"News, and new Things": Contemporaneity and the Early English Novel

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Long before Samuel Richardson showed readers and writers of fiction how to savor a single human instant a thousand ways, the world of print had begun its long liaison with the up-to-date, the latest news, the present moment, trying to provide a sense that the printing press offered a technology for nearly instant replay of human experience. Such a sense was crucial to many varieties of art and cultural experience in England in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries because the culture itself had developed a fixation on contemporaneity, part of its larger interest in discovery, enlightenment, and novelty. When the journalist, publisher, and would-be narrative-writer John Dunton insisted (repeatedly) that "News, and new Things do the whole World bewitch,"¹ he was characteristically blurring a distinction, this time between intellectual curiosity and the desire to be au courant, the fundamental motivations, respectively, for readers of science and journalism. But the blur represents a shrewd perception of connection between acute awareness of the latest events and the desire for innovation and originality. Both features of contemporary consciousness were crucial to the emergence of the peculiar, present-centered form of narrative that we have come to call (appropriately enough) the novel, and in fact the fusion of the two helps create the cultural mind that makes the novel possible.

¹ Dunton repeatedly used the line in his various works, often as an epigraph, but it was actually written by Robert Wilde. In one sense, Dunton's whole career is a gloss upon the line: "We are all tainted with the Athenian Itch, / News, and new Things do the whole World bewitch" (Poems on Several Occasions [London, 1683], p. 83).
The preoccupation with novelty, often motivated by a simple desire to be thought trendy and in-the-know, developed in one of its aspects into pure ephemeral silliness. Publishing ventures, including most of Dunton’s, often tried to read fickle public taste in the simplest and most obvious ways. A proliferation of anonymous ballads, broadsides, narratives of public or private intrigue, prophecies, criminal confessions, and other ephemera took events and rumors of the street and returned them to the street in printed form. But in other aspects, the attraction to novelty represents the legitimate line—from Francis Bacon through Isaac Newton, a line that later moved through Charles Darwin and Albert Einstein to Werner Heisenberg and Barbara McClintock—which refused to allow the Stagirite his traditional authority and which opened genuinely new directions of thought and human behavior. And the desire for “news,” although it frequently ends also in byways, utter trivia, and solipsism, represents as well the higher and broader reaches of communicative possibility, the side of the Enlightenment that leads away from elitism and toward political as well as literary radicalism.2

The sense that the moment (any isolated moment potentially, but some species of moment in particular) was in itself a kind of art object—to be adored, meditated upon, fondled, and contemplated again and again—had far-reaching, long-term implications for literature. Three major intellectual thrusts—philosophical explorations of time; psychological interests in memory, continuity of consciousness, and the nature of personal identity; and the new theological concerns with conversion, the individual epiphany, and the enlightened inner instant—all relate to (and in some sense grow out of) the developing concern with contemporaneity, the desire to recognize the momentous in the momentary and to feel the power of all time in its most fleeting moment. By the

2. For an extended argument that the novel derives directly from journalism, see Lennard J. Davis, Factual Fictions: The Origins of the English Novel (New York, 1983). The issue of origins seems to me much more complex than Davis suggests; a number of cultural forces converge to make the novel possible, and a great variety of literary and paraliterary forms provide crucial paradigms for the novel. For a good critique of Davis, see Michael McKeon, “The Origins of the English Novel,” Modern Philology 82 (Aug. 1984): 76–86. In his recent book, The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740 (Baltimore, 1987), McKeon himself offers a sensible balance on the issue and provides a rich sense of contextual complexity. In my forthcoming study, Before Novels, I discuss journalistic materials as one of several kinds of reading materials that helped prepare audiences for strategies used in novels. It takes much more than journalism, however, to make novels the characteristic expression of modern English culture.

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time the novel began to emerge even in its most elemental and tentative stages, English culture had given its tacit approval to a widespread devotion to radical contemporaneity, an urgent sense of now.

The novel represents a formal attempt to come to terms with innovation and originality and to accept the limitations of tradition; it reflects the larger cultural embracing of the present moment as a legitimate subject not only for passing conversation but for serious discourse. For at least a half century before the novel emerged, the world of print had experimented in assuming, absorbing, and exploiting that new cultural consciousness based on human curiosity—on the one hand “preparing” readers for novels and on the other offering later writers of novels some sense of potential subject matter and potential form, a sense of how the present could be won over to serious literature. The process was a curious and unstructured one; in its early manifestations it hardly seemed destined to lead to a significant new literary form. Even in retrospect, the print novelties of the turn of the century hardly seem part of a teleology of form or thought, but the broad ferment that authenticated the new, together with the apparent permanence that print seemed to bestow on accounts of the temporary and passing, ultimately led to a mind and art that transcended occasions and individuals even though it engaged them first of all—energetically, enthusiastically, evangelically. The first fruits of the modern moment-centered consciousness were not very promising, but the emergence of that consciousness enabled, when other cultural contexts were right, an altogether new aesthetic and a wholly different relation between life and literature.

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It is hard to say exactly when the present time became such an urgent issue in the English cultural consciousness. In one sense, of course, contemporaneity is and has always been of the essence in every culture, the immediacy of human needs and fears putting into shade all more abstract concerns. But long before the advent of print, or even of any means of written communication, art had taken as one of its essential functions the need to steer the human mind away from immediate gratification toward some longer and larger view—toward distancing, abstraction, perspective, a historical view that saw the present as a result, and largely as a reiteration, of a past that stretched amiably across a canvas as large as the mind of humankind itself. Literature (like painting, music, and told tales) had certainly celebrated or encompassed events, occurrences, and occasions, many of them recent or even urgently contemporary. But in traditional literature—oral creations that aspire to be etiological and formally satisfying—the demands of the moment are subordinated to a concern with the larger story of the culture that includes but quickly
transcends individuals and individual times, putting them into a perspective of history and slow time. Print technology, whatever its inherent attraction to the quick and the new, for the most part inherited and extended the assumption that human beings needed to be pried away from the immediate and the momentary to consider greater matters. It saw its function primarily as the need to educate people rather than just inform them, to delight with lasting joys rather than repeat the passing effects of conversation or oral discourse, to extend and expand human considerations rather than narrow, intensify, and gratify the immediate. And so printed books early on primarily consisted of works that offered, or aspired to, perspective: classics from the past; attempts to describe the universals of human experience; works of theology, philosophy, or history; narratives of long ago and far away.

