The Early English Novel: Tradition and Newspapers

Vanja Polić
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zagreb
vanja.polic@zg.t-com.hr

The article explores some of the social and cultural contexts in which the early English novel emerged at the turn of the 18th century: firstly, the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns that infused the English society of the time and the ways in which it was reflected in the emergence of the novel on the literary scene, its acceptance by the wide reading audience and its neglect by the learned circles. Secondly, the article discusses the influence of newspapers and periodicals on the development of the novel, not only intrinsically through style and discourse, but also extrinsically, by placing the novel into the 18th-century cultural consciousness. The beginnings of the novel are, thus, discussed with regard to the hieratic and demotic aspects of the early 18th-century culture as they appeared in the printed materials that surrounded them.

The Novel and the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns

It is a well-known fact that scholars mostly agree to disagree as to whether the English novel which emerges at the end of the 17th century represents a new literary form. Many literary historians and critics advocate the continuity of the novel genre from ancient Greek literature to the present times, while others claim that the novel is the product of a new, modern age.[1] However, a good argument

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[1] For arguments in favour of the continuity of the novel genre from the ancient times, see e.g. M. A. Doody, *The True Story of the Novel*; M. Bakhtin in *The Dialogic Imagination* lists Hellenic period, late Middle Ages and the Renaissance as the dominant periods of the novel genre, adding that the novel genre appears with special clarity in the second half of the 18th century (1981: 5).

M. McKeon, for example, solves this dilemma in one move by claiming that the 18th-century novelists not only perceived their novels as a new genre but also considered novelty as one of its characteristic traits. As a literary historian, McKeon also considers the novel to be a new genre (2005: 238).

in favour of the latter who insist on a specific generic novelty of the 18th-century novel can be found in the answer to the following question: if in the 18th century there existed an alleged agreement regarding the literary-historical and poetic continuity of the genre, why did so many 18th-century novelists insist on the claim that the literary works they wrote were new and original? Insisting on originality was certainly in direct opposition to the Neoclassical "*imitatio studii*" of the great role-models, i.e. the invocation of tradition and the "canon" of high/Classical literature. Opposing the tradition, on the other hand, raised a whole set of issues regarding the placement and establishment of the novel in the domain of high literature, the process which was not benevolently regarded by the literary academia of the period.

Taking into account both highbrow tradition and popular or lowbrow culture, this article aims to show how both of these, in essence contrary traditions were blended together to create a new genre which was able to cater to the contemporary interests of the 18th-century wider audiences precisely due to its hybrid origins. More precisely, the article will show how broader societal circumstances such as the increase in literacy, the printing press revolution and wider availability of printed materials – pamphlets, newspapers and magazines – as well as the appearance of specialized literary journals, all set the stage for the instant and massive acceptance of the novel as a new literary commodity in the new, modern society. The article will also show how the novelists called upon the literary canon, or the highbrow literary tradition only nominally, rhetorically, to connect the new genre of the novel with the ancient and well-respected genres such as the epic and drama, in the hopes of giving the novel literary credibility and status, while in fact they relied to a certain extent on the long-present but not well-esteemed genre of romance when constructing their novels. Thus, the article's aim is to offer a broader societal and cultural insight into the emergence of the novel at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, and to show the continuity as well as the coexistence of the novel genre with other forms of literature, both high and low, which could be found on the literary market of the time.

In answer to the question posed at the very beginning of the article, a look at the textual evidence reveals that most reactions of writers, critics, poeticians and readers from the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries support the novel's claim to novelty or, more precisely, support the appearance of new tendencies in 18th-century prose fiction. Moreover, reactions to the novelty of the period are abundant notwithstanding whether positive or negative. Thus, for example, the two most famous Neoclassical texts by Alexander Pope and Jonathan Swift, dubbed by the 20th-century theorist of the novel J Paul Hunter as "the great conservative manifestos" (1990: 97), very reluctantly accepted the novelty that the new age and new trends in literature brought along. Pope in his literary satire *The Dunciad* (1728) referred to the novelty of the modern age and consequently the novel in a negative light: advocates of modernity, the Moderns, were, according to Pope, *dunces*, fools and slow students who had trouble learning because they were charmed by the present and sought true value only in the future. True

heroes, on the other hand, looked to the past, towards the *auctores* of antiquity. In the same vein, Swift undermined the value of novels both in the *Battle of Books* (1697) as well as in its more extensive thematic sequel, *A Tale of a Tub* (1704):[2] in both of these satires he bore down on the hacks obsessed with novelty and new style who did not care for traditional cultural values. In a broader context, Swift in this way attacked the "new values" appearing in cultural and social life because he did not regard them with benevolence (Hunter 1990: 99; 106).

Five decades later, Samuel Johnson in the *Rambler* No.4 (dated 31st March 1750) published his famous essay "On Fiction" (Johnson called the novel "fiction") in which he admitted to the existence of a new prose genre and immediately prescribed the manner in which the novel was supposed to be written in order to have a positive impact on the society. Appropriating the Neoclassical doctrine of *utile*, Johnson claimed that the novel's primary function was to explicate human virtues, i.e. to provide example for a moral life and to provide a guide for youth who by their very nature are easily influenced, especially by novels (2001: 463-465).

These three authors represent just a fraction of the leading 18th-century thinkers who refused to legitimate, or who spoke with great reservations of the modern 18th-century prose narratives because they could not accept any shift from tradition. Moreover, they could not comprehend the needs of those modern readers who were not solely interested in the so-called high literature and its traditional/classical role-models (Hunter 1990: 163). However, despite harsh criticism of the novel, the mere fact that the 18th-century writers and thinkers found it necessary to discuss the novel indicates that the novel was, for better or for worse, visibly present on the contemporary literary and cultural scene.

Contrary to the negative criticism which the novel received from the Augustans, the highbrow advocates of the Neoclassical poetics and literature – some of the most notable of which were Samuel Johnson, Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift and Joseph Addison – the general reading public not only immediately accepted the novel but also played an important role in shaping its basic traits. The novel's popularity among the broad readership was thus never brought into question: what was questionable, however, was the promotion of the novel to the status equal to that of the other genres in the world of "high" literature.

It is important to stress that the discussions of the time, not only on the topic of the novel's novelty and originality but also on the topic of its literary value as a form lacking tradition, reflected a wider conflict in the society and culture of the times. This conflict, known as the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns, reached its peak at the end of the 17th and at the beginning of the 18th

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2   Swift started writing *A Tale of a Tub* in the mid-1690s, and published it for the first time in 1704. The text got its name, according to Swift, because sailors would, upon seeing a whale close to their ship, throw into the sea an empty tub to prevent it from attacking the ship. In this same way Swift wanted to divert the Moderns (wits) from attacking the weak sides of religion and government (1704: 14). *The Battle of Books*, on the other hand, got its name from the English version of the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns of which more will be said below.

centuries. A tentative truce was achieved in 1719 when both the Ancients and the Moderns accepted historical relativism but, despite the ceasefire, skirmishes in the form of fired debates continued during the whole of the 18th century (Patey 2005: 63). In fact, the Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns reflected a collision of the old world of classical *poiesis* and its corresponding episteme with the new, modern world governed by empiricism, individual perception and science. The Quarrel was of great importance not only for literature but also for its reflection of the worldview of the period because it represented the birthplace of modern thought and literary criticism, both of the 18th century and the modern age in general (Patey 2005: 32).

The Quarrel started in France around 1670 but it spread to Great Britain in 1690 with the "Essay upon The Ancient and Modern Learning" by Sir William Temple, a famous English statesman, diplomat, and Jonathan Swift's patron: Swift was Temple's secretary for ten years. Both men belonged to the Ancients, the promoters of antique values. It is believed that Temple's prose style strongly influenced Swift's works, especially the already mentioned *Battle of the Books*, Swift's best satirical work written in defence of Temple's "Essay". In 1694 Temple's text was attacked by a supporter of the Moderns, a scholar and linguist William Wotton, with his essay titled "Reflections upon Ancient and Modern Learning" and consequently the quarrel engulfed Great Britain.

Thus the French Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns "infected" not only the European literary world but also the whole society, and the themes that were most passionately discussed in France were common to debates across Europe.[3] Historians believe that the 18th-century Quarrel is of special importance because it engendered a new concept of history: all of the works made by human hand started to be perceived as products of history, i.e. as cultural constructs, which consequently lead to the relativization of taste, to a greater interest in non-classical cultures (an interest arose not only for the contemporary, "Modern", cultural products, but also for the past ones that did not belong to the classical period). The final result was the emergence of the late 18th-century "historicism" (Patey 2005: 34).

It is believed that the 17th-century Quarrel started because of a disagreement among the hitherto complementary values; new scientific insights, awareness of different national cultures and new directions in philosophy led to the dismantling of a formerly harmonious unity of science and philosophy.

