The Shock of the New:
Restoration and Early Eighteenth-Century Literature

SYLLABUS

September 9 & 11: Introduction: New Forms, Novel Identities:
Dryden, "To My Honoured Friend, Dr. Carleton,"
"Mac Flecknoe" (in DeMaria)
Swift, "A Description of a City Shower" (in DeMaria)

I. Satire and the New Science
September 16: Science and the Style of Politics:
Sprat, The History of the Royal Society (excerpt in DeMaria)
Butler, Hudibras, from Part 1, Canto 1 (handout)

September 18 & 23: Gender and Experimental Authority:
Cavendish, The Blazing World (in Salzman)

September 25 & 30: Against Nature:
Swift, Gulliver's Travels (Part 3)

II. Libertinage
October 2 & 7: The Future of Illusion:
Behn, "The Disappointment," "To the Fair Clarinda," "Ovid to Julia" (in DeMaria); "On Desire," "In Imitation of Horace" (handout)

October 9 & 14: The Constraints of Desire:
Wycherley, The Country Wife (in Salgado)

October 16 & 21: Sexual Modernism:
Etherege, The Man of Mode (in Salgado)

October 23 & 28: Women Who Rove with the Wolves:
Behn, The Rover
III. The New Woman and Her Detractors

October 30: Seventeenth-Century "Material Girls":
Behn, *The Feigned Courtesans*

November 4: Liberating Women:
Behn, "An Epistle to the Reader, Prefixed to The Dutch Lover," "Epilogue to Sir Patient Fancy" (handout); and "The Unfortunate Happy Lady" (in Salzman)
Chudleigh, "To the Ladies" (in DeMaria)
Defoe, "An Academy for Women" (in DeMaria)

November 6: Problems of Publicity:
Finch, "The Introduction," "The Unequal Fetters," "The Answer," "The Spleen" (in DeMaria); "A Nocturnal Reverie," "Ardelia's Answer to Ephelia" (handout)
Haywood, "Fantomina" (in DeMaria)

November 11: Masculine Backlash?:
Swift, "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" (in DeMaria)
Pope, "Of the Characters of Women" (in DeMaria)

IV. Anti-Hero and Anti-Epic:

November 13 & 18: Noble, African, and Anti-Christian:
Behn, *Oronoko* (in DeMaria)

November 20 & 25: Colonial Individuality:
Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

November 27: Satire and Anti-Humanism:
Swift, *Gulliver's Travels* (Part 4)

December 2: Conclusion and Review
Restoration and early eighteenth-century literature has it all: the smutty verse of court wits like Rochester; the pious elegies of Anne Finch; attacks on scientific learning by Jonathan Swift and defences of women scientists by Margaret Cavendish; witty celebrations of female autonomy and cynical exposés of female victimization (in the plays of Aphra Behn); new ideals of individual heroism (Milton’s Adam, Defoe’s Crusoe) and comic satires of these ideals (Swift’s Gulliver); new genres (such as the novel); new kinds of published authors (such as women and the middling ranks); new media (widely disseminated print forms such as the newsbook); the appearance of the working author (Grub Street); and new literary relationships to classical literature and learning, relationships which see “Athenian” writers such as Defoe set against “Augustan” writers such as Swift.

To a large extent the tremendous energy and enthusiasm that animates this literature springs from a series of social and cultural upheavals linked to the English civil wars: continuing tensions between Puritan and aristocratic perspectives after the Restoration of Charles II in 1660; the emergence of women’s public voices in politics and print; the increased importance of commercial life and the decline of aristocratic forms and the military ethos; the new science, officially sponsored by Charles II through the Royal Society; an emerging empire and the colonial experiences of war, conquest, slavery, trade, mobility, and the exotic; the appearance of new sexualities for both men (the gay-straight dichotomy) and women (asexual domesticity); the erasure of forms of customary and common life by market imperatives and capitalist ownership; and finally the gradual emergence—despite continuing deference and subordination between classes—of the “individual” as a human ideal.

These diverse cultural and social trends, set in motion by the upheavals of the mid-seventeenth century, may remind us a bit of the debris flowing down the gutter in Swift’s “A Description of a City Shower”: “Sweepings from Butchers’ Stalls, Dung, Guts, and Blood, / Drowned Puppies, stinking Sprats, all drenched in Mud, / Dead Cats, and Turnip-Tops come tumbling down the Flood.” While we do not want to get swept away ourselves in this torrent, the wild energy of Swift’s city is a fitting metaphor for the social and literary energies of the period 1660-1720.

In this class we will focus on a selection of exciting and significant works of Restoration and early eighteenth-century
literature and explore how they contribute to the creation of new literary forms and to the emergence of modern notions of personal identity. Rather than approach this literature by way of a chronological survey, I have grouped our readings under four headings—satire and the new science; libertinage; the new woman; and anti-heroes and anti-epics. In each case we will sample both venerable classics and upstart contenders to the canon, and we will examine the common questions and devices that structure each textual field. One writer in particular—Aphra Behn—will be singled out for attention across three of our four units.

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Office: Hagey Hall 257, X2416
Office hours: 1:30-2:30 Tuesday and Thursday, or by appointment

Required Texts:
Robert DeMaria, Jr., British Literature, 1640-1789: An Anthology (Blackwell)
Paul Salzman, ed., An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Fiction (Oxford)
Jonathan Swift, Gulliver's Travels (Oxford)
Gamini Salgado, ed., Three Restoration Comedies (Penguin)
Aphra Behn, The Rover and Other Plays (Oxford)
Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe (Oxford)

Recommended Texts:
Donald Greene, The Age of Exuberance: Backgrounds to Eighteenth-Century English Literature (McGraw-Hill)
Roy Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century, revised ed. (Penguin)
Joseph Gibaldi, MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 4th ed. (MLA)

Assignments: Attendance and active participation in class and class exercises (10%); mid-term (20%); group presentation or 7-page paper (your choice = 30%); and a final examination (40%).

The mid-term will be held on October 16. For those that choose to write it, the paper is due in class on November 11. Papers must be typed and double-spaced; if using a word-processor, laser print and do not use right justification. A page is 250 words. Papers must follow the format for citation and quotation laid out in the MLA Handbook. Papers late without prior permission may be penalized 2% per day. Uncompleted assignments will be graded F-.

NOTE: Please keep a photocopy of any paper you submit, and never hand a paper in by sliding it under (or sticking it to) my office door.