The seeds of dissension are, of course, early visible in the world of print, especially at moments when "art" is not such a secure notion or when traditional forms and audiences are under close scrutiny. Certainly in Elizabethan times one can spot tares prospering outside the traditional enclosed garden. The urban paraliterature in the time of Thomas Nashe, Thomas Dekker, Stephen Gosson, and Ben Jonson instantly suggests that print had uses that could extend well beyond the traditional and invade unaccustomed social groups. It is in this sense (rather than in the existence of particular novel-resembling books) that the novel—with its distinctively modern and antiaristocratic tendency to encompass the daily, the trivial, the common, and the immediate—has roots that reach well back into older times and domestic traditions. But the relationship to that curious paraliterary past is a complicated one because definitions of "literature" hardened during the seventeenth century, and the gap between "art" and popular culture increased enormously before the novel was (finally) able to narrow it again much later.

The formal programs for serious literature in the Restoration and early eighteenth century betray a divided heart about present events. Certainly the poets wanted to feel themselves an integral part of their own culture and its public faces, and they sought, as in few ages before or since, to affect the direction of politics and social history in their own

3. Superb work on the oral tradition and on the difference between oral and written modes has appeared in recent years, although literary history has yet to absorb its conclusions. For a good characterization of the tendencies of oral literature, see John Miles Foley, Oral-Formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography (New York and London, 1985). For ongoing discussion of the literary implications of oral literature for literary theory and history, see the journal that Foley founded in 1986, Oral Tradition.

4. The old view that the novel began in Elizabethan times, or perhaps even in classical Greece, has largely disappeared in the wake of increasingly precise definitions of how the novel differs from other types of fiction, but in the past few years, narratology (despite numerous virtues and accomplishments) has tended to lose track again of distinctions, historical and otherwise, among different kinds of narrative.
time. They often seem obsessed with even the most minor happenings around them. Their accounts of public affairs, their concern with the current health of the state, and their anxieties about social change are seldom far from the surface in what they write, even when they address the eternal issues of a *Religio Laici*, a *Solomon*, or an *Essay on Man*. And when they set themselves, as they often do, the task of evaluating critically the directions of modern life—in poems like *Absalom and Achitophel* or *The Dispensary* or *The Rape of the Lock*—they regularly treat contemporary matters in great, often painful, detail, regarding themselves as legitimate heirs of the Roman tradition of public commentary and responsibility. Still, there is among the public poets and aspiring men of letters always a decorum. It is not so much that they hold back in detail or restrain themselves in tone as that they try to restrict their subjects—the persons, events, and ideas they treat—to ones generally thought available and appropriate to public consideration. Among themselves they play and take holidays in verse or prose, and the range of banter and facetiousness in personal letters and light verse is sometimes astonishing. But until their exasperation is heightened and their anger turned to righteous indignation, they avoid the contexts of common debate and street life unless they are trying to locate it in a larger context (as in *A Description of the Morning*, or *Trivia*, or, *The Art of Walking the Streets of London*) or undermining its values in some sort of mock-heroic contrast (as in *MacFlecknoe*). When they turn desperately to full programs of satire that engage the present as the nearly full burden of their content, they have been driven to it largely by the energies of what has begun to happen in the popular mind. Certainly it is accurate to think of Augustan literature as aggressively public and heatedly anti-innovative, so that prose attacks on novelty like *A Tale of a Tub* or poetic ones like *The Dunciad* contain as much energy and vitality as the newly funded creativities they oppose. Writers like Jonathan Swift and Alexander Pope come to their position and achieve much of the force that drives their writing from a basic change in the culture. The best taste and the best brains in literature in the early years of the eighteenth century fought the change nearly every step of the way. While getting enormous mileage out of its weaknesses and silliness, they never came to terms with its virtues or its implications for future writing except as blind, often inarticulate and indiscriminate, hatred. The justification for public poetry and occasional literature that Augustans took from their Roman models, while always the putative sponsor of high art about contemporaneity, does not account fully for the best of Augustan addresses to the present time. Much as Pope or Swift would have dreaded to think it, popular culture not only provided grist for the Augustan mill but also the energy for doing the grinding.5

5. Recent social history has had so far too little effect on eighteenth-century studies, and the impact of popular culture—on the novel, let alone canonical forms—has been
What was most significant about early innovation had less to do with specific literary accomplishments than with the very idea that experimentation could be defended vigorously and sometimes plausibly and that modern occasional writing seemed to fit the mood, tone, and needs of the culture even when it was not very good. The defenses of the moderns against the ancients—whether by John Dryden or John Dunton, Robert Boyle or Richard Bentley—ring with a surprising energy, even when they argue or illustrate foolishly, and in retrospect it seems quite astonishing that traditionalists like William Temple and Swift took the new movement seriously enough to answer in such detail. In an important sense, the recognition that such works as A Tale of a Tub and The Dunciad bestowed on literary modernism legitimized the issue, and the “popular culture” aspects of novelty and journalism, ironically, come to exist in a canonical literature because the most traditional rivals, for reasons never yet fully explained, put them there.

Not all the energies of “literary” innovation resided in journalistic efforts to celebrate the present moment, but many of them did, and it is important to recognize the cultural depth and breadth beneath and around the surface signs. Perhaps the cultural anxiety about present time intensified gradually throughout the seventeenth century, or perhaps by fits and starts, but by the 1690s, the world of print had clearly joined the world of conversation, gossip, and rumor in a singular devotion to issues of the moment. The directions of publishing in the 1690s represent a milestone in the developing concern with contemporaneity. The pragmatic social and ethical concerns of the reign of William and Mary, manifested in such phenomena as the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, are one sign of the cultural mania for news. But there are many other signs as well: the publications of the 1690s and the early years of the new century generally suggest both how fully the concerns

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6. The moral fervor of reform during the reign of William and Mary was heavily dependent on public accounts, awareness, and outrage. Whether vice flourished more successfully or even more openly then is questionable, but the proliferation of accounts convinced the public that “the times” were especially desperate, and newspapers and pamphlets became the most significant weapon in the reformation-of-manners craze.

