novel provided compelling responses to such questions is evidenced by its enormous and enduring popularity. No form could have established itself so quickly and so powerfully without addressing the deepest needs of its audience.

The English novel tradition is not the only one to concern itself with the relationship between society and the self. Such concerns can also be seen to dominate the French, Russian, and American traditions. Yet if the English tradition shares much with its Continental and American counterparts, it also possesses a number of distinguishing features. Perhaps the most obvious aspect of the English tradition is its virtual obsession with courtship, love, and marriage. Almost all of the greatest English novels of the 18th and 19th centuries are love stories, and some of the great Modernist novels of the early 20th century are dominated by issues of love and marriage.

Another distinguishing feature of the English tradition, especially as it unfolds in the 18th and 19th centuries, is its striking preference for comedic plots. Unlike the works of Flaubert, Tolstoy, or Melville, the overwhelming majority of English novels from this period end happily. By the close of a novel by Fielding or Austen or the early Dickens, each of the characters has found his or her proper place in society. These characters not only end up where they belong but also get what they deserve. Virtue is rewarded, and vice is punished—which is to say that a larger sense of poetic justice prevails.

As the 19th century moved on, English novelists began to experiment with other sorts of endings. By the time Thomas Hardy published *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in 1891, the old conventions and forms had become increasingly untenable. For about a century, it had been possible for English writers to imagine a satisfying resolution to social

conflicts. By the time we get to Hardy, after decades of industrialization and the reorganization of English society along modern lines, that possibility had vanished.

In tracing the emergence and consolidation of various approaches to stories and storytelling, we will, of course, fashion a story of our own. The last large movement in that story will focus on the great modern novelists of the 1910s and 1920s. Like their 18th- and 19th-century predecessors, these writers were responding to larger social forces, including those associated with the horrors of the First World War. Yet even as modern novelists create disturbing images of social fragmentation, they deepen our understanding of the individual personality, fashioning character studies of unsurpassed emotional complexity.

The course ends by bringing the story up to date. The final lecture is largely devoted to living novelists, such as Salman Rushdie, Ian McEwan, and Zadie Smith. In the works of these writers, as well as those of Austen, Dickens, and Woolf, we can see why the novel remains a form of unrivalled popularity and undeniable importance.

Lecture Thirteen
After 1870—Review and Preview

Scope: In our second series of lectures, we will move from 1870 to the 1920s, devoting much of our attention to the emergence of Modernist fiction. Though Modernism is usually associated with the 1910s and 1920s, its first stirrings were felt at the end of the 19th century. Through the 1880s and 1890s, such novelists as Thomas Hardy and Henry James were increasingly dissatisfied with the conventions of English fiction, especially the courtship plot and the comedic ending. Their complaints were fueled by their growing familiarity with the literature of other countries, where writers seemed to enjoy greater freedom in their choice of subject matter. The limitations of dominant literary conventions were further exposed by the traumas of the First World War, which took the lives of 750,000 men from the United Kingdom. In closing this lecture, we will preview a number of developments covered in this series: the appearance of tragic and open endings, a greater frankness about sex, and a greater seriousness about the novel form itself.

Outline

I. In the first part of our course, we covered the period from 1740 to 1870, ending with the death of Charles Dickens.

- **A.** We noted several features of the novel form, including its commitment to realism, and we identified the form as having two significant dimensions, one sociological and the other psychological.
- **B.** In addition, we began to explore some of the most distinctive features of the English novel tradition, including its preoccupation with courtship and its preference for comedic endings.
- **C.** Finally, we explored the ways in which the English novel was shaped by the forces of urbanization and industrialization.

II. In this part of our course, we will move from 1870 to the 1920s. The writers discussed in this series include George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf.

- **A.** As that list may suggest, much of our attention will be devoted to the emergence of Modernist fiction.
  - **1.** *Modernism* is a term most often associated with the literature of the 1910s and 1920s.
  - **2.** Modernist writings are usually characterized by an interest in stylistic experimentation: Such writings may employ multiple narrators or jump back and forth in time.
- **B.** Although there is much truth in these generalizations, it's important to remember that Modernism did not spring up all of a sudden. Its first stirrings were actually felt in the later decades of the 19th century.

III. By the 1880s or 1890s, such novelists as Thomas Hardy and Henry James were increasingly dissatisfied with the dominant conventions of English fiction.

- **A.** Their dissatisfaction was fueled by their growing familiarity with the literature of other countries—and with that of France, in particular.
  - **1.** Two French novelists were especially important to their English counterparts: Gustave Flaubert, author of *Madame Bovary* (1857), and Emile Zola, author of *Nana* (1880) and *Germinal* (1885).
  - **2.** These writers seemed to enjoy considerable freedom in their choice of subject matter. Indeed, subjects long considered off limits in England—adultery, prostitution—were discussed openly in France.
  - **3.** As English novelists learned more about French fiction, they began to complain about the institutions—including publishing houses and circulating libraries—that seemed to act as de facto censors of English fiction.
  - **4.** Official government censorship continued into the 1920s, involving such authors as D. H. Lawrence and Radclyffe Hall, a woman whose *Well of Loneliness* addressed the issue of lesbianism.
- **B.** English novelists also looked to Russia, as Constance Garnett brought out her groundbreaking translations of Leo Tolstoy and Fyodor Dostoevsky.
  - **1.** Measured against the psychological complexity and spiritual depth of *War and Peace* (1865–1869) or *Crime and Punishment* (1866), even the greatest English novels seemed inadequate.

2. "An unpleasant and unpatriotic truth has here to be faced," remarked E. M. Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* (1927). "No English novelist is as great as Tolstoy…No English novelist has explored man's soul as deeply as Dostoevsky…and if we deny this we become guilty of provincialism."

C. To some, including Lawrence, even the American tradition seemed more interesting and more vital than the English. When Lawrence said that the "essential American soul is hard, isolate, stoic, and a killer," he meant it as a compliment.

IV. The growing dissatisfaction of English novelists was not merely a function of jealousy or envy. Such writers as Hardy, James, and Conrad had good reasons for questioning the courtship plot and comedic ending.

A. Comedic plots emphasize the reconciliation of conflict and the restoration of unity—both social and psychological—and such outcomes were beginning to seem more and more unlikely.

1. The gulf between rich and poor was widening, and by the 1880s and 1890s, there was little hope of bridging it.
   - **a.** During this time, social scientist Charles Booth estimated that 30.7 percent of London residents were living in poverty.
   - **b.** Booth's fellow researcher, Beatrice Webb, described England as "a community permanently divided into a nation of the rich and a nation of the poor."
2. Also deepening were a number of other social divisions. As the movements for Irish independence and women's suffrage gained strength, it became obvious that the appearance of social unity depended on the subordination of entire classes of people.
3. Similarly, the resolution of psychological conflict seemed to depend on acts of denial, forgetting, and repression. For such thinkers as Sigmund Freud, the human psyche was inevitably disordered and chaotic.

B. The inadequacy of established novelistic conventions was also exposed by the traumas of the First World War.

1. The war began in 1914 and lasted four years, taking the lives of 750,000 men from the United Kingdom and leaving another 1,500,000 wounded or sick.
2. The unprecedented horrors of the war cast doubt on the idea of human progress, as technological advances became the basis for more efficient killing machines.
3. In light of these historical developments, happy endings and comedic resolutions appeared absurd and outmoded.

V. As we head into the next series of lectures, we will want to watch for a number of new developments.

A. There will be an interest in alternatives to the conventional comedic ending.

1. We have seen the first signs of this development in the works of such writers as Thackeray and Emily Brontë, and we will see further signs of it in Eliot's *Middlemarch*.
2. Later, we'll see that Hardy will turn to tragic endings, while Lawrence and Joyce will experiment with more open endings.

B. There will be a new frankness about sex. Here again, Hardy, Lawrence, and Joyce will be crucial figures.

C. Finally, there will be a greater seriousness about the novel form itself, as such writers as James or Woolf present fiction as an art form worthy of comparison with music, painting, or poetry.

Essential Reading:

Peter Keating, *The Haunted Study: A Social History of the English Novel, 1875–1914*.

David Trotter, "The Modernist Novel," in *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*.

Supplementary Reading:

Chris Baldick, *The Oxford English Literary History*: Vol. 10: *The Modern Movement (1910–1940)*.

Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*.

Questions to Consider:

1. When you hear the term *Modernism*, which artists and artworks leap to mind? What about the term *Postmodernism*? Do you think that such movements tend to develop slowly or emerge all at once?

2. It sometimes seems as if the First World War has been overshadowed by the Second. What images of the First World War continue to linger in the popular imagination? What do history books and history courses tend to tell us about its causes and its consequences?

Lecture Fourteen
Eliot and the Multiplot Novel

Scope: George Eliot is the pseudonym of Marian (or Mary Ann) Evans, a thinker and editor who began writing fiction at the age of 37. In this lecture, the first of two on Eliot, we will see why her career marks a turning point in the history of English fiction. Eliot's *Middlemarch* is clearly indebted to the historical novels of Sir Walter Scott. Set in the period surrounding the first great Reform Bill, *Middlemarch* shows how individuals are affected by historical change. *Middlemarch* also perfects the form of the multiplot novel, combining the sweep of Dickens and Thackeray with the psychological acuity of Austen. Yet even as she works with familiar narrative forms, Eliot populates her world with new sorts of characters. Moved by deep spiritual yearnings, these characters want more than their immediate social worlds can provide. Through Eliot's depiction of such figures as Dorothea Brooke, she brings an unprecedented intellectual and moral seriousness to the English novel.

Outline

I. George Eliot is the pseudonym of Marian (or Mary Ann) Evans (1819–1880). In this lecture, we will see how she consolidates the achievements of earlier novelists.

- **A.** We will see that she is a historical novelist, clearly indebted to Sir Walter Scott.
- **B.** We will also see that she is a multiplot novelist who draws on the lessons of Dickens and Thackeray.
- **C.** Finally, we will identify her as a psychological novelist, heir to the legacy of Jane Austen.

II. We begin by reviewing the major events of Eliot's life.

- **A.** Unlike Charles Dickens or William Makepeace Thackeray, Evans was born and grew up in the country, and her experiences of rural life were the basis of her later fiction.
- **B.** Intensely devout as a young woman, she later came to view the Gospels as "histories consisting of mingled truth and fiction" and decided that she could no longer accompany her father to church.
- **C.** After her father's death, Evans used her inheritance to subsidize a career as a writer and editor, joining the staff of the *Westminster Review*, one of the leading journals of the day.
- **D.** Perhaps more important to her later fiction, however, was her experience as the translator of two works of biblical scholarship, both originally published in German.
  1. She translated the first, *The Life of Jesus* by David Friedrich Strauss, in 1846. The second, *The Essence of Christianity* by Ludwig Feuerbach, appeared in 1854.
  2. These two works were among the first in Western history to approach Christianity as a historical phenomenon. In them, Evans found a way to affirm the teachings of Jesus without accepting the notion of his divinity.
- **E.** Evans had a brilliant mind but did not know what kind of writing she wanted to do. Her decision to try her hand at fiction, which she reached at the age of 37, is a sign of the novel's rising status.
- **F.** Evans's first sketches were submitted anonymously; she began using her pseudonym in 1858, when the sketches were published as a book.
  1. One reason for her secrecy was the fact that she was living with a married man, George Lewes. She and Lewes thought of their own relationship as a marriage but knew that others would disagree.
  2. Although Evans later acknowledged authorship of her books, she continued to write and publish as George Eliot. Critics continue to use her pseudonym when writing about her work.

III. Over the course of her literary career, Eliot enjoyed greater and greater success.

- **A.** She first gained fame as the author of *Adam Bede* (1859). The novel establishes Eliot's great skill in developing women characters, as well as her continuing interest in religious feeling.
- **B.** *Mill on the Floss* (1860) ends with the death of its central character, Maggie Tulliver, and thus, stands out as one of the few tragic novels of the period.
- **C.** By the time Eliot finished *Middlemarch* (1871–1872), the novel widely regarded as her masterpiece, she stood alone among English novelists.

1. The great novelists of the early Victorian period were dead, including Dickens, Thackeray, and both Charlotte and Emily Brontë.
2. New writers, such as Thomas Hardy and Henry James, were entering the scene, but they had not yet emerged as major figures; thus, Eliot had the field all to herself, her only serious rival being Anthony Trollope.

IV. Eliot's triumph was not merely a matter of historical accident. In *Middlemarch*, her account of life in and around a small country town, she synthesized a number of earlier achievements in the novel form.

A. *Middlemarch* is indebted to historical novels, such as *Waverley* (1814). In Eliot, as in the works of Sir Walter Scott, we see how individuals are affected by larger historical forces.

B. Eliot places her fictional community on the brink of change, setting the novel in the period surrounding the Reform Bill of 1832. The characters not only debate the bill, which extended voting rights to some middle-class men, but also witness the extension of railway lines into their region.

C. Thus, we know what the characters cannot: that their way of life is about to be transformed as their small town is absorbed into a larger social network.

V. Eliot may also have perfected the form of the Victorian multiplot novel, combining the sweep of Dickens and Thackeray with the psychological depth of Jane Austen.

A. Like Dickens, she begins with several distinct groups of characters.
1. One group, reminiscent of the gentry families in Austen, lives in or around Tipton Grange. At the center of this group is Dorothea Brooke, an ardent young woman who surprises us with her decision to marry a middle-aged scholar.
2. Another group includes characters living in the town of Middlemarch, including the mayor, his son and daughter, and a young physician, Tertius Lydgate, who has recently arrived to work at a new hospital.
3. In addition to these two character clusters, Eliot introduces a third major grouping, which includes childhood sweethearts Fred Vincy and Mary Garth.