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3   Today experts date the beginnings of the Quarrel to the Renaissance, Middle Ages or even earlier, to the Classical Antiquity, because they believe that every age shapes the idea of its own distinctness and its own progress, identity and self-perception precisely on the opposition of the old and the new. According to such claims, the Quarrel of the 17th and 18th centuries was a continuation of this tradition but was, nevertheless, different from the previous quarrels inasmuch as it brought new realizations which will be discussed later in the text. It is believed that, precisely due to these new realizations, the famous quarrel of the 17th and 18th centuries represented a turning point in the modern way of thinking (Patey 2005: 33).

The Moderns opted for new scientific insights, while the Ancients invoked a historically universal and permanent taste, testifying to its existence by a continuous popularity of the classical works from the Classical Antiquity onwards. The universal taste was connected to the universality of human nature; both the Moderns as well as the Ancients, despite their later disagreements, initially firmly believed that human nature was eternal and immutable.

The Moderns, thus, relied on a detailed knowledge of human nature but also on the empirical rational concepts (human nature can best be understood by observation and experience; an individual can know himself best, and by knowing himself can also know human nature), using these ideas as key arguments in favour of the dominance of modernity in all of the areas of knowledge. However, notwithstanding their claim that human nature in its essence was the same and immutable, they admitted that the external circumstances such as the historical moment, the organization of the state and its institutions, as well as the general state of society, could influence the nature of an individual person. Such attitudes clearly show that the Moderns possessed an awareness of the historicity of their own moment in time and, in accordance with this view, that they began to contextualize historically both contemporary as well as past societies and civilisations.

Historicism, or the awareness of the specificity of every historical moment soon became a generally accepted fact, adopted even by the scholars of antiquity who, in later stages of their thinking, began to apply the historical contextualization to the reading of old texts belonging not only to literature but also to other disciplines. To a certain extent they modified their attitudes toward the eternal and immutable taste, and claimed that the historical context played an important role for a full understanding of all texts from the past times, i.e. that it was necessary to take into account the cultural and historical differences between the present and the past when interpreting works from thepast times. From the viewpoint of such an adapted attitude of the Ancients, the task of the interpreter and/or translator of old texts was to position oneself as much as possible in the historical context of the author (Patey 2005: 57); in other words, to contextualize the text that is being analyzed, and not evaluate it by the contemporary, modern criteria.[4]

Of course, many writers and intellectuals disagreed with such a view of history. Even though Swift belonged to the Ancients, in his preface to *A Tale of a Tub* he parodied such an approach to the historical contextualization *ad absurdum* by a meticulous description of the conditions in which he wrote his satire, and by

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[4] It seems that the ancients modified their attitudes in order to defend Homer from the attack of the moderns who, Patey claims, criticized him in order to better prove their modern beliefs. The moderns stated that Homer respected neither the decorum (because he used coarse language, dishonourable heroes, rude gods, obsolete science, and because his style was too trivial and repetitive) nor reason, but rather followed emotions, which was wrong because emotions should always be subordinated to reason (Patey 2005: 55-57).

asking his reader to replicate those conditions in order to be able to comprehend the text fully (1704: 18-19).

Disregarding the attacks such as Swift's, the awareness of history as a sequence of distinct periods which were therefore divisible into separate unities spread quickly over Europe, glossing over the previously more-or-less simply conceived history. This awareness brought with itself the above-mentioned contextualization or a need to understand and reconstruct the specific historical circumstances in which every text was created. Therefore the awareness of diverse stages in history now replaced the old ahistorical approach which perceived great classical role-models, whether literary, historical, philosophical, scientific or others, as sources of eternal and immutable truths. Moreover, historical periods were no longer considered as long-lasting periods: the 18th-century historians spoke of time segments lasting as long as a human life, i.e. one generation (the measure, as in the Renaissance, is man's biological duration and knowledge, ideas, information, worldviews that a man can gather in one life-span). In other words, at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries a new conception of a historical period was developed: a period was understood as the duration of an average human life, it represented a unity in which different aspects of human civilisation and culture in a specific historical moment are intertwined (Patey 2005: 67).

There is another important consequence of the 18th-century innovative concepts that crucially influenced not only the establishment of the modern notion of science but also the discussions regarding the generic novelty of the novel: it was the modern idea of arts and sciences as separate disciplines. The most meticulously executed division was made by Bernard de Fontenelle, Corneille's nephew, in his work *Digression sur les anciens et les modernes* (*Digression on the Ancients and the Moderns*) in 1688 in which, following René Descartes, he divided arts and sciences into two separate fields depending on the sphere of human intellectual ability governing the field: the arts are governed by imagination, the sciences by reason, i.e. by Descartes's "new way of thinking". Art and science were classified into two different areas depending also on whether they developed historically or not – the idea of progress seemed to be the dominant principle of the division. The main issue was whether progress was achieved through gradual collection of knowledge by learning (in the case of science), or whether talent could achieve the maximum of quality in a brief period (in the case of art).[5] The general conclusion was that scientific disciplines such as physics, medicine, mathematics, developed gradually from the ancient until present times by the accumulation of new knowledge, which in turn implied that the emphasis was on the idea of progress. Art or, more precisely, painting, poetry, eloquence, sculpture and architecture work within a set of ideas limited by language, imitation of nature and boundedness of sensory perception which

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[5] Fontenelle's division was based, according to Patey, on an almost identical traditional differentiation between literature (i.e. rhetoric) and philosophy (2005: 38).

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vivid imagination can elevate to the heights of quality in a very short time. Thus, even a passionate Modern such as Fontenelle believed that, despite the appearance of modern genres in Romance languages like romance and fairytale, the golden age of literature had already passed: poets of the Augustan age had already reached perfection (Patey 2005: 38, 40).[6] It is also important to underline that, despite the fact that he preferred classical to contemporary literature, Fontenelle additionally distinguished between ancient and modern/"new" literature within antiquity itself: namely, he favoured Roman over Greek literature in terms of quality, because Roman literature represented modernity – this being the reason for his foregrounding the literature of the Augustan age and not the one of Homer, Demosthenes or Pindar. At the same time, and speaking in favour of the 17th-century French literature, Fontenelle noted that his contemporaries formulated new genres such as the novel and *lettres gallantes* which did not exist in antiquity; this invention, he claimed, justified his preference of contemporary over ancient literature.

The firmly rooted supremacy of classical over modern literature in the contemporary thought was still visible in the writings of many Moderns from different European countries. One of these Moderns was a Briton William Wotton who openly agreed with the claim that classical poets represented the role-models even in the 18th century, and that it was necessary to follow their rules in order to master the art of writing. The other Moderns, on the other hand, opposed this view by supporting the idea of progress in all disciplines, art included, and consequently literature as well. However, in spite of the disagreements within the ranks of the Moderns and the Ancients, the new division of knowledge into the arts and sciences as separate categories soon became a universally accepted concept in the new intellectual *Weltanschauung*, and its consequences brought about a crisis in the traditional conception of art.

In consequence, art history started to be studied in a different way as a history of separate and distinct periods by which art ascended, step by step, led by the idea of progress. Connected to this, another belief also became popular, that the development of art followed the broader historical movements of a particular nation and state (Patey 2005: 45, 67).

Furthermore, during the whole 18th century the issue of the ratio of imitation and originality necessary for creating "high", "valuable" art was also under scrutiny.[7] Owing to new worldviews and new knowledge in social and natural

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[6] The terms "art" and "science" have only gained the meaning that we ascribe them today in the 19th century. In the 17th and 18th centuries they still traditionally designated theoretical understanding (science) and practical activity, creation in accordance with rules (art) (Patey 2005: 39).

[7] It is important to mention that imitation, as perceived by the ancients and Augustans such as Pope, did not represent mere imitation, copying of old literary texts, but consisted of "a mode of cultural transmission that crucially involved correction of a tradition from within" (Patey 2005: 8): in this way, new originals were produced using imitation. Patey adds that both Pope and Dryden valued imitation because they understood the referentiality of literature, but also its intertextuality (even though they did not use

sciences, the concept of art as a "methodic activity" governed by rules deduced from traditional norms was gradually rejected; instead, this concept now became the chief tenet of science (hence, instead of the term "science", the term "scientific method" will be used in its place, the term that has remained in use till present day) (Patey 2005: 43). Due to the fact that art was no longer perceived as a methodic activity governed by the rules, it was no longer possible to understand art as a skill which could be transmitted from one excellent artist to another: put simply, the imitation of *auctores* now lost its relevance, while originality and novelty gradually took its place. At the end of the 18th century, with the sway of Romanticism in Great Britain, originality and novelty would finally gloss over the emulation of classicist poetics. Romanticism would ascribe the greatest importance to individual talent, novelty and uniqueness of the act of creation, and the artistic work created by that very act, while the imitation of role-models and emulation of tradition will be ostracized.

Even though most European countries discussed the same problems regarding the need for continuity or newness of the artistic tradition, individual countries raised different issues. So, for example, parallel to the Quarrel in France but different in focus, England was enwrapped in the already mentioned Battle of the Books which revolved, as the name reveals, around books and literary theory, the production of books, their use and the readers.