The question of when and why the preoccupation with contemporaneity became so obsessive in England is too complex for an essay in literary history to address, but the proliferation of printed materials at the time of the Civil Wars suggests that some combination of ideology and concern for personal safety must have been involved. Certainly the growing presence of pamphlets about contemporary events in the 1640s and 1650s helped to create the taste that printers tried in wider ways to satisfy near the end of the century.
of the moment had absorbed the world of print and how the world of print interacted with conversation and the oral culture, especially in London where pamphlets, periodicals, and informal talk fed each other in an ever-intensifying attention to the latest news or pseudonews.

Histories of English journalism seriously begin with the 1690s, for the sharp increase in the number of periodicals published in London in this decade and the proliferation of news pamphlets and news sheets that eventuate in the founding of a London daily in 1702 suggest that the cultural moment for journalism had just then come. The term “journalism” apparently did not enter the English language until 1833, but according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, the term “journalist” came into use as early as 1693 to describe those who wrote for the public press of the daily doings of life. In their etymology, “journalist” and “journalism” appropriately suggest the whole range of preoccupation with contemporaneity, with the daily and the ordinary, that characterized the 1690s and the following decades. The French word *jour* is, of course, the root from which “journalist” and “journalism” spring, and “journal” and “journey” have their derivation there as well. In its original meaning, a “journey” was a day’s travel (although it quickly became extended to cover travels that could be measured by a specific number of days required), and “journal,” both in its sense as a public account of daily events and as a private account of the personal details of daily life, in its origins emphasizes the centrality for the recording and receiving consciousness of immediate moments in time. Significantly, the term “journal” and its several derivatives separated themselves from the sense of order and predictable repetition that a word like “diurnal” has continued to carry in English, so that the term “journalism” in the sense that it is popularly used today carries (much like the term novel) historically accurate connotations that suggest what was happening in the culture at a very deep level.


9. I discuss the matter in more detail in Before Novels.

with the potential significance of any single isolated instant that an im-
mediate written record needed to be created. The preoccupations with
news and novelty in fact coalesce in the popular consciousness much as Dunton suggests.

Journalism was beginning to “rise” elsewhere in Europe too, but it
became culturally significant rather more slowly and tentatively in other
countries. Nowhere else does there seem to be, so early, the obsession
with contemporaneity that characterizes English culture at the beginning
of the eighteenth century. The English were notorious among Europeans
both for their attraction to novelty and their devotion to news. An eight-
teenth-century French traveler to England concludes that “the melancholy
temper of the English has rendered them, in all ages, exceeding fond of
every thing which appears to be out of the common order.” 11 The English
fondness for wide-ranging gossip, masquerading as news of foreign affairs,
was regarded as beyond debate, although Englishmen regularly took
umbrage at that “common Imputation cast upon Englishmen by For-


13. César de Saussure, A Foreign View of England in the Reigns of George I & George II:
The Letters of Monsieur César de Saussure to His Family, ed. and trans. Madame van Muyden
(London, 1902), pp. 178–79; further references to this work, abbreviated FV, will be
included in the text.


15. Richard Baxter, A Christian Directory; or, A Summ of Practical Theologie, and Cases of
Conscience (London, 1673), p. 36. Baxter, anticipating Dunton’s etiology and analysis, goes
on to quote the biblical passage about the Athenians who “spent their time in nothing else,
but to tell or hear some new thing” (Acts 17).
of traveler, Lemuel Gulliver, makes a similar observation about the strange land of Laputa, ultimately concluding the same thing about his fellow Englishmen: “But, what I chiefly admired, and thought altogether un-accountable,” he says of the otherworldly mathematicians, “was the strong Disposition I observed in them towards News and Politicks; perpetually enquiring into publick Affairs, giving their Judgments in Matters of State; and passionately disputing every Inch of a Party Opinion.”

The creation of such a public consciousness in England was probably not engineered so much as just permitted, although the new brand of party politician and information manipulator like Robert Walpole obviously perceived advantages to be gained from heightened public consciousness of public events and attitudes loosened from their traditional moorings. The cultural institution that finally had the most to do with encouraging the new consciousness has usually been studied in literary history only in a somewhat precious way. That institution is the coffeehouse, often treasured for its benign and lovable (if somewhat obtuse) denizens who value good conversation, or praised for its attempts to raise the cultural level of cits and tradesmen, or gently teased for the foibles of sotted squires or sparks gone to embers. A more important cultural contribution resides, I believe, in the structural tendency of the institution to bridge a variety of social levels of discourse (with at least as much influence from below as above) and to blur the distinction between oral and written discourse.

The conversation of the coffeehouse, while sometimes perhaps as “improving” and high-minded as its literary admirers would have us believe and sometimes as irrelevant and banal as satires on it suggest, most often seems to have been determined not by abstract or “universal” human concerns but by the events of the day—or rather by what public gossipmongers defined as “events” of the day. Timeliness was the crucial element in the conversation; talking to the moment was as crucial to the


17. For all the anxiety to define and separate genres and kinds in the eighteenth century, there is a remarkable tendency, in practice, to blur and merge, a tendency that has been insufficiently discussed, especially in relation to oral traditions.

18. In a letter of 29 October 1726, Saussure reported that “Some coffee-houses are a resort for learned scholars and for wits; others are the resort of dandies or of politicians, or again of professional newsmongers; and many others are temples of Venus” (FV, p. 164). He seems to be reflecting prevalent clichés and oversimplifications, which are still honored. Although the leading coffeehouses no doubt did attract distinctive audiences, contemporary treatments of the phenomenon suggest that all or most were characterized nearly equally by newsmongering and a love of gossip about current topics. The classic treatment of the coffeehouse phenomenon is still Robert J. Allen's The Clubs of Augustan London (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), although it badly needs updating. For details of individual houses, see Bryant Lillywhite, London Coffee Houses: A Reference Book of Coffee Houses of the Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Centuries (London, 1963).
coffeehouse consciousness (and ultimately to daily life in London) as writing to the moment ever became to the novel. Reports, rumors, and stories from the street vied with printed “news” and speculations from the regular periodicals and the daily variety of occasional publications as the subject of conversation. It may have been amusing to hear the mixture of information, misinformation, speculation, and opinion that resulted, and apparently the joy of participating was widely prized. Not many major decisions about government or trade (or anything else) resulted from these conversations (although journalists and spies for various groups regularly listened in, used them as sounding boards, and probably planted additional “information”), but the illusion of being “involved” in matters of moment and of “knowing” the state of London and the world seems to have appealed mightily to late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century Londoners of many classes and stripes. “What attracts enormously in these coffee-houses,” writes the visitor César de Saussure in 1726, “are the gazettes and other public papers. All Englishmen are great newsmongers. Workmen habitually begin the day by going to coffee-rooms in order to read the latest news. I have often seen shoeblacks and other persons of that class club together to purchase a farthing paper. Nothing is more entertaining than hearing men of this class discussing politics and topics of interest concerning royalty. You often see an Englishman taking a treaty of peace more to heart than he does his own affairs” (FV, p. 162). Even allowing for the bemused chauvinism of a visitor bent on entertaining the folks at home, the picture confirms in its basic outline the view from English observers. The virtuosi and coffeehouse politicians widely portrayed in plays and other records of the time were essentially the “Athenians” with an itch for news and novelty that Dunton described, and their significance lies not in what they actually knew, said, or accomplished but in the expectations they set for eighteenth-century conduct and consciousness. As early as 1667, a London broadside, News from the Coffe-house, satirized the already-accepted expectations:

