

The Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great, which explored the physical limits of what could be presented on stage, while the footnotes included in the printed version parodied pedantic scholarly concerns. The Licensing Act of 1737 tried to rein the theatre in, pulling it back to just two London theatres, the Covent Garden and the Drury Lane, and requiring that plays be approved in advance by the Lord Chamberlain. One of the most famous actors of the day, Colley Cibber, published an autobiography, *An Apology for the Life of Colly Cibber* in 1740, providing historians with tremendous insights into the workings of the eighteenth-century stage. The 1770s saw two of the best-loved plays in the English language produced for the first time: Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) and Sheridan's *The Rivals* (1775), the latter of which included a speaker given to awkward turns of phrase, Mrs Malaprop (after whom funny, mangled idioms have come to be known as 'malapropisms').

The novel

Perhaps the most important development in literary genres in English during the Restoration and eighteenth century is the emergence of the novel, which would go on to become the most popular and influential literary genre. When viewed through the familiar lens of the nineteenth-century novels by Anne, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy, the novels of the Restoration and eighteenth century can seem quite odd, almost as if they are not at all novels in the nineteenth-century sense of the term. In the best-known nineteenth-century novels, for example, the focus is on tensions between city and country, or between poor residents of the provinces and wealthier city residents, or on the lonely consequences of living in the landscape (recently animated by the Romantics). Many of the major nineteenth-century novels are domestic in the largest sense, set in the great country house and in a changing English countryside. In these nineteenth-century novels, England's relation to the outside world and to its colonies is consigned to the attic, so to speak. There is often in the nineteenth-century novel a sprawling assortment of native English voices assembled from across the socio-economic spectrum. The major eighteenth-century novels, by contrast, are often engaged globally, rather than domestically; the most famous eighteenth-century novels are populated by world explorers such as Robinson Crusoe and Lemuel Gulliver. Where the nineteenth-century novel is often a lengthy polyglot collection of overlapping narratives (the openness and heteroglossia that Mikhail Bakhtin, the Russian literary theorist, associates with all novels), the Restoration and eighteenth-century novel can often be fairly slim and often does not include the same range of voices. Especially in the novels from the earlier part of the period, the landscape of the Restoration and eighteenth-century novel is the *terra incognita* of colonial locations, the New World that Britain was increasingly engaging.