William Temple, the author of the first "Essay Upon the Ancient and Modern Learning" in favour of antiquity, and the instigator of the battle in England, immediately refuted Fontenelle's modern division of disciplines to arts and sciences by claiming that, in terms of quality, no modern discipline, whether science or art, from the end of the dark Middle Ages to the 17th century, come even near the ancient learning (Patey 2005: 47). Temple, hence, believed that the oldest books, written in Latin and Greek, were the most valuable and that it was to them that the Western culture owed all of its knowledge. He therefore studied history in the traditional humanist way, believing that historical texts directly spoke of relevant human issues and taught about morals, virtue and politics despite the temporal chasm that separated the present from the past (Patey 2005: 50-51).[8]

Thus, Temple did not recognize this new division into arts and sciences, believing that antiquity in its learning surpassed modernity; as proof of his

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that term); i.e. they realized that by selecting and combining elements from earlier literary works the authors changed, corrected, re-created and refined literary tradition (2005: 8-9).

[8] It was only in the 18th century that the study of history began to be perceived as a significant human activity that should be at the centre of every civilisation. Until that time history was never an important part of education nor was it ever claimed that it was able to describe and interpret the entirety of human life. This was, until the late 18th century, the function of religion, philosophy, and even poetry and fiction. In the same period, historiography would become an important discipline defined as a theory and history of writing about history based on a critical study of historical sources, selection and synthesis of certain authentic details into a discourse that would be objective and critically sound.

thesis he listed four major causes of modern inferiority in all intellectual and creative activities. These causes, according to Temple, were responsible for the lower quality of modern with regard to ancient literature. The first cause was the Protestant Reformation which resulted in the public attention being too centred on religion; the second was the abatement of patronage which, in view of many other intellectuals of the 17th and 18th centuries, dictated high quality of literary works, and which was no longer a necessary requisite for the publication of an artistic text. The third cause was the change in the system of social values because people now longed for money whereas before they had longed for honour; the last cause was the false "scorn of pedantry" (Patey 2005: 47).

"Pedant" was a derogatory term for poets and critics, modern philologists who analyzed classic and historical texts in great detail, annotating them with comments, notes, indexes, contents and footnotes, wishing to define as precisely as possible all the minutia relating to names and events mentioned in those texts. Texts analyzed in such a manner reflected practically all of the critic's or editor's learning, and this in consequence suffocated the main text with paratextual elements.[9] Ancients such as Temple thought of these "true" critics, or Moderns, as scribblers whose only goal was to discover and gather the author's errors; opposed to them, the critics belonging to the Ancients were thought to be gentlemen (Patey 2005: 48-49). Following his line of thought, Swift attacked these pedant Modern critics with particular satire in his *Tale of a Tub*, calling them error mongers of other people's mistakes.

Secondly, Temple believed that historiographic texts should be well-rounded texts shaped like stories/narratives, i.e. shaped according to the rules of narration, because in this way they could best serve as an example and guide to future generations. Contrary to Temple, some Moderns, Wotton being among them, no longer believed that history was a guide through life and an example for posterity (as did the Ancients who observed the principle *historia est magistra vitae*), but rather studied history as a separate discipline which should be analyzed according to the rules of the "scientific method". Consequently, their historiographic texts were full of comments, dates and names, thus becoming non-narrative texts which predominantly resembled, in Wotton's opinion, a mosaic of thoughts and sentences by various authors, historians or historical persons on a given subject (Patey 2005: 50-51). Wotton praised such a careful approach to the analysis of history because he believed it allowed the 18th-century historians to become

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[9]   Paratext is one of the types of transtextual relationships defined by Gérard Genette. According to the author, it includes "a title, a subtitle, intertitles; prefaces, postfaces, notices, forewords, etc.; marginal, intrapaginal, terminal notes; epigraphs; illustrations; blurbs, book covers, dust jackets, and many other kinds of secondary signals, whether allographic or autographic" (1997: 2-3). In other words, paratext is used to describe every text connected to the main text, which can be found "around" it, whether preceding (e.g. foreword) or following it (e.g. afterword), whether published separately (e.g. review or advertisement). The purpose of paratext is to explain in more detail the main text. In the above context it primarily refers to footnotes and notes.

acquainted with a particular historical period to an extent even greater than the people who had actually lived during it. Moreover, Wotton thought that a critic and a historian who "pedantically" interpreted the author's thoughts were in fact superior to the author himself /herself because they were able to enter his/ her thoughts (Patey 2005: 48).[10]

From such opposed views in the 18th century there emerged the frequently mentioned rivalry between "wit and learning" or, in other words, between "gentility and pedantry", or, in other words still, between taste (understood in the traditional way as the universal taste determined by the classics of ancient Greek and Roman literature) on the one hand, and historical and grammatical knowledge, on the other. The latter notion was in the 18th-century texts frequently denoted by the French term *érudition* (Patey 2005: 52).

Excessive erudition and pedant textual annotations advocated by the Moderns were, of course, the popular target of derision, especially in the learned circles of the opposing camp. The most famous of those was the "Martinus Scriblerus Club", the society of witty and humorous writers and Tories such as Jonathan Swift, Alexander Pope, John Gay, Thomas Parnell and John Arbuthnot.[11] The purpose of their meetings was to make fun of pedant erudition,

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[10] It seems that Henry Fielding had that in mind in the second chapter of the first book of *The Life of Mr. Jonathan Wild the Great* where he ironically stated that biographers wrote their works with the exclusive goal of showing off how much they knew about history. Namely, the chapter in question begins with a statement that it is "the custom of all biographers, at their entrance into their work, to step a little backwards (as far, indeed, generally as they are able) and to trace up their hero, as the ancients did the river *Nile*" (1982: 5; italics in the original). Fielding continues to list assumptions at the core of this way of writing, the first being the biographers' fear that the readers will think their heroes invented if they do not provide a thorough genealogy: "I have imagined it might be to obviate a suspicion that such extraordinary personages were not produced in the ordinary course of nature" but are the fruit of their imagination. As the last possible reason for offering the hero's origins Fielding lists a real criticism at the expense of biographers: "Lastly, and perhaps more truly, I have conjectured that the design of the biographer hath been no more than to shew his great learning and knowledge of antiquity. A design to which the world hath probably owed many notable discoveries, and indeed most of the labours of our antiquarians" (1982: 5).

[11] John Gay (1685-1732) is perhaps best known for his *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), famous in his time precisely because it represented a combination of the Italian opera burlesque and political satire at the expense of Sir Robert Walpole. *The Threepenny Opera* written in 1928 by Bertolt Brecht is a variation of Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*. Thomas Parnell (1679-1718) wrote his version of the mock-heroic epic poem *Batrachomyomachia*, which was in the 18th century wrongly ascribed to Homer, and called it *Homer's Battle of the Frogs and Mice with the Remarks of Zoilus* (1717). In his epic poem Parnell attacks famous Neoclassicists, a critic and poetician John Dennis, and a Shakespearean scholar Lewis Theobald, who published a very strict but well-grounded critique of Pope as very bad editor of Shakespeare's works. It is believed that Parnell's poem "Night-piece on death" is the first of the so-called graveyard poems very popular in the 18th century. John Arbuthnot (1667-1735), Scottish mathematician, was Queen Anne's royal physician

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pretentiousness and learned language through the invented character of a pedant and scribbler, Martin Scriblerus. The Club members derided the works published by Modern intellectuals-pedants by claiming those works were written by none other than Martin Scriblerus, but they also published completely new works under the same pseudonym. The name for their Club and their "front-man" was not chosen by accident: the name Martin represented an "emulation" of the character by the name of Martin Mar-all originally invented by John Dryden, which in the 18th century became the synonym for absurd errors. His surname, Scriblerus, derives from the 18th-century word *scribler*, i.e. a writer but also a hack, an untalented writer. The Club members began to meet in 1713 in London where they collectively started to compose *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*, but only Pope and Swift lived long enough to see the work published in 1741. In the meantime these writers published, either individually or collectively, shorter texts under Scriblerus's name. How much they enjoyed their passionate discussions can be discerned from Pope's letter to Swift in which he wrote: "The top of my own ambition is to contribute to that great work [the *Memoirs*], and I shall translate Homer by the by" (1770: 6).

The Novel, Ancient Role-Models and Modernity

The Quarrel between the Ancients and the Moderns, thus, infused wider public circles and literary spheres alike, and it is no wonder that the Quarrel penetrated between the book covers of the 18th-century novels, the very genre that belonged to modernity.

Perhaps the most famous site of scorching criticism pointed at excessive learnedness and pedantry is the work *Gulliver's Travels* by Jonathan Swift, saturated with the parodic spirit of the Scriblerus Club. Literary critic Paul Turner conveys the belief of some critics who maintain that *Gulliver's Travels* were created as an elaboration and a spin-off of one of the chapters from the *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus* in which Martin's travels are described. Swift, who loved writing travel books, was allegedly given the task of writing the travel chapter in the *Memoirs* and was in this way inspired for *Gulliver*. However, irrespective of such theories, the extent to which the *Memoirs* might have influenced Swift's work still remains disputable (Turner in Swift 1998: xi).

