

MASTERING THE GENRES: NEOCLASSICISM INFLUENCING THE RISE OF THE NOVEL AND THE RISE OF THEORY OF THE NOVEL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE

Petru GOLBAN

Universitatea Namık Kemal, Tekirdag (Turcia)

Nașterea romanului în secolul al XVIII-lea a reprezentat, prin elementul său realist, moral și comic, constituirea unui gen nou în literatura engleză ce a dominat practica literară a perioadei. Însă, în ceea ce privește doctrina literară, secolul al XVIII-lea a fost dominat de către neoclasicism, curent ce a îmbrățișat atât teoria, cât și practica literară, în special datorită contribuției lui Pope, Addison și Johnson. Dar și fondatorii romanului englez, printre care Defoe, Richardson, Fielding și Reeve, au exprimat importante opinii critice despre noua tradiție literară a romanului. În articol se întreprinde o încercare de a prezenta modul în care neoclasicismul, dominând și direcționând arta poetică, a influențat nu doar nașterea romanului, ci și formarea unei teorii a romanului. O deosebită atenție este acordată convenției neoclasiche de a compara o operă originală cu un precedent clasic și de a o alinia unei tradiții literare consacrate și onorabile, ceea ce l-a condus pe Henry Fielding să traseze, de exemplu, în Prefață la „Joseph Andrews”, principiile teoretice atât ale romanului, ca o specie literară nouă, în general, cât și ale romanului comic, ca subspecie a romanului, în particular.

1. Introduction

The British literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or more precisely between the 1660s and the 1780s, is dominated by the neoclassical theory, whose corresponding literary practice includes satirical and philosophical poetry. Based on ancient tradition and classical values, revived in Renaissance and now institutionalised, neoclasicism promoted a way of thinking and writing based on reason, clarity, common sense, measure, good taste, verisimilitude, and above all the dependence of literature upon rules and the ancient models. Neoclasicism represents at once a distinct cultural period, a literary movement, and a poetic trend, which appeared as a reaction against the late Renaissance cultural extravaganza of Baroque and metaphysical poetry, and which can be defined by the two main principles put forward by Alexander Pope: ‘imitate the classics’ and ‘follow the nature’. Pope, actually, in his prefaces and the famous *An Essay on Criticism* and *An Essay on Man*, together with Joseph Addison in a series of critical studies delivered to *The Spectator* and with Samuel Johnson in his essays, prefaces, and the celebrated *Lives of the Poets*, represented at best the neoclassical doctrine.

The eighteenth century was on the whole a period of progress and prosperity based on the idea of order and proportion, stability and self-confidence, where “an ideal of providential harmony, of co-operation, and of a political order reflecting that of nature seemed to many to be realized in the triumph of practical reason, liberal religion, and impartial law. Temperate kings would reign over a united nation in which individual liberty would be constitutionally guaranteed” [8, p.277].

English literary neoclasicism manifested itself both in the creation of a strongly prescriptive cultural doctrine and in the production of literary texts, namely poetry. Pope, Johnson, and other neoclassical authors wrote a type of philosophical, didactic and satirical poetry, approaching general aspects concerning the human nature in relation to man’s place in the universe and in relation to the social background. The complete neoclassical writer would combine in his work the side of a theoretician of the doctrine with that of a poet, just as Pope does in his *An Essay on Man*, being able to state in one literary discourse the neoclassical ideas in the form of a highly elaborated and philosophical poetic expression.

Apart from the neoclassical theory and its poetry, there are other important literary experiences of the eighteenth century, such as pre-Romantic poetry, which emerged more or less as a regular trend with the weakening of neoclasicism by the middle of the century. Pre-Romanticism with its ‘primitive’ and ‘mournfully reflective’ poetry manifested as an alternative to neoclassical poetry and as a precursor of Romanticism.

