Changing the Subject:

The Literature of the Middle and Later Eighteenth Century

In this course we will read a selection of exciting and significant works of eighteenth-century literature and explore how they contribute to the creation of new literary modes and to the formation of modern notions of personal identity.

Some of these developments are common knowledge. This is the period known for the "rise of the novel," in Ian Watt's phrase. It certainly is a period of tremendous experimentation in "formal realism" and narrative technique. Other developments have been rediscovered over the last decade or so. For example, this is the first period in which English women writers produce a "literature of their own," especially in fiction, culminating with the outstanding achievement of Jane Austen. Thus after 1740 we can say that the subject of literature changes in a double sense: on the one hand, new notions of the individual are elaborated (especially in fiction); while on the other, members of subordinate groups start to exercise--and create--new forms of literary expression. These two trends come together in the literary mode of biography and autobiography, a genre that was practised not only by elite male writers such as James Boswell, but by a host of "scribblers" that includes plebian women and former slaves. Historically, all these "techniques of the self," to borrow Michel Foucault's phrase, come to a head with the American Revolution of 1776 and the French Revolution of 1789.

Rather than approach our readings through a chronological survey, I have grouped the material we will be studying under four headings--subaltern subjects; parodies of learning and the form of reason; technologies of the self and "the rise of the novel"; and life writing. In each case we will be sampling both venerable classics and some upstart contenders to the canon, and considering how common questions and devices serve to organize each textual field.
Office: Hagey Hall 257, X2416
Office hours: 1:00-2:00 Tuesday and Thursday, or by appointment

Required Texts:
  Robert DeMaria, Jr., British Literature, 1640-1789: An
  Anthology (Blackwell)
  Christopher Smart, Poems (Penguin)
  Samuel Richardson, Pamela (Penguin)
  Henry Fielding, Joseph Andrews and Shamela (Oxford)
  Frances Burney, Evelina (Penguin)
  Ann Radcliffe, A Sicilian Romance (Oxford)
  Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey (Oxford)
  Olaudah Equiano, Narrative, in Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed.,
  The Classic Slave Narratives (Mentor)

Recommended Texts:
  Donald Greene, The Age of Exuberance: Backgrounds to
  Eighteenth-Century English Literature (McGraw-Hill)
  Douglas Hay and Nicholas Rogers, Eighteenth-Century English
  Society (Oxford)
  Joseph Gibaldi, MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers,
  4th ed. (MLA)

Assignments: attendance and active participation in class (10%);
presentation on a critical work (10%); presentation on a literary
work (20%); 7-page paper (25%); and a final examination (35%).

The paper is due in class on March 31. Papers must be typed and
double-spaced; if using a word-processor, please use a laser
printer if possible, 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. 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.
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SYLLABUS

January 6: Introduction

I. Subaltern Subjects

January 8: Perils of Publicity:
Finch, "The Introduction" (in DeMaria)
Haywood, Fantomina (in DeMaria)

January 13 & 15: Literary Contests:
Swift, "A Beautiful Young Nymph Going to Bed" (in DeMaria); "The Lady's Dressing Room" (handout)
Montagu, "The Reasons that Induced Dr. S[swift] to Write a Poem Called the Lady's Dressing Room" (in DeMaria)
Duck, "The Thresher's Labour" (selections in DeMaria)
Collier, "The Woman's Labour" (in DeMaria)
Goldsmith, "The Deserted Village" (in DeMaria)
Crabbe, "The Village" (selections in DeMaria)

January 20 & 22: Foreign Agents:
Montagu, Letters: April 1 and 18, 1717 (in DeMaria)
Wheatley, Poems (selections on handout)
Blake, "The Little Black Boy" and "The Chimney Sweeper" (both versions) (in DeMaria)
Sancho, excerpt from The Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African (handout)

II. Parodies of Learning and the Form of Reason

January 27 & 29: Printing Madness:
Swift, A Tale of a Tub: prefatory material; sections 3, 5, 7, and 9; and conclusion (in DeMaria)
February 3 & 5: Grub Street's Anti-Epic:
   Pope, *The Dunciad Variorum* (1729) and *The New Dunciad* (selections in DeMaria)

February 10 & 12: Bedlam's Anti-Encyclopaedia:
   Smart, *Jubilate Agno*

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III. Technologies of the Self and "The Rise of the Novel"

February 24: Ideas of the "Novel": "Writing to the Moment":
   Johnson, *Rambler* No. 4 (in Norton Anthology)
   Richardson, *Pamela* (43-148, 221-278)

February 26 and March 3: "A Comic Epic in Prose":
   Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*

March 5 & 10: Epic Grotesques:
   Burney, *Evelina*

March 12 & 17: Romance and the Rights of Woman:
   Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance*

March 19 & 24: Realism and the Wrongs of Woman:
   Austen, *Northanger Abbey*

IV. Life Writing

March 26: Making Up Men and Women:
   Johnson, *Rambler*, No. 60 (in Norton Anthology)
   Boswell, *Life of Johnson* (selections in DeMaria)
   Burney, *Journals* (selections in DeMaria)

March 31 and April 2: The African Subject:
   Equiano, *Narrative* (chapters 1-5, 10-12)

April 7: Conclusion and Review