History of the Novel

A brief chronological history of the genre and its developments.

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A new way to tell stories - At the end of the 17\(^{th}\) century, beginning of the 18\(^{th}\), a new way to tell story was born in England. Thanks to the economical and cultural improvements following the new trades routs and the first phase of the industrial revolution, the English middle classes could explain and show their political and economical weight with the novel.

However earliest examples of long writings in prose appeared in Europe and Asia in ancient and medieval times, but the novel took its modern form beginning in the 1500s, primarily in Europe.

Early Narrative Forms

Fictional stories were composed throughout the ancient world, and many of these have been referred to as novels. From ancient Rome the chief examples of these works are *The Golden Ass* (2nd century ad) by Lucius Apuleius, in which Lucius describes his adventures after magic lotion turns him into an ass, and the *Satyricon* (1st century ad) by Petronius Arbiter, which portrays wild parties and other excesses of life in Rome in the 1st century ad.

In Greece in the early centuries of the Christian era (1st century ad), several books appeared that can be considered novels. The best known include the romances *Daphnis and Chloë* (2nd century ad?), which is generally attributed to Longus, and *Æthiopica* (3rd century ad), by Heliodorus of Emesa.

With the fall of Rome in the 5th century, Europe moved into the Middle Ages (5th century to 15th century). During this time the epic was a popular form, and it can be seen as a precursor to the modern novel. Usually told or written in verse, epics involve the adventures of a single character, usually a heroic one. Details of everyday life appear only as background to a greater story. The list of well-known epics is long, but the most famous British example is the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf* (8th century).

The romance also developed in the Middle Ages. Romances were extensive works, in verse or prose, dealing with courtly love, valorous knights, ladies of the court, and chivalry. At first, romances were told and sung by French poet-musicians called troubadours and trouvères. Subsequently, romances were written by nobles, clerics, court musicians, and scribes. One popular romance was *Le Morte d'Arthur* (1469-1470; The Death of Arthur) by English writer Sir Thomas Malory.

16th and 17th Centuries

The novel developed in its modern form in Europe in the late 1500s and early 1600s, during the flowering of the Renaissance (14th century to 17th century), a time of renewed interest in learning and culture. The subject matter of the early novels reflected the concerns of society in general, including the emergence of the middle class as a social group, the questioning of traditional religious and moral values, a new curiosity about science and philosophy, and an enthusiasm for exploration and discovery.

The earliest novels, called *picaresque novels*, were stories of adventure describing malicious main characters, or picaros, who usually travelled and who depended on their intellect for survival. They took advantage of those less clever than themselves. In contrast to the poetic
romances of chivalry, which told of the quest of high spiritual ideals, picaresque novels celebrated adventure for its own sake. The story was usually told in a series of episodes that did not depend on one another to make sense. The major picaresque examples are the Spanish *Lazarillo de Tormes* (1554), anonymous and *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes. 

In England, an early picaresque novel was *The Unfortunate Traveller, or The Life of Jack Wilton* (1594) by Thomas Nashe, a portrayal of 16th-century Italy with its sinister clerics, beautiful endangered women, and appearances by German theologian Martin Luther and Dutch scholar Desiderius Erasmus.

The novel made few major advances in the 1600s: public interest in the drama was strong, and John Milton and John Dryden wrote excellent poetry. Many people considered the novel cheap and vulgar compared with drama and poetry. It also seemed to require less talent to create than verse did, and its subject matter was rarely as refined as that of the other literary forms.

**18th Century**

The novel first emerged as a definite literary type in the eighteenth century, an age of criticism and reflection that laid the foundations for social sciences. England was undergoing an economic and industrial transformation which awakened new aspirations and opened new opportunities to the great “upper middle” class. The early novel was written for the public augmented by this large and mixed class with their democratic sympathies, their enthusiasm for concrete experiences, and their rich common sense. The novel is a fictional prose in which characters are common people met during the daily routine and the places are the towns and the villages common people know, visit, live in. This was the main difference between romance and novel: the romance were about stories of kings, queens, knights, magicians, and the settings were sometimes imaginary or legendary; the novel is a story of everyday life about every day people who work, love and travel. The word derived from the Latin word *Novus* because an author who decided to speak about common and familiar subjects was a real novelty for the period.

Daniel Defoe, Samuel Richardson, Henry Fielding, Tobias Smollett, Jonathan Swift and Laurence Sterne wrote the first most important novels in English.

The first major British novelist was **Daniel Defoe**, a journalist. He satisfied the public taste for exotic foreign countries and characters in *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and looked at city life in *Moll Flanders* (1722).

**Robinson Crusoe** is the story of a shipwrecked sailor who must survive on a remote island, a common man, a modern hero who succeed in his fight against adversities alone, with the only help of his ability and cleverness. Also *Moll Flanders* is narrated by a London prostitute who gets her living in various, not always legal ways. The narration is captivating, the detailed descriptions of the setting give the impression of reality, his characters are middle class heros who succeed in making their way in the new society. The limit is that these characters do not develop during the story and very little is written about their inner thoughts and concerns.
Defoe usually wrote in *first person narration* to make the story more vivid and immediate, referring the inner point of view of the protagonist to the reader, but whose limit is that it restricts the novel to one viewpoint.

The *diary form* was usually adopted by first novelists because it permitted to bring the reader closer to the characters and respected the Puritan imperative of the importance to keep a daily record of one’s own life, a conception clearly borrowed by the business accounting of the world of commerce.

Unlike Defoe, **Samuel Richardson** paid attention to the psychology of his characters and in the novels *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1747-1748), deals with inner torment, manipulation in romance, and passion turned to cruelty. The writer succeeded in giving more details about personality, thoughts and feelings, with the use of the epistolary form. This way of writing, based on an exchange of letters between different characters, permits to introduce everyday events to the reader from the inside. In so doing, private experiences and emotions become often close to interior monologues. There is no intrusive narrator or author so the impression is verisimilar; several points of view are possible when different correspondent relate the same event. Finally, even this narrative form obeyed a Puritan rule: it gave the possibility to edify people with moral values and to reach the didactic aim of teaching young women, how to write letters. Women at the time were approaching literature because they could read as they spent their time at home where they could find libraries and personal tutors.