But towering over the entire period in matters of literary practice is the novel, whose rise and consolidation in the eighteenth century represented a distinct process of development. Neoclasicism assumed first the control over the poetry of the period, but the rise of the novel is in some respects – and in relation to both novel related literary practice and critical thinking – dependent on the neoclassical theory. A great exception would

be sentimentalism which pervades the prose writings of Richardson, Sterne, and Goldsmith. Moreover, neoclassicism would influence not only contemporary poetry and contemporary consolidation of the novel writing tradition, but also the later nineteenth century Victorian realism with its novels of the socially concerned, realistic, and moral type.

2. The Influence of Neoclassicism on the Rise of the Novel

Neoclassical theory dominated the poetical production of the eighteenth century, but also influenced the newly emerging genre of fiction concerning the practice of novel writing, where verisimilitude, faithfulness to the fact, and respect to the genre are among the strongest points of the neoclassical doctrine that had a direct impact on the rise of the English novel.

Regarding the literary practice, an example would be the neoclassical precept of 'respect to the genre' that made Jonathan Swift write his *Gulliver's Travels* as a satire in prose aimed at the contemporary travel-books in which many writers of the period would exaggerate their travel experience. As travel-book is a genre requiring veracity and faithfulness to the fact, what started as Swift's task to provide 'an exaggeration of exaggeration' as the main point in his satire on travel-books was extended into a satire on England, Europe, and finally on human condition in general, and became a proto-novel. There are critical claims that *Gulliver's Travels* is the first English novel, which are supported by references to the narrative level, but these claims have no validity on the thematic level, where the textual presence of the verisimilitude is discussible given the predominance of the fantastic element, in that one may notice a clear concern with individual experience and social background but not the textual representation of the concern which is reified by fantastic creatures and settings.

Also, the neoclassical spirit is revealed in this work in the presentation of the flying island of Laputa, which is inhabited by the shades of ancient scholars, containing a satire on philosophy and science and disclosing the principle of neoclassicism regarding the absurdity of knowledge that is not tested and applied in reality, or not designed to improve human life.

Moreover, in placing the Yahoos against the Houyhnhnms, Swift considers the former as pathetic representations of the human race, conducted by passion, feeling, instinct, whereas the latter stand for reason and rationalism, revealing Swift's avocation of the neoclassical principles. One may notice in the representation of the Houyhnhnms the elements of Utopia, in that, although they lack love and other feelings, these non-humans express the ideal community which, according to a neoclassical mind, humans must aspire to, the ideal community of the ideal of rational existence, moderation, order, and common sense.

Another example would be the neoclassical emphasis on verisimilitude and faithfulness to fact that made Defoe conceive his novels as true stories, authentic records of actual events. Moreover, *Robinson Crusoe* advocates the neoclassical reason and common sense, belief in the human potential and optimism in the power of the rising middle-class. The main concern of the novel is the individual experience and the main theme of the novel is the survival of the individual removed from any social setting or social interaction, but who, guided by reason and the sense of order, escapes the traps of the sentimental self-pity for such a situation and achieves the recreation of the English society on different levels: cultural, moral, religious, political, economic, and even related to the colonial expansion of England.

Also, rebuilding or recreation of the Englishness on all levels – personal, social, cultural, religious, economic, colonial – is based on the belief in the power of individual (in particular, of the rising middle-class) from two perspectives: (1) learning/discovering from experience (empiricism) and (2) repress/subdue emotions by reason and cold calculation (rationalism). Hence the idea that not Swift but Daniel Defoe, given the disappearance of the fantastic element from fiction which was replaced by verisimilitude, is claimed to be the first true master of the English novel. This claim, however, may be considered to have limited validity. First, regarding the realistic element, its textual presence is discussible given the concern with individual experience and social background but not the textual representation of this concern which is actually implied in Crusoe's attempts to learn, self-improve, and rebuild a whole milieu. Second, regarding the origin of the novel, the author rejecting any possibility of the text to be taken as a piece of imaginative writing and claiming the faithfulness to fact, the text is conceived as an extended journalistic event apparently based on a diary containing Crusoe's own memories. Like with other novels, Defoe's prose fiction in general "sprang from an experimental involvement in other literary forms, most notably the polemic pamphlet, the biography, the history and, latterly, the travel-book. His novels included elements of all these forms" [8, p.302].