You that delight in Wit and Mirth
And long to hear such News
As comes from all Parts of the Earth . . .
Go hear it at a Coffe house
It cannot but be true.

There’s nothing done in all the World,
From Monarch to the Mouse
But every Day or Night ’tis hurl’d
Into the Coffe-house.
So great a Vniversitie,
I think there ne’re was any;
In which you may a Schoolar be
For spending of a Penny.  

Seven decades later, the expectations and jokes were still the same. A 1733 satire invites its readers to

See yon spruce busy Man, he asks you hasty,
What News from Coffee-Club, or who just past ye?  

No doubt real news did sometimes get passed on in such company, for real doers as well as imaginary ones did in fact frequent coffeehouses—often with their judgment fully intact—but a “Coffee-house Tale” was considered synonymous with unreliability, the love of stories for their own sake, and ultimately with triviality.

In the mixture of journalism and conversation, print record and loose talk, fiction and fact, informed opinion and baseless speculation, the oral and written cultures dramatically meet and interact in the coffeehouse milieu, reflecting changes in the larger world and demonstrating not only how quickly booksellers had learned to exploit the daily possibilities of print but also how “talk” and current opinion joined and enlarged the cycle of “now” consciousness. And, like the influence of books and booksellers, the effect spread outward from London with a sense of what was appropriate, timely, and “in.” The result was felt not so much in the provincial proliferation of coffeehouses themselves but in the acceptance of London values and conversation as normative. For many in villages and in the countryside, the sense of the city and its alluring fashions of busyness and knowledge of the world set expectations that profoundly affected the sense of what was worth talking about, thinking about, and reading about. And if such a cycle of communication and such a mixture of human modes characterized daily London life and set a pattern elsewhere for those who aspired to live a fashionable modern life, they also led to an important conditioning of the reading public and those who wrote for it. As the reading public for journalism, didactic works, biography and travel, history, and literature in the late seventeenth century became (without much alteration) the reading public for the novel a generation later, the sense of urgency about present time and current concerns was deeply built into the public consciousness. The private reading of novels

21. See, for example, the way Sir Roger L’Estrange uses the term in Citt and Bumpkin (1680; Los Angeles, 1965), p. 32.
in a sense displaced the taste for public discussion. The early novelists shared the public taste for contemporaneity and novelty and quickly discovered how to blend it into a substantial and complex web of narrative and discursive prose, creating in effect a kind of portable coffeehouse of elongated conversation in print. For Henry Fielding the world is a stagecoach in which a narrator can nudge and twit hearers, and for Laurence Sterne it is a library where readers are present with the author as he writes, but the effect is finally just as evident in the expository “dear Reader” world of Daniel Defoe or the epistolary totality of shared circumstance in Richardson or Fanny Burney.

Works that detail a single event or a series of related ones had been fairly common early in the seventeenth century. In titles such as A Wonderfull and most Lamentable Declaration of the great hurt done, and mighty losse sustained by Fire . . . ; . . . Winde, Thunder, Lightning, Haile, and Raine and The Wonders of this windie winter (both 1613) one can readily see the interests of those who wrote about the contemporary scene, an interest that lay primarily in natural disasters or other dramatic events and their role in human destiny. The emphasis was continuously on patterns, their supernatural origins, and the human implications. Every event, no matter how small or apparently isolated, was put into larger perspective as a detail in some larger plan. The woodcut that serves as a frontispiece to Wonders of this windie winter suggests that recurrent theme. There two heavenly figures are shown blowing toward earth, while in the ensuing wind trees and houses fall, and people and ships tumble helplessly about in the sea. No event is altogether independent; nothing just happens.

A similar thematic emphasis continues in much of the material published about contemporary events throughout the late seventeenth century and into the eighteenth, especially when some dramatic natural occurrence

22. The importance of women in the reading public for novels has much to do with this displacement. Women were largely excluded from, or at least underrepresented in, coffeehouses, and thus were denied access to the most direct means of hearing and sharing news, but if I am right that the novel became a kind of substitute for news and gossip, the importance of novels to female readers and soon to female writers suggests the way women came quickly to relate to the deep cultural phenomenon. I have discussed the evidence for female literacy and readership of novels in my essay “The Young, the Ignorant, and the Idle,” in Anticipations of the Enlightenment in England, France, and Germany, ed. Paul J. Korshin and Alan C. Kors (Philadelphia, 1987), pp. 259–81.

focuses attention on human limits in the face of earthquake, wind, or fire. The prodigious storm of November 1703, for example, inspired a number of detailed accounts of destruction and the frustration of human efforts. There was virtual unanimity in regarding the event as a divine visitation upon England, although the precise grounds for divine anger were located variously, depending upon the assumptions, affiliations, and biases of the individual writer. Defoe’s artful account, The Storm, Or, A Collection Of the most Remarkable Casualties And Disasters Which happen’d in the Late Dreadful Tempest, Both by Sea and Land (1704), one of the best of his early blends of narrative interest and thematic coherence, is one of the most detailed and comprehensive treatments (285 pages long), and it is probably the best. But there were many other notable accounts as well, including The Terrible Stormy Wind and Tempest . . . Consider’d, Improv’d, and Collected, to be had In Everlasting Remembrance (1705), A Wonderful History of All the Storms, Hurricanes, Earthquakes, &c. That have happen’d in England for above 500 years past (1704), and An Exact Relation Of the Late Dreadful Tempest: or, a Faithful Account Of the Most Remarkable Disasters which hapned on that occasion . . . Faithfully collected by an Ingenious Hand, to preserve the Memory of so Terrible a Judgment (1704). “So remarkable and signal a Judgment of God on this Nation,” the latter pamphlet argues, “no History either forreign or domestick, can parallel,” claiming that the storm was more destructive than the great fire. “To transmit therefore a distinct and true Account of that unheard of and fatal Accident, and to observe an exact Decorum in each particular as much as possible, we hope, will not be unacceptable to the Reader; since a matter of this important Consequence must and will stand as a Monument of the Anger of Heaven, justly pour’d down upon this Kingdom to all posterity.”