Richardson’s *Pamela* provoked a reaction in **Henry Fielding**, a London judge who parodies Pamela in *Joseph Andrews* (1742). His masterpiece is *Tom Jones* (1749), a story in the picaresque tradition. In both novels the hero is an every-day man who “travels” along the street of life learning how to defend himself and improve his social position. Fielding mainly used third person omniscient narrator to appear more detached from the events he narrated with irony and humour. This form of narration also permitted him the use of digressions which put him in contact with the reader and permitted to explain his choices and exigencies as a novel writer.

The works of **Tobias Smollett**, such as *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748) and *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), provide a broad vision of English social life. His characters range from pretentious provincials to cynical sailors to semiliterate servant girls. Smollett’s stories are strongest when they satirize social climbers and describe the faults of the English middle and upper classes.

**Jonathan Swift**’s fame is strictly connected with his long novel *Gulliver’s Travels*, the adventures of a sailor who shipwrecks and experiences different way of living and government in the places he is forced to visit. It is the first example of Dystopian novels as it describes four types of societies that can’t be defined perfect as all of them reveal negative aspects hidden under a peaceful and equalitarian surface.
The word *utopia* dates back to the homonymous work by **Sir Thomas More**. It is composed of two Greek words that mean no place and good place and means an ideal place that doesn’t exist. Thomas More gave origin to a new type of novel, based on the narration of a voyage to an unknown country (usually an island) where everything is perfect and in contrast with the real everyday world. It was followed by **Francis Bacon**'s book *The New Atlantis* in 1626.

**Laurence Sterne**, a country clergyman and intellectual, brought together the features of other writers of his time. Like Richardson, Sterne was obsessed with the differences between individuals, but like Fielding and Smollett, he was comic and vigorous in his subject matter. Sterne’s *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) opened up a new front for the novel: experimentation with structure and language. The novel is filled with asides, wild scholarly digressions, comic scenes, blank pages (to be filled in by the reader), and other experimental features, including a black page to express pain for a departed character.

All these authors shared common concerns about the relationship between the writer and the reading public. Their heroes/ heroines are people the public could daily meet on the streets and that managed to live in the newly formed society using their intellectual and experienced abilities.

At the end of the 18th century a new trend appeared on the literary scene, the *Gothic Novel*. This new genre had its roots in the graveyard’ school of poetry, in the works by *Ossian* and *MacPherson*, with their fascination with medievalism seen as barbaric and linked with Catholicism and the supernatural; the revival of gothic architecture; *Burke*’s philosophical enquiry into the *Origin Of Our Ideas Of The Sublime And Beautiful* (1757) which theorizes that terror is beautiful in itself and the influence of *Jean Jacque Rousseau* in terms of the primitive and the irrational. Probably the writers of this genre, also attracted by the ideals of freedom brought on by the French revolutions, tried to get free from the links of everyday life and found new source of inspirations using fancy and imagination.

The first Gothic novel was *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by **Horace Walpole**, the prime minister’s son.

In the last decade of the 18th century, when they became more sentimental, the emphasis shifted on the fears of the heroines. It became a literature of emotions mainly written by women and attractive to women. Most plots followed the same lines: the heroine is kidnapped by a wicked relative, taken to a faraway castle or abbey which with its tunnels, cells and strange noises, becomes a scene of terror, suspense and strange supernatural happening. Later examples include *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by **Ann Radcliffe**, *Ambrosio, or The Monk* (1796) by **Matthew Gregory Lewis**.

From this moment on literature can be seen as divided into popular literature and high literature. Popular novels’ primary intention is to entertain. They are accessible to a wide range of people and are usually written to achieve commercial success by providing readers with a good story. The gothic novel pathed the way to those genres science-fiction tales, detective stories, fantasy novels, horror novels, romances, historical novels and spy novels.
Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), the tale of a doctor who uses body parts to construct an artificial man, is often cited as one of the precursors to science-fiction novels. Science-fiction novels are books based on actual or imagined scientific discoveries and knew development and diffusion during the 20th century.

19th Century

In the 19th century the novel flowered thanks to the ever increasing importance of the middle classes, the larger number of those who could read and the growth of the public libraries. The novel, more than any other genre, could give a picture of the people with their hopes, ideas and values, it reflected a changed society. It was published in serial form and helped increase imagination and strengthen moral values and feelings of human solidarity. It was a time of innovation in form and exploration of new subject matters and writers experienced new way of writings without the need to be clear or to clarify their needs as novelists. The point of view ranged from the 1st person narrator, to third unobtrusive or omniscient; in some cases writers uses more than one narrator to give the idea of the different approaches to truth.

The early Victorians, in particular, shared the same climate of ideas and feelings, they identified themselves with their age, accepted the society in which they lived and were at one with their reading public.

For this reason one of the most typical example of novel of the period is the social novel that focuses on the behaviour of characters and how the characters’ actions reflect or contradict the values of their society. The social novel includes two major types: the novel of manners and the chronicle novel. In both types, the characters’ external conflicts and interactions with others are the nucleus of the story.

The novel of manners, in its general form, is concerned with subtle degrees of behaviour and standards of correctness, usually in upper-class life. Novels of manners describe small encounters and use insights from these incidents to make generalizations that apply to humanity as a whole. Jane Austen (1775 – 1817; *Emma; Persuasion; Pride and Prejudice; Sense and Sensibility; Washington Square*) studied a small segment of society in order to explore individual character. They generally concentrate on two themes: the loss of illusions which leads the protagonists to a more mature outlook, and the clash between traditional moral ideals and the everyday demands of life. She deals with her characters in an ironical, detached form, without judging them. They are women who assumed the role of heroines as they react in a society which had little consideration on the female role – the only possibility to get a good social position was a favourable marriage. Jane Austen’s works contain few references to social and political issues, such as the squalor of agricultural labourers’ lives and the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815) against other European nations.