In particular, Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is an intermediary element in the process of development of the novel towards Richardson's *Pamela*, in which the realistic element, though limited to a sentimental and

moralizing outlook, covers both the concern with individual existence and social milieu, and the thematic representation of this concern. This process comes to its end and establishes itself as a definite literary tradition with Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, in which the impression of realism is fully achieved in that both the concern with individual experience and social background, and the textual representation of the concern are extended and made complex, as in the former novel, or made panoramic, as in the latter.

The history of the novel “is the history of forms rejected and modified, by parody, manifesto, neglect, as absurd” [2, p.304], and, ‘cleaning’ itself from alien to the fictional discourse thematic and narrative elements, the development of the English novel in the eighteenth century, starting with *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe* and culminating with Fielding's *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones*, gave rise, according to Ian P. Watt and other critics, to a social consciousness of the British novelist, meaning the concern with the representation of the complexity of social and personal life as to achieve the semblance of real world, and to an idea of social reformation, meaning the ethical didacticism in matters of spiritual betterment, reforming the manners, beliefs, moral values, and the whole of the society. In doing so, Defoe, Richardson and Fielding “demonstrably honour ‘reality’ more faithfully than their predecessors in narrative literature, but they are also demonstrably more committed to the stereotypes than, say, Jane Austen or George Eliot, who in turn impose a degree of order upon experience that would be impossible to sustain (at their level of seriousness) in the modern era” [4, p.44]. The eighteenth century English novelists, like their Victorian successors, saw themselves responsive for society's moral edification, and both social consciousness and social reformation represent interdependent parts of the element of realism that forms the basic component in the literary pattern of fiction writing, and whose beginnings found their textual expression in the eighteenth century novels.

It is this realistic element or verisimilitude that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries allowed the realistic novel to develop into maturity, and it was neoclassical theory that had a strong impact on this literary experience by promoting the concern with actual reality and moral issues, and its textual expression, as important literary principles.

3. The Influence of Neoclassicism on the Rise of the Novel Related Literary Theory

Among the founders of the novel in English literature there were writers who, like Richardson and Fielding, were also important representatives of the eighteenth century critical thought, namely the novel related literary theory and criticism, which is to be taken separately from the neoclassical criticism of Pope, Addison, and Johnson.

But similar to neoclassicism determining the literary practice of novel writing, the neoclassical doctrine manifests also as influencing the rise of the critical thinking on the newly emerging genre.

First, the developing with the rise of the English novel first critical theories of the novel focus on the moral implications of the narratives, where the fiction writing is considered as a pedagogical exercise, whose purpose is to teach existence as moral becoming, like in Richardson's epistolary works and Fielding's novels of character and manners.

Second, based on the neoclassical principles of verisimilitude, faithfulness to the fact, and respect to the genre, the first instances of novel criticism include the critical debate on the relationship between fiction and reality. The eighteenth century novelist-critics would pretend that their writings are true stories, as Daniel Defoe did with reference to *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*. In the Preface to the former he denied that his book is a romance (novel, fiction) and assumes the position of a mere editor of Crusoe's life as a true history – it was ‘all historical and true in Fact’ – which deserves to be told because of its unbelievable content. In the Preface to *Moll Flanders*, Defoe again pretends that Moll's story is true and it is told by the heroine herself, yet ‘put into new words, and the style [being] a little altered’. Defoe insisted on realism and credibility, and on the faithfulness to the fact, making attempts to persuade the reader that his novels are authentic records of actual events. In doing so, Defoe raised one of the most important matters of critical concern in later debates on fiction, namely the issue of realistic depiction of human and social life, along with the question of the status of the narrator, its relationship to the thematic content and the reader, and the issue of the moral and didactic elements in the novel. In his prefaces and in *An Essay Upon Literature*, Defoe proves to be a sociologist of literature, which is enhanced by his attention given to the relation of writer to reader and to all the elements involved in maintaining a trustful relationship between these two, including ‘word’, ‘pen’, ‘ink’, ‘paper’, and the printing machine, were ‘the excellency of the art of printing [is] that everything worth recording in the world, is now so secured, that it may almost be said, it cannot be lost, and perhaps may never till the general conflagration.’

