



The Rise of the Novel: Defoe Richardson, and Fielding

Ian Watt, Richardson, and Fielding Studies in Defoe

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From the back of the book: This is a remarkable book in three aspects. First it is the only full-length study of the early eighteenth-century novel that has appeared in recent years. Secondly, it is a pioneer work in the application of modern sociology to literature. But sociological analysis, however deep, is not the ultimate point of literary criticism; and we might have been disappointed if Mr. Watt had not scored for the third time, by a brilliant critical appreciation of three masterpieces of the period, "Moll Flanders," "Clarissa," and "Tom Jones." Contributed by Manchester Guardian. The American Journal of Sociology states that "This book is an outstanding contribution to the field of historical sociology and the sociology of knowledge. In three hundred, well-written and carefully documented pages the author has set the "rise of the novel" as a new literary genre in the social context of eighteenth-century England with emphasis on the predominant middle-class features of the period. The Saturday Review: "The strength of the book lies in its not being limited to any one method or point of view. Professor Watt leaves us not only with a deepened understanding of novels as documents, or reflections, of major social tendencies, but with a new insight into their nature as artistic creations. One finishes the book with a satisfying sense of its completeness. Ian Watt, former Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, is Professor (1971) of English at Stanford University.

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