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Sommario/riassunto	"This book about reading the English novel during the "long eighteenth century," a stretch of time that, in the generally accepted ways of breaking up British literary history into discrete periods for university courses, begins some time after the Restoration of King Charles II in 1660 and ends around 1830, before the reign of Queen Victoria. At the beginning of this period, the novel can hardly be said to exist, and writing prose fiction is a mildly disreputable literary activity. Around 1720, Daniel Defoe's fictional autobiographies spark continuations and imitations, and in the 1740s, with Samuel Richardson and Henry

Fielding's novels begin what is perceived as "a new kind of writing." By the end of the period, with Jane Austen and Walter Scott, the novel has not only come into existence, it has developed into a more-or-less respectable genre, and in fact publishers have begun to issue series of novels (edited by Walter Scott and by Anna Barbauld, among others) that establish for that time, if not necessarily for ours, a canon of the English novel. With the decline of the English drama and the almost complete eclipse of the epic, the novel has become by default the serious literary long form, on its way to becoming by the mid-nineteenth century, with Dickens, Thackeray, and Eliot, the pre-eminent genre of literature. This chapter will consider how and why the novel came to be when it did"-- Provided by publisher.

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