



The Oxford History of the Novel in English: Volume 2: English and British Fiction 1750-1820

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Volume 2 examines the period from 1750-1820, which was a crucial period in the development of the novel in English. Not only was it the time of Smollett, Sterne, Austen, and Scott, but it also saw the establishment and definition of the novel as we know it, as well as the emergence of a number of subgenres, several of which remain to this day. Conventionally however, it has been one of the least studied areas—seen as a falling off from the heyday of Richardson and Fielding, or merely a prelude to the great Victorian novelists. This volume takes full advantage of recent major advances in scholarly bibliography, new critical assessments, and the fresh availability of long-neglected fictional works, to offer a new mapping and appraisal. The opening section, as well as some remarkable later chapters, consider historical conditions underlying the production, circulation, and reception of fiction during these seventy years, a period itself marked by a rapid growth in output and expansion in readership. Other chapters cover the principal forms, movements, and literary themes of the period, with individual contributions on the four major novelists (named above), seen in historical context, as well as others on adjacent fields such as the shorter tale, magazine fiction, children's literature, and drama. The volume also views the novel in the light of other major institutions of modern literary culture, including book reviewing and the reprint trade, all of which played a part in advancing a sense of the novel as a defining feature of the British cultural landscape. A focus on 'global' literature and imported fiction in two concluding chapters in turn reflects a broader concern for transnational literary studies in general.

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