By contrast, the grand-scale novels of the 19th century responded to history, social change, and national character by including a great amount of details and at the same time displaying broad panoramic scenes. The chronicle novel paints a broad analysis of society as a whole and
the story becomes a literary and cultural experience. It is a source of historical information, a study of manners and morals, a course in contemporary political and ethical ideas, and an investigation of wealth and poverty, respectability and crime.

Scottish novelist Sir Walter Scott’s novels (1771 – 1832; Waverly; Ivanhoe; Rob Roy) offer a clear example of chronicle novel, a genre that takes a broader view than the novel of manners by attempting to bring the scope of a whole civilization into the work. It also depicts the meanings, principles, and social styles that govern people’s lives. The chronicle novel analyses individuals but at the same time offers an investigation about social classes and groups. But Scott is also famous as the creator of the historical novel that places its characters in a past time trying to portray it realistically in both fact and spirit. Scott was one of the first writers to show individuals in the rush of great events as his masterpiece Ivanhoe clearly shows.

Both Jane Austen and Walter Scott are considered Romantics, but their romanticism is very different from that of Victor Hugo or that of Goethe. Miss Jane was quite realistic in her consideration of marriage and in her ironical, detached description of the characters. Sir Walter was neither a passionate assertor of individualism nor he had a mood of lyrical melancholy. His spirit was at once robust and social, youthful but of an ancient line, drawing its rich stores from fireside legend and from proud national tradition.

In the same period, the mystery novel and the detective stories, complete with all their conventions, emerged with the publication of Edgar Allan Poe’s (1809 – 1849) The Murders in the Rue Morgue (1841). This and all of Poe’s “tales of ratiocination” feature the chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, a brilliant amateur detective, who, by an intense analysis of motives and clues, solves crimes that are puzzling to the police.

The first complete of mystery novels were probably Wilkie Collins’s (1824 – 1889) The Woman in White (1860) and The Moonstone (1868), which continued Poe’s concept of the brilliant detective—although Collins’s Sergeant Cuff, a roses amateur, is a policeman.

Even Charles Dickens (1812 – 1870), whose most important works are social and chronicle novels, attempted this popular form also in The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870), a work both intriguing and frustrating because it is unfinished and its crime is never solved. Dickens (Oliver Twist; David Copperfield; A Christmas Carol; Hard Times; Bleak House; Little Dorrit) and his contemporary English author William Makepeace Thackeray (1811 – 1863; Vanity fair; Barry Lindon; Pendennis) found inspiration in his society to write novels which are coloured by historical events such as wars, riots, and the passage of important laws and examine the social conditions of his time and place—England during the reign of Queen Victoria. The writer gained fame for his ability to embody these conditions in characters who are both representations of the times and unforgettabl e individuals in their own right.

In Hard Times C. Dickens faced the positive and negative aspects of education and school system. For this reason this work can be labelled as educational novel whose main concern is to underline and to describe stages in the life of its main character as the individual develops
as a person and that shows how theories about family life can be translate into everyday living.

The *philosophical novel* deals with intellectual exploration and aim to confront the so-called eternal questions about freedom, humanity’s place in the universe, and the value of human effort. The characters are sometimes used to voice ideas and viewpoints. They differ from purely philosophical works because they embody concepts in human personality and direct attention to the characters who hold opinions rather than just to the positions themselves.

In *North America* the *social novel* had a different shape. Early novelists of North America explored the struggle of people to obey their consciences without the guidance and support of established institutions, and the isolation of men and women in a region without ancient traditions. *Nathaniel Hawthorne*’s (1804 – 1864) *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) is set in the colonial times of the 1600s, he focuses on religious and social matters and comments on human psychology and the nature of sin and guilt. *Herman Melville*’s (1819 – 1891) famous novel *Moby Dick* (1851) deals with obsession and tribulation of life at sea and on the whale as symbol of God, nature, fate, the ocean, and the very universe itself—it depends on the character and as they see it. The historical novel in north America focused on the adventures of pioneers and frontiersmen as it is shown in the works by *James Fenimore Cooper* (1789 – 1851) that makes up the series called *The Leather-Stocking Tales* which follows the adventures of a white man, Natty Bumppo, who lives in the wilderness. Natty represents the conflict Cooper saw between developing the land in the name of progress and preserving nature unspoiled.

On the whole, it is a realistic form which has dominated fiction in English language with the only meaningful exceptions of the *Brönte* sister, Emily (1818 – 1848) and Charlotte (1816 – 1855) who followed the *tradition of romance* without forgetting the teachings of the Gothic Novels. Romance Novels are stories of love. *Wuthering Heights* (1847), by Emily, is about a passionate, but troubled love between two characters Heathcliff and Catherine who share the same wild, childish nature whereas *Jane Eyre* (1847), by Charlotte, is a tale of personal growth that depicts women’s relationship to power in a male-dominated society. Their work seem to represent a bridge between two periods as they anticipated themes such as the debate about the role and the condition of women and the double personality. Emily also experienced a new narrative technique that permitted more than one point of views and gave more realism to the story: the different narrators.

The writers of the first half of the Victorian period, like C. Dickens, W. Thackeray, A. Trollope, did not form a coherent body, but shared a special climate of ideas and feelings, a set of fundamental assumptions. They were conditioned by their public; they identified themselves with their age and were its spokesmen. The first Victorians were not uncritical, but they were not radical. They accepted the society in which they lived without opposition and questions, voicing the public’s doubts and fears.
The Later Victorians showed a critical attitude towards their society and towards the way their earlier contemporaries approached literature. They no longer conceived themselves as preachers and entertainers, but hold a higher conception of their art, both moral and aesthetic. They questioned the climate and assumption of their age and wrote against it with a critical and hostile attitude.