As far as the criticism of pedants in *Gulliver's Travels* is concerned, it is especially present in the chapters on the flying island of Laputa and the Lagado academy in the third part of the book. It is there that Swift particularly attacked the members of the Royal Society and their research, describing them as "professors" looking for solutions to utterly meaningless problems, such as building a house

and Swift's close friend, as well as the principal author of the work *Memoirs of Martinus Scriblerus*. He also wrote *The History of John Bull* (1727), a character who would become the symbol of a stereotypical Englishman in literature and comics.
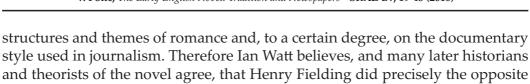
from the roof down, or producing spider webs of different colours. After a visit to the Lagado academy, Gulliver concludes that the professors there are not in their right minds and only confirm the old saying that "there is nothing so extravagant and irrational which some Philosophers have not maintained for Truth" (Swift 1998: 179). Swift, hence, by describing the Laputans as caricatures of scientists who searched for useless knowledge, satirically uncovered the senselessness of such an approach to science.[12]

Writing some fifteen years later, Samuel Richardson also joined the debate between the Ancients and the Moderns but in his novels he presented the poetic views different from the ones that preoccupied Swift. Richardson was not so interested in satirizing pedantry and antiquity as he was in establishing the modern genre of the novel which he deemed superior to the ancient epic poem. Richardson, a modestly educated printer and a Modern, defended modern literature against the classical and Neoclassical one by stating, for example, that the epics of Homer and Virgil, despite their possible nobility of style, had been spreading paganism and savagery, brutality and superstition for centuries because the authors had not known Christian piety and gentility. These latter qualities, according to Richardson, were clearly reflected in the genre of the novel, the modern age invention. It was with these opinions, in fact, that Richardson strongly influenced his friend Edward Young who, in his essay *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), expressed his belief that Christianity contributed to the development of literature because it enlightened, offered a broader understanding of the world and in that way enriched the imagination which, in its own turn, "enabled composition to shine" (Richardson and Young in Patey 2005: 64).

In contrast to Richardson, one could claim that Henry Fielding, a classically educated Ancient and a great rival of Richardson's, stood on the very borderline between accepting the ancient role-models and modern tendencies. Fielding, at least according to his own wording, believed that it was necessary to legitimate the new genre by connecting it to the epic poem or, more precisely, to the comic epic which had been written, as it was then believed, by Homer, but which was lost in the course of history. Not only did Fielding use prefaces to various novels to define the novel as a comic epic poem in prose but, more importantly, he emphasized that he was the very one who had invented a completely new way of writing. Curiously enough, Fielding deliberately used prefaces to his novels *Tom Jones*, *Joseph Andrews*, and even the preface to the second edition of his sister Sarah's novel *Adventures of David Simple* to verbalize meticulously his support for the ancient origins of the novel, while, at the same time, his novels tended to rely heavily precisely on the texts belonging to the non-classic tradition, i.e. on the

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[12] Swift mocked or, rather, insulted the pedants even by the choice names for the island and the academy: Laputa, "[t]he Word, which I interpret the *Flying* or *Floating Island,* is in the Original Laputa, whereof I could never learn the true origin" (Swift 1998: 152; italics in the original), inviting in this way readers to see through the thinly disguised insult in Spanish which formed part of the 18th-century lingua franca. Perhaps one could also propose the potential etymology of the Academy's name, Lagado: in Portuguese "gado" means livestock, oxen.

structures and themes of romance and, to a certain degree, on the documentary style used in journalism. Therefore Ian Watt believes, and many later historians and theorists of the novel agree, that Henry Fielding did precisely the opposite of what he propagated: he consciously and deliberately rejected the ancient role-models when composing his novels (Watt 2001: 243) in the same way in which these role-models were rejected by Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Delariver Manley, Eliza Haywood, Jane Barker and many other male and female novelists of the 18th century.

Fielding's deliberate rejection of *auctores* is further confirmed by the unmistakeably parodic dimension of his novels. Moreover, 20th -century theorists of the novels such as Georg Lukacs, Mikhail Bakhtin, as well as the historians of the novel such as Ian Watt and Michael McKeon, J. Paul Hunter and John Skinner all emphasize the fact that Fielding's "comic epic poems in prose" represent a calculated parody of the ancient epic genre. In this context, parody is generally defined as a novelist's deliberate strategy of juxtaposing a faithful imitation of the classical role-models alongside its subversive critique, achieving in this way the incongruence between what is propagated in the prefaces and what the text itself reflects and supports, and Fielding more than any author is the case in point.[13]

Fielding's parody of the ancient epic, i.e. his intentional rejection of classicist norms, becomes apparent if we bear in mind that the 18th -century readers were aware of parody in the backdrop of his novels. This awareness is testified to by various texts of the period, such as a pamphlet printed in 1751, titled "An Essay on the New Species of Writing founded by Mr. Fielding: with a Word or Two upon the Modern State of Criticism" in which an anonymous author, describing a mock epic poem, cited *Tom Jones* as an example: "The Story should be probable (...) and to enliven it more, it is sometimes heightened to the Mock-heroic, to ridicule the Bombast and Fustian, which obtain'd so much in the Romances" (Williams 1970: 153).

In the introduction to the collection *The Works of Henry Fielding, Esq; with the Life of the Author*, collected and published in 1762, the author Arthur Murphy, writing about *Tom Jones*, stated: "The laws of the mock-epic (...) demand, that, when trivial things are to be represented with a burlesque air, the language should be raised into a sort of tumor of dignity, that by the contrast between the ideas and the pomp in which they are exhibited, they may appear the more ridiculous to our imaginations" (Murphy in Williams 1970: 258).

Another example comes from a work in six volumes titled *The Origin and Progress of Language* (1776) by James Burnett Lord Monboddo, which primarily deals with the evolution of Indo-European language but also contains very interesting comments on 18th -century literature. Lord Monboddo also mentioned parody in *Tom Jones*, which he disapproved of:

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[13] Genette's etymological analysis of the word "parody" supports this argument. The scholar asserts that *ode* means a chant, while *para* means "along, beside". *Parodein,* where the word *parody* comes from, "would (therefore?) mean singing beside: that is, singing off key; or singing in another voice – in counterpoint; or again, singing in another key –deforming, therefore, or *transposing* a melody" (1997: 10; italics in the original).

But what shews evidently that the matter is principal in the sublime character of style is this, that, if the matter be low and trivial, and, at the same time, the sentiments heroic with language suitable, then it becomes a species of writing altogether different, and indeed opposite, and which, accordingly, bears the name of *mock-heroic*, or *burlesque*. Of this kind we have an antient poem (...) the battle of the frogs and mice (...) In modern times (...) the best of them all (...) is *The Dunciad* of Mr. Pope (...) Mr. Fielding, in his comic narrative poem, the history of *Tom Jones*, has mixed with his narrative a good deal of the mock-heroic (...) It is, indeed, an excellent parody of Homer's battles, and it is highly ridiculous; but, in my opinion, it is not proper for such a work: *First*, because it is too great a change of style, greater than any work of a legitimate kind, which I think Fielding's is, will admit, from the simple and familiar to the heroic or mock-heroic. (Lord Monboddo in Williams 1970: 293; italics in the original)

Hence, Lord Monboddo offered his definition of parody as well as his own evaluative judgement of Fielding's most highly regarded novel claiming that *Tom Jones* possessed some qualities of a work belonging to "serious" literature but was at the same time debased by too great an incongruence between its individual parts.

It is important to note that the renunciation of the ancient role-models as advocated by the Moderns was not implemented *a priori* and *ad extremis*. Rather, some of the classic and basic postulates governing the structure, particularly the structure of dramatic texts, were still valid in the 18th century. This is particularly true of Aristotle's unity of action which can be said to be one of the essential construction principles of the novelistic genre in the 18th century. From the point of view of the unity of action, *Tom Jones* was considered to possess a particularly well construed plot; moreover, it is a well-known fact that Samuel Taylor Coleridge claimed that the novel had a perfect plot with a complex, masterfully executed cause-effect structure. Even today many critics agree with Coleridge's assessment, if not completely, then at least in the framework of the 18th-century novel.

Rejection or parody of classic models lead to the search for inspiration in other places, such as in the parallel vernacular tradition. This non-classic tradition, if this syntagm is not too much of an oxymoron, offered the Moderns several possibilities within which they could realize their own understanding of literature. Due to the fact that the Modern politics/poetics, unlike the one cherished by the Ancients, was oriented towards the readers' needs and desires as the determining factors in the shaping of literature, the Moderns, accordingly, produced their literature with the aim of satisfying the needs of contemporary readers who lived in a new, dynamic, technologically and scientifically advanced world. In the same vein, novelists through their novels offered their readers a view of the contemporary society as seen "from the outside", a specific view filtered through fiction, all with the aim of helping the readers to better perceive the

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world they lived in. In order to depict the world as best they could, the modern novelists often conceived their plots to offer a broader social and political context of the "brave new world", which they achieved either through descriptions of life or though the consciousness of one or more characters. Hence, even though the author of this article cannot claim with absolute certainty that the Moderns wrote their texts programmatically, they still tended to offer harsh comments on the new social circumstances in which they found themselves by pointing to the society's flaws, and often using elements of satire and parody to that end. In so doing, popular literary forms such as romance in prose (more rarely in verse), or ballads, offered them a template for a play unbound by norms and poetics.