Accounts like these repeatedly emphasize, usually through key words in their titles as well as by repetition in the body of the text, their factuality and particularity (“Exact Relation,” “Faithful Account”). Details are in fact very important to their effect, but the emphasis still falls, as it did a century earlier, on meanings that can be assigned to the storm. Those meanings remain old-fashioned in their reliance on traditional religious and moral assumptions about how human events are, and should be, controlled, and in their insistence that such events can be “read” as God’s judgment on human behavior and events. “Readings” often differed, of course, the storm being regarded alternatively as God’s displeasure with Queen Anne or with those who frustrated her plans, but however doctors disagreed in the applications of their theology, they agreed that such events had dramatic, often deep, meanings. One popular interpretation of the storm, especially among Dissenters, was as a judgment on playgoers.

24. An Exact Relation Of the Late Dreadful Tempest; or, a Faithful Account Of the Most Remarkable Disasters which hapned on that occasion . . . Faithfully collected by an Ingenious Hand, to preserve the Memory of so Terrible a Judgment (London, 1704), pp. 24, 3.
(the Collier controversy was still running full speed). When *The Tempest* was produced just after the storm, in what was widely regarded as an irreverent and sacrilegious act, many predicted disasters even more dire.  

And so it went. Every natural event offered lively possibilities, and every context had multiple referents. Sometimes the emphasis in such accounts stayed on the details of the event and left readers on their own to draw conclusions. *A True and Perfect Narrative of the Great and Dreadful Damages Susteyned in Several Parts of England by the Late Extraordinary Snowvs* (1674), for example, describes on its title page snow “covering the Tops of . . . Houses” and people burning “all their Goods to keep them warm” but avoids blaming the event on any particular evil practice. More judgmental, but equally detailed, is an account of rains and floods in 1683, *A Strange and Wonderful Account of the Great Mischiefs, Sustained by the late Dreadful Thunder, Lightening, And Terrible Land-Floods Caused by the Immoderate Rain in England, Scotland, & Holland, Giving an Exact Relation of the Men, Cattle, Houses, &c that have been Thunderstruck*, although blame is cast rather broadly and generally.

It is tempting for modern readers to look in such accounts for increasing evidence of insincerity and erosion of belief in divine control and divine intervention, a temptation that literary historians fall for much more frequently than do intellectual or cultural historians. The climate of religious belief is in fact much different in 1703 from that in 1613, but if the nation in general is more secular in 1703 (as it surely is), those who continue to be believers are not less sincere and not noticeably less certain themselves. Accelerated secularism and diminished religious faith are facts of life in the early eighteenth century, but the change is one of degree, and the degree is less radical than some literary historians think. The restoration of the monarchy, the plague of 1665, the Great Fire of 1666, the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the storm of 1703, the peace of

25. “Are we not . . . loudly called upon to lay aside this prophanè Diversion, by the late dreadful Storm?” asked the anonymous author of *A Representation of the Impiety & Immorality of the English Stage*, 3d ed. (1704; Los Angeles, 1947), p. 4. One pamphlet suggests that the defiant production of *The Tempest* could close theaters by producing a popular outcry against such blasphemy or at least might mean tight regulation. Other events inspired similar interpretations. John Barnard, for example, interpreted a contemporary earthquake in New England as displeasure with sabbath-breaking. A sermon preached in Colchester on the “providential” victories of the Duke of Marlborough created such a fuss that its author claimed he was invited to the local coffeehouse to hear himself parodied and scoffed at, an indication of how wide a net was cast by providentiality and how controversial even patriotic interpretations could become. See Josiah Woodward (?), *Some Thoughts Concerning the Stage in a Letter to a Lady* (1704; Los Angeles, 1947), p. 12; John Barnard, “Earthquakes under the Divine Government,” *Two Discourses Address’d to Young Persons* (Boston, 1727), pp. 71–99; and the preface to William Smithies, Jr., *The Coffee-House Preachers* (London, 1706), esp. fols. [A4r]–B1. The latter title was once regarded as Defoe’s, and it may well be invented—its rhetoric is somewhat suspicious, but even if the episode is invented out of whole cloth, the pamphlet accurately suggests the terms and tones of contemporary debate.
Utrecht, and every major military and political event throughout the seventeenth century and well into the eighteenth were accompanied by pamphlets and in many cases long books that argued traditional providential interpretations of the events. The difference between early seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century accounts involves the fact that earlier writers can readily assume that their audience will already believe that some sort of religious and moral interpretation is true and relevant, whereas later accounts have to be prepared to argue in a context of less certainty about ultimate causes. The change in rhetoric is indeed an index of contexts beginning to change, but most interpreters continue to be supported by the same philosophical and theological assumptions, while being aware that their task of persuasion became every day more difficult because of cultural slippage. Later accounts tend to be more detailed and conscious of piling up the evidence for a particular interpretation. Accounts alternate radically between the precise details of a particular episode and generalizations about the meaning of such events for an interpretation of the direction and fabric of English culture; they illustrate both the importance accorded to authentic human experiences and the deep desire to interpret by accumulation. Many pamphlets, booklets, and single sheets told a particular story and provided explicit or implicit interpretations, usually along moral or religious lines. And ultimately huge collections and anthologies of such stories and anecdotes, usually organized by subject (stories of storms, for example, or famous murders) and by theme (that murder will out, for example, and murderers be punished) became popular and readily available.