The writers developed the types of novels already mentioned adding a critical point of view that showed their concern and their anxiety about man’s future in a society based on trade and mass-production. The great hopes that had followed the industrial revolutions are now questioned. The new hero is a frail man sometimes unable to react his destiny and to control his own personality.

Much of the fiction of George Eliot (1819 – 1880; The Mill on the Floss; Middlemarch) was similarly a response to political and social history. Her novels are a complex observation of individuals and society in the provincial countryside, and focus in great detail on the lives of a few individuals.

In American social-writing, just before and soon after the Civil War, focussed on the racial problem. Harriet Beecher Stowe’s (1811 – 1896) Uncle Tom’s Cabin (1852) was a strong antislavery statement that created a sensation when it was published. It revealed the cruelty of the system of slavery and cast the national political debate over abolition and slavery in terms of good and evil.

Other American authors Henry James (Portrait of a Lady; Daisy Miller) and Edith Wharton wrote about this world using novels of manners to depict the struggle of people to maintain individualism while conforming to society’s expectations, but he dealt with the problem from a psychological point of view.

They both are considered the first authors who properly wrote psychological novels whose main intent is to reveal their characters’ inner selves at a particular time in life. In terms of style, many psychological novels use interior monologue, a literary technique that gives the reader direct access to the inner thoughts of characters.

English author D. H. Lawrence (Son and Lovers, Lady Chatterly’s Lover; Women in Love) also deals with the appearance and resolution of old psychic problems and difficult relationships that challenge usual moral values.

However a sort of psychological novel had already appeared in English literature with the works by Oscar Wilde and Robert Louis Stevenson.

Both of them shared the same sources, the Gothic novel. Oscar Wilde followed the example of his uncle, the dandy priest Charles Maturin, author of the gothic story Melmoth the wanderer. In his only novel, The Picture of Dorian Gray, a very handsome, young man starts a life of crime and corruption after looking at his portrait, his alter ego.

The first idea was to write a sort of detective story for the same American magazine that was publishing the works of a master of the crime, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sherlock Holmes’s creator (1887 : A Study in Scarlet) which introduced Sherlock Holmes, destined to become the most famous of all literary detectives. This vain and unfriendly amateur detective, with a love
for pipes, violins, and cocaine, solves crimes through extraordinarily perceptive recognition and interpretation of evidence.

R. L. Stevenson’s *The strange Case of Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a horror tale about a split personality: a handsome, respectable doctor makes a potion that turns him into a hairy, violent criminal. Both Charles Darwin’s studies and the new colonies in far off lands inhabited by savage peoples inspired the writer to deal with the animal instinct hidden in every man. The British colonies with their halo of mystery suggested the ideas for a new, fantastic literature which could appeal to children’s imagination as it is the case of Rudyard Kipling’s *Jungle Books* a novel that describes wild animals with human connotations and feelings.

The real novelty of the end of the century is the fantasy novel which deals with magical and supernatural characters and events. Many fantasy works are written in a lyrical or witty style, and some appeal especially to children and to their innocence as a way to escape from the aridity of daily routine.

Two of the most famous writers of the genres English author Lewis Carroll - *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871) - and American writer L. Frank Baum - *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900).

The journey, the travel, the discovery of unknown lands, the dimension of a dream-like world represented, for some writers, an escape from a world which was becoming increasingly dominated by machines and business values. Others, on the contrary, followed the school of realism developed in France in the 1850s, and that from there it spread to other countries. Thomas Hardy (*Jude the Obscure; Far from the Madding Crowd; Tess of the D’Urberville*) English writer explored the naturalist lesson of the French writers and chronicled the lives of rural English workers and gentry in a realistic fashion.

The American Mark Twain wrote realistic novels (*Huckleberry Finn*, 1884) that drew together many of the themes of 19th-century North American literature and used language and phrases that represented the American manner of speech more authentically than any American novel had done before.

At the very end of the century, under the influence of German romanticism and De Sade, the novels became more macabre and more sexually violent than the previous ones. These were labelled under the title of horror novels, or occult novels, and usually deal with a battle between supernatural forces of good and forces of evil. They are typically darker than fantasy novels and aimed more at adult readers. An early example of a horror novel is *Dracula* (1897) by Irish writer Bram Stoker. This novel introduced the character of the vampire Count Dracula of Transylvania further exploited by literature and cinema.

Also science fiction and utopian novels develop new possibilities in writing and represent a new way to show the hidden criticism to the Victorian way of living. Samuel Butler’s *Erewhon* (1872), anagram of nowhere, describes a country whose ideals are very different from the Victorian ones revealing a satire to the age and its policy.
In the late 1800s century with the works by **H. G. Wells** such as the *Time Machine* (1895) and *Modern Utopia* (1905) which mix political concerns with pseudo scientifical and technological discourses. The War of the Worlds (1898), about a Martian invasion of Earth is somehow alarming foreseeing a world war with no certain answer to the future of man.

**20th century**

The 19th century, so rich with new trends and styles, was fading away in an atmosphere of anxiety and fear. In the late 1800s and the 1900s there was an explosion in the number of novels written and in authors' choice of subject matter, as well as broad experimentation with language and point of view.

Many British writers went on writing novels with traditional approaches, but others experimented with the form.

A major theme of British novels in the 20th century was **disillusionment**, which was one product of a century with two major wars—World War I (1914-1918) and World War II (1939-1945)—and the final break-up of the British Empire.

One of the most important English novelists of the early 20th century was **Joseph Conrad**, who was born in Poland and did not become a British citizen until he was almost 30 years old. Nevertheless, Conrad (*Lord Jim; Heart of Darkness*) changed the way of telling a story. The third person narrator was usually outside the story; Conrad's novels employed a character who tells his own story within the structure of a third-person narrative. The results opened disturbing questions—questions about who the reader should trust and believe, for example. Conrad also broke from tradition: he did not use long descriptive passages, but symbols and recurring images to convey meaning to the reader, he even started the spy novel with *The Secret Agent* (1907) which describes agents who are un-heroic and insignificant.

Conrad's innovations were followed by other new approaches in the form and subject matter of the novel.