B. By the end, Eliot has connected all her characters, demonstrating what her narrator calls the "stealthy convergence of human lots."
1. The novel's three major plots, sharply distinct at the outset of the story, have merged by the end.
2. Behind this narrative design lies an important moral purpose. Eliot's aim is to move her readers out of their habitual egoism. If we understand our connections to other people, she reasons, we may become less likely to take the world "as an udder to feed our supreme selves."

VI. Eliot's psychological interests will be the subject of our next lecture. For now, it is enough to recognize her desire to populate the novel with new sorts of characters.

A. In many ways, Eliot's Dorothea resembles Austen's Emma Woodhouse: Both characters enjoy the advantages of wealth, beauty, and intelligence.

B. Emma, however, is happy to stay within the confines of her immediate social world, while Dorothea wants something more.
1. In the opening pages of the novel, Eliot likens Dorothea to St. Theresa of Avila, noting that Theresa's "passionate, ideal nature demanded an epic life."
2. Dorothea's intellectual and spiritual yearnings make her something of a misfit—despite her beauty and wealth, she doesn't quite fit in.
3. Dorothea's yearnings (and her lack of self-understanding) lead to her hasty marriage to Edward Casaubon, a middle-aged scholar and minister. She hopes that it will be like marrying Pascal or Milton, but she is bitterly disappointed.
4. Fortunately, by the end of the novel, Dorothea has found something better. Freed from her first marriage by Mr. Casaubon's death, she is now able to marry for love—and does so in spite of her friends' disapproval.

C. Characters like Dorothea had never before appeared in English fiction. By placing such characters at the center of her novels, Eliot takes the form in a new direction, investing it with an unprecedented sense of moral and intellectual seriousness.

Essential Reading:

Karen Chase, *George Eliot: Middlemarch*.

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*.

Supplementary Reading:

Rosemarie Bodenheimer, *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans: George Eliot, Her Letters and Fiction*.

Peter Garrett, *The Victorian Multiplot Novel: Studies in Dialogical Form*, chapter 4.

Questions to Consider:

1. Is any recent historical period comparable to the one in which *Middlemarch* is set? At what points in the 20th century were rural communities poised on the verge of great change?
2. Are characters like Dorothea—characters with intellectual and spiritual yearnings—still uncommon? Do any characters from recent books or movies share Dorothea's aspirations?

Lecture Fifteen
Eliot and the Unfolding of Character

Scope: In this lecture, we will conclude our discussion of *Middlemarch*, exploring Eliot's approach to characterization. Eliot learned much from Jane Austen, as we can see from her handling of Tertius Lydgate. Like Austen, Eliot shows how our personalities are shaped by accident and circumstance. For Eliot, however, personalities are never fixed or finished. In her world, character is a "process and an unfolding." Eliot's most original characters may be Edward Casaubon and Nicholas Bulstrode, middle-aged men who have known great disappointment. We cannot always approve of their actions, but we are made to understand their feelings—and to wonder what it would be like to be in their shoes. After considering Eliot's portrayal of Casaubon and Bulstrode, we will see why Virginia Woolf described *Middlemarch* as "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people."

Outline

I. We ended our first lecture on George Eliot by examining her portrayal of Dorothea Brooke. In this lecture, we will continue to explore Eliot's understanding of character.

- **A.** Eliot shows how circumstances help to shape our personalities.
- **B.** For Eliot, however, personalities are never fixed or finished. As her narrator explains, character is a "process and an unfolding."

II. Eliot's views on these matters are evident in her handling of all the characters. We'll focus this lecture on three of her men:

- **A.** Dr. Tertius Lydgate, who at the beginning of the novel has only recently arrived in town.
- **B.** Edward Casaubon, a clergyman and scholar, the first husband to Eliot's heroine, Dorothea Brooke.
- **C.** Nicholas Bulstrode, a banker and community leader. Through her portrayal of Bulstrode's religious hypocrisy, Eliot raises a number of spiritual questions.

III. Eliot's approach to character first becomes evident in her portrayal of Dr. Lydgate.

- **A.** Lydgate is another orphan, and like Dorothea, he comes from a distinguished family. Indeed, his aristocratic connections set him apart from others in his profession.
  - **1.** Here, we might note that the medical profession was not then what it is now. Though medicine had advanced beyond the days of barber-surgeons, the medical profession was still largely unregulated.
  - **2.** Eliot was especially interested in the conflict between physicians whose medical practices were based on tradition and younger doctors (such as Lydgate) who took a more scientific approach.
- **B.** Eliot shows how chance events have shaped Lydgate's personality, explaining that his vocation is the result of an accident—his childhood discovery of an encyclopedia article on human anatomy.
- **C.** In Eliot's handling of such details, we see her debt to Austen.
  - **1.** In the opening paragraphs of *Emma*, Austen shows how a number of factors unite in the formation of Emma's personality.
  - **2.** These factors include her beauty, intelligence, social position, and wealth. Had any of these things been different, Austen suggests, Emma's personality would have been different as well.
- **D.** In addition to noting the impact of accidents and circumstances, Eliot traces the gradual unfolding of Lydgate's personality.
  - **1.** Eliot's narrator tells us that while studying medicine in Paris, Lydgate became involved with a French actress, proposing marriage, only to discover that she may have murdered her first husband.
  - **2.** Despite his determination to take a "strictly scientific view of women," Lydgate jumps into marriage with Rosamond Vincy, daughter of the mayor, and this marriage proves to be a terrible mistake for both of them.
  - **3.** At the end of the novel, we're told that although Lydgate later enjoyed worldly success as a physician in London, he "always regarded himself as a failure" and "died prematurely of diphtheria."

4. In Lydgate's case, we are dealing not with a single set of circumstances but with a chain of events: The affair with the actress leads to the resolution to avoid entanglements with women, which in turn, leads to the impulsive engagement and the unhappy marriage.

IV. Despite her success with Lydgate, Eliot offers something even more original in Casaubon and Bulstrode.

A. Both of these figures are middle-aged and, thus, strikingly different from the youthful protagonists of most English novels. What's more, they are conflicted and tormented men, capable of hurting others as well as themselves.

B. Casaubon hurts Dorothea, largely through suspicion and mistrust.

1. Though he appears pretentious and vain, Casaubon is deeply insecure, afraid of being exposed as a failure. Though he has for years been working on a massive scholarly project, he has refused to consult the leading authorities on his subject.
2. Through his adult life, he has managed to hide his insecurities from others, but after his marriage, further concealment becomes impossible.

C. As Casaubon takes out his frustrations on Dorothea, we are torn. Though we do not approve of his behavior, we can see that his situation is desperate. It would be terrible to be in Dorothea's situation, we feel, but perhaps even worse to be in Casaubon's.

V. After resolving Casaubon's story with his death, Eliot moves on to the more difficult case of Bulstrode.

A. Now a pillar of his church, Bulstrode is hiding dark secrets.

1. As a young man, Bulstrode inherited a fortune from his first wife, after concealing information about her estranged daughter.
2. The past is now catching up with Bulstrode, and as he confronts the threat of exposure, he is tormented. He knows that he has cheated his stepdaughter and that it is too late for him to set things right.
3. Moreover, he is not sure that he really wants to set things right. He has enjoyed many advantages because of the inheritance from his first wife, and he is not ready to give them up.

B. As Bulstrode's world collapses and he is forced to leave Middlemarch, we cannot help but feel that he is getting what he deserves. As with Casaubon, we also share his pain and wonder what it would be like to be in his situation.

1. What would it be like to spend your life with a terrible secret? How would you cope with the knowledge that you'd wronged another person? How might you justify your actions to yourself?
2. These are the questions that Eliot raises through her portrayal of Bulstrode. As we consider them, we can see why Virginia Woolf described *Middlemarch* as "one of the few English novels written for grown-up people."

Essential Reading:

Karen Chase, *Eros and Psyche: The Representation of Personality in Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, and George Eliot*, chapters 7–8.

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*.

Supplementary Reading:

Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*, chapter 4.

Virginia Woolf, "George Eliot," in *The Common Reader: First Series*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Does sympathy preclude or complicate moral judgment? Once we understand a person's motives, are we incapable of assessing his or her actions?
2. What makes a book seem "grown-up"? Woolf suggests that it has something to do with the acknowledgment of pain and failure. Do you agree?

Lecture Sixteen
Hardy and the Natural World

Scope: Like George Eliot, Thomas Hardy is drawn to stories of disappointment and failure. Yet if Eliot considers the possibility of tragedy, Hardy embraces it. His major novels end unhappily, often with the destruction of the main character, leaving us with no sense of poetic justice. Closely connected to Hardy's tragic sensibility is his view of nature. At times, Hardy encourages us to think of nature as benevolent, a source of consolation and redemption. At other times, he reverses course, presenting nature as malevolent and cruel. Through all of this, Hardy dramatizes human misunderstandings of nature, suggesting that natural forces are indifferent to our happiness or survival. The world of his fiction, strongly influenced by his reading of Darwin, is one in which natural forces are not immoral but amoral. By presenting nature in these terms, Hardy breaks with the traditions of English fiction and points ahead to the achievements of later writers.

Outline

I. It is no surprise to learn that the early fiction of Thomas Hardy was sometimes thought to have been written by George Eliot.

- **A.** Like Eliot, Hardy sets his stories in small villages and towns, and like Eliot, he is drawn to experiences of disappointment and failure.
- **B.** Yet if Eliot considers the possibility of tragedy, Hardy embraces it.
  - **1.** His major novels end with the destruction of the main character, and the intense suffering of those characters often seems undeserved.
  - **2.** There is no sense of poetic justice in Hardy's world: Virtue is not necessarily rewarded, and vice may be punished excessively.
- **C.** This aspect of Hardy's fiction—often identified with what critics call his "pessimism"—will be our main concern in this lecture.
  - **1.** We will account for Hardy's pessimism by connecting it to both his personal experiences and his view of nature.
  - **2.** Our main example will be Hardy's most famous and popular novel, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891).
  - **3.** *Tess* ends with the heroine's execution for the crime of murder and, thus, illustrates Hardy's differences from the novelists we've studied so far.
  - **4.** There had been a few tragic novels in England—including Richardson's *Clarissa* and Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*—but Hardy is the first English novelist who consistently works in a tragic mode.

II. The roots of Hardy's pessimism may lie in his earliest experiences.

- **A.** Hardy was born in 1840 and died in 1928. He was, in many ways, an outsider, distinctly different from other writers of his day.
  - **1.** His father was a stonemason—not exactly a laborer, but not a professional either.
  - **2.** Hardy's early education was good, but instead of attending college, he was apprenticed to a local architect.
- **B.** Hardy's marriage is another possible source of his later pessimism. By the time he reached his late 40s, he and his wife were leading separate lives.

III. Hardy's first works of fiction appeared in the early 1870s, around the same time as *Middlemarch*.

- **A.** His real breakthrough came with the publication of *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874). Through the 1870s and into the 1880s, he published a number of popular novels, including *The Return of the Native* (1878).
- **B.** In 1889, as Hardy began working on *Tess*, he was beginning to chafe against the restrictions placed on English novelists. Eventually, he gave vent to his frustrations in an essay called "Candour in English Fiction."
  - **1.** After agreeing that English novelists do not feel free to talk honestly and openly about sex, Hardy explains that most magazines and libraries refuse to publish or stock material that isn't suitable for the entire family.

2. Until this system is changed, Hardy concludes, English readers shouldn't expect much more from English novels.

IV. In *Tess*, Hardy was testing the limits of what was considered acceptable.

A. Central to the novel are issues of sex and sexual desire.

1. The novel begins by placing Tess in a situation like that of Richardson's heroines. Tess is first pursued by her wealthy employer and cousin, Alec D'Urberville.
2. But instead of being rewarded with an offer of marriage, Tess is either raped or seduced (the situation is unclear) and drawn into a brief sexual relationship with Alec, during the course of which she becomes pregnant.
3. Thus, we might view *Tess* as a deliberate revision of *Pamela*. In Hardy's version of the story, the poor girl actually comes from an aristocratic family, and the aristocrat is really just a fake.

B. Through the rest of the novel, Hardy continues to challenge conventional attitudes toward sex.

1. After leaving Alec, Tess returns to live with her family. Her baby dies in infancy, and Tess learns that because it was never properly baptized, it cannot be buried in the churchyard.
2. Throughout the rest of the novel, Hardy repeatedly insists that sexual desire should not be regarded as sinful. To stigmatize sex, he says, is to deny our own essential nature.

C. When preparing the novel for its original serial publication, Hardy decided to remove and publish separately some of the most controversial episodes, a process that he compared to dismembering a body.

D. When it came time to republish *Tess* in volume form, he not only reincorporated the missing episodes but added a provocative subtitle, boldly identifying Tess as a "pure woman."

E. After *Tess*, Hardy published only one more novel, *Jude the Obscure* (1895), giving up fiction for poetry.

V. Hardy's tragic sensibility and his view of sexuality are both connected to his understanding of nature.

A. At times, Hardy encourages us to think that nature is benevolent—that it will reward patience and virtue.

1. After the death of her baby, Tess finds great satisfaction in her work at a dairy. Through these scenes, Hardy suggests that because nature can be intensely beautiful, it must also be inherently good.
2. These suggestions are reinforced when Tess appears to find a man who truly loves her, Angel Clare.
3. Tess marries Clare but is rejected by him after confessing her sexual history. In a matter of days, the couple parts—apparently for good.

