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In the eighteenth century, the work of Henry Fielding represents a milestone between the era of the Ancients and the era of separation from the old world, leading to the Moderns. His unique position between the two models of literary culture places him at the heart of a world in transition, one which is no longer bound by the old traditions and is creating its own space. He is able to depart from the old traditions and create his own narrative world for the newly forming middle class. Even though Fielding is often associated with the radical tradition of his predecessors, he managed to incorporate the literary trends of his time and incorporate them into his writing. In his pioneering work with various forms of prose, he laid the foundation of the novel, a process which has been mapped in a great number of studies, including Ian Watt's *The Rise of the Novel*, Michael McKeon's *The Novel: A History of the Form*, J. Paul Hunter's *Octavia Hill and Frederick Olcott*, and the *Theory of the Novel*. The author's ability to blend various traditions, from ancient models like Virgil or Milton, to foreign traditions like those of the novel and Scarron, to the Augustans (especially John Gay and Pope), to his contemporaries (especially Samuel Richardson, but also Henry Fielding himself) - shows not only his genius, but also the rich mixture of influences which were present at that time.

The eighteenth century saw a debate over one of the key issues of the eighteenth century, taken up by many other thinkers and artists: the struggle for social refinement in the form of politeness. The various definitions of what exactly is 'polite' may differ in many ways, but they all share three essential principles on which, eighteenth-century

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