Third, and what is even more important, the neoclassical rationalism rejecting whatever subjective and emotional, like the expression of personal feelings in poetry and the sentimentalism of romance, there is also a critical debate on the similarities and differences between novel and romance in favour of the former, although sentimental novel is among the most important eighteenth century types of English fiction.

Cervantes is accredited for having made possible the transition from 'romance' to 'roman' ('novel') with *Don Quixote*, the last romance and at the same time the first modern novel, in which the fantastic elements is replaced by verisimilitude or realistic element. Terry Eagleton, however, claims that to call *Don Quixote* a novel is a mistake, because the picaresque prose fiction has also challenged romance in this way at that time or even before and at least implicitly. Moreover, Cervantes's great work "is in fact less the origin of the genre than a novel about the origin of the novel", showing "how the novel comes about when Romantic idealism, here in the form of Quixote's chivalric fantasies, collides with the real world" [1, p.3].

As it is, following the medieval period, the two major thematic components of the literary system of romance diverge into other literary patterns, the word 'romance' giving in many European languages the noun 'roman' ('novel', in English) to name a new literary tradition that preserves from romance the narrative element (the story as a sequence of events, characters, narrator, point of view, etc.) and excludes the verse form and the fantastic element that are replaced by the prose form and the realistic element, respectively. The word 'romance' also gave the adjective 'Romantic', referring to the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century age of Romanticism, this time due to the similar in romance and Romantic poetry supreme emphasis on love, feeling, imagination, fantasy, and a special attention given to the psychological treatment of the character.

The conflict between the literary tradition of romance and that of novel means the conflict between the fantastic element and the realistic element, which is the conflict between Romantic flight and actual fact, idealism and realism, dream and reality, and, finally, the conflict between "the person having noble aspirations and the reality that is alien and hostile to these aspirations, that is to say, that type of conflict which will be typical to the later social novel and the realistic literature on the whole" [7, p.112]. A similar conflict would be found later between the Romantic novels, especially Gothic, still called romances, and the realistic novels as anti-romances.

For a long period of time until late in the eighteenth century, the terms 'romance' and 'roman' (or 'novel' in English) were a matter of confusion. Similar to the word 'romance', the term 'roman' (novel) "appeared in Middle Ages to name a story, at first in verse (like *Tristan et Iseut*) and later in prose (*Le Roman de Renart*), and which were written in vernacular, romance language different from Latin, the language reserved for scientific and religious texts" [10, p.21]. Starting in eighteenth century and especially with the rise of Romanticism, there were more conclusive efforts made to distinguish between romance and novel, emphasising alternatively the importance of one form of writing over the other, but the genres also proved to be less conflicting than complementing each other. Thus, "the revival of traditional romance from the late eighteenth century onwards had a huge impact on the novel, spawning subgenres explicitly mixing the characteristics of novel and romance such as the Gothic, the sensation novel, the thriller, the crime novel, science fiction, children's fiction, and modern fantasy" [6, p.13]. Also, in contemporary conception, the word 'romance' is used to name novels of love, sensation and sentimentalism, but they are often censored as being just popular and of low aesthetic quality.