Sigmund Freud's studies about man's mind and unconscious, the contact with other cultures and the barbaric violence of the colonial period, the new political ideas such as Karl Marx's socialism, that contained the seeds of a revolt, brought a climate of anxiety every writer tried to communicate. The beginning of the new century witnessed the birth of a new trend, modernism, that in fiction produced the so called experimental novel. This form is a work in which the author places great importance on innovations in style and technique. It throws the reader into the narrator's complex way of thinking which dominates the novel and implies a completely new and uncommon approach to time passing. This novel represents reality in unusual ways, but they also demonstrate one of the novel's greatest strengths—its ability to include a large variety of approaches. A famous precursor of this form had been the already mentioned *Tristram Shandy* by Laurence Sterne (18th century)

One prominent experimental writer in the first half of the 20th century was **Virginia Woolf**. In novels such as *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927) she used the interior monologue which gave the reader access to the characters' thoughts. It also implied two times, the fictional or mental time and the chronological one. Woolf wrote a manifesto for 20th-century writers in her essay "**Modern Fiction**" (1925). Life, she argued, was not what the 19th-century realists had planned.
The Irish writer **James Joyce** started his career as a writer with the collection of short stories, *The Dubliners* (1914). These tales depict characters’ inner thoughts in a direct way supplying an intense exploration of individual consciousness. Joyce extended his new approach in the educational novel form *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), a study of the growth of a young man as a person and as an artist. The thoughts of the main character, Stephen Dedalus, jump from association to association, making it difficult for the reader to follow. One of Joyce’s favourite methods for representing the mind’s discovery of the world is the epiphany, a “sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or in a memorable phrase of the mind itself.”

Joyce expanded on this technique in *Ulysses* (1922), a detailed account of the events and moments of consciousness in the lives of several Dublin people during a single day. The book is an exploration of the possibilities of the English language and a projection of impressions, perceptions, and knowledge. He attracts the attention to his chapters by changing the literary style he uses, mixing objective facts and dreams.

The Irish author continued his experiments with the English language in *Finnegans Wake* (1939), a series of a man’s dreams during one night. In this book Joyce tried to present the unconscious workings of the mind and ordinary language is used to reproduce conscious and unconscious mental processes.

The hidden criticism to the repressed Victorian way of living becomes more and more evident at the end of the 1800s with the works belonging to **science-fiction** and **utopian tradition**. The celebration of the new developing technologies produced a reaction among the writers that tried to stress the evil of mechanicism and the thread to man. A new trend began the anti-utopia or dystopia fiction which describes places apparently democratic and civilized, but that are, as a matter of facts, nightmarish and frightening.

**Samuel Butler**’s *Erewhon* (1872), anagram of nowhere, describes a country whose ideals are very different from the Victorian ones revealing a satire to the age and its policy and **H. G. Wells**’s the *Time Machine* (1895) and *Modern Utopia* (1905) which mix political concerns with pseudo scientific and technological discourses.

*Brave New World* (1932) by **Aldous Huxley**, *Animal Farm* (1946) and *1984* (1948) by **George Orwell** add to these themes a fearful pessimism towards the future and a lack of faith into the new generations. The same pessimistic prospect of **William Golding**’s *Lord of the Flies* (1954)

**Graham Greene** combined satire with metaphysics, or the study of the nature of existence and the moral suffering of characters living on the edge of personal abysses. *Brighton Rock* (1938) is a penetrating portrait of a mad murderer obsessed by sin. The main character of *The Power and the Glory* (1940) is a priest, totally isolated, confronting his past and his sins while living in Mexico during a time of political chaos.

He also used the new born spy genre for unconventional purposes. His novel *Our Man in Havana* (1958) features parody and comic characters and situations. The mission is absurd: a mock intrigue involving a vacuum cleaner representative named James Wormold of Phastkleaners, Ltd. engaged by British intelligence, he has no conception of what to do and so invents contacts and reports.
Even in North America writers experienced new possibilities of style. **Ernest Hemingway**’s *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), captured the emotional effects of human experiences such as battle, café life, love, and sport. Hemingway’s language was simple, but he tried make the reading of a text as close as possible to the genuine experience of what it described.

**F. Scott Fitzgerald**’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925) focused on human behaviour and its consequences in the glamorous Jazz Age society of the 1920s. It put in evidence the fragilities and hypocrisies of the American dream.

In a different vein, **William Faulkner** followed the trend of European authors **Virginia Woolf** and **James Joyce** in innovating with style. He suggested that the traditional values of the American South had been savaged by a new ideal, power. The American writer also experimented fragmented narrative and used the stream of consciousness to reproduce the perceptions of crazed or fixated people and to mix fact with legends and illusions.

Other writers, in the same period, went on writing novels with traditional approaches even if the subject matter and the figure of the protagonist, or hero, were rapidly changing together with the disillusion towards progress and the dreams it had risen.

In **E. M. Forster**’s *A Passage to India* (1924), the tension between the British and the Indians symbolizes the chaos of the modern world and the confusion all people are experiencing facing new social complexities.

The psychological novel was enriched by new theories and experience of psychoanalysis. In *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) the American writer **J. D. Salinger** reveals his hidden desire to become “the catcher in the rye”—the defender of childhood innocence—who would stand in a field of rye where thousands of children are playing and “catch anybody if they start to go over the cliff.”

Perhaps the situation of people in the period between the two World Wars is best described in *In The Bell Jar* (1963), by **Sylvia Plath**. The American writer examines the challenges of being a young woman in America in the 1950s by describing the precarious psychological condition of a character named Esther. A bell jar is a bell-shaped glass container. To show how she feels, Esther describes herself as being inside one. She is a strong scholar but unhappy with her life and the limitations her society places on women; she suffers a breakdown and attempts to commit suicide. However, she recovers and moves on with her life. This autobiographical novel roughly parallels events in Plath’s own life.