B. After this decisive event, Hardy seems to change direction completely, presenting nature as malevolent and cruel.

1. In describing Tess's work on other farms, Hardy's narrator suggests that she has entered a bleak and inhospitable world.
2. Later events seem to confirm this impression: After Tess drifts back into a relationship with Alec, her husband finally returns to her, seeking reconciliation.
3. Traumatized by Clare's return, Tess murders Alec and flees with her husband, avoiding capture for just a few days. Eventually, she is caught and executed for her crime.

VI. Through all of this, Hardy may seem to be viewing the natural world from a Darwinian perspective.

A. At first glance, Darwin's world seems to be cruel and violent. Yet on a closer reading, we see that Darwin stresses the ultimate *indifference* of nature and natural processes.

B. In the end, following Darwin, Hardy thinks of natural forces as amoral, not immoral.

C. Hardy seems to view Tess not as a victim of nature's cruelty or indifference but as a person unfit for her environment.

VII. In such novels as *Tess*, Hardy considers the possibility that human consciousness is actually part of the problem.

A. For Hardy, consciousness may be a kind of "maladaptation"—a trait that actually makes us less capable of thriving in our present environment.

B. According to Hardy, then, we may all be misfits like Tess—unsuited for life in a world like this one. More than anything else, such views distinguish him from almost all earlier English novelists.

Essential Reading:

Gillian Beer, *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, chapter 8.

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.

Supplementary Reading:

Penny Boumelha, *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form*, chapter 6.

David Lodge, "Tess, Nature, and the Voices of Hardy," in *Language of Fiction: Essays in Criticism and Verbal Analysis of the English Novel*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do Hardy's complaints about English publishers, booksellers, and readers seem justified? Are similar restrictions placed on artists today, or are they free to explore whatever subjects they choose?
2. Hardy suggests that we project our own ideas about beauty or morality onto nature. If that's true, then how can we know if we've begun to see the natural world in a more accurate way?

Lecture Seventeen
James and the Art of Fiction

Scope: Henry James is important not because he defended the novel form, but because he devised a new sort of defense, stressing the novel's ability to expand our perceptions. In this lecture, we will see how James developed this argument in two works from the 1880s: *The Portrait of a Lady*, his first great novel, and "The Art of Fiction," his most famous critical essay. We will begin by noting that James creates problems for literary historians: An American by birth, he lived in England for more than 40 years, setting many of his greatest stories there. We will also review his acquaintance with French and Russian novelists, suggesting that conversations with Flaubert and Turgenev played a crucial role in his development. Though we will end by acknowledging the influence of James's later novels, our aim will be to recognize his achievements in the 1880s. Through this crucial decade, James not only challenges the most cherished conventions of English fiction but also introduces new ways of thinking and talking about the novel form.

Outline

I. This lecture deals with one of the major figures in the history of the Anglo-American novel, Henry James; it also draws together many of the major themes of our course.

- **A.** The lecture takes up the idea of the novel as a popular and accessible form, one designed for common people, rather than educated elites.
- **B.** The lecture also examines the idea of the novel as a medium of moral instruction. As we'll see, James devises a new way of thinking about the novel's morality, stressing its ability to expand our perceptions.
- **C.** In addition, the lecture explores the growing sense of discontent among English writers. We've seen an example of that discontent in Hardy, and we'll see further evidence of it in James.

II. This lecture will also present us with a new question: Who really qualifies as an English novelist?

- **A.** James was born in the United States and is often identified as an American writer, even though he spent much of his adult life in England and eventually chose to become an English citizen.
- **B.** He's included in this course for a simple reason: His absence would leave a gaping hole in our understanding of the English novel tradition.

III. We will focus our discussion of these issues by looking at two of James's greatest works: *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and his most influential critical essay, "The Art of Fiction" (1884). Before dealing with these works, however, we'll need to review the major events of his life.

- **A.** James was born in 1843, in New York City, and he died in 1916. His family was wealthy and ambitious, producing an impressive list of writers and thinkers.
  - **1.** James's father became a kind of amateur theologian and lecturer, as well as a friend to the American transcendentalists.
  - **2.** His older brother William is now regarded as a central figure in the history of two modern academic disciplines: psychology and religious studies.
  - **3.** Although his sister Alice spent much of her life as an invalid, she nevertheless produced a remarkable diary, first published in the 1930s.
- **B.** James began traveling at an early age and spent much of his youth moving between the United States and Europe.
- **C.** Much of James's literary inspiration came from France and Russia.
  - **1.** He was the first major novelist in England or America to befriend Continental writers, such as Ivan Turgenev and Gustave Flaubert.
  - **2.** As a young man visiting with these more experienced novelists, he noted that their discussion centered not on the moral status of characters or stories but on questions of craft and technique.
- **D.** As a result of his experiences as a traveler in Europe and a reader of Continental fiction, James became convinced that the United States had little to offer an ambitious novelist.
- **E.** James became a British subject in 1915, at the age of 72.

IV. James's greatest popular success as a novelist came in the late 1870s, with his treatment of what came to be known as the "international theme."

A. In such works as *The American* (1877), *The Europeans* (1878), and *Daisy Miller* (1879), James explores the tension between American and European values.

1. Typically, James dramatizes this tension by bringing American characters to England, France, or Italy.

2. As we watch the Americans adjust to European customs, we ask many questions: Are the Americans idealistic or naïve? Are the Europeans sophisticated or cynical? How does each group understand its relationship to the other?

B. James's most impressive investigation of the "international theme" came about 10 years into his literary career, with *The Portrait of a Lady*.

1. The young "lady" of the novel's title is Isabel Archer, an American who travels from Albany to visit her wealthy relatives in England.

2. Isabel's American relatives have purchased a great country house and become friends with Lord Warburton, who soon proposes marriage to her. Isabel not only refuses Warburton but also turns down Casper Goodwood, a Boston businessman, insisting that she wishes to remain independent.

3. After inheriting a great fortune from her uncle, Isabel decides to marry, accepting the proposal of another American expatriate, Gilbert Osmond. The marriage is unsuccessful, and at the end of the novel, Isabel remains trapped.

4. Isabel's story has a moral dimension—she gains a fuller understanding of human virtues and vices. Yet unlike Dorothea Brooke, in Eliot's *Middlemarch*, she cannot use her new insights as the basis for a happier and more fulfilling life.

5. For James, understanding is an end, not a means. He does not offer anything more, either to his heroine or his readers.

V. A few years after finishing *The Portrait of a Lady*, James published "The Art of Fiction," his most important critical work.

A. James's essay was written in response to a lecture by Walter Besant, who had praised English novelists for almost always starting with a "conscious moral purpose."

B. In sharp contrast with Besant, James asserted the artist's freedom to explore the subjects that interested him, suggesting that most English writers had become "shy" and "timid," reluctant to deal with the "sad things of life."

C. James's most important move was to present the novelist as an artist, rather than a moralist. "Questions of art are questions (in the widest sense) of execution," he said. "Questions of morality are quite another affair."

D. In describing the work of the novelist, James also stressed the importance of perceptiveness and sensitivity. His major piece of advice to aspiring writers was: "Try to be one of those people on whom nothing is lost!"

VI. These ideas are extended in James's late masterpieces—*The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904).

A. In these novels, James attempts to capture the most fleeting impressions and perceptions, presenting almost everything from the perspective of a single central character.

B. For many readers, such works as *The Ambassadors* are James's crowning achievements. For others, those same works are simply frustrating.

1. The main issue is what critics call James's "late style"—a tendency toward ever longer and more complicated sentence structures.

2. Those long sentences enable James to capture the minute fluctuations of human thought, yet they also require considerable attention—even from the most experienced and sophisticated readers.

C. In any case, James's late novels should not overshadow his achievements in the 1880s.

1. In his portrait of Isabel Archer, he challenges some of the most cherished conventions of English fiction: the conscious moral purpose, the happy ending, poetic justice.

2. In his critical writings, he establishes connections between English and Continental traditions, presenting the novel form as an art form, one with the same potential for greatness as painting or sculpture.

Essential Reading:

Henry James, "The Art of Fiction," in *The Critical Muse: Selected Literary Criticism*.

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*.

Supplementary Reading:

Richard Chase, *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, chapters 1 and 6.

Dorothy Van Ghent, "On *The Portrait of a Lady*," in *The English Novel: Form and Function*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What problems of classification are created by expatriate writers? If a writer is born in one country, then spends most of her life in another country, should she be grouped with the writers of her native land or with those of her adopted home?
2. Is James right to doubt the wisdom of starting a novel—or any work of art—with a "conscious moral purpose"? What are the dangers of beginning in that way?

Lecture Eighteen
Conrad and the "Scramble for Africa"

Scope: Joseph Conrad follows Henry James in exploring the moral complications of storytelling and in developing the form of the frame narrative. Conrad is also the first great novelist in the English tradition to take up the subject of European imperialism. In his most famous work, *Heart of Darkness*, he focuses on the European "scramble" for control of Africa, drawing on his own experiences as a merchant seaman in the Belgian Congo. As the story unfolds, Conrad's attitude toward imperialism proves to be highly complex. At times, he upholds racist stereotypes and seems to provide a justification for colonial violence. At other times, he offers a devastating critique of imperialism, tracing its crimes back to a single motivation—namely, greed. By the end of the book, Conrad has forced a terrible self-knowledge upon his readers. If there can be no end to imperialism, he implies, then perhaps there can be an end to some of the more absurd and self-deluded idealizations of it.

Outline

I. At the end of our last lecture, we noted the influence of Henry James on Joseph Conrad (1857–1924). Let's begin by extending that point and trying to develop a fuller understanding of Conrad's career.

- **A.** Conrad was much younger than James and, thus, in a position to see James as a kind of mentor.
- **B.** He was also able to appreciate James's interest in the experience of cultural dislocation.
  - **1.** Though Conrad was the son of Polish aristocrats, he was actually born in the Ukraine. His father was later exiled to a village in northern Russia.
  - **2.** The experience of exile hastened the death of both parents. By the age of 12, Conrad was an orphan, left in the care of his mother's brother, who allowed him to go to sea a few years later.
  - **3.** Conrad eventually sought work on British vessels, serving as a British seaman for 16 years. He retired from his maritime career in 1894, settling down in England and devoting himself to his writing.
- **C.** James and Conrad met in February of 1897 and remained friendly—though tensions did emerge as the years wore on.

II. In October of 1898, Conrad read a new story by James, "The Turn of the Screw," which may have changed his own approach to fiction writing.

- **A.** The most interesting feature of the story was its narrative structure. "The Turn of Screw" is a frame narrative—a tale within a tale, recounted by multiple narrators.
- **B.** James's story helps us to see why frame narratives are often described as stories about storytelling. The act of storytelling is central to such narratives, as are acts of reception and interpretation.
- **C.** This sort of thing proved fascinating to Conrad, who began to produce frame narratives of his own—the most famous of them being *Heart of Darkness* (from 1899) and *Lord Jim* (from 1900).
  - **1.** Conrad begins his frame narratives in the same way that James begins "The Turn of the Screw," with an anonymous narrator who quickly hands the ball off to another storyteller.
  - **2.** Most often, that second storyteller is Charlie Marlow, an experienced and somewhat cynical English seaman who is, in many ways, an alter ego for Conrad.
  - **3.** Conrad also follows James in emphasizing the self-serving, self-interested quality of storytelling.

III. Another feature distinguishes writers like Conrad and James from their predecessors.

- **A.** With few exceptions, the characters in 18th- and 19th-century novels can be seen and known fully.
- **B.** By the time we come to Conrad, we face a growing suspicion, later common among the Modernists, that such knowledge is unattainable.
- **C.** In short, the frame narratives of James and Conrad raise questions about the motives for storytelling and the possibility of absolute knowledge, either sociological or psychological.

IV. Conrad is also the first great novelist in the English tradition to treat the subject of European imperialism in a serious and sophisticated manner.

A. He shows that although the imperial project is often justified by religious and moral arguments, it is actually rooted in greed and enforced by violence and brutality.

B. Throughout the 19th century, European empires had been growing steadily, and the 1880s and 1890s witnessed what would later be described as a "scramble" for control of Africa.

V. In *Heart of Darkness*, Conrad drew on his own experiences of exile and disillusion.

A. He had traveled extensively in Asia, and in 1890, he made the most important journey of his career, sailing to the coast of Africa and steaming up the Congo River.

B. He had long been fascinated with Africa, but what he found there was nothing like what he'd expected.

1. At the time of his visit, the Congo was the private property of King Leopold II of Belgium. Leopold's men not only plundered the country but also ravaged the population, killing as many as 10 million people in the process.

2. Conrad's trip proved both physically and morally debilitating. "Everything here is repellent to me," he wrote in one letter to a friend. "Men and things, but above all men."

C. These feelings would make their way into *Heart of Darkness*, in which Conrad saw himself as pushing "only a very little…beyond the facts of the case."

VI. As we move into the novel, we discover that Conrad's view of imperialism is complex and contradictory.

A. At times, Conrad affirms racist stereotypes and may provide justification for colonial violence.

1. The black characters in this novel are portrayed as uncivilized savages. Their behavior is irrational and incomprehensible.

2. These characters are also incapable of entering into any kind of normal relationship with Europeans. The Africans are portrayed as responding only to the use of force.

3. We may be invited to conclude that if Europeans are going to live and work in Africa, they will be forced to resort to violence and oppression.

