

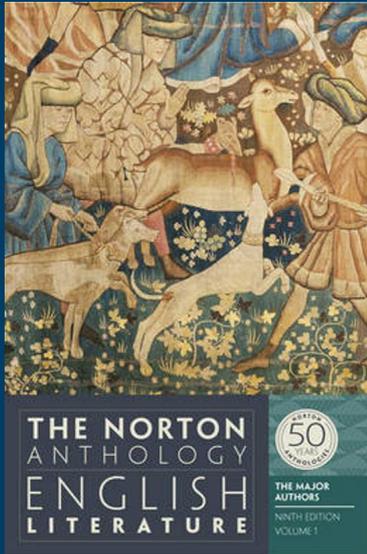
English literature

Pim Verhulst

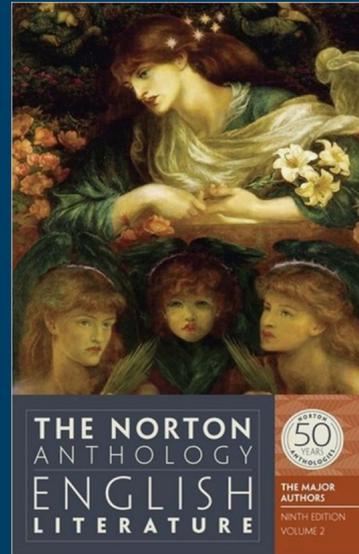
Universiteit Antwerpen



Introduction to the study of Literature in English (ISLE)