Meanwhile the popular novel in America went on and added a new form to the ones already mentioned, the western novel about the continent’s vast wilderness and the hard life. **Western novels** are set in the American West and feature cowboys and Native Americans. These books feature cattle rustlers, stage and train robbers, and gunfights. One of the earliest Westerns was *The Virginian* (1902) by American novelist **Owen Wister**. It is about a Southerner who moves to the West. The Virginian, as the main character is known, is a calm but resolute hero who served as the model for many future literary characters.
Later in the century the form developed and started dealing more with issues related to the environment and the ethnic diversity of the population.

After World War II several major novels about war appeared. *The Naked and the Dead* (1948) by American Norman Mailer features a platoon of soldiers in the Pacific Ocean arena of conflict during World War II. *Turvey* (1949) by Canadian author Earle Birney satirizes the Canadian intelligence service through the eyes of Tops Turvey, a young soldier. *From Here to Eternity* (1951) by American author James Jones studies war from an enlisted man’s viewpoint.

The long established literary form of *detective stories* was going on and developed thanks to some of the best-known mystery novelists of the early and mid-20th century: English author Agatha Christie (*The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, 1926), and American authors Dashiell Hammett (*The Maltese Falcon*, 1930), Raymond Chandler (*The Big Sleep*, 1939), and Ross MacDonald (*The Galton Case*, 1959).

Many popular novels take the form of *spy stories*. Some writers emphasize the glamorous side of a spy’s life, as English writer Ian Fleming did in several novels featuring the British secret agent James Bond. Bond lives in a world of fast cars, beautiful women, ingenious weaponry, and gorgeous settings. Fleming’s novels include *Casino Royale* (1953), *Goldfinger* (1959), and *Thunderball* (1961).

*Romance* continues the old tradition with *Rebecca* (1938), by British writer Daphne du Maurier, who tells of a young woman who marries a widower and becomes preoccupied with what kind of woman the man’s first wife was. A classic romance is *Love Story* (1970) by Erich Segal, about a man from a wealthy family who marries a poor girl who dies young.

English novelist J. R. R. Tolkien created an enduring body of work - *fantasy novels* - that includes the novel *The Hobbit* (1937) and the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955). These books are set in a fantasy world called Middle Earth. The Hobbit centres around the small and timid Bilbo Baggins who, lured into a treasure-hunting adventure, finds a ring that makes its wearer invisible. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Bilbo’s nephew Frodo gains possession of the ring and battles Sauron, a demonic being who desires control over all Middle Earth. Beginning in 1998 English novelist J. K. Rowling began publishing the *Harry Potter* books. This series of fantasy novels about a boy in training to become a wizard became extremely popular among readers of all ages.

One of the most popular writers of *historical novels* of the late 20th century was Patrick O’Brian, who was born in England and later moved to Ireland. He wrote 20 books set during the Napoleonic Wars (1799-1815), about Jack Aubrey, a British naval officer, and Stephen Maturin, an Italian Catalan doctor and spy. The most famous is the first of the series, *Master and Commander* (1969).
Science-fiction novels were enriched with the new scientific discoveries such as space travel, time travel, the discovery of other intelligent beings in space, cybernetics and the creation of self-aware robots, but they did not give the certainty of success. On the contrary some of them warned men against the power of machines. For several decades in the early 20th century, the best science fiction was published in magazines, but in mid century the genre revived in the novel form with authors such as Isaac Asimov (The Foundation Trilogy, 1951-1953), Frank Herbert (Dune, 1965), and Ursula K. Le Guin (The Left Hand of Darkness, 1969) of the United States.

After England experienced the violence of World War II (1939-1945), the English novel became especially rich in works about the individual struggling against social ills such as the injustices of class, the anonymity of life in a modern nation, and the stifling uniformity imposed by institutions. Native Son (1940) by Richard Wright is a chilling account of an African American man’s hatred of the weakness and hypocrisy of middle-class whites. It is an indictment of the social structure, but also a frank coming-to-terms with the reality of violence. The narrative technique of Invisible Man (1952) by Ralph Ellison—which uses wild and grotesque portraiture, as well as surrealistic scene painting—makes its exploration of New York City’s predominantly African American neighborhood of Harlem into a literary experiment and a study of society.

Toni Morrison, who won the Nobel Prize in 1993, explored the African American experience in novels such as Song of Solomon (1977) and Jazz (1992). Jewish writers Philip Roth found inspiration in American urban scene and spoke to the concerns of middle-class Jewish intellectuals in Portnoy’s Complaint (1969) and in a series of novels focusing on the character Nathan Zuckerman: The Ghost Writer (1979), Zuckerman Unbound (1981), The Anatomy Lesson (1983), and The Counterlife (1986). More broadly, Roth’s subject is the experience of Americans of varied ethnic backgrounds and their struggle to define identity and to find happiness. Macho! (1973) by American writer Victor Villaseñor is about a young Mexican man who wants to enter the United States.

Many other North American novelists paid special attention to the situation of women in society. Fear of Flying (1973) by American author Erica Jong is about a woman asserting her personal independence; and The Good Mother (1986) by American author Sue Miller, is about a woman who loses custody of her daughter after a divorce. In V (1963) American writer Thomas Pynchon transforms the mystery story form into a meditative exploration of 20th-century history. In Gravity’s Rainbow (1973) the framework of an investigation barely serves to hold together a story about World War II and the destructive powers of modern civilization.

Another important development was the growing number of prominent novelists not of Anglo-Saxon background. Writers from other ethnic and cultural groups moved within the general literary current, but their subject matter often related to the issue of cultural diversity in modern society.
In the Caribbean, as in many areas of the world, one of the major trends was the depiction of characters caught in the net of politics or an unjust social order. In *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961), for example, Trinidad-born writer V. S. Naipaul describes the situation of a poor father trapped between a suffocating Hindu family and the colonial world, as he tries to possess a home of his own. Naipaul’s later works are descriptions of what freedom can be like amidst the political chaos of new societies.