B. Yet if Conrad sometimes seems to justify colonial violence, he cannot be said to glorify it.

1. Over the course of the novel, supposedly civilized Europeans engage in numerous acts of casual cruelty. Indeed, they enjoy the opportunity to beat, starve, and enslave the Africans.

2. In describing one group of traders, Marlow tells us that their sole desire was "to tear treasure from the bowels of the land…with no more moral purpose at the back of it than there is in burglars breaking into a safe."

3. This is especially true of Mr. Kurtz, the novel's most compelling character. Kurtz comes to Africa hoping to assist in the spread of civilization, yet before long, he has cast aside his mission and his morals, becoming a kind of madman.

4. Marlow is unable to rescue Kurtz from corruption and death. In the end, Marlow gains admiration for Kurtz, but only because Kurtz is marginally more honest than the other European traders.

5. Kurtz has gained a horrible self-knowledge, Marlow implies, and ultimately, that is the most one can hope for.

VII. In the end, Conrad's novel seeks to encourage a similar self-knowledge among its late Victorian readers.

A. If Kurtz could be corrupted, then so could anyone. How can we be sure that we wouldn't succumb to the same temptations?

B. Conrad had no hope of putting an end to the scramble for Africa. His aim was to challenge the idealization or glorification of European imperialism.

C. By exploring these themes, and leading his readers to such uncomfortable conclusions, Conrad not only extends the reach of the English novel but also deepens its impact.

Essential Reading:

Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa," in *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays*.

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*.

Supplementary Reading:

Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914*, chapter 9.

Robert Hampson, introduction to the Penguin edition of *Heart of Darkness*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Why might a writer be drawn to the idea of a frame narrative? Why might he be interested in using multiple narrators?
2. Is Conrad's critique of imperialism focused solely on the situation in the Belgian Congo? Does his critique apply to other instances of colonial violence?

Lecture Nineteen
Ford and Forster—Transition to Modernism

Scope: E. M. Forster and Ford Madox Ford are transitional figures, bridging the gap between the 19th and 20th centuries. This lecture will concentrate on their relationship to earlier traditions and their anticipation of later ones. The lecture starts with Forster's first great success, *Howards End*. In this novel, Forster borrows much from mid-Victorian novelists, particularly in his efforts to reveal hidden connections between widely separated social classes. By the end of the story, he has brought the contending groups together, creating his own version of the classic comedic ending. The lecture then moves on to Ford's masterpiece, *The Good Soldier*. Like Forster, Ford draws on the achievements of earlier writers, fashioning a brilliant synthesis of Conrad, James, and Hardy. Ford's work is distinguished by his subtle analysis of marital conflict and sexual infidelity, themes often relegated to the margins of serious English fiction. The lecture closes with a look at *A Passage to India*, in which Forster explores the effects of colonial rule on both the colonizer and the colonized.

Outline

I. In this lecture, we'll continue our progression into the 20th century, focusing on the works of E. M. Forster and Ford Madox Ford.

- **A.** We'll start with *Howards End* by Forster (1910); move on to *The Good Soldier* by Ford (1915); and conclude with *A Passage to India*, also by Forster (1924).
- **B.** Although these works have been widely acclaimed, they may not serve as especially good examples of Modernism. Obviously, your view of that issue depends on your definition of Modernism itself.
  - **1.** If you associate Modernism with an attitude toward life and society, then the works of Forster and Ford should qualify.
  - **2.** If you identify Modernism as a matter of style or form, then there is some room for doubt about Forster and Ford, because stylistic experimentation is not the main attraction of their work.

II. With that in mind, let's turn our attention to Forster.

- **A.** Edward Morgan Forster was born in 1879, and he enjoyed an exceptionally long life, passing away after a stroke in May of 1970.
- **B.** His parents came from different walks of life. His father was from a wealthy family, while his mother had more modest origins.
- **C.** Forster was educated at Cambridge and began his literary career in 1905 with the publication of *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. His next novel, *A Room with a View*, enjoyed some success, but his real breakthrough came with *Howards End*.

III. In *Howards End*, Forster takes up the legacy of the great Victorian novelists—Dickens, Thackeray, and Eliot—in looking for connections between widely separated social classes.

- **A.** His approach to this issue is fresh and interesting, because he refuses to treat social classes as unified, monolithic groups. At the beginning of the novel, he shows us the differences between two affluent families.
  - **1.** On the one side are the Schlegel sisters, who represent urban intellectuals like Forster himself. They are patrons of the arts, and they identify themselves as politically progressive.
  - **2.** On the other side is the Wilcox family. They represent what we might call "business interests." They care little for art or books and, instead, enjoy playing sports, driving fast cars, and dealing in real estate.
- **B.** Throughout the novel, Forster is interested in seeing how these two groups might somehow come together. His narrator is quick to note that some connections already exist, whether the characters know it or not.
- **C.** Later in the novel, Forster goes even further, bringing Margaret Schlegel and Henry Wilcox together in marriage. Though this union is sometimes rocky, it does become the basis for a classic comedic ending, in which many of the major characters are reunited at the country home of Henry's first wife.

IV. This emphasis on social harmony and personal fulfillment is nowhere to be found in Ford Madox Ford's *The Good Soldier*.

A. Ford was born Ford Hermann Hueffer in 1873, and he died in 1939. In what seems like an attempt to re-create himself, he later had his name legally changed to Ford Madox Ford.

B. This change followed a series of emotional trials and marital crises. It also followed his service in the First World War, where he was nearly killed in the first battle of the Somme.

V. *The Good Soldier* can be read as a brilliant synthesis of Hardy, James, and Conrad.

A. Like Hardy, Ford steers the novel toward tragedy. And like Hardy, he also portrays sexuality as a disruptive and destructive force.

1. Before we're 10 pages into the book, we begin to suspect that Florence, the wife of narrator John Dowell, has had an affair with one of their closest friends, Captain Edward Ashburnham.

2. As it turns out, Florence Dowell was Ashburnham's mistress for about nine years. Ashburnham has had a number of affairs, but the "grand passion" of his life is Nancy Rufford, a girl of 22 who is also his ward.

3. The consequences of this passion are devastating, and as the story unfolds, it's hard to tell who should be seen in the better light—the characters who commit adultery or the ones who don't.

4. Thus, we can see Ford working (as Hardy did) to expand the subject matter of the English novel. Until the publication of *The Good Soldier*, there had been no English equivalent of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* (1857) or Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* (1875–1877), classic stories of adultery and its aftermath.

B. Like James, Ford is interested in the relationship between naïve or idealistic Americans and cynical or realistic Europeans.

1. Dowell and his wife are Americans, while the Ashburnhams are English—and, on the husband's side, aristocratic.

2. In exploring the characters of the Ashburnhams, Dowell sees himself as "sound[ing] the depths of the English heart." Through the novels, Americans seem to find European culture both attractive and dangerous.

C. Finally, like Conrad, Ford chooses not to present the events of his story in chronological order. What's more, he also follows Conrad in focusing on the psychology of storytelling.

1. It's clear that Dowell wants to tell his story—including the episode of his own cuckolding.

2. At the same time, it's also clear that Dowell is unsure of exactly what has happened to him. Over and over again, he calls attention to his own ignorance and confusion.

3. Through Dowell, Ford may go beyond Conrad, linking storytelling to darker psychological possibilities. Why should Dowell torment himself by telling and retelling this story? Why should he force himself to confront his own limited powers of understanding?

VI. Before closing, we must also give some attention to another major work, Forster's *A Passage to India*.

A. Forster had lived and traveled in India, and he had firsthand knowledge of the social tensions between native Indians and their British colonial rulers.

B. In his novel, Forster acknowledges that India is divided in multiple ways. In addition to the division between the British and the native Indians, there are divisions among the Indians themselves—most notably, a split between Hindus and Muslims.

C. By exploring these divisions, Forster raises questions that remain important to us today: Can people of different backgrounds or faiths find common ground? Can they become political allies and personal friends?

D. Such questions are debated by the characters themselves. In the opening scene, several Indian Muslims argue over "whether or not it is possible to be friends with an Englishman."

E. Forster concludes that colonialism hardens the hearts of both colonizer and colonized, and in reaching this conclusion, he departs from the social optimism of *Howards End*.

1. At the close of *Howards End*, Forster had offered a vision of social harmony and rebirth. At the end of *A Passage to India*, he gives us something very different.

2. In the final scene, we see the parting of two men, one Indian and one British, who have tried and failed to become friends. They have been torn apart by larger social forces—and although they both regret it, they are powerless to change their situation.

Essential Reading:

Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*.

E. M. Forster, *Howards End* and *A Passage to India*.

Supplementary Reading:

David Galef, "Forster, Ford, and the New Novel of Manners," in *The Columbia History of the British Novel*.

Michael Levenson, *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality: Character and Novelistic Form from Conrad to Woolf*, chapters 2–3.

Questions to Consider:

1. Scholars often find it difficult to decide if Forster and Ford should be labeled as Modernists. How important are such labels? What would happen if we simply ignored them?
2. Can you see why Forster thought that a comedic ending would be inappropriate for *A Passage to India*? Should we admire his refusal to provide us with such an ending—or should we, instead, feel disappointed in him?

Lecture Twenty
Lawrence and the "Bright Book of Life"

Scope: With the appearance of D. H. Lawrence, our transition to Modernism is complete. Lawrence is most controversial of the major Modernists, and in this lecture, we'll try to get a sense of what makes him so distinctive. Most of our attention will be focused on *Women in Love*, in which Lawrence presents himself as a critic of modern industrial society, attacking conventional views of love, marriage, and sex. As we'll see, Lawrence also rejects conventional approaches to human psychology. Indeed, his aim is to assert the value of what one character calls the "final me," a self that includes body, mind, and spirit. Although Lawrence discards the methods of earlier novelists, he holds out hope for the novel itself, praising it as the "one bright book of life." The philosopher, scientist, and poet engage different "bits" of the human being, he says, but only the novelist makes the "whole man alive tremble."

Outline

I. With this lecture, we begin the final phase of our course and complete our transition into Modernism. Our focus this time is the most controversial of the major Modernists, D. H. Lawrence (1885–1930).

- **A.** For his admirers, Lawrence is one of the great social critics—and one of the great liberators—of the 20th century.
- **B.** For his critics, Lawrence is a muddled and confused thinker. According to these critics, the problem is most obvious in his writing about sex and in his views of women.
- **C.** Whether you come away from this lecture loving or hating Lawrence, you should get a sense of what makes him interesting and distinctive.

II. Lawrence is the first of our writers—and perhaps the only major figure in the entire tradition—whose origins are working-class.

- **A.** Lawrence's father was a coal miner, who worked in the pits from boyhood into old age. His mother, a former schoolteacher, came from a higher social class.
- **B.** The tensions between Lawrence's parents escalated into what he would later call a "fearful, bloody battle"—a conflict described with great precision in the opening chapter of *Sons and Lovers* (1913).
  - **1.** In that chapter, we meet Gertrude Morel—married to a miner and pregnant with her third child.
  - **2.** Lawrence treats the figure of the mother with deep sympathy, yet he also sees how her love for the children creates problems for everyone.
  - **3.** The conflict between the parents can be read as a conflict between two sets of social values. Such conflicts lie behind much of Lawrence's writing and played a major part in his personal life, as well.
- **C.** Lawrence's own marriage was both complicated and difficult—among the most tempestuous in literary history.
  - **1.** Lawrence fell instantly and deeply in love with his eventual wife, Frieda, even though she was married to one of his professors.
  - **2.** Frieda agreed to end her marriage and give up her rights to her three children, and this enormous sacrifice was a major cause of their now-famous battles.
  - **3.** Yet along with the fights and infidelities, there were moments of intense connection. Indeed, Lawrence found that Frieda inspired him in a way that no other person ever could.
- **D.** No less troubled than his love for Frieda were Lawrence's dealings with editors, publishers, and critics.
  - **1.** Lawrence's major works were objects of controversy. All were rejected by at least one publisher, and three were prosecuted for obscenity.
  - **2.** These controversies were intensely difficult for Lawrence, and they deepened his sense of alienation from the English public.
- **E.** Those feelings of alienation were intensified by Lawrence's response to the First World War. Both he and Frieda were disgusted by the conformity and simple-minded patriotism of wartime England.

III. Lawrence began his literary career in 1909, but his first great success came a few years later, with the publication of *Sons and Lovers*.

A. *Sons and Lovers* introduces Lawrence's most characteristic subjects—family, work, love, freedom. Its treatment of sexual desire and sexual passion remains remarkably candid.

B. *Sons and Lovers* also bears a close resemblance to James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916): Both works center on the struggles of a young artist, and both experiment with open endings.

IV. Lawrence's next major project, an enormous family saga, was eventually split into two parts.

A. The first part, published in 1915 as *The Rainbow*, treated the family's history through several generations.

B. The second part appeared in 1920, after extensive revisions, as *Women in Love*.

1. The women of the novel's title are Ursula and Gudrun Brangwen, sisters in their mid-20s. Ursula falls in love with a colleague, a school inspector named Rupert Birkin, while Gudrun chooses Gerald Crich, the son of a mine owner.

2. Complicating the situation is the intense friendship between the two men. Even as Birkin enters into marriage with Ursula, he hopes for a relationship with his male friend, as something "additional to marriage."

3. By the end of the novel, Birkin and Ursula have married. Gudrun has become involved with another man, and Gerald, tormented by jealousy, has died.

4. The final scene presents us with another open ending, as Birkin views Gerald's dead body and mourns the passing of their chance for an "emotional union."