The search for the inspiration and appropriation of specific literary forms from the vernacular tradition resulted in interesting explorations of the hitherto unexplored genres but also in the debates about the new literary values. In France, for example, the romance became the focus of attention; in Great Britain in this period the novel was the literary genre at the centre of creative attention, but debates on romance did not abate, either. Moreover, the interest in romance, in France but also in Great Britain, spanned the entire period, and its students were particularly interested in its origin. One of the earliest theoretical works on the subject was *Traité de l'origine des romans* (*The History of Romances*) (1670) by the bishop Pierre Daniel Huet translated into English in 1715; this study played an important role in the 18th-century attempts at formulating the poetics of romance as well as the novel. In the late 18th century perhaps two of the most interesting treatises were *The Progress of Romance* (1785) by Clara Reeve which is by many leading 20th- and 21st-century historians of the novel considered to be the first serious treatise that pioneers the poetics of the entire novel genre; and the essay "A View of the Commencement and Progress of Romance" (1797) by John Moore.

Even though these treatises on the romance represent the very beginnings of a systematized thought on the poetics of the novel, they are relevant for the study of the novel in its formative period lasting from the end of the 17th to the second half of the 18th centuries because they reveal the development of the poetic awareness of the novel, as well as the attempts to define and conceptualize the whole genre in a more coherent manner. Another reason why treaties on the romance are so relevant for the study of the novel lies in the romance's centuries-long presence on the literary scene. In other words, by the 18th century, the romance had been a long present and well-known literary phenomenon and was therefore frequently used by the 17th- and 18th-century intellectuals as a starting point for the discussions regarding the new literary form, as the novel was then perceived. Therefore, poetic discussions on the novel were most often based on the comparison between the features of the romance and the novel with the aim of identifying the distinctive traits of the latter which, at least seemingly, though sometimes even visibly, relied on the former. In the mid- and late 18th century, it is true, one can speak only of the very rudimentary analytical thinking about the novel and its poetics, but even this thinking offers a clear insight into the awareness of the novel as a separate literary genre. Some of these insights, such as a large portion of the novel's poetics as formulated by Clara Reeve, are

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relevant even today and are referred to in the most current literary histories and theories of the novel.[14]

Finally, it is important to mention that, even though the modern worldview eventually prevailed in literature, this by no means implies that Modern voices easily and entirely glossed over the traditional ones. Traditional classicist poetics still dominated the literary scene, especially in the early years of the 18th century. This dominance was, according to Hunter, crucial for the emergence of the novel because traditionalism, with its rejection of novelty, popular interests and popular needs, in fact paved the way for a new literary genre that could satisfy those needs. Hunter also claims that traditionalism, by looking up only to the high forms of ancient literature, completely neglected the non-classic oral tradition and various forms of oral literature. However, by doing this, it did not eliminate the need of the growing reading audience for that popular type of entertainment. Quite the contrary: owing to the changes in society, the wider reading audience, unsatisfied by the classicist literature, began to dictate the conditions on the literary market, and this eventually led to the situation in which traditionalism inadvertently – by denying popular entertainment but not succeeding in (or not wanting to) replace it with its own classicist production – contributed to the emergence and sudden popularity of a literary form that initially belonged to low literature. In other words, traditionalism created what Hunter calls a "vacuum", i.e. a free space in which the novel entered the scene and quickly took over one of the leading positions on the scale of readers' interests (1990: 163).

Readerly Interests and the Commercialization of Literature[15]

While high intellectual and literary circles of the 17th and 18th centuries passionately debated about the values of the ancient role-models versus the non-classical tradition and modern literary kinds, general readership mostly read for pleasure, curiosity and out of boredom, but also to satisfy the need for daydreaming and wish fulfilment, the need which, according to Patricia Meyer Spacks, often represented the main motive for perusing novels (2006: 17, 99).
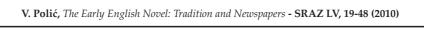
The wider reading audiences of the 18th century did not choose what to read, but rather read everything that came to hand: among available longer prose fiction, novels were particularly popular, but also romances, available in

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[14] Clara Reeve's treatise is particularly interesting in those places in which she lists those novelistic traits which she considers valuable, and when she offers comments on the most famous novels from the beginning of the 18th century until 1785, when she writes her *Progress of Romance* (vol. 1, pp. 108-144; vol. 2, pp. 4-31 *et passim*).

[15] Readerly is appropriated here to denote "of the reader" and not to Barthes' terms readerly/writerly as discussed in *S/Z. An Essay* (1974). For the latter, see Barthes 1988: 4-5. Barthes, Roland (1988 [1974]) *S/Z: An Essay,* trans. by Richard Miller, Preface by Richard Howard, The Noonday Press, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, Inc.: New York.

numerous translations from French. In terms of non-fiction, newspapers were read most widely, even though the classification of 18th -century newspaper articles, journals and pamphlets into the newspaper genre as it is defined today is sometimes problematic because the boundaries between fact and fiction were even less clear then than today.[16]

However, what were the precise changes which occurred in the social structure at the turn of the 18th century and which triggered the rise of the readership, giving it a previously unimaginable power of influence over literary and newspaper production? Changes were several, but one of them was certainly the shift in the economic edifice of society. Middle classes at the turn of the 18th century were already established as the *nouveau riche*: by owning money they exerted influence on society and affected culture in a way which had previously been reserved only for the aristocracy. Money could buy everything, even the aristocratic way of life which entailed a better education and a greater amount of leisure.

Leisure was connected to the second reason for the increase, or at least for the horizontal widening of the reading circles due to the fact that more free time was now at the particular disposal of the enriched middle classes.[17] Among them, the middle-class women represented a special subgroup since they became constituted as the "new" ladies who no longer had to, or, for that matter, were allowed to do housework. Such an elevation in social standing eventually left them with only a few of the "ladylike" activities to curb their boredom: the most interesting of them was reading. Considering that women were still bound to the domestic and private sphere, and banned from a variety of activities and forms of entertainment in the public sphere reserved only for men, reading offered them one of the rare windows into the world.[18]

Thirdly, there was a relative rise in the literacy of the lower classes, at least in London and larger British cities. One of the circumstances favouring the rise in the lower class reading population was their employment as servants: household

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[16] For the issue of fact vs. fiction in the 18th-century novel see, for example, Davis, *Factual Fictions*, especially chapters 3-6.

[17] From today's perspective, the 18th-century leisure represented perhaps a banal, but nonetheless at the time relevant indicator of family wealth. It became the status symbol especially of the middle classes who, having amassed their wealth relatively recently, mostly through trade and not through inheritance, wanted to emulate "the old blood", aristocracy and their way of life.

[18] However, many 18th-century novels describe the consequences of excessive reading, especially in women: the most famous one is certainly Charlotte Lennox's *Female Quixote, or, The Adventures of Arabella* (1752), considered to be most successful and consistent English version of Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. The heroine Arabella, having read too many novels, experiences the real world as a romance convention, and only a discussion with a priest brings her back on the right path. The second example is an episodic character in Tobias Smollett's novel *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771): Lydia thinks of herself as a romance heroine and during the whole novel she acts her role, having no contact with reality.

staff usually had access to their masters' libraries. Furthermore, Sunday schools taught children to read so that they could read the Bible by themselves, individual reading of the Holy Scripture being one of the basic Protestant tenets (Watt 2001: 45-49).

However, perhaps even more relevant than the increase in number and scope of reading audience was the fact that the 18th-century readers began to influence literary production. One of the reasons was that, with the development of the printing-presses, patronage was no longer the only form of financing artistic production, even though it persisted throughout the 18th century. From antiquity till the end of the 17th century, patrons, all aristocrats, supported the artists through the commissions and thus to a certain extent dictated the taste, fashion and trends in arts. But as the 18th-century middle classes became aware that everything could be bought with money, for the first time in history art entered the market as a commodity and started to obey the market rules of supply and demand. On the other hand, with the development of the printing-presses, texts and books started to be ordered by printers and booksellers who financed the projects. However, means to print books could also be collected by subscription (Watt 2001: 52-53), the process which worked in the following way: an author desiring to publish his work was obliged to find a certain number of people willing to contribute a small amount of money towards the full price of printing the author's book. The list of subscribers would be published on the first page of the book, advertising them as patrons of culture; this process at the same time reflected the readership's influence on what was to be printed.