But in literary history, most important is that romances are directly connected to the rise of the novel, to which they offer – excluding the fantastic, the improbable, and the extravagant – elements of a narrative of love, adventure, the marvellous and the mythic, the travel and the quest, the test of life and initiation, and, to a lesser extent, aspects of the daily, domestic and social life. In eighteenth century, the English novel separated from the romance, as well as epic, in the framework of "a temporal and spatial shift from distance and heroic scale to the 'here and now' of bourgeois immediacy" [3, p.30], even in Swift and Defoe with their 'implied versions' of the contemporary society and, as in Swift, of neoclassical principles, or, as in Defoe, also of the middle-class values.

The separation between novel and romance was already noticed in the eighteenth century, where Tobias Smollett, for instance, formulates in the Preface to his *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753) the distinction between romance and the new type of fiction of his day, that is, the novel, which, according to him, is 'a large diffused picture, comprehending the characters of life, disposed in different groups, and exhibited in various attitudes for the purpose of an uniform plan, and general occurrence, to which every individual figure is subservient'. William Congreve in the Preface to his *Incognita* (1691) declares that romances present 'Mortals of the first Rank', whereas novels deal with 'more familiar' experiences of life. Also, a very important and modern distinction between novel and romance (as the novel's most diachronically related text) was drawn

by Clara Reeve in “the first book in English wholly devoted to the study of the narrative tradition” [9, p.6], which is *The Progress of Romance through Times, Countries, and Manners* (1785): ‘The Romance is a heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons or things. The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the time in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened nor is likely to happen. The Novel gives a familiar relation to such things as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves; and the perfection of it is to represent every scene in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable, as to deceive us into persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses of the persons in the story as if they were our own.’

A more contemporary distinction between the literacy forms of romance and novel, but not far removed from Reeve’s, considers romance to be “full of marvels, whereas the modern novel is nothing if not mundane. It portrays a secular, empirical world rather than a mythical or metaphysical one. Its focus is on culture, not Nature or the supernatural. It is wary of the abstract and eternal, and believes in what it can touch, taste and handle (...) The novel presents us with a changing, concrete, open-ended history rather than a closed symbolic universe” [1, p.3].

Finally, and what is most important concerning the influence of neoclassicism on the eighteenth century theory of the novel, is the neoclassical revival and reliance on the ancient classical tradition which, when used by writer-critics, fulfils the task to defend the novel as a new type of literary tradition. This fourth example of the ways in which neoclassicism influences the rise of novel theory in the eighteenth century is related to the previous third example, which is about the critical debate on novel and romance as distinct genres.

This aspect of the eighteenth century critical thinking is best seen in Henry Fielding’s Preface to his novel *Joseph Andrews* (1742), although the author-critic does not use the term ‘novel’ for his work but ‘romance’ and ‘epic’, which could be a source terminological confusion.

Fielding is among those eighteenth century writer-critics who, like Richardson and Smollett, are conscious that what they are writing is something completely different from the romance and totally new in English literature. Unlike them, Johnson or Goldsmith, for instance, fail to see any difference between novel and romance, and are not aware of the appearance of novel as a new type of literary text; also others, like Defoe, refuse to consider their writings to be even of imaginative prose.

In the eighteenth century, English literary history witnessed the rise and consolidation of the novel writing tradition, Fielding being not only one of the founders of this genre but also the founder of a new species of novel, which is the comic novel, *Joseph Andrews* coming first in the line. In the Preface to *Joseph Andrews*, Fielding states the general principles that govern his writing and argues about the relationship between his new, comic type of novel and some long-established literary genres, and thus successfully proving the literary validity of his work and defending its literary value.