V. Throughout *Women in Love*, Lawrence presents himself as a critic of modern industrial society.

A. His views are first expressed through Gudrun, who is repulsed by the "shapeless, barren ugliness" of the mining town.

B. Such views are later articulated by Birkin, whose hatred of industrialization leads to contempt for all humanity. Although Birkin's opinions are mocked by other characters, it is clear that Lawrence shares his view of industrial society as dehumanizing.

VI. Lawrence also attacks conventional views of love, marriage, and sex—thereby distancing himself from the work of earlier novelists.

A. In the opening scene between Gudrun and Ursula, Lawrence makes it clear that none of the usual reasons for marriage—affection, security, or children—will be enough to draw or bind his characters together.

B. In later episodes, Lawrence turns his attention to sexual bonds, insisting that sexual pleasure has a spiritual dimension.

1. In their first sexual encounter, Birkin and Ursula experience an "ascension into being" and a connection to "the darkest, deepest, strangest life-source of the human body."

2. For Lawrence, the important thing about sex is that it involves and activates "the whole of the human being."

VII. Lawrence also rejects conventional approaches to human psychology in the hopes of moving past "the old stable ego of the character."

A. As Lawrence's characters come together, they are highly unstable, constantly shifting between love and hate. To portray human psychology accurately, Lawrence implies, the novelist must capture the violence and suddenness of human emotions.

B. Lawrence also acknowledges the existence and power of unconscious forces, especially in describing the initial connections between his characters.

C. Thus, in opposition to the social self or conscious self portrayed in earlier novels, Lawrence tries to evoke a "final me," a self that includes body, mind, and spirit.

VIII. Despite his intense dislike of much prior fiction, Lawrence sees the novel as the best vehicle for this sort of psychological and philosophical exploration—"the one bright book of life." Other sorts of writing engage different "bits" of the human being, he explains in one of his most famous essays, but only the novelist makes the "whole man alive tremble."

Essential Reading:

D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love*.

Supplementary Reading:

Terry Eagleton, *The English Novel: An Introduction*, chapter 12.

Mark Kinkead-Weekes, introduction to the Penguin edition of *Women in Love*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What is the appeal of an open ending? Do such endings appear more realistic than tragic or comedic endings?
2. How should we react to the presence of explicit sex scenes? Why does Lawrence think it necessary to include such scenes?

Lecture Twenty-One
Joyce—Dublin and Dubliners

Scope: In this lecture, the first of two on James Joyce, we will consider the first part of his literary career. In *Dubliners*, a collection of short stories, the characters often appear to be paralyzed. These characters are nostalgic, sentimental, and ultimately powerless, incapable of acting on their own behalf. Their situation mirrors that of Dublin itself, reflecting the city's steady decline over the course of the 19th century. Similar themes are carried into Joyce's first novel, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. This work takes the central character, Stephen Dedalus, from infancy to his early 20s, and it ends with Stephen on the verge of leaving Dublin for Paris, where he hopes to begin his life as a poet. Although Stephen's artistic vocation marks this novel as Modernist, his devotion to art is always presented ironically. At the end of the book, as Stephen prepares to leave his home and family, we can't tell if he's on the verge of doing something foolish or something great.

Outline

I. Throughout this course, we have described the novel as a form interested in the relationship between individuals and their larger social worlds.

- **A.** We will consider that relationship in our next two lectures, both of which will focus on James Joyce (1882–1941).
- **B.** In this lecture, we will explore early works, such as *Dubliners* (1914) and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).
  - **1.** We will want to consider what it meant for Joyce to be a Dubliner. What was the city's history and character, and how did Joyce see himself as fitting into it?
  - **2.** We will also want to explore Joyce's stylistic experiments. What are his contributions to the development of the English novel?
- **C.** In the next lecture, we will turn to Joyce's later writings, including *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939).

II. As we consider the events of Joyce's life, we should note that his family life and social position were both unstable.

- **A.** At the time of Joyce's birth, his family was doing well. His father worked as a rate collector, and the family was part of a rising Irish Catholic middle class.
- **B.** Before long, the family's fortunes had collapsed. During Joyce's youth, the family was always on the move, taking step after step down the social ladder.
- **C.** Joyce eventually became a student at a Jesuit day school, where he was considered a possible candidate for the priesthood. He went through a period of intense piety, but broke with the Church before leaving for college.
- **D.** While in college, Joyce decided on another vocation—that of the artist—and began publishing reviews and essays.

III. The most important event in Joyce's life occurred in June of 1904, when he met Nora Barnacle, a maid in a local hotel. The two of them departed for the Continent a few months later and remained partners for the rest of their lives.

- **A.** Nora was beautiful, affectionate, and funny—but she doesn't seem to have cared for Joyce's writing.
- **B.** Joyce and Nora were always short of money, and their financial difficulties were compounded by his frustrating experiences with publishers.
  - **1.** The case of *Dubliners* is perhaps the most dramatic. Joyce began circulating the manuscript when he was still in his early 20s.
  - **2.** By the time *Dubliners* appeared in print, 10 years had elapsed, and Joyce had already begun serial publication of *A Portrait*.

IV. Though the stories in *Dubliners* are often overshadowed by Joyce's novels, they deserve close attention.

A. The word most often used in critical discussions of these stories seems to be *paralysis*. To see why the word seems so appropriate, we might consider one of the earliest stories, "Eveline."

1. In this story, a young woman named Eveline is getting ready to elope with a man she has recently met. He is considerate, attractive, and good-natured, and she has no apparent reason to look back.

2. Nevertheless, she has reservations, and she finally allows herself to pass up her best chance at happiness and love.

B. As we move through the rest of the collection, we might begin to see Eveline as a typical Dubliner: nostalgic, superstitious, and ultimately, powerless.

C. A similar vision of Dublin emerges in another story, "Ivy Day in the Committee Room," which Joyce wrote in August of 1905.

1. The characters in this story are middle-aged men, political professionals working for a candidate they don't really respect.

2. It is "Ivy Day"—the anniversary of the death of the great Irish politician Charles Stewart Parnell.

3. The men see that things have gone downhill since Parnell's death, but instead of continuing his work, they've gotten stuck—waiting for another "chief" to come along and save them.

D. Joyce's view of Dublin was an accurate one.

1. In the 18th century, the city had enjoyed economic prosperity and cultural distinction. But after the union of Ireland and Great Britain, at the beginning of the 19th century, its fortunes declined dramatically.

2. Joyce's critical view of Dublin distinguishes him from other Irish writers of the period. Unlike Irish nationalists, Joyce refuses to idealize his country or his characters.

3. In these stories, sociology and psychology come together in a new way: Joyce shows that Ireland's political problems are rooted in its psychological condition.

E. Before setting *Dubliners* aside, we might also say a bit about the form of the short story.

1. The short story didn't take on its modern shape and character until the 1880s. Indeed, the term *short story* seems to have been coined at that time.

2. The emergence of the short story can be tied to the explosion of periodical literature in the later decades of the 19th century. Through these decades, hundreds of new publications appeared.

V. Many themes from *Dubliners* are carried over into *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, an autobiographical novel focused on the character of Stephen Dedalus.

A. One of the novel's most famous scenes is a bitter debate over the fate of Parnell. In this scene, Stephen's father gets off a number of hilarious lines but also indulges in maudlin self-pity.

B. *A Portrait* also includes a number of bitter comments on the state of Irish civilization. The ugliness and dirtiness of the city is relentlessly exposed, and Stephen is not exempted from that critique.

C. Finally, the novel expands on the stories' critique of the Church. Joyce liked to say that Ireland was subject to both Roman and British domination, but he did not hesitate to acknowledge his debts to the Jesuits.

VI. *A Portrait* takes Stephen Dedalus from infancy to his early 20s, following his experiences both at school and at home.

A. There's a love story buried deep in this novel, but the main action of the novel is Stephen's increasing realization that he wants to devote himself to art.

B. The novel ends with Stephen on the verge of leaving Dublin for Paris, where he hopes to begin his life as an artist.

C. Stephen's artistic vocation is one sign of the growing self-consciousness that characterizes so much Modernist literature.

VII. Another important feature of *A Portrait* is its irony: Although the work is autobiographical, the main character is seldom presented in a flattering light.

A. As a boy, Stephen is timid and anxious. Above all things, he fears being mocked, and that fear becomes the basis for much of his later behavior.

B. Even Stephen's later devotion to art and literature is presented ironically. Indeed, it's hard to decide if he really has what it takes to succeed.

C. At the end of the novel, as Stephen prepares to leave for Paris, we can't tell if he's on the verge of doing something foolish or something great. Like Lawrence, Joyce wants to leave things open at the end, avoiding the extremes of both comedic and tragic resolutions.

Essential Reading:

James Joyce, *Dubliners*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*.

Supplementary Reading:

Seamus Deane, "Joyce the Irishman," in *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce*.

Dorothy Van Ghent, "On *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," in *The English Novel: Form and Function*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Could Joyce's stories take place in any other part of the world—or do they have to be set in his hometown? What are we to make of the fact that, although Joyce spent much of his life in self-imposed exile, he never stopped writing about Dublin?
2. For George Eliot, the novelist's aim was to expand our sympathies. Does Joyce write with a similar goal in mind? By the end of *Portrait*, have we gotten any closer to Stephen—or do we continue to view him from a distance?

Lecture Twenty-Two
Joyce—Realism and Anti-Realism

Scope: In turning to Joyce's *Ulysses*, we confront a paradox: Although Joyce is in many ways the ultimate Realist, famed for his ability to capture the smallest details of daily life, he is not afraid to present himself as an enthusiastic anti-Realist. In the later chapters of *Ulysses*, Joyce experiments with radically different styles. One chapter is set up like a newspaper, complete with boldface headlines; another recapitulates the history of the English language, taking us from the Middle Ages to modern times; yet another takes the form of a catechism. By devising and discarding so many different styles, Joyce undermines the authority of representation itself. It is this paradox, this simultaneous affirmation and negation of Realism, that sets him apart from other novelists and makes him one of the most important figures in our course.

Outline

I. In this lecture, we will take up Joyce's *Ulysses*, focusing on its contradictory attitude toward Realism. Is *Ulysses* best described as a realistic work? What is its relationship to the tradition of Realism, and what is its place in the larger history of the novel?

II. To answer these questions, we will need to know more about the composition and publication of Joyce's great novel.

- **A.** Joyce began work on *Ulysses* when he was still in his early 30s. He and his wife had two small children—a boy, aged 9, and a girl, aged 7.
- **B.** At this point, Joyce had not yet become a famous author. Indeed, he had only recently begun to find publishers for his fiction.
- **C.** Four years passed between Joyce's initial work on *Ulysses* and the publication of the first episode in *The Little Review*. Several of the early installments were confiscated and burned, and the entire work did not appear until February of 1922.

III. In turning our attention to the novel itself, we might consider its curious title, especially given that *Ulysses* doesn't feature a character by that name.

- **A.** Ulysses or Odysseus is an epic hero, the king of Ithaca and the central figure in Homer's *Odyssey*.
- **B.** As a schoolboy, Joyce had enjoyed reading a child's version of the *Odyssey*, and he later described Ulysses as the "most human" figure in Western literature—a father and a son, a lover and a husband, a comrade and a king.
  - **1.** Critics have found a similar humanity in Joyce's central character, Leopold Bloom. Although Bloom is just an advertising salesman—not a king or a general—he is, like Ulysses, many-sided.
  - **2.** At times, Bloom is ridiculous and disgusting. At other times, he seems to be possessed of genuine courage.
  - **3.** Because Bloom is Jewish, he is also a kind of outsider or misfit in Dublin. Neither Catholic nor Protestant, he has no particular stake in the quarrel between the Irish and the British.
- **C.** The parallels between Joyce and Homer can be extended well beyond the title of the novel.
  - **1.** Indeed, every character in Joyce's novel has a counterpart in the *Odyssey*. For example, Molly Bloom can be likened to Penelope, wife of Ulysses.
  - **2.** Because these parallels are almost endless, they have inspired a number of critical questions. Was the story of Ulysses the only myth that could have served Joyce's purpose? In drawing the parallel between his characters and Homer's heroes, is Joyce pointing out a sad discrepancy between present and past?

IV. The mythic parallel is not the only important structuring device in the novel.

- **A.** The story is centered on a single day—June 16, 1904—now known as Bloomsday. Many later authors, including Virginia Woolf, have followed Joyce in focusing on the events of a single day.
- **B.** Because the opening chapters focus on Stephen Dedalus, *Ulysses* appears to begin as a sequel to *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.*

1. Since the end of *A Portrait*, Stephen has been to Paris and back. He is now working as a history teacher in Dublin.
2. Over the first few chapters, we watch as Stephen quarrels with his roommates, teaches his class, and walks on the beach. We also see that he is coming to terms with the recent death of his mother.

C. Later, the focus shifts to Bloom, who is in many ways the antithesis to Stephen.
1. Where Stephen is brittle, anxious, and unforgiving, Bloom is tender, comfortable, and generous.
2. We see Bloom first in his kitchen, following him around the corner to the butcher shop and, eventually, into the outhouse.

D. There are many connections between Stephen and Bloom, and the aim of the plot is to bring the two men together.
1. Their paths nearly cross a few times, and they finally meet in a brothel, where a drunken Stephen provokes a fight with an English soldier.
2. After the police come to break up the fight, Bloom takes charge of Stephen, offering him a place to stay for the night. Stephen declines the invitation, and the two men part.