Beside the direct participation in the book's production process through subscription or buying of books, readers could affect the new trends in literature in various other ways. By borrowing certain books from circulating libraries,[19] for example, even the poorer readers very directly let the printers and booksellers know which books were most lucrative or, when speaking of novels, which subject-matter and genre were most wanted and, consequently, which novels the printers should order from the novelists. The reading public, therefore, began to dictate the new taste.

Printers' and booksellers' practice of publishing the information regarding the new book-titles and their prices in newspapers and periodical literature also contributed to the growing awareness of the book as a market product. With a sudden flourishing of the newspapers in the late 17th century, readers formed the habit of reading the news on a regular basis, and subsequently developed a constant need for new news and subject-matter which could, in turn, be found all in one place –the newspapers. Since, during the 18th century, in the newspapers literary articles were increasingly published alongside the reports of current

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[19] Circulating libraries appeared in the 18th century (it is believed that the first one opened in Edinburgh in 1726) and were relevant for the increase in literacy and interest for novels because they offered works at a very low price, making them affordable to everyone. Historians agree that circulating libraries greatly contributed to the spreading of literacy and self-education of the lower classes.

events, readers began to perceive new literary products as part of the news. Owing to this, literature became a source of reports and comments on the general culture and most recent societal events.

Newspapers, hence, contributed to a large degree to the increased presence of literature, especially the novel, in the public eye. Notwithstanding the large influence that the newspapers had on the novel's emergence and popularization, newspapers were also relevant in a broader context because they mirrored the contemporary society, they signalled that a significant shift from the traditional to the modern worldview was occurring, as well as that there was a change in the way contemporary people thought. At the same time, newspapers also significantly contributed to the shaping of contemporary taste. All these were traits which the novel would recognize and build into its own structure, recognizing the importance of newspapers in the 18th-century society and taking advantage of them for its own popularity. However, it is important to bear in mind that, notwithstanding the importance of the newspapers in the popularization of the new novel, newspapers were by no means the only or decisive factor for the novel's emergence.

Newspapers, Periodical Literature and the Novel

The kernel shift in the way of thinking occurred in the second half of the 17th century when people began to show a much greater interest for contemporaneity, for the present moment. Naturally, the shift was the result of a long-term process and not of a swift change. It is believed that until then art, philosophy and theology insisted on abstract thought based on distancing from the present, which in turn enabled the observance of the present moment as a consequence of a set of historical events (Hunter 1988: 495).

In the 17th-century man's focus turned to the present, which was, among other things, a reflection of a wider cultural interest for new discoveries, enlightenment and innovation, and originality as a general principle (Hunter 1988: 493). However, the focus on the moment also stemmed from the Protestant doctrine which emphasized the necessity of documenting every moment of one's own life in order to correctly interpret it: omitting even the smallest detail could lead to the loss of the overall picture and consequently to the incorrect interpretation of the purpose of one's life. Furthermore, it was also important to document every moment in order to explain its meaning in a broader context of the divinely ordered universe; the reason for this lied in the traditional beliefs. During the first half of the 18th century, and notwithstanding the new scientific discoveries some of which had been known for a longer while, human consciousness was still embedded in old beliefs in the universe arranged in concentric circles. Thus, for example, Eliza Haywood in her introduction to the *Adventures of Eovaai, Princess of Ijaveo* (1736) relied on the Elizabethan perception of the world when she justified the questionable probability of her own story: Haywood situated her plot in the pre-Adamic age, and continued to speak of those times, of the four

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great alterations in the world which occurred under the influence of the Four Elements, water, fire, air and earth. Calling upon the Elizabethan worldview, Haywood wished to discredit potential criticism of her novel by arguing that she was in no way obliged to stress the truthfulness of her history in a world where there existed only the descriptions of a sublunary, imperfect world (1736: xi-xii). In other words, Haywood claimed she was not obliged to justify the possible imperfections of her history in a world governed by imperfection (Moon's trajectory, in the Elizabethan belief, demarcated the border between the perfect, eternal, immutable world of divine creatures, and the "world below the Moon" in which all creatures were mutable, mortal and incomplete).[20]

Namely, the 17th century still upheld the Elizabethan conviction that everything existed for a reason in the universe, every particle was reflected in everything else, every element was connected to all other elements in the system according to a strictly defined plan, and this order was governed by the *primum mobile*, God. In such a universal arrangement every event could be interpreted as a sign, a message that God addressed to man. Hunter gives a good example of this conviction when he mentions a series of texts on a great snowstorm that hit London in November 1703 (the best account of which, Hunter believes, was given by Defoe in one of his early works, *Lay-Man's Sermon Upon the Late Storm 1704*) (1990: 179). In these texts, published immediately after the storm, the storm was interpreted as the vehicle of God's wrath, the means by which to chastise London.

Now it becomes clear why the 17th-century men believed it absolutely essential to document each moment: and this obsession with recording is evidenced by numerous diaries and journals of the time, but also almanacs which noted every important event in the state and sometimes even beyond it. From the end of the 17th century, the need to document new events would increasingly be satisfied by the newspapers and their sudden development which occurred precisely in this period.

However, newspapers, separately printed pamphlets and various other 17th-century publications evinced an ever widening public interest which now, more than ever before, included not only extraordinary events such as storms, shipwrecks, battles and truces, but also everyday, ordinary events which frequently concerned the private, domestic sphere. The public interest, thus, turned toward the private life, toward the personal and subjective (Hunter 1988: 513) and some of the more interesting contemporary "proto-journalistic articles"

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[20] At the time there occurred several revolutionary scientific discoveries that upturned the traditional beliefs in the universe arranged into concentric circles in the centre of which were the Earth and Man, circles governed by the great geometer God. Some of these discoveries were the following: in 1616 William Harvey (1578-1657) discovered how blood circulated in the human body (in 1628 he published his discoveries); around 1609 Galileo Gallilei (1564-1642) discovered the telescope by the use of which he proved Copernicus's theory of the heliocentric system, the discovery which displaced Ptolemy's geocentric universe. Both Gallilei's and Copernicus' teachings became accepted in the 18th century. For a detailed analysis of the Elizabethan order of the universe, see the still relevant study, *The Elizabethan Worldpicture*, by E. M. W. Tillyard, published in 1943.

– that is, separately published periodicals which recorded the events from the private sphere – would, according to the present-day standards, be classified as the newspapers' crime section. These proto-articles described robberies, family disputes, charges of witchcraft, arson and many other everyday events (Hunter 1988: 507-508).[21]

Hunter claims that three intellectual thrusts leading to a new cultural consciousness were connected to this growing obsession with contemporaneity. They were the "philosophical explorations of time; psychological interests in memory, continuity of consciousness, and the nature of personal identity; the new theological concerns with conversion, the individual epiphany, and the enlightened inner instant" (1988: 494). These intellectual thrusts were the source of the desire to experience every moment in life as unique, feel its relevance, and sense the power of the entirety of time in its most fleeting moment.

It appears that at the beginning of the 18th century the English were obsessed with contemporaneity and consequently with news and new things to a much greater degree than other Europeans. The label "news", instead of serious political and economic news, frequently designated diverse gossips and scandals that the English happily exchanged in the coffeehouses. Hunter underscores the importance of coffeehouses as places where people from various social strata, who otherwise would not have intermingled, gathered to discuss passionately the rumours, gossips and stories arriving "fresh" from the street. The credibility or, more precisely, the incredibility of such coffeehouse stories and discussions is visible in their frequent appropriation for satirical purpose: in the late 17th and the very beginning of the 18th centuries the so-called "Coffee-house Tale" was a synonym for an unreliable and trivial story (Hunter 1990: 175). Hence, the essential traits of the coffeehouse discussions were not truthfulness, factuality and seriousness of the subject under discussion (even though the debates also revolved around political, societal and artistic topics, and not only gossip and scandal), but rather the transmittance of the "street" information by its perpetual circulation and transformation into new stories, satisfying in this way the need for novelty which the stories themselves generated.

With the appearance of newspapers the coffeehouse culture, primarily oral, came into contact with the written culture: the newspapers, as Hunter put it succinctly, gathered news from the street, printed them and then returned them to the street in the written form (1988: 494). These two cultures, oral and written, mingled and inflamed the readers' desire for a yet greater quantity of news. It is true that before the emergence of newspapers this role was performed by the popular ballads, pamphlets and essays, but the newspapers were the ones which, by their regular publication, accustomed the readership to a regular quantity of

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[21] Examples of interesting real and fictional missing persons advertisements written by the contemporary writers and novelists-in-the-making can be found in Michael Seidel's article "Narrative News". Short newspaper notices such as these advertisements reveal the combined use of facts and fiction, making it difficult for the reader to differentiate between the two. See Seidel 1988: 131-3.

newsflashes, satisfying at the same time the readers' obsession to continuously document current events and interpret them in order to preserve their importance for the future.