From the very beginning, Fielding shows that he is aware of the fact that his writing is a totally new genre, a ‘new species of writing’, which he does not remember ‘to have seen hitherto attempted in our language’. He defines his work as a ‘comic romance’, which is a ‘comic epic poem in prose’. Having read widely in classics, Fielding bases his ideas on them to find points of contact between the established traditional genres and his new literary creation. In doing so, Fielding proves that he has been writing within a highly respectable tradition – that of the ancient epic – and the aim would be thus to prove that his work is important enough to be considered as a literary tradition in itself – that of the comic novel – aesthetically valuable enough to be accepted by the reading public and to be implemented in the contemporary literary background. In this respect, Fielding claims, in ancient period both epic and drama had the tragic and comic modes, and the ancients left patterns of those types, except the comic epic: Homer is said to have written one but now it is lost. Fielding attempts to fill this empty case by his own work which possesses all the elements of an epic – fable, action, character, sentiment, and diction – except metre, his text being written in prose. Almost all the elements being similar, except one, then it is appropriate, Fielding believes, to call his novel *Joseph Andrews* an epic. Moreover, it is reasonable to do so, since ‘no critic hath thought proper to range it under any other head, nor to assign it a particular name to itself’.

Fielding then carefully delimits his text from other literary species, with which it has certain elements in common, namely from comedy and serious romance (including other novels written in his period). It differs from comedy, ‘as the serious epic from tragedy’, in that ‘its action being more extended and comprehensive; containing a much larger circle of incidents, and introducing a greater variety of characters’. It also differs from the serious romance in its fable and action, which are ‘light and ridiculous’, whereas in the serious

romance they are 'grave and solemn'; in its characters, by introducing characters of different types, including 'persons of inferior rank, and consequently of inferior manners', whereas the serious romance 'sets highest before us'; and finally in its sentiments and diction by introducing the ludicrous instead of the sublime in sentiment and the burlesque in diction. Being a playwright, in particular of comedies, before coming to novel writing, Fielding is able to delimit clearly these two notions of the comic genre, as well as that of the ridiculous, which has its source in affectation arising from hypocrisy and vanity as depicted in the representation of characters and their feelings.

The comparative approach to his comic novel (which he calls 'comic romance' and 'comic epic poem in prose') and the three traditional genres of epic, comedy, and serious romance results in some similarities between *Joseph Andrews* and epic, in a series of differences between *Joseph Andrews* and comedy, and in a number of differences between *Joseph Andrews* and the serious romances. Here it is interesting to observe that in his comparative assessment of *Joseph Andrews*, Henry Fielding, by comparing his text to epic and comedy, points to the characteristics of the novel in general and gives a very modern definition and explanation of what a novel is in the broadest sense: a novel contains 'fable, action, characters, sentiments, and diction'; it is written in prose form; and it has 'extended and comprehensive' action, a large 'circle of incidents', and a great 'variety of characters'. By comparing his comic novel to the serious romance on the basis of the common elements found between the epic and his own literary work, Fielding draws the comic elements in the novel and thus offers the modern definition and understanding of what a comic novel is in particular: a comic novel contains 'light and ridiculous' fable and action; characters of 'inferior rank' and 'inferior manners'; and 'ludicrous' sentiments and 'burlesque' in diction.

4. Conclusion

The rise of the novel is a major aspect of the eighteenth century British literature, next to neoclassicism and pre-Romanticism. The genre of fiction received a status of popularity equal to that of Elizabethan drama during the Renaissance, and was founded by such writers as Defoe, Richardson, Fielding, and others. Nowadays nobody challenges the idea that the novel has antecedents in Antiquity, namely epic and Latin novels, and in medieval period, namely romance. The novel passes then through a complicated but continuous development in Renaissance and seventeenth century as picaresque fiction in Europe in general and establishes itself as a new form in the eighteenth century English literature as well. The eighteenth century English novel, intruding upon such established genres as epic, romance, and picaresque novel, gradually replaced them, flourished and became extremely popular in a short period of time.