But journalism did change dramatically during the seventeenth century, reflecting broadened curiosity more than abandoned commitments. If readers continued to be fascinated with accounts of storms and shipwrecks, they also developed an interest in lesser, more private and personal events. Everyday and domestic events began to appear more and more frequently in print, both in periodicals and in separate titles. Even at the beginning of the seventeenth century, pamphlets sometimes described murders, acts of treason, and other acts of individual behavior that seemed to threaten the public peace or the social fabric. For example, A true relation of a most desperate murder committed upon the body of Sir John Tindall, knight, one of the maisters of the Chancery, appeared in 1617; in 1605, A True relation of Gods wunderfull mercies, in preseruing one aliue, which hanged fiue dayes, who was falsely accused. By the 1670s, individual accounts of murders appeared routinely almost every week, no doubt reflecting increased crime (especially in London) but also demonstrating the heightened interest of the general public in a more individualized definition of current events. In late 1677, for example, an extensive collection of stories, A true relation of all the bloody murders that have been committed in and about the citie and suburbs of London, since the 4th of this instant Inne 1677, was published. The range had extended by then to accounts of robberies, fires, household
quarrels, discoveries of witchcraft, and all sorts of out-of-the-ordinary events occurring to ordinary people in ordinary circumstances. In 1676, a short (eight-page) pamphlet provided *A Brief Narrative of A Strange and Wonderful Old Woman that hath A Pair of Horns Growing upon her Head*, and another “brief and true Relation” purported to describe *The Miraculous Recovery of A Dumb Man at Lambeth*. In 1678 readers were offered such items as *A Strange, but true Relation Of the Discovery of a most horrid and bloody Murder Committed on the Body of a Traveller About Thirty Years Ago in the West of England* and *Strange and wonderful News from . . . Ireland*, or, *A Full and True Relation of what Happened to one Dr. Moore*. In the highly charged political year 1679, the following, among many others, appeared: *A True Account of The Horrid Murther Committed upon His Grace, The Late Archbishop of Saint Andrews*; *A true Account of divers most strange and prodigious Apparitions*; *A True Narrative of the Horrid Hellish Popish Plot* (a lengthy, illustrated ballad with elaborate references to other published accounts); *A True Narrative and Discovery of several very Remarkable Passages Relating to the Horrid Popish Plot*; *A True Narrative of that Grand Jesvite Father Andrews*; *A True Relation of a Devilish Attempt to Fire the Town of Barnet*; *A True Narrative Of the Late Design of the Papists to Charge Their Horrid Plot Upon the Protestants*; *A Full Narrative, or, a Discovery of the Priests and Jesuites*.

Many “events,” such as those referred to in these titles, were tied to political concerns, rumored occurrences, and suspicions of deep plots. The “Popish Plot” was responsible for literally hundreds of titles that promised the “exact relation” of this or the “true narrative” of that. The term “narrative,” in fact, although occasionally used on title pages earlier, became a title catchword in the late 1670s to signal accounts of events that seemed related to Catholic Europe’s intrusive interest in English affairs. Although the terms “narrative,” “relation,” “account,” and “news” strictly speaking only indicate that contemporary events are to be the center of attention, such code terms were used to imply a connection with intrigue of some larger, ongoing sort, an implication of human conspiracy nearly as useful as providential explanations to make sense of random, apparently isolated events.

Timeliness was essential for most of the separate journalistic publications; ordinarily accounts were rushed into print within days, or even hours, of a dramatic event. Publishers usually preferred personal confessions of horrible conduct, when available, to simple accounts of the events, apparently because such statements seemed to finesse the issue of authenticity while often providing vivid, immediate, and convincing detail. *A Narrative of the Extraordinary Penitence of Rob. Maynard, Who was Condemnd For the Murder of John Stockton, Late Victualler in Grub-street* (1696), for
example, includes both an account of “Several Conferences Held with him in Newgate” and “a Copy of the Papers which he left to be Published after his Death.” A Full and True Relation of the Examination and Confession of W. Barwick and E. Mangall, of two Horrid Murders (1690) typically glories in the discovery of the real facts, after an initial uncertainty or cover-up, as does a single sheet, Concealed Murther Reveil’d, of 1699. The sense of filling in the details, helping to write the full history of the times and ultimately of reality itself, is prominent in most of these titles, however hurried on by sensationalism or commercial greed. Behind the formerly-concealed-but-now-revealed motif is a powerful sense that great chunks of reality are liable to escape detection or get by without being recorded; the journalistic writers seem to see themselves as sleuths whose duty it is to capture it all for print. Swift thought it was just plain silly to be the universe’s amanuensis, but for many of his contemporaries it was not just a living and a comprehensive record of the times that was at stake but also a view of reality. For the Puritans—and their view of history largely becomes the Whig version of reality—nothing could be known without a full and complete account of events: that was where meaning lay.

Other events less momentous than political treason and less horrendous than murder were swept into the public record as well. Physical ailments and cures were often detailed (A Narrative Of the Late Extraordinary Cure Wrought in an Instant upon Mrs. Eliz. Savage . . . With an Appendix, attempting to prove, That Miracles are not ceas’d [1694]), local instances of detected witchcraft were described (A True Narrative of the Sufferings and Relief of a Young Girle, . . . Strangely Molested By Evil Spirits and their Instruments [1698]), and news was brought in from remoter places (A True Narrative of the Murders, Cruelties and Oppressions, Perpetrated on the Protestants in Ireland [1690]). Sometimes collections of miscellaneous events were pulled together to provide the equivalent of annals for a particular year, as, for example, God’s Marvellous Wonders in England: Containing divers strange and wonderful Relations that have happened since the beginning of June, this present Year 1694, a work that includes accounts of murders discovered, destructive hailstorms, the surprising sprouting of corn in barren fields, a “Shower of Wheat that fell in Wiltshire,” and the appearance of a whale near the mouth of the River Humber. Sometimes the record reads like the Daily Mail or the National Inquirer, but serious cosmic assumptions support its desire to be all-encompassing.

26. Concealed Murther Reveil’d. Being a Strange Discovery of a most Horrid and Barbarous Murther . . . By Mary Anderson . . . On the Body of Hannah Jones an Infant of 8 Weeks Old . . . As also How it was Conceal’d 3 Years, and not Discovered till Monday last . . . (London, 1699).

