

Cauvery College for Women (Autonomous)

Nationally Accredited (III Cycle) with 'A' Grade by NAAC

Annamalai Nagar, Tiruchirappalli-18.



Name of the Faculty : Ms. K. JASIMA NILOFAR M.A., M.Phil., NET

Designation : Asst Professor

Phone Number : 9629708940

Department : ENGLISH

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Topic Covered : PICARESQUE NOVEL



**PICARESQUE
NOVEL**

WHAT IS PICARESQUE?

LETS TALK SOME ETYMOLOGY...



- The word comes from the Spanish “*Picaro*” referring to a rogue or a rascal.
- The expression picaresque novel was coined in 1810

EARLY PICARESQUE NOVELS

FINDING THE ROOTS...

- This style of novel originated in Spain in 1554 and flourished throughout Europe for more than 200 years, though the term "picaresque novel" was only coined in 1810.
- The modern picaresque begins with *Lazarillo de Tormes*, which was published anonymously in 1554
- The next picaresque novel to be published, Mateo Alemán's *Guzmán de Alfarache* (1599), became the true prototype of the genre and helped establish realism as the dominant trend in the Spanish novel.
- The autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini, written in Florence beginning in 1558, also has much in common with the picaresque.
- The classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West* (1590) is considered to have considerable picaresque elements.

WHAT MAKES A PICARESQUE HERO?

A FEW INGREDIENTS..

- The protagonist
 - Is a Sympathetic anti-hero
 - Travels to different locations and carries out adventures
 - Experiences various things at different levels of society
 - Leaves his social commentary and nativity to the reader's inference
 - Is hardly the typical literary hero.
 - Stumbles form episode to episode
 - Generally belongs to a low social class
 - Lives by his wits in a corrupt society
 - Drifts from place to place and from one social milieu to another in his effort to survive.



CHARACTERISTICS OF PICARESQUE NOVEL

- Long, rambling romances of medieval **chivalry**
- Usually **satirical**
- Written in **first person** as an autobiographical account.
- There is little or no plot. The story is told in a series of loosely connected adventures or **episodes**.
- The picaro's story is told with a **plainness of language** or realism.
- Told in flashbacks
- Lacks a sophisticated plot
- Mingling of characters from all walks of life, vivid descriptions of industries and professions, realistic language and detail.



NOTED PICARESQUE NOVELS



- Cervante's *Don Quixote*
- Voltaire's *Candide*
- Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*
- Henry Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*
- *The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling*
- Thackeray's *The Luck of Barry Lyndon*
- Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*
- Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*
- J. D. Salinger's *The Catcher in the Rye*

CONTINUED..



- Thomas Nashe's *The Unfortunate Traveller*
- Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders*
- Tobias Smollet's *The Adventures of Roderick Random*
- Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March*
- Iris Murdoch's *Under the Net*

TOM JONES

AS A PICARESQUE NOVEL



✓ **Rogue**

- Tom's "roguishness" present already at his birth or even before.

✓ **First-person narrator**

- Tom Jones is significant due to its omniscient narrative being interrupted with the author's first-person narrative. This kind of technique is not only used to describe the story and the characters from the narrator's point of view, but it is also important for its considerable influence

"The reader must now allow we were very nearly arrived at this period, since it would be difficult for the devil, or any of his representatives on earth, to have contrived much greater torments for poor Jones than those in which we left him in the last chapter"

(Fielding 319).

"Though I called him poor Partridge in the last paragraph, I would have the reader rather impute that epithet to the compassion in my temper than conceive it to be any declaration of his innocence"

(Fielding 56).

✓ **Flashbacks**

- Throughout the novel, the narrator uses flashbacks and retrospective entries to remind the reader about a preceding situation so that the latter understands well what is happening or about to happen.

- *“It will be believed that Mr.Allworthy... but it is unnecessary to insert it here, as we have faithfully transcribed what he said to Jenny Jones in the first book...”*

(Fielding 131)

- *“My reader may please to remember...”*

(Fielding 41)

- *“It will be believed that Mr.Allworthy... but it is unnecessary to insert it here, as we have faithfully transcribed what he said to Jenny Jones in the first book...”*

(Fielding 131)

✓ Satire

- In this novel, the element of fun is very common.
- Indeed, even situations which are meant to be serious are to a large degree ironized.
- The narrator sometimes even tries to analyze situations or an aspect which are clear enough and we would not even think of dissecting them further
- The narrator carries one and that is where the satire takes its place as he criticizes the manners of some gentlemen:
- *“for in town nothing can be more common than for the finest gentlemen to perform this ceremony [mentioned above] every day to their superiors, without having that favour once requested of them.”*

(Fielding 224)

✓ Tom as a picaro

- Tom started his roguish activities already in his youth as he became friend with the gamekeeper. The author mentions the proverb:

“You may know him by the company he keeps”

(Fielding 71).

- Furthermore, at the beginning of his home studies at Mr. Allworthy’s mansion, Tom was not gentleman-like at all. The reader finds out that good manners do not mean a lot during his early ages:

“He was indeed a thoughtless, giddy youth, with little sobriety in his manners, and less in his countenance”

(Fielding 82-83).

THE END