Caribbean writer Jean Rhys was an unsentimental realist who focused on manipulated women and predatory men in *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), the story of the character Antoinette Cosway. English writer Charlotte Brontë first created Antoinette, the insane first wife of the character Mr. Rochester, in the novel *Jane Eyre* (1847). *Wide Sargasso Sea* traces how Antoinette became the person Brontë depicts her as.


In the 20th century, the effects of colonialism were important issues for authors in Africa, where many nations gained their independence from colonial powers. *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe of Nigeria describes the effect of European settlers on traditional African society.

Even after most African nations had gained independence, the after-effects of colonialism remained a concern. In South Africa a major issue was apartheid, an official policy of racial separation that the government endorsed from 1948 to the early 1990s. Nadine Gordimer addresses apartheid in *The Conservationist* (1974) and *Burger’s Daughter* (1979). *The Life and Times of Michael K* (1983) by J. M. Coetzee is a frightening vision of a desolate, brutal South Africa.

One major concern in 20th-century Indian literature was the partition of the country into two nations: India and Pakistan. When partition was not the primary subject of novels, it was often featured as a major element of the setting. Anita Desai set *Clear Light of Day* (1980), a novel about a Delhi family, against the background of partition.

Indian novelists have written in dozens of languages, but English-language writing was one of the strongest traditions in the late 20th century. British novelist Salman Rushdie, who was born in India, created a great controversy in 1988 with his publication of the novel *The Satanic Verses*, which was banned in several Islamic countries because many Muslims considered it an attack on the Qu’ran, the prophet Muhammad, and the Islamic faith.

Australia’s novel tradition began in the mid-1800s but did not gain strength until the early 1900s. The main theme is the social life of immigrants.
Katherine Susannah Prichard's *Coonardoo* (1929) studies the relationship between an aboriginal woman and a white man; Patrick White, author of *Happy Valley* (1939), *The Tree of Man* (1955), *The Twyborn Affair* (1979), deals with the individual's search for meaning in a harsh, potentially brutal country searching for its own self-definition. He claimed the Nobel Prize in literature in 1973.

Novelists of greater importance in New Zealand are Jane Mander, whose novel *The Story of a New Zealand River* (1920) is a sensitive portrayal of life in a lumber-milling community; Robin Hyde, who dramatized the aftermath of World War I in *Passport to Hell* (1936) and *North the Years Condemned* (1938). After World War II (1945-1939) Ian Cross explored the state of mind of a 13-year-old who relives a family tragedy in *The God Boy* (1957) and examined relationships in *After Anzac Day* (1961).

Genres of the novel

Novels can be classified into various genres, and can belong to several of these categories at the same time. Distinctions can depend on the form in which the works are written. These novels include epistolary novels, which take the form of letters written between characters; the diary form deriving from the tradition of travellers of the 17th century and the episodic forms in which the story is usually told in a series of episodes that did not depend on one another to make sense. Some novels derive from the settings in which they take place, such as regional novels, which focus on life in a certain area. Others depend on the purpose, such as propaganda novels, which try to convince the reader to adopt a certain point of view. Other examples derive from both the themes and the forms in which they are written. The picaresque novels are stories of adventures describing malicious main characters, or picaros, who usually travelled and who depended on their intellect for survival. They took advantage of those less clever than themselves and celebrated adventure for its own sake. Their form is usually episodic.

The Gothic novel appeared at the end of the 18th century. Rooted in the graveyard school of poetry, (Ossian's and MacPherson's works), fascinated by medievalism, the supernatural and gothic architecture, the authors of this genre tried to get free from the links of everyday life and found new source of inspirations using fancy and imagination. The first Gothic novel was *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole, the prime minister's son. In the last decade of the 18th century, when they became more sentimental, the emphasis shifted on the fears of the heroines. These later examples include *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Ann Radcliffe, *Ambrosio, or The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Gregory Lewis.
Another very important trend that inspired many authors all through the centuries was the **utopian novel**. The word *utopia* dates back to the homonymous work by Sir Thomas More. It is composed of two Greek words that mean no place and good place and means an ideal place that doesn’t exist. It is usually the narration of a voyage to an unknown country, an island, where everything is perfect and in contrast with the real everyday world.

Famous examples are *De Republica* by Plato and Francis Bacon’s book *The New Atlantis* in 1626.

Jonathan Swift wrote the first anti-utopian or dystopian work, *Gulliver’s Travels*, who inspired many writers in modern times: George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* and *1984*; Aldus Huxley’s *Brave New World*; Golding’s *Lord of the Flies* and Anthony Burgess’s *The Clockwork Orange*. These novels are usually criticism to the society as they reveal the hidden evil of seemingly perfect worlds.

Broadly speaking novels can be divided into **classic and popular**.

**Classic Novels**

*Classic novels* have a highly structured plot interwoven with many subplots that create quite a complex story. They can be classified according to some general trends and themes. There are **social novels** which tend to focus on how the characters’ actions reflect or contradict the values of their society. The social novel includes two major types: *the novel of manners* and the *chronicle novel*. In its general form, the novel of manners focuses on a small segment of society and is concerned with subtle nuances of behaviour and standards of correctness, usually in upper-class life. *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by English writer Jane Austen describes bad behaviour and the distinctions between the pride of self-respect and the various forms pride can assume: arrogance, disobedience, and vanity into which this pride.

American authors Henry James and Edith Wharton wrote novels of manners to depict the struggle of people to maintain individualism while conforming to society’s expectations. (Henry James’s *Daisy Miller*, 1879, Wharton’s book *The Age of Innocence*, 1920)

The chronicle novel analyses individuals but at the same time offers an examination of social classes and groups. *Vanity Fair* by William Thackeray offers a witty portrait of the English society during the Napoleonic Wars and *Sartoris* (1929) by American novelist William Faulkner follows tragic carelessness through several generations.

**Psychological novels** explore the inner workings of an individual’s mind. In terms of style, many psychological novels feature interior monologue that give the reader direct access to the inner thoughts of characters. One famous example of a psychological novel is *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951) by American writer J. D. Salinger.