The novel, together with novella and short story, is a literary species of the narrative genre, a type of text of fiction, a variety of imaginative prose. The standard definition regards novel as a long, extended narrative consisting of many characters involved in a complex range of events that are organized by chronotope in narrative sequences. Terry Eagleton defines novel as "a piece of prose fiction of a reasonable length", but immediately warns that "the novel is a genre which resists exact definition", "less a genre than an anti-genre", since there are novels written in verse form, or the novel becomes a process of integration, usually unconscious, of some alien discourses: "you can find poetry and dramatic dialogue in the novel, along with epic, pastoral, satire, history, elegy, tragedy and any number of other literary modes. Virginia Woolf described it as 'this most pliable of all forms'. The novel quotes, parodies and transforms other genres, converting its literary ancestors into mere components of itself in a kind of Oedipal vengeance on them." [1, p.1] Above all, the realistic element is considered to represent the most important matter of reference to a text in prose as novel. It is actually the essence of the existence of novel as a literary fact in spite of the issue concerning the relation between fiction and fact. Realistic element or verisimilitude is also of primary importance in any attempts to disclose the ways in which the English novel in the eighteenth century passed through a process of rise and consolidation in which realistic, thematic, and structural elements occurred to survive, be developed, or disappear in accordance with the tacit requirements of the novel writing tradition. In the eighteenth century English novel, the primary aim of the new thematic (social concern, moral education, sentimentalism, melodrama, and so on) and structural (travel narrative, memories, diary, epistolary technique, and so on) conventions was to achieve verisimilitude – illusion of reality – and to organize the fictional material in a manner of writing mostly accessible to the reading audience, given the moralizing and critical concern of the authors. The particular way of linguistic representation of the story – what Ian P. Watt calls 'the distinctive narrative mode' – has to do with the sum of literary techniques, "whereby the novel's imitation of human life follows

the procedures adopted by the philosophical realism in its attempt to ascertain and report the truth", and is conventionally called 'formal realism', that is, "the narrative embodiment of the premise, or primary convention, that the novel is full and authentic report of human experience, and is therefore under an obligation to satisfy its reader with such details of the story as to the individuality of the actors concerned, the particulars of times and places of their actions, details which are presented through a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms." [11, p. 41]

The typology of the eighteenth century novel is remarkable: picaresque novel, adventure novel, epistolary novel, sentimental novel, novel of manners, moral novel, comic novel, the 'anti-novel', and others. The realistic element became the unifying principle of all these types, and it was neoclassicism that determined the first English novelists to assume the task to give the impression of fidelity to human experience, which is always treated in relation to the milieu and in relation to the morals, the manners, and the different aspects of life of the contemporary to the writer society.

Neoclassicism also influenced the first instances of critical thinking on novel, especially with regards to the idea of the novelty of the novel, among the issues of the novel related critical thinking being that of the distinction between romance and novel.

Much of this novel theory consists of the writer-critics' attempts to familiarize the new literary form by the standards of older forms. Bakhtin, Lukacs and other theorists of the novel consider epic and romance to be the novel's most important literary precedents. Likewise, Fielding speaks about both the epic and romance taking them as respectable traditions to justify his newly developing genre by identifying in the framework of a comparative analysis certain similarities but also differences between the three genres. In doing so Fielding establishes a convention of writing and by the latter part of the century the genre of novel has become already a tradition, a conventional form, and the "new genre in search of its own rules had quickly become so rule-bound as to appear utterly formulaic" [5, p.244].

Henry Fielding excels in both familiarizing and defending the aesthetic validity of a new genre, the novel, and of one of its new forms which is the comic novel. In doing so, Fielding, "the most theoretically minded of the great early English novelists, was a strict neoclassicist who believed that all valid literature was derived from the ancient Greek and Roman literary forms" [6, p. 24]. Henry Fielding materialises this believe in his critical thinking, and shows, together with other eighteenth century novelists and critics, that neoclassicism dominates not only the poetic production of the period but also influences the literary practice of novel writing and especially the critical thinking related to novel writing.

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