E. *Ulysses* ends not with Stephen or Bloom, however, but with Bloom's wife, Molly, whose drowsy monologue consists of eight sprawling sentences.
1. Molly considers the possibility that her husband no longer cares for her, but she ends by recalling their first lovemaking, and her closing words ("yes I said yes I will Yes") are unmistakably affirmative.
2. Reunion and reconciliation, understanding and acceptance—all the familiar chords—are struck in this final chapter. The result is Joyce's highly idiosyncratic version of a comedic ending.

V. *Ulysses* is a paradoxical work, especially in its attitude toward Realism.

A. In many ways, *Ulysses* is the ultimate Realist novel.
1. Through many years of work on *Ulysses*, Joyce constantly referred to maps, city directories, and newspapers. He also relied on his mother's sister, writing to her for information about particular places in Dublin.
2. Joyce challenges himself to take in every aspect of life, including masturbation and menstruation. How realistic can earlier novels have been, he asks, if they excluded so many different things?

B. Joyce's Realism takes in the mind as well as the city.
1. In his portrait of Bloom, he is especially eager to capture the mind's quickness, to show how rapidly we take in and process new information.
2. Instead of presenting Bloom's thoughts in complete sentences, as writers from Austen to James had done, Joyce works with short fragments. The scene at the butcher shop offers a good illustration of this technique.
3. Much later, Joyce moves in the opposite direction, working with run-on sentences instead of fragments. As we've noted, Molly's monologue includes only eight sentences, yet it runs for more than 40 pages.
4. Despite the differences between Bloom's fragments and Molly's run-ons, Joyce's project remains the same: to capture the workings of the mind.

VI. Yet although Joyce expands our understanding of Realism, he also presents himself as an "artificer," or anti-Realist.

A. As he moves into the later chapters, he experiments with radically different styles. One chapter is set up like the pages of a newspaper, while another traces the development of the English language from the Middle Ages to modern times.

B. By developing and discarding so many styles, Joyce undermines the authority of representation itself. When reading a novel, Joyce reminds us, our relationship to reality is never immediate or direct.

C. With his paradoxical attitude toward Realism, Joyce looks back to novelists from Richardson to Lawrence and points ahead to experimental writers, including Samuel Beckett, Vladimir Nabokov, and Thomas Pynchon.

D. There can be no doubt, then, that he deserves a central place in our understanding of the novel form and its history.

Essential Reading:

James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1961 edition).

Harry Blamires, *The New Bloomsday Book: A Guide through Joyce's Ulysses*.

Supplementary Reading:

Hugh Kenner, *Joyce's Voices*.

David Trotter, *The English Novel in History, 1895–1920*, chapters 6 and 19.

Questions to Consider:

1. What has happened to the comedic tradition by the time we get to *Ulysses*? Have writers, perhaps disillusioned by the First World War, become suspicious of happy endings? What sorts of happy endings are they now willing to present?
2. Some readers appreciate the proliferation of styles in *Ulysses*, while others complain that stylistic experimentation interferes with their responses to the characters. What do you suppose Joyce would have made of such complaints?

Lecture Twenty-Three
Woolf and the Poetic Novel

Scope: This lecture is devoted to Virginia Woolf, the third of our major Modernists. After reviewing the events of Woolf's life, including her involvement in the now-famous Bloomsbury Group, we will take up her most famous work of fiction, *To the Lighthouse*. With this novel, Woolf was facing challenges both personal and professional. Her desire to free herself from novelistic conventions is evident in her determination to blur the usual distinction between prose and poetry. Each of the novel's three main sections is composed in a different style, and the larger effect is remarkable. In closing the lecture, we will consider Woolf's place in the history of the English novel, noting that although she is indebted to many earlier writers, her exploration of human consciousness is unsurpassed in its originality and beauty. It is for this reason, as much as any other, that her work can be seen as the culmination of a long tradition in English fiction.

Outline

I. In this lecture, we will turn our attention to the third of our major Modernists, Virginia Woolf (1882–1941).

- **A.** Like her great contemporaries, D. H. Lawrence and James Joyce, Woolf often centers her stories on the figure of the writer or artist.
- **B.** Woolf also joins her fellow Modernists in seeking to provide a fuller and more accurate image of human consciousness.
  - **1.** Fairly or not, the Modernists see the work of most earlier novelists as superficial, concerned largely with appearances.
  - **2.** They try to push beneath the surface, moving toward a deeper or more profound psychological truth.
- **C.** Finally, Woolf shares with the other Modernists an interest in artistic or stylistic experimentation. We will consider her experiments in greater detail at a later point in this lecture.

II. We will begin our discussion of Woolf by reviewing the facts of her life.

- **A.** We should probably begin with a popular film, *The Hours*, in which Woolf is portrayed by actress Nicole Kidman. If you have seen the film, you know that Woolf lived through periods of intense depression and eventually took her own life.
  - **1.** It's likely that her condition was inherited. It's also likely that her depression was deepened by childhood experiences of sexual abuse.
  - **2.** It's also important to remember that Woolf was not merely a victim or a sufferer. She produced nine novels, hundreds of essays, and thousands of letters over the course of her life.
- **B.** Starting at the age of 13, Woolf experienced a series of devastating personal tragedies. These losses included the deaths of her mother, her half-sister, her father, and her brother.
- **C.** Although these losses were hard to bear, they brought Woolf and her surviving siblings a new kind of freedom.
  - **1.** With her brother and sister, she moved to Bloomsbury, a somewhat unfashionable neighborhood near Regent's Park in London.
  - **2.** Their new home became the center of the famous Bloomsbury Group, which provided a forum for free and open discussions of everything from art and politics to sex.
  - **3.** In addition to Woolf herself, this group included biographer Lytton Strachey, art critic Clive Bell, artists Roger Fry and Duncan Grant, and economist John Maynard Keynes.
  - **4.** Also associated with the group—not every source identifies them as full-fledged members—were E. M. Forster and Woolf's future husband, Leonard.
- **D.** Although the marriage was not always an easy one, everyone agrees that Leonard was a devoted husband. The Woolfs were also partners in one of the most influential publishing ventures of the 20th century, the Hogarth Press.
- **E.** Woolf's great breakthrough as a novelist came with the appearance of *Jacob's Room* (1922).

1. Through the 1920s, she published many of her greatest works, including *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *Orlando* (1928), and *A Room of One's Own* (1929). In later years, she wrote *The Waves* (1931) and *Three Guineas* (1938).
2. In *A Room of One's Own* and *Three Guineas*, Woolf makes a fascinating intervention into debates over women's rights, using the techniques of the novelist to reinforce her main points.

III. In this lecture, we will focus on *To the Lighthouse*, which may be Woolf's most famous novel.

A. With this novel, Woolf was revisiting both happy and painful memories of childhood and creating (in the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay) almost exact likenesses of her own parents.

B. As she began work on the novel, Woolf assumed that her father would be its central figure, but as the work continued, her focus shifted to her mother.

C. It is one of the Ramsays' houseguests, rather than one of their daughters, who seems a kind of surrogate for Woolf herself.

IV. In writing *To the Lighthouse*, Woolf also faced a number of professional challenges.

A. She had ambivalent feelings about the tradition of English fiction, and she was originally reluctant to identify *To the Lighthouse* as a novel.

B. Woolf's desire to free herself from novelistic conventions is evident in her determination to blur the distinction between prose and poetry.

1. Throughout the novel, she creates striking symbols and images: a piece of knitting, a green shawl, the lighthouse itself.
2. She also takes a poetic approach to chapter and section breaks. Like the stanzas or sections in a Modernist poem, the three main parts of *To the Lighthouse* are composed in very different styles.

V. The novel is divided into three parts, with the first section ("The Window") being the longest and most complicated. This section centers on Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, their eight children, and six houseguests.

A. The centerpiece of this section is an elegant dinner party, held at the Ramsays' vacation home in the Hebrides. Though the party begins badly, it soon takes on the beauty and intensity of a great work of art.

B. The fleetingness of this moment makes it all the more satisfying and exhilarating, and the party becomes one of Woolf's greatest symbols—an image of what art can do for those who love it.

VI. The second part of the novel ("Time Passes") is highly experimental. If the first section was overcrowded and confusing, the second is strangely empty.

A. Here, Woolf centers the action on the vacant house, exploring the possibility of a novel without human characters.

B. Humanity does not disappear entirely, however, and in a devastating series of brief reports, all contained within square brackets, Woolf tells us of the deaths of three important characters.

C. If this section has a human hero, it is Mrs. McNab, a local woman who comes to clean the house in preparation for its reopening. As the section closes, the house is full again.

VII. The third section ("The Lighthouse") reunites some of the surviving characters. After the dislocations of the first two sections, it may strike us as almost conventional in tone and approach.

A. In this section, Woolf's surrogate, Lily Briscoe, attempts to finish a painting she had started in the first section. At the same time, James Ramsay joins his father and sister Cam on a trip to the nearby lighthouse.

B. While Lily struggles to accept Mrs. Ramsay's death, James battles his anger toward his father. By the end of the novel, both characters have attained a kind of peace—Lily by finishing her picture and James by reaching the lighthouse.

VIII. In closing this lecture, and moving toward the end of our course, we should consider Woolf's place in the history of the English novel.

A. Like almost all the novelists treated in these lectures, she is keenly sensitive to distinctions of rank and status.

B. In addition, Woolf shares her predecessors' concern with relationships—and occasional conflicts—between men and women. She is especially alert to the role of gender in shaping relationships between parents and children.

C. Finally, Woolf follows earlier novelists in exploring the nature of human consciousness. She devotes little time to action or dialogue, focusing instead on the characters' inner lives.

D. Though she is indebted to many earlier novelists, Woolf's representation of human consciousness is unsurpassed in its originality and beauty. It is for this reason, above all others, that we might view her work as the culmination of a long and grand tradition in English fiction.

Essential Reading:

Michael Whitworth, *Authors in Context: Virginia Woolf*.

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*.

Supplementary Reading:

Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, chapter 20.

Alex Zwerdling, *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do we usually understand the differences between fiction and poetry? Why might an author wish to blur that distinction?
2. Are we most fully ourselves, as Woolf seems to suggest, when we are alone with our own thoughts?

Lecture Twenty-Four
The Impact of the Novel

Scope: In this last lecture, we'll take up some obvious questions: Why end our course in the 1920s? What has happened since then? And what is happening now? We'll see that there are good reasons, both historical and literary, for ending in the 1920s. We'll also take a brief look at some interesting writers from more recent decades, paying close attention to the work of Salman Rushdie. In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie proves to be a brilliant synthesizer, merging Hindu mythology and Disney movies with the work of many of our novelists. Finally, at the end of the lecture, we'll assess the impact of the novel form on us and our world—reminding ourselves that the novel has sharpened our sociological insights and shaped our view of consciousness itself.

Outline

I. In this final lecture, we'll take up some obvious questions: Why end our course in the 1920s? What has happened since then? And what is happening now?

- **A.** The most obvious reason for ending in the 1920s is that it's a matter of biographical and historical necessity.
  - **1.** None of our three major Modernists lived to see the end of the Second World War. Lawrence died in 1930; both Joyce and Woolf, in 1941.
  - **2.** There's something almost fitting in that. For such writers, the individual human being remained a figure of enormous value. How could they have reckoned with such events as the Holocaust or the dropping of the atomic bomb?
- **B.** Another reason to end in the 1920s is that the stylistic experiments of the great Modernists do represent the culmination of a tradition.
  - **1.** To be sure, a writer might go beyond *Ulysses* or the "Time Passes" section of *To the Lighthouse*—but not without leaving the novel tradition behind.
  - **2.** For example, in *Finnegans Wake* (1939), Joyce conducts an astonishing experiment with language, but he does not give us a realistic situation or a set of characters who grow and change.

II. What, then, has happened *since* the 1920s? Have any important novels been produced since the heyday of British Modernism?

- **A.** In exploring these questions, we might consider a group or generation of writers born in the early years of the 20th century.
  - **1.** The writers in this group include Evelyn Waugh (1903–1966), Graham Greene (1904–1991), Henry Green (1905–1973), and Anthony Powell (1905–2000).
  - **2.** The most famous of these figures are Waugh and Graham Greene. Waugh is best known for *Brideshead Revisited* (1945) and Greene for *The End of the Affair* (1951) and *The Quiet American* (1955).
  - **3.** Despite their impressive achievements, these writers are often said to work in the shadows of the great Modernists. A sense of having been born too late, of missing out on the great age of literary innovation, is sometimes thought to be one of the defining traits of this generation.
- **B.** Along with these men, we might consider the work of several women writers, including Iris Murdoch (1919–1999) and a pair of sisters, A. S. Byatt (born in 1936) and Margaret Drabble (born in 1939).
  - **1.** Murdoch's most highly regarded novel is probably *The Sea, the Sea* (1978). She also published a number of philosophical works, including the first study of Jean-Paul Sartre published in English.
  - **2.** Byatt rose to fame with *Possession* (1990), in which she portrays two couples, one from the 20th century and the other from the 19th.
  - **3.** Drabble's works include *The Millstone* (1966) and *Ice Age* (1977). She is also the editor of an indispensable reference work, *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*.
- **C.** For further proof that the English novel remains alive and well, we might survey the work of other recent writers. In making our survey, we'll see that these writers often return to familiar forms and traditions.

1. The historical novel has been reimagined by Pat Barker (born in 1943). Barker's most famous works are set in the period of the First World War: *Regeneration* (1991), *The Eye in the Door* (1993), and *The Ghost Road* (1995).
2. A number of important novel traditions come together in the work of Ian McEwan (born in 1948). In *Atonement* (2001), the work that will probably be viewed as his masterpiece, McEwan returns to themes associated with James and Conrad—and techniques devised by Austen, James, and Woolf.
3. The urban novel—the novel of Thackeray, Dickens, and Joyce—has been revitalized by a young writer named Zadie Smith (born 1975). The London of Smith's *White Teeth* (2000) is multicultural and multiracial—very much a city of the present day.