Apart from providing a locus of communication among the most diverse types and classes of people, coffeehouses were also important in the late 17th- and early 18th-century society because they enabled every interested individual to browse through or read daily newspapers and periodicals free of charge and thus to get acquainted with the current state of events in the society. In this way newspapers created a reading habit, but also prepared the reading audience for a new literary form which would take over the newspapers' concern with contemporaneity, present events and individual accounts.

Moreover, Hunter claims, the majority of the late 17th-century readers would become novel readers a generation later because they would not detect a major difference between journalistic and novelistic discourses. The novel would build into its own structure precisely those human (and readerly) needs that lay at the core of the 17th-century newspapers ads and coffeehouse discussions: contemporaneity and "dailyness", immediacy of the recorded moment but also the very process of recording the historical moment, insight into an individual's private life, proneness to details, subjectivity and insistence on the factuality of the described events.[22] In other words, the activity of newspaper-reading accustomed the readers to a certain newspaper discourse which the novel took over, thus enabling the readers to simply continue reading by shifting from newspapers to the novel. It is interesting to note that the writer and novelist Richard Steele described the newspaper discourse later taken over by the novel as a "Dialect between the Familiarity of Talking and Writing" (Steele in Seidel 1988: 126), thus giving an excellent definition of the union between the oral/coffeehouse and written/newspaper culture.

Hence, novelists took over the duty of satisfying new readerly needs by shaping them into fictional prose writing and thus creating "a kind of portable coffeehouse of elongated conversation in print" (Hunter 1988: 503-504, 413). In other words, the novel displaced the need for a public discussion in coffeehouses and transformed it into the activity of novel-reading in the privacy of one's boudoir. Women, who were hitherto tied to the private sphere, and therefore removed from coffeehouse discussions, could now take greater part in the 18th-century obsession and discussion on contemporaneity.

However, it is important to stress that, notwithstanding the general overview of the most relevant issues that preoccupied the new taste at the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, the contemporary readership was by no means uniform and homogeneous in their interests. The reading audience, which consisted of members of all classes, had always had most diverse interests, a fact proven by the diversification of the newspapers and periodicals according to

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[22] Cf. Hunter 1988: 496.

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various fields of interest which, in the second half of the 18th century led to the appearance of specialized journals.

In that respect it is important to briefly mention the development of the specialized literary and critical periodicals which focused primarily on narratives, literary theory and criticism in general. The 18th century was of paramount significance for the development of the notion of British literary history, theory and criticism because the literary criticism that emerged in the periodicals of the time would eventually evolve into a modern discipline as we know it today. The appearance and subsequent development of literary criticism and the novel are interconnected due to the fact that literary criticism emerged as an independent discipline at about the same time when the novel constituted itself on the literary scene as a new self-standing literary genre which could no longer be ignored. Consequently, in the second half of the 18th century, literary criticism could sharpen its critical apparatus on the novel but would also, after it became established in specialized review journals, directly influence the novel's production.

The beginnings of literary criticism in periodicals were practically simultaneous to the development of newspapers. The beginnings of newspapers in England can be traced as early as 1620, even though a more serious history of journalism might start with the year 1690 since it was then that a great flourishing of different periodical and daily newspapers occurred. The first daily newspapers in England would start to come out in 1702, while literary criticism in newspapers appeared as early as the first decade of the 18th century. However, ever since the beginning of the 18th century the two journalist genres that contributed most to the development of literary criticism belonged to the two opposite poles in literary culture, the learned and the popular. The newspapers certainly belonged to the popular culture, while the so-called learned journals, which appeared around 1665, pertained to the traditionalist high culture and dealt only with learned content which, translated to the kind of literature they focused on, meant that they exclusively analyzed ancient and classicist texts such as *Memoirs* by the already mentioned Ancient, William Temple, or, for example, the translation of *Aesop's Fables* by a journalist, pamphleteer and active Royalist Sir Roger L'Estrange (Basker 2005: 319-320). Learned journals, in a somewhat changed form, would continue to be published along with different and more popular publications until the 21st century, satisfying the tastes of well-educated people desirous of traditional analytical approaches to various "serious" subjects.

At the start of the 18th century, however, the situation in the newspaper sphere changed because of the appearance of two types of periodicals which paved the way for later specialized critical journals: the so-called periodical essay, and magazine or monthly miscellany. Both types originated from the sphere of popular culture and, due to their extraordinary popularity, they strongly influenced the later development of literary criticism and journalism.

The two most famous periodical magazines from the first half of the 18th century are certainly the *Tatler* (1709-1711), founded by Richard Steele and published with the help of Joseph Addison, and the *Spectator* (1711-1715), founded jointly by Addison and Steele. These two periodicals for a brief time managed to

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unite a whole plethora of readerly tastes: their subscribers came from the ranks of intellectuals, merchants and craftsmen, military officers and bureaucrats, and they also included a large number of women. An issue would usually consist of one moderately long essay – the length was adapted to suit the amount of leisure-time a middle-class businessman might have at his disposal – dedicated to a current socially relevant topic which was not discussed in an overtly intellectual manner. The primary aim of such essays was to divert and entertain the readers, but the essays frequently pursued literary-critical topics and, owing to their popularity, they familiarized the broader audience with the subject of literature and literary criticism (Basker 2005: 320-321). It is important to mention that the *Tatler* and *Spectator* invited their readers to comment on a given subject and would publish the readers' letters, inciting in this way a dialogue with their audiences.

The popularity and influence of *Tatler* and *Spectator* was obviously immense since their texts were reprinted in textbooks, and numerous annual editions circulated the country during the whole of the 18th century. Beyond Great Britain, these periodicals influenced readers throughout Europe not only because parts or whole essays were translated and published in various European magazines, thus directly participating in the creation of an image of the English culture abroad, but also because many European countries started publishing their own periodicals modelled on the *Tatler* and *Spectator*.

By stylistically and linguistically adapting their essays for a wider audience, the *Tatler* and *Spectator* familiarized the 18th-century society with literary topics such as the works by William Shakespeare and John Milton, but they also discussed literary genres such as pastoral poetry, the popular ballad and the novel, omitted previously by the learned journals because they were deemed too low. At the same time, the essays supported modern social and cultural tendencies, and opposed the classicist rules (Basker 2005: 322). The key to their success might have lain in the very method of tackling the knowledge: they successfully discussed serious subjects in an everyday, commonsensical language which could be understood not only by those who were educated but lacked traditional competence in classicism, but also by those who barely had any kind of educational background, i.e. the readership that, irrespectively of an alleged lack of education, was highly interested in the 18th-century matters.

As far as the novel was concerned, the periodicals were the first to initiate a more systematic literary criticism of this new genre that was until then discussed in various other places: prefaces, afterwords, dedications, epistles, pamphlets and essays, all of which were published occasionally and irregularly. Until the first decade of the 18th century a literary-critical dialogue did exist, but was not systematic due to the fact that the above-mentioned texts by their nature did not offer a possibility of a continuous dialogue among the authors, critics and readers. However, as soon as the *Tatler* and *Spectator* appeared, i.e. from the first decades of the 18th century, this paratextual locus of literary-critical dialogue was gradually transferred to the periodicals which, owing to their regular publication as well as wider availability, established a space in which authors (who were frequently critics themselves) could carry out continuous discussions. Hence,

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from the mid-18th century one can speak of a more systematic literary criticism in specialized periodicals.

There is another important newspaper genre which, alongside the periodical essay, contributed immensely to the development of literary criticism in the first half of the 18th century: it was the magazine or monthly miscellany and it quickly incorporated the separately published periodical essay. The most famous monthly miscellanies were the *Gentleman's Magazine* which started to come out in 1731, and the *London Magazine* which appeared a year later (Basker 2005:324). The greatest difference between the magazine and the periodical essay was in the range of topics: unlike the periodical essay which pursued one topic, the magazine consisted of various sections covering practically all aspects of contemporary life, from domestic and foreign affairs, economy, through births and deaths, crime section, to the literary section.

The literary section consisted of critical articles which continued to be written in a simple, readable style. Their thematic range was not dictated by any special criteria, hence critical articles could tackle any literary genre, contributing to the popularization of the "lower" literary kinds just as the periodical essays did. However, beside the critical articles, the literary section also contained fiction and poetry as well as biographical articles. Fiction published in magazines at the beginning of the 18th century was usually a simple reprint of popular stories from other magazines or books, and rarely included original or first-time published works. In fact, it was only after 1740 that new and original stories began to be published to any greater degree (Mayo 1962: 6). A good example of such an adaptation to modern demand was the already mentioned *Gentleman's Magazine* which started to come out in 1731, but changed its concept in 1739 to include sections with original texts and reviews (Doody 1997: 276).

Prose fiction of various length published in magazines was on high demand and therefore very abundant. Moreover, the 18th century which is usually considered "the age of the novel", when observed from the perspective of the monthly miscellanies was in fact the age of short stories and sketches,[23] mostly the heritage of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* (Mayo 1962: 4); the novel in fact coexisted with them or, in some cases, appeared shortly after.