27. The narrator of A Tale of a Tub is made to sound utterly foolish when he declares, “This, O Universe, is the Adventurous Attempt of me thy Secretary” (Swift, A Tale of a Tub, The Prose Works of Jonathan Swift, 1:77).
Many other short narratives of the 1690–1710 period come from, or purport to come from, documents such as diaries, packets of letters, or notes taken by someone present at the occurrence or at an eyewitness account of it. Other narratives purport to derive from court documents and proceedings. As full, or at least as detailed, as many such accounts were, their truth is sometimes a matter of doubt, regardless of the claims of their titles. The important thing is that they claim factuality, for whether they were literally and completely true, based upon facts but liberally embroidered, or made up out of whole cloth, the narratives achieved much of their appeal through their claim to represent what the present-day world was like, what kinds of amazement and surprise and horror were available to those whose lives were drab, uneventful, and apparently trivial, increasingly buried in the routine impersonality of modern life.

Between 1700 and 1710, a large number of eight-page pamphlets focused on contemporary life with a vengeance. Most of them were half-sheet octavos or half-sheet duodecimos, designed (like chapbooks) to sell cheaply. Some are dated and some are not (the ones that are date mostly from 1705–9), but most recount events of recent date—often startling or at least surprising ones—and all are anecdotal in the new journalistic spirit. Many are told in a spirited, comic, and frolicsome way, while others point toward pathos, poignancy, or even tragedy. What these short episodic pamphlets have in common is that they seem to commit to print the sorts of “surprising” and “wonderful” tales of contemporary life which in another age would have found room, at least passingly, in oral traditions transmitted within families or villages or groups of workers. A few such stories had found their way into print as exempla in moral works or as instances in the anthologies put together to prove or illustrate some theological, philosophical, political, or social point, but very few of them in earlier times would have been preserved at all beyond their immediate

28. An item from 1700 typifies the kind of narrative designed to illustrate providential influence on human destiny by recording a story in detail, in this case in journal form. See Jonathan Dickinson, God’s Protecting Providence, Man’s Surest Help and Defence, in Times of the Greatest Difficulty, and Most Eminent Danger. Evidenced In the Remarkable Deliverance of Robert Barrow, with divers other Persons, from the Devouring Waves of the Sea; amongst which they suffered Shipwreck: And also, From the cruel Devouring jaws of the Inhumane Canibals of Florida (1699; London, 1700).

29. See, for example, these two brief, single-page items from 1706: A Full and True Account of the Examination and Condemnation of Handsome Fielding This 6th of December 1706. For Having Two Wives . . . For which he was found Guilty and A faithful Account of the Examination of Robert Fielding, Esq.; before the Rt. Hon. the Ld. Chief Justice Holt, and his Commitment to Newgate.

30. An example is the thirty-eight-page folio transcript of The Tryal of Spencer Couper, Esq.; John Marson, Ellis Stevens, and William Rogers, Gent. Upon an Indictment for the Murther of Mrs. Sarah Stout, a Quaker . July 18, 1699. Of Which they were acquitted. Faithful full-transcript accounts of law trials were frequently printed as well.
geographical area or contemporary moment. One can find scattered instances of such short anecdotal pamphlets earlier and elsewhere in Europe, but the sudden appearance of a great number of them in England just after the turn of the century is a new historical phenomenon, marking a perceived desire for access to narrative that is neither primarily moral nor primary political in thrust but that regards the present as crucial to be recorded.

The “plot” of most of these short narratives is given away entirely in the lengthy title, and the writing is usually indifferent, but the tone is sometimes experimental and the subject matter daring. Thus, An Almanack-Husband: or, a Wife a Month: Being A very Comical and Pleasant Relation of a Merchants Son near the Monument, who Married a Wife every Month, for a Year together . . . (1708) takes a detached and tolerant view of polygamy and the confusion of progeny that ensues. The “Almanack-Husband” gets all his wives pregnant “and being discovered, gave them all an Invitation to a Tavern, where they were exceeding Merry”; the tone (if not the syntax) is maintained in “A commical Dialogue which pass’d between him and his Wives, and after parted very lovingly,” an outcome that Captain Macheath must have envied offered in a spirit that, in its broader cultural version, helped to nurture Gay’s anti-Augustan side. Only the few cautionary words at the end violate the spirit of the piece: “but I would have the Reader not to mind a Libertine’s Advice, for nothing but Destruction attends such lewd Debauchees.”31 An obvious example of thin, after-the-fact, disingenuous moralizing, this kind of brittle postscript is, however, much less common in these narratives (and other works of many kinds) than is usually thought. The moralizing tendency which is native to the period usually results in works that are wholeheartedly didactic; the quick moral gloss that is antithetical to the spirit and tone of the whole is nearly as rare as the total lack of any moral or religious sentiment whatever.

Most of the comic narratives involve male–female relationships and domestic deception. Their plots resemble stage plays, even if the details don’t usually derive from this source. The emphasis on literal factuality and currency is heavy, and many contain directions for verification. The Comical Bargain: or, Trick upon Trick. Being A Pleasant and True Relation of one Thomas Bocks, a Baker’s Prentice, near Milk-Street, that . . . courted an Eminent Doctor’s Daughter near King-Street in Bloomsbury (1707), a story of two sharpeners who deserve and get each other, contains this “authentication” on the title page: “If any one Question the Truth of this Relation, let them En[quire] for the New-married Couple at the Sign of the Dog and Cat in Bread-street, London.”

31. An Almanack-Husband: or, a Wife a Month: Being A very Comical and Pleasant Relation of a Merchants Son near the Monument, who Married a Wife every Month, for a Year together . . . (London, 1708), title page, p. 8.
More common than comic stories are ones which purport to be serious or tragic and which narrate occurrences that are often violent and brutal. Typical are such titles as *The Cruel Son, or, the Unhappy Mother. Being a Dismal Relation of one Mr. Palmer and Three Ruffins, who Barbarously Murder'd his own Mother and her Maid... November the 7th, 1707. by Cutting their Throats from Ear to Ear, in a Cruel and Unnatural manner; and afterwards setting the House on Fire* (1707) and *The Cruel Mother. Being a strange and unheard-of Account of one Mrs. Elizabeth Cole... that threw her own Child into the Thames* (1708). Less typical but equally interesting are titles which include several different stories: *Wonder upon Wonders, or, the London Histories* (1710), for example, which includes several separate brief narrations, some of them quite fanciful, and *Eight Dreadful Examples* (also 1710), which includes as one of its examples a story of “How a cruel Tax-gatherer taking away a poor Womans Cows wrongfully, his own Died, and for blaspheming God he was turned into a Dog.”