III. Before closing out this survey of recent fiction, we must consider one more writer: Salman Rushdie (born 1947). In *Midnight's Children* (1981), he has created something like a contemporary classic—a work increasingly regarded as one of the greatest novels of the last 25 years.

A. *Midnight's Children* is a first-person narrative, told by a man born at the stroke of midnight on August 15, 1947—the very moment at which India achieved its political independence from Britain.

B. As Rushdie's title suggests, the narrator is not midnight's only child. Hundreds of others are born in the first hour of the nation's independence—and each is gifted with some sort of supernatural power.

C. Despite this interest in the supernatural, *Midnight's Children* exhibits many of Rushdie's connections to the English novel tradition. The novel is especially rigorous in its delineation of dates, covering many crucial events in the history of India and Pakistan.

D. In the end, Rushdie can be seen as a brilliant synthesizer—a writer who brings together Hindu mythology, comic books, Disney movies, and the works of many of our novelists.

IV. In closing, we must recognize the novel's impact on its readers and their world.

A. Novels have sharpened our sociological insights, helping us to envision human communities as complex yet coherent.
1. Such writers as Fielding and Austen have made us more alert to contradictions between official values and actual social practices.
2. Such writers as Dickens and Joyce have encouraged us to imagine even the most complex societies as interconnected. Beneath the chaos of a city like London or Dublin, we feel, there must be some kind of order.

B. Novels have also helped us to develop a more sophisticated historical consciousness—and a richer sense of our own place in history.
1. Novelists like Scott and Eliot have shown us the impact of larger historical forces on the lives of particular individuals.
2. Writers like Joyce and Rushdie continue to move us in that direction.

C. Novels have even shaped our view of consciousness itself. When we try to imagine what's going on in our minds, we'll probably come up with something like a passage from Austen or Eliot or Woolf.
1. Like those writers, we tend to believe that our minds are always busy—sorting out sense impressions, memories, projections, and rationalizations.
2. In addition, we're aware of the fact that we like and need to tell stories. Though the novel began in the 18th century, it assures us that storytelling has always been crucial to our humanity.

V. In the publishing world, it's often said that readers are turning from fiction to nonfiction, putting down novels and picking up memoirs, works of popular history, or journalism.

A. Although there are good reasons why that might be so, we might remember that whereas journalists and historians often paint in broad strokes, novelists can work in miniature, giving us a sense of how particular people in particular places actually feel and think and live.

B. In light of that fact, we might conclude that this is not a time to turn away from fiction—but a time for turning back *to* fiction. We may need the novel now more than ever.

Essential Reading:

Ian McEwan, *Atonement*.

Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*.

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*.

Supplementary Reading:

Dominic Head, *Modern British Fiction, 1950–2000*.

Bruce King, *The Oxford English Literary History*: Vol. 13: *The Internationalization of English Literature (1948–2000)*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Has our preoccupation with the Modernists of the 1920s limited our appreciation of later writers? Such novels as *Women in Love* and *Ulysses* are now more than 80 years old. Why do they continue to strike us as daring and innovative?
2. Why might someone choose to read a novel instead of a work of history? Is there any sort of knowledge, any sort of experience, that we can get only from novels?

Glossary

amatory tale: A term devised by recent scholars to describe the short, formulaic, and usually sensational love stories that served as precursors to the first English novels. Especially popular from 1680 to 1740, these stories often focused on the pursuit of an innocent young girl by a sexually experienced older man. Writers associated with this form include Aphra Behn, Delarivière Manley, and Eliza Haywood.

circulating library: An institution more like a modern video store than a public library. In exchange for an annual fee, patrons could check out books for a limited period of time. Circulating libraries were especially popular, and especially powerful, in the middle of the 19th century, when they dominated the market for fiction. Complaints about their prudishness emerged in the 1880s and 1890s, and by the turn of the century, they had lost much of their influence over English publishers.

comedic ending: A particular sort of happy ending, often featuring the marriage of one or more sympathetic characters. Other components of the comedic ending include the establishment or restoration of social order and the achievement of poetic justice. For this sort of ending to succeed, readers must feel that most of the characters are getting what they need and deserve. The dominance of the comedic ending is one of the defining features of the English novel tradition, especially in the period from 1740 to 1900.

courtship plot: A distinctive feature of English fiction is its attachment to the courtship plot, in which a young man or woman eventually finds happiness in marriage. The hero or heroine's progress toward marital happiness may be blocked by any number of obstacles. Some of these may be external (the objections of parents and family), while others are internal (confusion about one's own needs and desires or mistaken impressions about possible suitors or love objects). In a classic example, Jane Austen's Emma begins by insisting that she intends to remain single—and ends happily married to the man next door.

epistolary novel: A novel told in letters. The advantage of the form lies in its suggestion of illicit intimacy. There is in our society a powerful taboo against reading someone else's letters, and the epistolary novel gives us the sense of breaking or, at least, bending that rule. The disadvantage of the form comes with the disappearance of a reliable, controlling narrator. With only the assertions of the characters to depend on, readers may not know what to think or whom to believe. Samuel Richardson's use of letters in *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1747–1749) inspired a vogue for epistolary fiction on the Continent. More recently, some authors have experimented with the idea of an "e-mail" novel; such experiments would include works by David Lodge (*Thinks…*, 2001) and Zadie Smith (*On Beauty*, 2005).

free indirect discourse: A term used to describe one of the chief means by which novelists represent their characters' inner lives. The term applies only to third-person narratives, describing passages in which the narrator seems to speak, however briefly, in the voice of one or more characters. In a passage of free indirect discourse, the narrator does not employ quotation marks or rely on such phrases as "he said" and "she thought." Instead, the narrator moves smoothly from her own summary into something more like a transcription of the characters' own impressions. The first extensive uses of this device occur in the novels of Jane Austen. In this passage, as Austen's narrator reports Emma's initial responses to Harriet Smith, the narrator's more objective language gives way to Emma's subjective (and self-satisfied) thoughts:

> [Emma] was not struck by any thing remarkably clever in Miss Smith's conversation, but she found her altogether very engaging—not inconveniently shy, not unwilling to talk—and yet so far from pushing, shewing so proper and becoming a deference, seeming so pleasantly grateful for being admitted to Hartfield, and so artlessly impressed by the appearance of every thing in so superior a style to what she had been used to, that she must have good sense and deserve encouragement. Encouragement should be given. Those soft blue eyes and all those natural graces should not be wasted on the inferior society of Highbury and its connections.

Gothic novel: A form especially popular from the 1790s through the 1820s. Through this period, some writers (and many readers) begin to wish for something less obviously realistic than the fiction of such writers as Richardson, Fielding, or Burney. Gothic novels take their name from the Gothic architecture of the medieval castles in which their stories are frequently set. These novels are often preoccupied with the secrets of the past, and their aim is to inspire fear and suspense, rather than to provoke thought. Supernatural elements are not uncommon—though, as in the novels of Ann Radcliffe, they may be explained away at the end of the story.

historical novel: A form perfected, if not exactly invented, by Sir Walter Scott in the 1810s and 1820s. Historical novels are not only set in the past but may also take place against the backdrop of real-life events. In some cases, important historical figures may even appear as characters. In Scott's *Waverley* (1814), generally regarded as the first important historical novel in England, Charles Edward Stuart, or "Bonnie Prince Charlie," makes an especially dramatic appearance in chapter 40.

Industrial Revolution: The Industrial Revolution coincided almost exactly with the rise and early development of the English novel, a fact that has not gone unnoted by literary historians. The first phase of the Industrial Revolution is usually said to center on the development of the textile industry in the late 1700s; the second, to center on the growth of the iron and steel industries (along with the extension of the railways) in the early and mid-1800s. With industrialization came mechanization (as machines took over the work once performed by human hands), urbanization (as people moved from the country to the city), and globalization (as raw materials were imported to England and finished goods shipped back out of it).

Modernism: A movement in the arts usually associated with the period from 1880 to 1930. The movement is often said to have reached its height in the decades of the 1910s and 1920s, and the fragmentation of Modernist art does seem to reflect the social fragmentation and moral confusion of the period surrounding the First World War. In the case of the English novel, Modernism is identified chiefly with the work of D. H. Lawrence, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf. Despite their differences, these writers have much in common: They reject conventional means and methods of storytelling, experimenting with open endings; they also seem to place great value on the inner life of thought and feeling, devising new ways of representing human consciousness.

multiplot novel: A term developed by recent critics. Multiplot novels were especially popular from the middle of the 1840s to the beginning of the 1870s. The greatest examples may be Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847–1848), Dickens's *Bleak House* (1852–1853), and Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871–1872). In a multiplot novel, the reader's attention is initially divided among two or more clusters of characters. By the end of the novel, the stories and fates of these characters are closely intertwined. Echoes of the multiplot tradition can be heard in such Modernist novels as Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925).

novel: A long work of fiction in prose, usually distinguished from other such works by its interest in everyday life and its concentration on ordinary people. The novel has two especially significant dimensions, one sociological and the other psychological. As Jane Smiley put it, the novel is "first and foremost about how individuals fit, or don't fit, into their social worlds." According to most literary historians, the English novel began its rise in the 1740s and reached a kind of culmination in the Modernist fiction of the 1910s and 1920s. Through this period, the novel became not only the most popular but also the most influential literary form in England. It is important to note that the term *novel* has been used in a variety of ways throughout literary history and did not take on its current meaning until the end of the 18th century.

novel of manners: A story focused on the behavior and attitudes of a particular social group. Classic examples come from such novelists as Jane Austen, Henry James, and E. M. Forster, but other fine examples could be drawn from the works of some mystery writers, especially those associated with the form of the police procedural. In a good procedural, we not only watch our heroes solve the crime but also observe their interaction with each other. By the end, we have learned something about the social hierarchies—official and unofficial—present in an urban squad room.

open ending: An ending that leaves at least a few questions unanswered. In such an ending, though the characters may appear to have worked through a number of problems, we are not entirely sure of what they will or can do next. Two classic examples are the endings of D. H. Lawrence's *Sons and Lovers* (1913) and James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). At the end of Joyce's novel, we watch Stephen Dedalus as he prepares to leave Ireland for the Continent. We know that Stephen has decided not to become a priest, and we can see that he hopes to achieve great things as a poet, but we have no way of knowing whether or not he will realize his goals. The shift from comedic and tragic endings to more open endings is characteristic of the Modernist novel, offering clear evidence of its dissatisfaction with established narrative conventions.

poetic justice: This term was coined at the end of the 17th century by critic Thomas Rhymer, but it can still be used to describe stories in which good characters are rewarded and bad characters punished in ways that seem both appropriate and just. By the end of most English novels written in the 18th and 19th centuries, we feel that almost all of the characters get what they deserve. Such endings tend to be reassuring and even comforting—they tell us that

things will and usually do work out for the best—and they remain an important element of most popular films and television programs.

poetic novel: A novel that seems in some way to resemble a poem. A poetic novel may be organized around a series of striking visual images. The individual sentences and paragraphs in such a novel may be shaped with great care, and larger units—including whole chapters—may be organized like the stanzas or sections of a poem. In Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), for example, the length of the chapters varies considerably, and the end result is a structure not unlike that of T. S. Eliot's great Modernist poem, *The Waste Land* (1922).

Realism: The defining feature, for many critics, of the novel itself. The novel's Realism is both sociological and psychological, especially in the 18th and 19th centuries. A novel such as Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871–1872) or James's *Portrait of a Lady* (1881) gives us a vivid image of an entire social world, as well as deep insight into the workings of particular human minds. For some critics, Modernist fiction by such authors as Lawrence, Joyce, and Woolf amounts to a rejection of traditional Realism. For other critics, Modernism is an extension and elaboration of the Realist tradition.

romance: The literary form to which the early English novel is most often compared and against which it is most often defined. Writing in 1785, Clara Reeve explained that "the Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what has never happened nor is likely to happen." Common features of the romance include a remote or exotic setting, larger-than-life characters, and supernatural experiences or events. The romance is a highly flexible category, and examples range from the medieval tales of King Arthur and his knights to the *Lord of the Rings* and Harry Potter books.

stream-of-consciousness narration: Another technique used in presenting or dramatizing the inner lives of fictional characters. As the image of the stream implies, this sort of narration is supposed to suggest the ever-flowing movement of the mind. A passage narrated in this way might include a character's sense impressions, memories, and fantasies—as well as her or his more conscious thoughts and feelings. Though a refinement of the devices developed by Jane Austen and other 19th-century writers, stream-of-consciousness narration is most often associated with Modernist fiction, especially that of Virginia Woolf. A further distinction can be made between Woolf's stream-of-consciousness technique and Joycean interior monologue. In Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927), the characters' thinking is filtered through a narrator; in Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922), the narrator frequently disappears, and the reader is presented with what appears to be a direct and exact transcription of a character's thoughts.

Bibliography

Novels and Other Primary Materials:

The novels discussed in this course are widely available, but not all editions are created equal. The best are those published by Penguin Books (in the Penguin Classics series), Oxford University Press (in the Oxford World's Classic series), and W. W. Norton and Company (in the Norton Critical Editions series).

If an edition appears in one of these series, you can be sure that it has been prepared by a distinguished scholar whose introduction and notes will also be worth reading. Penguin and Oxford World's Classics editions are only slightly more expensive than other paperbacks—the difference is usually just a dollar or two—and they are definitely worth the price.