These shorter prose narratives possessed certain traits which revealed the new taste of the age, and which would all soon be incorporated into one single genre – the novel. Such narratives used everyday language to describe individuals and their private lives in a very immediate and detailed manner, they placed the characters into a contemporary context and described them as subjective beings,

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[23] Sketch is a short prose text of usually descriptive character; sometimes it may formally approach the short story. It is usually printed in newspapers and magazines (Cuddon 1999: 833). It is characterized by a familiar tone and informal approach to the subject matter, and usually depicts an individual's experience, especially, for example, of a foreign land. The sketch, thus, usually consists of anecdotes and is to a certain extent autobiographical.

depicting unusual but still possible events occurring to them. Hunter stresses that the above-mentioned narrative elements are in fact typical novelistic tenets which were mostly absent in previous literature, for example, in romance (1988: 513).

Monthly periodicals in their literary sections also published critical essays on marginal and new literary forms such as popular poetry, farce and the novel. Alongside these prototheoretical and protocritical essays, the customary practice of the monthlies was also to reprint parts or entire popular articles and essays from other newspapers and separately printed periodical essays. This practice, according to Basker, resulted in an unintentional incorporation of the existing periodical essays into the monthly, which, in turn, contributed to the demise of the periodical essay as a separately printed form (2005: 324).

Moreover, it is important to mention that monthly magazines regularly published lists of newly printed books, by which printers and booksellers informed the readers of the newest titles and their prices; in this way the magazines regularly offered their readers news from the cultural sphere of literary production. Very soon this became a regular practice since, owing to the boom in literary production, it became practical to publish all relevant data on the newest titles in one place. Monthly magazines competed against each other in printing book-lists with the newest and most correct information, in this way also raising the audiences' awareness of literature as an important component of social and cultural competence. Moreover, Basker adds, by printing market reports in almost the same form as new book-lists, magazines increasingly contributed to the concept of the book as a market product, a commodity (2005: 326). Considering that book-lists did not include any additional information apart from the book's title, author and price, there was a growing demand for texts which would review and provide summaries of the books.

Consequently, specialized periodical criticism finally appeared by the mid-18th century, marking the beginning of modern literary criticism. It united the two different periodical traditions, the learned and the popular. Due to the fact that it had great cultural aspirations and because it strove towards a higher level of specialization, review criticism appropriated from the learned journals the high style and elevation of tone, critical objectivity when discussing the topic, selectivity of material, and an enlightenment spirit which transcended the borders of European knowledge (Basker 2005: 320). On the other hand, review journals which stemmed from the publications belonging to popular culture, i.e. the monthly miscellanies and newspapers, continued to be more accessible to a wider readership, influencing its taste in the same way in which the newspapers had done. By connecting different written discourses and two opposite poles of culture, and by simultaneously retaining a wide readership, review criticism became one of the strongest, i.e. "the most widely influential organ of criticism in the history of periodical literature" (Basker 2005: 327), and more so because, beside the relatively high circulation, it was still available to a broad spectrum of audiences in coffeehouses, reading salons and libraries. Furthermore, many libraries documented that, due to the large interest for review criticism, it was the only item on the list of publications which was restricted to library use (Basker 2005: 329).

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Critical reviews such as the *Monthly Review* which started to be published in 1749, and the *Critical Review* founded in 1756, aimed at a quick and thorough inclusion of all the new publications, irrespective of whether they were learned, scholarly and scientific or ordinary, literary or non-literary (Basker 2005: 327). With this practice they gradually introduced serious literary topics into the awareness of the average readership not only in London which had the greatest concentration of specialized journals, but also throughout the Kingdom, enabling the British readers to follow regularly the news from the literary sphere and, if desired, to participate in literary discussions.

However, review criticism began to influence the primary literary production in another way as well: printers soon started to print reviews or partial reviews published in specialized journals, or as advertisements on book covers, in order to additionally attract readers, thus frequently adjusting the number of a novel's copies according to the positive or negative reviews, i.e. by ordering more books in the genre that had good circulation, or more works from an author that sold well. The power that review criticism wielded over the general taste was truly overwhelming, but it also affected the authors themselves who, according to the evidence from the period, revised their works in accordance with reviews.

During the 18th century the influence exerted by the critics on the authors was also visible in the changes which occurred in the addressees of dedications: whereas at the turn of the 18th century authors had dedicated their works to rich aristocrats in the hopes of getting the money necessary for the publication, in the first half of the 18th century the authors increasingly addressed dedications and prefaces to the literary critics. Such a shift speaks most clearly about the intensity of influence that the critics had over the public taste.

What is more, Basker even claims that review journals shaped the literary canon, or "the approved books available in a society at a given moment" (Basker 2005: 330), stressing in this way that the reviewers had precisely that kind of power of approval and granting of social acceptance to certain books.

However, beside the fact that these specialized review journals significantly contributed to the systematization of the literary-critical apparatus and terminology, one must also take into the account the influence which the specialized review journals exerted on their readers in Great Britain but also abroad (data shows that there was a large number of subscribers from all over Europe). On the other hand, the journals also stimulated communication between the critics and the readers, for the critics, while writing their reviews, needed to take into account the public opinion accessible to them through letters from the readers. In this way the communication process flowed in both directions: reviewers shaped the public taste by their critical articles, and in turn had to make their critical attitudes in tune with the public opinion. This is how a large corpus of 18th-century literary criticism which paved the way to modern literary criticism and theory, primarily that of the novel, was produced.

Thus, notwithstanding the fact that the 18th century represented the century in which the modern discipline of literary criticism appeared, in the period analyzed in this article, ranging from the end of the 17th to the middle of the

18th centuries, literary criticism of the novel was still in its infancy. During this period, which would last until the appearance of periodical journals and their development of a more systematic literary criticism of the new genre, criticism of the novel was dispersed in and around the novel, mostly paratextually linked to it; it appeared in prefaces, conclusions, dedications, epistles, pamphlets and essays, published occasionally and irregularly. Doody stresses that "from the 15th century to the age of Prévost, Fielding, and Richardson, the preface(s) of a novel had constituted the *locus* where critical dialogue had been carried on and critical argument made" (1997: 277; italics in the original). It is, nonetheless, true that a specific type of a literary-critical dialogue did exist even before the first decade of the 18th century, but its erratic nature and form made it impossible for the authors, critics and readers to establish a continued exchange of ideas amongst themselves, and consequently the true dialogue would be introduced only later by the specialized journals. With the appearance of the *Tatler* and *Spectator*, the locus of literary-critical dialogue, as Doody calls it, gradually moved to periodical literature which, owing to its regular publication as well as wider availability, established a space in which the authors, who were often also the literary theorists and critics, could explicate and discuss the fictional texts they were writing, thus gradually formulating at least some of the crucial traits and preoccupations of the nascent genre of the novel.

In conclusion, the popular influence of the coffeehouse tales, newspapers, street gossips, and readerly comments, among others, all contributed to the development of the novel into its recognizable form. By opening itself up to the not strictly highbrow literary contexts and influences, the novel could be more flexible both generically and thematically, and in this way could satisfy the readers' demands, as well as cater to

the readerly needs, needs which primarily involved supplying the facts about contemporary life. Thus, while relying on the tradition of high literature for some form of (literary) respectability, the novel's unprecedented success lay precisely in the fact that it managed to combine the street and the canon, the high and the low, offering to the always hungry and growing readerly audiences a form of readable and enjoyable, and yet educational, literature.

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RANI ENGLESKI ROMAN, TRADICIJA I NOVINE

Svađa između «starih» i «mladih», između pobornika anticiteta i pobornika modernosti, koja prožima englesko društvo na prijelazu iz 17. u 18. stoljeće zrcali se u novoj književnoj vrsti romanu. U članku se nudi kratki pregled «bitke knjigâ», naziv koji je svađi nadjenut u Velikoj Britaniji, te se pokazuje njezin značaj za razvoj i etabliranje romanesknog žanra na onodobnoj književnoj sceni: prihvaćenost romana od strane šire čitateljske publike s jedne strane, te zanemarivanje romana u učenim krugovima, s druge. Nadalje, u članku se raspravlja o važnosti novina za razvoj romana koja obuhvaća ne samo novinski utjecaj na romaneskni diskurs budući da rani roman prisvaja novinski stil, već i utjecaj novina na javnost razvojem časopisa specijaliziranih za književnu kritiku u kojoj se počinju objavljivati oglasi i recenzije novih romana. Ti specijalizirani časopisi amalgam su dvije vrste periodičke literature: mjesečnika mješovitog sadržaja koji potječu iz popularne kulture, i takozvanih učenih časopisa koji potječu iz visoke kulture. O počecima romana u Engleskoj na prijelazu iz 17. u 18. stoljeće raspravlja se, dakle, s obzirom na elitnu i demotičku kulturu, kao i s obzirom na razvoj specijalizirane književne kritike u periodičkoj literaturi.

Key words: the early English novel, the Battle of Books, 18th-century readers, newspapers, literary criticism.

Ključne riječi: rani engleski roman, Bitka knjigâ, čitateljstvo 18. stoljeća, novine, književna kritika.