

Comparisons Between Ancient and Modern Novels [Discussion]

For this discussion, draw upon any novels that you may have read. (One of the aims of this exercise is to bring into discussion as many texts as possible.)

1. In what ways are modern novels similar to ancient novels?
2. Do modern novels tell us more or less about contemporary societies than ancient novels?
3. Are modern novels more or less 'literary' than ancient novels?
4. What, in your view, are the major characteristics of the modern novel?
5. What kind of techniques of characterisation have you encountered when reading a modern novel?
6. Do you agree with Auerbach's suggestion that the major difference between ancient and modern fiction is the level of realism?
7. Think about the major novels of the Romantic period (i.e. the works of Mary Shelley, Walter Scott, Jane Austen, Emily Bronte and Charlotte Bronte): what do they have in common?
8. What constitutes a 'historical fiction'?
9. What are the characteristics of Modernism in literature?
10. What is the future direction of fiction?