

# The Rise of the Novel in England

The Great Augustans

## Samuel Richardson

1689-1761



SAMUEL RICHARDSON  
From a painting by M. Chamberlain  
Augustan Age

- HISTORICAL SETTING
- LIFE
- STYLE: The Bourgeois Novel
- WORKS

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1

# Historical Setting

## STUART

- William (1689-1702) and Mary (1689-1694)
- Anne (1702-1714)

## HANOVER

- George I (1714-1727)
- George II (1727-1760)

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2

# Life

- 1) Born in Mackworth - 1689
- 2) Went to London when he was 10
- 3) Married first with Martha Wilde then with Elizabeth Leake
- 4) He had 12 sons and 8 of them died in childhood
- 5) Apprenticeship at a printer's
- 6) Coowner of one of the three most important printing business in London
- 7) He had an intellectual circle
- 8) In 1733 he started to print the journal of the House of Commons
- 9) Three important works
- 10) Died near London - 1761

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3

# Style: BOURGEOIS NOVEL -1

- a) His novels are based on a single story that speaks about everyday events and complex emotional situations;
- b) His novels aren't set in exotic places (as in Defoe's) but in a domestic environment;
- c) His male characters aren't heroic knights; he speaks about people of the new middle class with their problems and repressed desires;
- d) There is plenty of realism in his novels

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# Style: BOURGEOIS NOVEL - 2

- e) All his novels reveal a unique psychological insight into human feelings and his understanding of women's hearts
- f) All his novels have happy or moving tragic endings
- g) They are all written in the epistolary form
- h) His novels have some defects:
  - prolixity
  - repetitiveness
- i) With Richardson a fashion starts which is to continue up to our own times with soap operas, sentimental films and novels.

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5

# Epistolary form

- Epistolary form:
  - \* it created a sense of intimacy between characters and readers;
  - \* it has the same function of soliloquies in drama;
  - \* it became an expression of individuality,
  - \* it is in keeping with R.'s nature, as he is a letter-writer by vocation;
  - \* it influenced later writers as Rousseau, Goëthe and Foscolo.

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6

## Works - 1

- **PAMELA**, or Virtue Rewarded (1740-41): (in 4 volumes)
  - \* The first modern novel;
  - \* inspired by a true story, it tells of a young waitress who refuses the advances of her mistress's son, but in the end, manages to marry him;
  - \* epistolary novel with only one character's letters;
  - \* it presents the moral and institutional values of the middle-class;
  - \* Pamela is the first example of persecuted heroine, which will become a topos in the XVIII cent. European literature;
  - \* (a new serial "Pamela" is starting in July 2001 in Ireland, starring Alessio Boni and Marina La Rosa!)

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## Works - 2

- **CLARISSA HARLOWE** (1747-48) (in 7 volumes)
  - \* A very long novel: more than 500 letters;
  - \* divided into three parts:
    - 1- Clarissa leaves her family
    - 2- Lovelace rapes her
    - 3- Both of them die: Lovelace in a duel, Clarissa like a saint;
  - 2 groups of letters (2nd phase of R.'s epistolary novel)
    - from Clarissa to a friend
    - from Lovelace to a friend;
  - \* The novel shows the women's typical standard of life in the period -> historical document;
  - \* The end reminds us of the Puritan idea of punishment.

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## Works - 3

For the human mind  
is seldom at stay:  
If you do not grow better,  
you will most undoubtedly  
grow worse.

—Samuel Richardson

- **Sir CHARLES GRANDISON** (1753-54): (in 7 volumes)
  - \* Also in letter form:
  - \* no longer centred on a woman but on a man who, after many vicissitudes, is able to marry the woman he loves;
  - \* he is intended as a model of manly virtues;
  - \* he is so "perfect" that he becomes boring;
  - \* the least successful of the three novels.

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9