In *The Bell Jar* (1963), American writer Sylvia Plath examines the challenges of being a young woman in America in the 1950s by describing how she feels, as being inside a bell-shaped glass one.
Education novels describe stages in the life of its main character as the individual develops as a person as in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916) by James Joyce. English novelist Charles Dickens in *Hard Times* (1854) shows how theories about family life translate into everyday living. In this novel, a theory of education has tragic consequences for the theorist’s own children. *Hard Times* can be also seen as a Philosophical novel as it provides a platform for the author to explore intellectual or philosophical questions. These works aim to confront the so-called eternal questions about freedom, humanity’s place in the universe, and the value of human effort.

In the 20th century the experimental novel offered examples placed great importance on innovations in style and technique. One of the earliest examples of the novel of experimentation is *Tristram Shandy* (1759-1767) by English writer Laurence Sterne. The novel requires the reader to wait with the author until he finishes digressions, figuring out jokes and enjoying twists such as odd turns of phrase, puns, and blank pages. *Ulysses* (1922) by Irish writer James Joyce is basically a projection of impressions, perceptions, and knowledge. Drawing attention to his chapters by changing the literary styles, Joyce mixes objective fact and dream dialogues and train of associations. In *Ragtime* (1975) American author E. L. Doctorow mixes history and fiction to create events that never happened. For example, in the novel Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, two famous real-life psychoanalysts, take a trip through the Tunnel of Love ride at the Coney Island amusement park.

One of the best-known experimental novelists is American writer William S. Burroughs. His best-known book is *Naked Lunch* (1959), a freely structured novel that depicts the experiences of a man trying to escape drug addiction. Burroughs deliberately cut apart and recombined sentences to realize new images and freedom from the limits of conventional storytelling techniques.

Popular Novels
As people became more used to reading they looked for a cultural way of entertainment and Popular novels’ primary intention is to entertain. They are accessible to a wide range of people and are usually written to achieve commercial success by providing readers with a good story.

There are many different types of popular novels, including detective stories, spy novels, science-fiction tales, fantasy novels, horror novels, romances, historical novels, and westerns.

Detective stories and mystery stories typically involve complicated plots, so that the reader remains as puzzled as the characters within the story. Precursors to modern detective and mystery stories were the Gothic novels of the late 1700s and early 1800s with their mysterious situations and a dark and frightening atmosphere. Detective stories and mystery tales emerged in the 1800s. A forerunner was Edgar Allan Poe whose *Murders in the Rue Morgue* (1841) introduces the chevalier C. Auguste Dupin, an amateur detective, who, by an intense analysis of motives and clues, solves crimes that are puzzling to the police.
Some of the best-known mystery novelists of the early and mid-20th century, along with examples of their work, are English author Agatha Christie (*The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, 1926), Belgian French writer Georges Simenon (*The Patience of Maigret*, 1940), and American authors Dashiell Hammett (*The Maltese Falcon*, 1930), Raymond Chandler (*The Big Sleep*, 1939), and Ross MacDonald (*The Galton Case*, 1959).

Many popular novels take the form of **spy stories**. Some writers emphasize the glamorous side of a spy's life, as English writer Ian Fleming did in several novels featuring the British secret agent James Bond. Bond lives in a world of fast cars, beautiful women, ingenious weaponry, and beautiful settings. Fleming’s novels include *Casino Royale* (1953), *Goldfinger* (1959), and *Thunderball* (1961). Other spy fiction looks at a darker side of life in espionage. *The Secret Agent* (1907) by English writer Joseph Conrad features agents who are seedy and petty or *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1963) by British writer John le Carré features betrayal, misuse of power, and the cynicism of international intriguers.

**Science-fiction novels** expresses human fears and curiosity about the future. *Frankenstein* (1818) by English novelist Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley is often cited as one of the precursors to science-fiction novels. It is the tale of a doctor who uses body parts to construct an artificial man.

In the late 1800s English author H. G. Wells was a great influence on science fiction, with novels such as *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898).

For several decades in the early 20th century, the best science fiction was published in magazines, but in mid-century the genre revived in the novel form with authors such as Isaac Asimov (*The Foundation Trilogy*, 1951-1953).

**Fantasy novels** deal with magical and supernatural characters and events. Many fantasy works are written in a lyrical or witty style, and some appeal especially to children.

Famous examples are *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking-Glass* and by English author Lewis Carroll and *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* (1900) by American writer L. Frank Baum.

English novelist J. R. R. Tolkien created an enduring body of work that includes the novel the trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-1955) set in a fantasy world called Middle Earth. Beginning in 1998 English novelist J. K. Rowling began publishing the *Harry Potter books*.

**Horror novels**, also called *occult novels*, usually deal with a battle between supernatural forces of good and of evil. An early example of a horror novel is *Dracula* (1897) by British writer Bram Stoker about the vampire Count Dracula of Transylvania. American novelist Stephen King is perhaps the best-known horror writer today.

**Romance novels** are stories of love. One of the first great romances was *Jane Eyre* (1847) by English novelist Charlotte Brontë and *Rebecca* (1938), by British writer Daphne du Maurier.
A classic romance is *Love Story* (1970) by Erich Segal, about a man from a wealthy family who marries a poor girl who dies young.

**The historical novel** places its characters in a past time. The novelist attempts to portray that era realistically in both fact and spirit. Sir Walter Scott is considered the father of this type of fiction with his *Ivanhoe* (1820).

In the United States one of the most popular historical novels is a *Gone With the Wind* (1936) by Margaret Mitchell, set during the American Civil War (1861-1865) and the Reconstruction period directly after it.

One of the most popular writers of historical novels of the late 20th century was the English Patrick O'Brian who wrote 20 books set on board of a ship a British Catalan during the Napoleonic Wars. *Master and Commander* (1969) is the most famous.

Finally, **western novels** are typically American as they set in the West of the U.S. and feature cowboys and Native people. One of the earliest Westerns was *The Virginian* (1902) by American novelist Owen Wister.