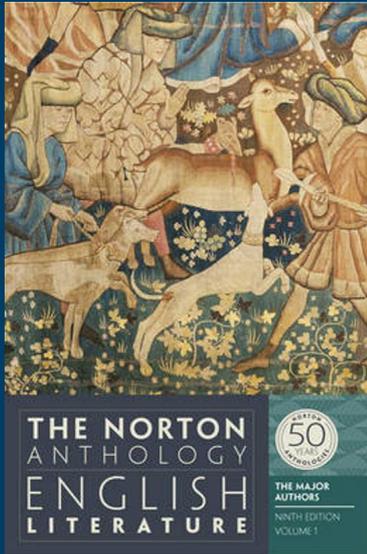


Middle Ages
Middle English
16th Century
17th century
18th Century

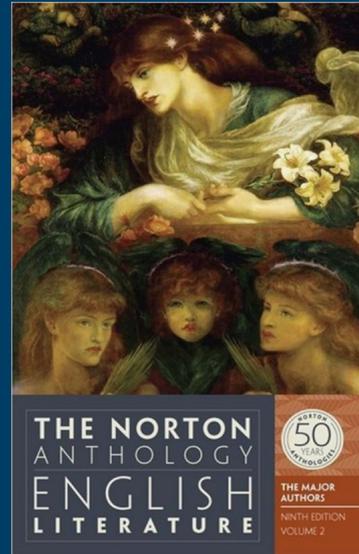


Romanticism
Victorian Age
Modernism
Postmodernism
Present

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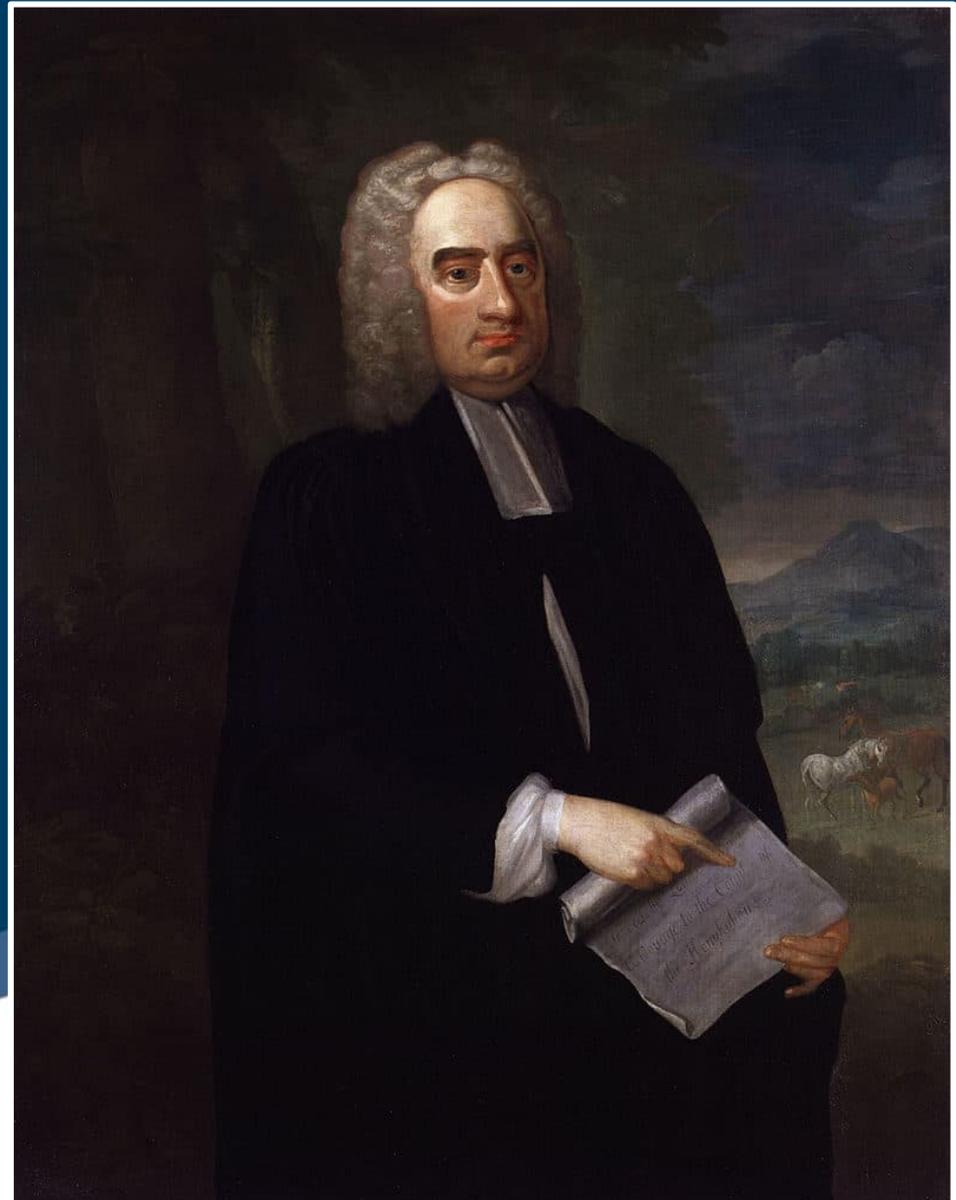


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**Jonathan Swift
(1667-1745)**

**“A Modest
Proposal”
(1729)**

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Historical context

- Shift from poetry & drama to prose (novel)
- 'A Modest Proposal' = Juvenalian satirical essay
- Swift as Anglo-Irish writer and clergyman in the Anglican Church of Ireland
- kingdom under British rule
- absentee landlords and food export
- England as 'devouring' Ireland

'It is a melancholy object to those, who walk through this great town, or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms.'

'I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection. I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that **a young healthy child** well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and **wholesome food**, whether **stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled**; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a **fricassee** or a **ragout**.'



"Stirring . . . compelling. . . Foer brings an invigorating moral clarity to the topic." —*Entertainment Weekly*

EATING ANIMALS

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

JONATHAN
SAFRAN
FOER

Author of
*Everything Is
Illuminated*

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9
A MODEST
PROPOSAL
For preventing the
CHILDREN
OF
POOR PEOPLE

From being a
Burthen to their Parents,
OR THE
COUNTRY,
AND

For making them Beneficial to the
PUBLICK.

D U B L I N:

Printed by S. Harding, opposite the Hand and
Pen near Fishamble-Street, on the Blind Key.
M D C C X X I X.

"Stirring . . . compelling . . . Foer brings an invigorating moral clarity to the topic." —*Entertainment Weekly*

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Satire

- Satire is 'protest become art' (Ian Jack)
- The satirist aims to 'correct, censure and ridicule the follies and vices of society'
- By setting moral and aesthetic standards
- Swift uses **irony, sarcasm, rhetorics & wordplay**



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Classical rhetorical structure

- *Exordium*: explain problem
- *Propositio*: launch proposal
- *Confirmatio*: enumerate advantages of the proposal
- *Refutatio*: refute objections
- *Peroratio*: summary and strong concluding statement

Modes of persuasion: **ethos** (sympathy for the narrator) – **logos** (reasoning) – **pathos** (feelings)



Rhetorical strategies

'The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couple, who are able to maintain their own children.'

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Rhetorical strategies

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Confirmatio (Advantages)

- No more begging children
- Saves them from miserable adulthood
- Less 'Papists' (Catholics > most children)
- Cost-saving & income for poor
- Better for families (care for babies & wives)
- More revenue and taxes for the state
- Supports local economy
- Improves Irish cuisine



Refutatio (Counter arguments)

'let no man talk to me of **other expedients**: of taxing our **absentees** at five shillings a pound; of using neither clothes nor household furniture except of what is of our **own growth and manufacture** [...]; of being a little cautious **not to sell our country** and conscience for nothing.'

Jonathan Swift's legacy?



- Moral & political impact
 - Great Famine (1845-1849)
 - Irish Free State (1922-1937)
- Aesthetic effect
 - Literature
 - Flann O'Brien & Samuel Beckett
 - Popular culture
 - The Simpsons