“Reader,” begins the narration proper of a 1707 eight-pager called *The Horrors of Jealousie, or, The Fatal Mistake,* “I here present you with a very amazing and dreadful Relation.” Adjectives such as “amazing,” “dreadful,” “terrible,” and “horrible” are as common in the body of these texts as on their title pages, as is the repeated insistence on the immediacy and literal truth of the accounts. They are “true relations,” “exact accounts,” and “faithful narratives,” and they are located and dated precisely. For most of the episodes described, a basis in fact is quite likely, and the suggestion of larger human patterns—whether they involve the certainty of remorse and punishment or the tendencies of a sizable minority of human beings toward behavior that ends in robbery, rape, murder, and incest—is secondary to the emphasis on accurate recording of historic particulars. But it would be foolish to separate these narratives too rigidly from fictional ones or to discount what they tell us about contemporary taste for narrative because of their insistence on truth. Novels written in the years that follow insist just as strongly on the factual basis of their events, and early novels repeatedly verify their claims by citing or “quoting” documents or referring readers outside their texts to actual (and verifiable) persons, places, and events.

What readers found in such narratives as the eight-pagers is similar to what they sought in the longer narratives of “real” life written by...
Defoe and his successors a few years later. If the style and artistic structure of narratives like these do not seem to offer a model for potential novels—any more than the brief moments used here to capture some surprising aspect of life in eight pages resembles the resonant length and complexity of Defoe’s narratives—the subject matter and focus of these narratives does suggest what interested readers in the generation before they had novels to read. It is not that the eight-pagers are novels in miniature or even protonovels of some sort. But like other journalistic phenomena of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, they suggest both what was on the minds of large numbers of people in the culture and how the ground was prepared for print strategies that became characteristic of the novel.

In the increasing variety of events that inspired short journalistic narratives in the final years of the seventeenth century and the early years of the eighteenth, we can readily see audience tastes expanding and growing even more voracious as well as intensifying toward matters of the moment. In sheer quantity the number of “news” accounts increases sharply during the 1680s and then even more dramatically near the turn of the century. Part of the reason may reside in the tendency of journalistic interest to beget journalistic interest: the taste for news clearly had developed during the Civil Wars, when average Englishmen and Englishwomen felt they had much personally at stake in every public event. By the 1690s, with subject matter rapidly expanding, an audience of eavesdroppers was in effect creating itself. When the Licensing Act was finally relaxed for good in 1695, after several temporary lapses earlier, the amount of publication increased generally. But the major reason for expanded journalistic subject matter seems to involve a discernible shift in taste toward a greater interest in private life, the personal, and the subjective. There is increasing emphasis on the personal feelings of those involved in significant occurrences, and quite a number of short narratives (like *A True and Perfective Narrative of the . . . Snovus*) seem almost to be interested in narrative for its own sake. Few of those narratives lack moral or religious application of some kind; in most of them the application seems natural and genuine enough, but an interest in other effects is obvious as well. Many intend primarily to amaze or amuse, and many others blend delight and instruction attractively. Cumulatively these narratives suggest a nearly infinite variety in human events and feelings. In the way they blend contemporaneity, subjectivity, concentration on detail, emphasis on the unusual which happens even to the most ordinary of mortals, and sponsoring interest in the patterns of human events, we can readily see a number of novelistic features that had not been comfortably present in romance or other earlier narratives.

33. On the issue of whether the increased number is related to licensing, see the extended discussion in Downie, *Robert Harley and the Press*. 
Some of the early English novelists, most notably Defoe, cut their teeth in print journalism, learning narrative and expository craft by interpreting what was happening almost at the moment of action. For others, like Richardson, the routines of their daily lives meant that journalistic accounts of the times were more immediate to them than belles lettres, and their notion of the present was firmly shaped by the way their journalistic contemporaries saw and phrased it. Still others, like Fielding and in a sense Sterne, although less personally involved in popular print culture during their formative years, ultimately discovered just how steeped they were in journalistic assumptions and found themselves later in their careers shifting back and forth between fictional narratives of a certain magnitude, scope, and literary pretension and journalistic treatments of the everyday. For Burney, devotion to a personal and private account of everyday events amounts to almost the same thing as journalism, and the sense of immediacy and of minutiae in her fiction depends upon ways of thinking, perceiving, and articulating that she developed for her diaries, a record of daily life that depended on a crucial sense of immediacy and the values of contemporaneity.

For almost all the early novelists, individual segments of what they wrote when they wrote novels might easily be mistaken for the stuff of everyday popular print. Both the matters they wrote about and the way they wrote about them owed much to the journalistic context of the previous half century. Distasteful as it may be to traditional literary history, the relationship between ephemera and serious literature in the mid-eighteenth century was a very close one, not always clear even to the writers who were producing one or the other, and these writers moved back and forth in their commitments and accomplishments in a very confusing way. A literature of the everyday ultimately cannot make very persuasive high-flown claims to be high-born and elitist. Despite Fielding's attempts to establish a literary and classical heritage (as well as many subsequent critical sophistries), the novel has seldom had much luck in dissociating itself from origins in a broad popular consciousness and allegiances that are broad rather than narrow, leveling rather than hierarchical.

More important, however, than any apprenticeship individual writers got or direct influence that they felt was the context of expectation that they inherited, participated in, and ultimately enhanced. A significant aspect of that contextual inheritance involved the belief that contemporary events demanded attention and interpretation, and the cultural consciousness of contemporaneity meant that the narrative intention and definitions that they developed had a fertile ground. Telling the story of what life is like now and helping to explain how it got that way—the literary job that novelists defined for themselves—could hardly have come about without such a friendly everyday context, and an important aspect of what the novel came to do is a palpable result of the journalistic
agenda. Other aspects of popular consciousness also conditioned novelists, the readers of all kinds of print material, and the preoccupations of the culture more generally. Journalism is not the explanation of where the novel comes from or why it developed when it did. But the consciousness that made the present moment the center of human attention and led to the directions of modern journalism helped prepare the cultural context for novelists' preoccupations, too. Crucial dimensions of the modern novel seem unimaginable without the peculiar combination of "News, and new Things" that obsessed English culture at the turn of the eighteenth century, dominated most of the directions of the print culture, and refused, for just one brief moment before the novel took over as the dominant form of modern discourse, the written and oral worlds, the sign of one world dying and another newly born.