



University of Tikrit  
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English Department

Subject

**Modern Novel Definition and Elements**

Fourth Stage

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## The Definition and the Emergence of the Novel

\***Novel** is along work of narrative fiction, written in prose form, and which is typically published as a book. The word novel” derives from the Italian *novella* for “new”, “news” or” short story of something”.

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\***Novel**, an invented prose narrative of considerable length and a certain complexity that deals imaginatively with human experience, usually through a connected sequence of events involving a group of persons in a specific setting.

Within its broad framework, the genre of the novel has encompassed an extensive range of types and styles: picaresque, epistolary, Gothic, romantic, realist, historical.

In his book *The Rise of the Novel* (1957) Jan Watt has argued for a close relationship between the rise of the novel and the rise of the middle class, and in different ways literacy, printing and the market economy can all be related to the establishment of capitalism in the period during which the novel emerge. The novel emerges in the recognizably modern form in the Europe of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

### The most important reasons that led to the rise of the novel are:

1- Due to the social economic and demographic factors as well as literary and philosophic influences.

2- The development of the press is the most important reason that led to the rise of the novel. It facilitates the production of the large number of copies needed to satisfy a literate public at the price that they could afford.

3- In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a market economy increases the relative freedom and isolation of writer and decreased the immediate dependence upon particular individuals and groups. The sociology of the novel was based very much on market relationship between author and reader mediated through publishers. The growth of the market economy was an aspect

of the rise of capitalism. The system which had displaced feudalism in Britain by the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**4-** The reading public increased during the 18<sup>th</sup> century and this contributed to the rise of the novel. There have been cases of literate people gathering to hear novels read -part of Dickens's reader was of this sort- and during the Victorian period the habit of reading a loud within a family was much more widespread than it is today.

**5-** The rise of individualism. unlike many of the narrative that preceded it, the novel does not just present the readers with "type" characters. The readers are interested in *Tom Jones*, *David Copperfield* as distinct individuals with personal qualities. Ralph Fox states, "the novel deals with the individual, it is the epic of the struggle of the individual against society. And against nature, and it could only develop in a society where the balance between man was at war with his fellows or other nature. Such society is the capitalistic society." Defoe, Richardson and Fielding focused on the individual and even named their novels after the main characters.

**6-** Realism highly affected the society in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, therefore, the need of new form of literature increased, since realism which is written in prose was the most important thing. For that reason, it is called the age of prose.

**7-** People who could not go to the theaters which were mainly placed in the cities, I.e., those who lived outside the towns such as farmers and country people also needed this new form of literature to reach them at home. Therefore, the novel appeared to satisfy this social need.

**8-** There were many foreign influences that contributed to the rise of the novel like:

a- The effect of *The Arabian Nights*.

b- The effect of the Italian 'novella' represented by the writings of Boccaccio, especially his *Decameron*.

c- The effect of the Spanish writings such as Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.

d- The effect of the French romance such as 'de la Rose' which tells the story of Platonic love

**9-** Conditions during the 18<sup>th</sup> century were favorable for this new form of literature. Printed press improved so that they could turn out thousands of copies rapidly. More people could read, as education spread to the middle classes, and more people had money to pay the booksellers in return for amusement.

**10-** Women were crucial factors in providing a readership for fiction. They were educated. better education for women coincided with a period of greater leisure for women in the middle and upper ranks. It no longer seemed lady-like for a woman to involve herself directly in the domestic duties of her household: the middle class woman, gradually became a lady of leisure. The greater leisure of women left a vacuum in their lives which demanded to be filled. Thus, the novel appeared to satisfy this need.

**11-** Most significant of all was the thirst of reading public to learn about the manners, the behaviours and the circumstances of the other classes and localities than their own. To learn how others, behave is a universal urge, and by providing some of the necessary expertise the novel facilitated that comparatively easy social mixing that has always been characteristic of British life. The novelists saw it as their duty to inform and to inculcate morality. Thus, as the novelists were introducing their readers to new social worlds and delineating their behaviour there in, they were also providing the moral frame work within which that behaviour should be judged.