Online editions of the novels remain unreliable and should be avoided.

Austen, Jane. *Emma*. Edited by Fiona Stafford. London: Penguin Classics, 1996.

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Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Edited by Michael Mason. London: Penguin Classics, 2003.

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Eliot, George. *Middlemarch.* Edited by Rosemary Ashton. London: Penguin Classics, 1994.

Fielding, Henry. *Tom Jones*. Edited by John Bender and Simon Stern. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998.

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Hardy, Thomas. "Candour in English Fiction." In *Thomas Hardy's Public Voice: The Essays, Speeches, and Miscellaneous Prose*. Edited by Michael Millgate. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001.

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Haywood, Eliza. *Love in Excess*. 2nd ed. Edited by David Oakleaf. Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Literary Texts, 2000.

James, Henry. "The Art of Fiction." In *The Critical Muse: Selected Literary Criticism.* Edited by Roger Gard. London: Penguin Classics, 1987.

———. *The Portrait of a Lady*. Edited by Geoffrey Moore. London: Penguin Classics, 2003.

Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. Introduction by Terence Brown. London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000.

———. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Edited by Seamus Deane. London: Penguin Classics, 2003.

———. *Ulysses*. New York: Vintage International, 1961. Still preferred by many to the "Corrected Text" or "Gabler Edition," which is also available from Vintage.

Lawrence, D. H. *Sons and Lovers*. Edited by Helen Baron and Carl Baron. London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000.

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Radcliffe, Ann. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. Edited by Bonamy Dobreé. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 1998.

Richardson, Samuel. *Pamela.* Edited by Thomas Keymer and Alice Wakely. Oxford: Oxford World's Classics, 2001. Unlike other editors, Keymer and Wakely reprint the very first edition, helping us to see why the work became so controversial.

Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. London: Penguin, 1991.

Scott, Walter. *Waverley*. Edited by Andrew Hook. Penguin: Penguin Classics, 1981.

Smith, Zadie. *White Teeth*. New York: Vintage International, 2000.

Sterne, Laurence. *Tristram Shandy*. Edited by Melvyn New and Joan New. London: Penguin Classics, 1997.

Thackeray, William Makepeace. *Vanity Fair*. Edited by John Carey. London: Penguin Classics, 2001.

Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. Introduction by Eudora Welty. San Diego: Harvest/HBJ, 1989.

Other Essential Readings:

Deserving of special mention, along with the individual works listed here, are the volumes in the *Cambridge Companions* series from Cambridge University Press. The series includes volumes on individual authors and larger periods (English Literature, 1740–1830; the Victorian Novel; Modernism). Each volume features essays by leading scholars, and (best of all) the contents are intended for a general audience.

Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa." In *Hopes and Impediments: Selected Essays*. New York: Anchor, 1990. A significantly influential analysis of racist images in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. One of the most important critical essays on any subject published in the last quarter century.

Beer, Gillian. *Darwin's Plots*: *Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot, and Nineteenth-Century Fiction.* 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Views Darwin as a writer, focusing on his use of language, and demonstrates his impact on Eliot and Hardy.

Blamires, Harry. *The New Bloomsday Book: A Guide through Joyce's Ulysses.* London: Routledge, 1996. An invaluable aid. Meant to be read alongside the novel, it provides a detailed summary of every single scene.

Booth, Wayne C. *The Rhetoric of Fiction*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961. One of the best books ever written on the subject of the novel, especially good on the relationship of narrators to readers.

Butler, Marilyn. *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. One of the first scholarly works to challenge the notion of Austen as disengaged from contemporary events.

Chase, Karen. *Eros and Psyche: The Representation of Personality in Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, and George Eliot*. New York: Methuen, 1984. Shows how three Victorian novelists imagined the human mind; also considers the 19th century's fascination with mesmerism and phrenology.

———. *George Eliot: Middlemarch.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991. A wonderful introduction to the novel, situating Eliot in relationship to Victorian feminism; memorable for its approach to the novel's ending.

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Hobsbawm, E. J. *Industry and Empire: The Making of English Society, 1750 to the Present Day.* New York: Pantheon, 1968. Traces the emergence and development of capitalism in England, linking it to the expansion of the British Empire.

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Shaw, Harry E. *The Forms of Historical Fiction: Sir Walter Scott and His Successors*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983. A lucid account of historical fiction, presenting the form as "inherently problematical."

Tillotson, Kathleen. *Novels of the Eighteen-Forties.* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954. Demonstrates the crucial importance of the decade in which Thackeray and the Brontës emerged as major rivals to Dickens.

Trotter, David. "The Modernist Novel." In *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. Edited by Michael Levenson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. A terrific introduction to Modernist fiction in England; offers valuable distinctions, as well as more obvious connections.

Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957. Remade the entire field of novel studies upon its initial publication. Among the most essential of these essential readings, especially for its arguments about the central place of realism in the novel tradition.

Whitworth, Michael. *Authors in Context: Virginia Woolf*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Particularly useful for the third chapter, a review of the "literary scene" in the age of Modernism.

Supplementary Reading:

Armstrong, Nancy. *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987. A challenging but rewarding study of the period from 1740 to 1850, emphasizing the emergence of domesticity as a dominant social value.

———. *How Novels Think: The Limits of Individualism from 1719 to 1900.* New York: Columbia, 2005. Shows how early novelists shaped our image of the human being as an autonomous individual. Also shows how this image was challenged by later writers.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953. Moves from Homer to Virginia Woolf with magisterial authority. The classic study of literary Realism in the West.

Baldick, Chris. *The Oxford English Literary History.* Vol. 10: *The Modern Movement, 1910–1940.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002. Places classic works alongside long-forgotten popular fiction, revising our image of the entire period.

Bodenheimer, Rosemarie. *The Real Life of Mary Ann Evans: George Eliot, Her Letters and Fiction.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994. Fascinating biographical study; uses Eliot's private correspondence to illuminate her public career.

Boumelha, Penny. *Thomas Hardy and Women: Sexual Ideology and Narrative Form*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1982. A subtle account of Hardy's attitude toward women, alert to the development of his views over time.

Brantlinger, Patrick. *Rule of Darkness*: *British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988. A major work on the topic; begins and ends with Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.

Butler, Marilyn. *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and Its Background, 1760–1830.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982. Valuable for the fourth chapter, which places Scott and Austen in the context of British Romanticism.

Chase, Richard. *The American Novel and Its Tradition.* Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1957. A classic study of the differences between the American and English novel traditions. For our purposes, the key sections are the introduction and the chapter on Henry James.

Chittick, Kathryn. *Dickens and the 1830s.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. One of the most influential recent works on Dickens, focused on the period in which he rose to fame. Explains why his early books were not originally viewed as novels.

Deane, Seamus. "Joyce the Irishman." In *The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Places Joyce's writing in the context of Irish history. An elegant overview.

Doody, Margaret. *A Natural Passion: A Study of the Novels of Samuel Richardson*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974. Remains one of the most important studies of Richardson's life and works.

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Ehrenpreis, Irvin. *Fielding: Tom Jones*. London: Edward Arnold, 1964. A beautiful introduction to the novel. As good on formal and technical matters as it is on biographical and historical contexts.

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Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975. A landmark study of the First World War and its impact on modern culture. Recently named one of the 100 best works of nonfiction published in the 20th century.

Galef, David. "Forster, Ford, and the New Novel of Manners." In *The Columbia History of the British Novel.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Presents Forster and Ford as writers caught between the Victorians and the Modernists.

Garrett, Peter. *The Victorian Multiplot Novel: Studies in Dialogical Form.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980. Identifies the multiplot novel as a distinctive form, one that arises in the 1840s and more or less disappears by the end of the 1870s.

Gilbert, Sandra, and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979. A brilliant study of 19th-century women's writing, now most famous for its groundbreaking interpretation of *Jane Eyre*.

Hampson, Robert. Introduction to *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad. London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000. Offers a sympathetic account of Conrad's early life; also links the novel to earlier writings on Africa, including those by Henry Stanley, the "discoverer" of Dr. Livingstone.

Head, Dominic. *Modern British Fiction, 1950–2000.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002. A fine introduction to the subject, linking major writers and texts to larger historical trends.

Hogle, Jerrold E., ed. Introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. Not only defines the form but also accounts for its popularity, arguing for the Gothic as an expression of fear and desire.

Hunter, J. Paul. *Before Novels: The Cultural Contexts of Eighteenth-Century English Fiction.* New York: Norton, 1990. Connects the early novel to a variety of nonliterary texts, including newspapers, devotional works, histories, and biographies. The opening chapter, "What Was New about the Novel?" is especially helpful.

Johnson, Claudia L. *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. Revises our image of Austen, arguing that the novelist was much less conservative than she appears.

Kenner, Hugh. *Joyce's Voices.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978. Elegant study of Joyce's style—or, better yet, styles—focused mainly on *Ulysses*.

King, Bruce. *The Oxford English Literary History.* Vol. 13: *The Internationalization of English Literature, 1948–2000.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. Very helpful in understanding a figure such as Rushdie. Can he be described as an English novelist? Should he be? If not, where and how does he fit in? Such are the questions addressed by this groundbreaking study.

Kinkead-Weekes, Mark. Introduction to *Women in Love* by D. H. Lawrence. London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2000. A model of its kind. Makes sense of the text without explaining away its difficulties.

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———. *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. London: Verso, 2000. Deals mostly with Continental writers but has much to say (especially in the fourth chapter) about the distinctive features of the English tradition.

Polhemus, Robert M. *Erotic Faith: Being in Love from Jane Austen to D. H. Lawrence.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990. A lively study of a central issue; argues that the novel merges romantic love with religious or spiritual devotion.

Richetti, John. *The English Novel in History, 1700–1780*. London: Routledge, 1998. This work, like much of Richetti's scholarship, establishes the importance of the amatory tale to the rise of the English novel. Covers major figures, such as Richardson and Fielding, but also looks past them to consider women writers from the period.

Shields, Carol. *Jane Austen*. New York: Viking, 2001. A lively, short biography, itself the work of a Pulitzer Prize–winning novelist.

Shillingsburg, Peter. *William Makepeace Thackeray: A Literary Life*. New York: Palgrave, 2001. Reveals the complexity of such novels as *Vanity Fair*, praising Thackeray for his refusal to satisfy the public's demand for "uplifting fiction."

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Straub, Kristina. "Frances Burney and the Rise of the Woman Novelist." In *The Columbia History of the British Novel*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. Pays close attention to Burney's fiction while also considering her place in the history of the novel form.

Sutherland, Kathryn. "Jane Austen and the Invention of the Serious Modern Novel." In *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1740–1830.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Full of nifty lines and smart observations. Especially interesting is the idea that Austen merges the political and the domestic. Also good on technical matters, including Austen's use of dialogue.

Trilling, Lionel. "Manners, Morals, and the Novel." In *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society.* New York: Viking Press, 1950. Begins by identifying the novel with the "shifting and conflict of social classes," then follows Henry James in asserting that "American writers of genius have not turned their minds to society."

Trotter, David. *The English Novel in History, 1895–1920.* New York: Routledge, 1993. Consistently impressive, relates the rise of Modernism to the emergence of consumer capitalism. Also good on the novel's role in the redefinition of national identity.

Van Ghent, Dorothy. "On *The Portrait of a Lady*" and "On *A Portrait of the Artists as a Young Man*." In *The English Novel: Form and Function.* New York: Rinehart, 1953. Classic early study, analyzing more than a dozen major works. Worth reading from cover to cover but recommended here for the chapters on James (*Portrait of a Lady*) and Joyce (*Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*).

Welsh, Alexander. *The City of Dickens*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971. Links Dickens's obsession with the city to his understanding of morality, innocence, and death.

Williams, Raymond. *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979. Links the Victorians to the Modernists in fascinating ways; focuses mainly on changing views of human community.

Wilson, Edmund. "Dickens: The Two Scrooges." In *The Wound and the Bow.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941. The essay credited with rescuing Dickens from critical neglect; it remains a splendid introduction to his work.

Wood, Ellen Meiksins. *The Origin of Capitalism*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1999. A short work on the history of capitalism, intended for the general reader. Distinguishes capitalism from earlier forms of exchange, arguing that it should not be seen as "the natural realization of ever-present tendencies."

Woolf, Virginia. "George Eliot." In *The Common Reader: First Series.* New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1953. A good example of her work as a critic; also shows how the Modernists distinguished themselves from the Victorians.

Zwerdling, Alex. *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986. A pioneering historical study of Woolf; explores her feminism, her pacifism, and her occasional snobbery.

Internet Resources:

Discovering Dickens: *A Community Reading Project*. dickens.stanford.edu/ index.html. A project out of Stanford, this site includes a wonderful online edition of *Great Expectations*, complete with maps of Dickens's London.

IQ Infinity: The Unknown James Joyce. www.robotwisdom.com/jaj/index.html. The work of a Joyce enthusiast and web blogger named Jorn Barger, this site has many resources for the beginning Joycean.

Jane Austen Information Page. www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/janeinfo.html. A major labor of love, this website includes e-texts of Austen's writings, reviews of the movies, genealogical chart. You name it, it's there.

Ulysses for Dummies. www.bway.net/~hunger/ulysses.html. It's silly, but nevertheless pretty accurate.

The Victorian Web. www.victorianweb.org/. An exhaustive overview of 19th-century literature and history. This site is the brainchild of George Landow, formerly of Brown University and now of the National University of Singapore, where he was founding dean of the University Scholars Program.