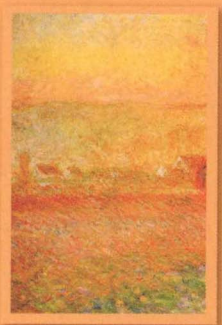


外研社学术文库·英美文学

# The Modern British Novel

*1878–2001*



## 现代英国小说

Malcolm Bradbury

外语教学与研究出版社

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## **图书在版编目(CIP)数据**

现代英国小说/ 布拉德伯里 (Bradbury, M.) 著. — 北京: 外语教学与研究出版社, 2012. 8

(英美文学文库)

ISBN 978-7-5600-8529-6

I. 现… II. 布… III. 小说—文学评介—英国—现代—英文  
IV. I561.074

中国版本图书馆 CIP 数据核字 (2004) 第 131050 号

**出 版 人:** 蔡剑峰

**项目负责:** 姚 虹

**责任编辑:** 徐 宁

**封面设计:** 牛茜茜

**出版发行:** 外语教学与研究出版社

**社 址:** 北京市西三环北路 19 号 (100089)

**网 址:** <http://www.fltrp.com>

**印 刷:** 北京京科印刷有限公司

**开 本:** 650×980 1/16

**印 张:** 40.75

**版 次:** 2012 年 8 月第 1 版 2012 年 8 月第 1 次印刷

**书 号:** ISBN 978-7-5600-8529-6

\* \* \*

**购书咨询:** (010)88819929 **电子邮箱:** [club@fltrp.com](mailto:club@fltrp.com)

如有印刷、装订质量问题, 请与出版社联系

**联系电话:** (010)61207896 **电子邮箱:** [zhijian@fltrp.com](mailto:zhijian@fltrp.com)

**制售盗版必究 举报查实奖励**

**版权保护办公室举报电话:** (010)88817519

**物料号:** 185290001

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# General Preface

Among the most important developments in contemporary global culture is the arrival of Western literary criticism and literary theory in China. FLTRP is to be congratulated for its imagination and foresight in making these crucial texts available to teachers and students of literature throughout China. There is arguably no greater force in producing understanding between peoples than the transmission of literary traditions—the great heritage of narrative, lyric, and prose forms that give cultures their distinctive character. Literary criticism and theory stand at the crossroads of these transmissions. It is the body of writing that reflects on what a literature has meant to a culture. It investigates the moral, political, and experiential dimensions of literary traditions, linking form to content, literature to history, the sensuous love of literature to analytic understanding.

The availability of these important texts will greatly help students and teachers to become acquainted with recent criticism and major critical theories and movements. I am convinced that the series will make an important contribution to the literary education of China, increasing literacy in new fields and international understanding at the same time. It is an extraordinarily timely venture, at a time when comparative literary study in a global context has become increasingly important for professionals, and beyond that, for a general readership that seeks a deeper understanding of literature.

**W. J. T. Mitchell**

Gaylord Donnelley Distinguished Service Professor  
English and Art History  
University of Chicago  
Editor, Critical Inquiry

## 出版说明

近年来,许多大专院校为英语专业的学生开设了英美文学课程,市场上也出现了各种版本的原版英美文学经典著作,它们基本上满足了高校对课堂阅读教材的需要。但是,英美文学教学中仍然严重缺少原版文学史、文学理论、文学评论和文学工具书等重要参考书,以至于许多学生写论文时收集资料成为一大难题,专业教师和研究人员的业务水平的提高因此受到限制,在知识更新及学术研究上也难以与国际接轨,北京、上海等大城市以外的地方尤为如此。

据此,外研社组织了全国17所著名高校或研究院的44名英美文学领域的专家学者,经过仔细斟酌,决定引进一批与教学需要相适应,有学术价值,在国外最常用且被国际公认为优秀的文学评论、文学理论、文学史和文学工具书。这是一套开放型的系列图书,以原版加中文序言的形式分批出版。相信这套书的出版定可缓解国内大专院校中英美文学参考书匮乏的现象;同时,通过这种途径,可以有意识地引进国际知名学者的代表作,这无疑会推动和提高我国在英美文学领域的研究水平。

钱 青

北京外国语学院英语学院

1993年,《现代英国小说》初版。1994年出了一个新版本,但作者马尔科姆·布拉德伯里(1932—2000,英国著名文学史学者、文学评论家、小说家、杂文家)并没有对全书进行实质性修订,仅增加了一个当年所写的针对当年出版的小说的跋。具有实质意义的修订版一直等到2001年才问世,也就是我们读到的这个版本。在这个真正的新版本中,出版商在“现代英国小说”字样后添加了年份“1878—2001”,以示这是一部“跨世纪”之书,已“跨越”到了新世纪、新千年。事实上,此版《现代英国小说》不仅增加了100多页篇幅,而且在时间上也横跨3个世纪和2个千年:从19世纪的最后23年到21世纪的第1年。

当然,世纪、千年只是人为的时间概念,这里更应当注意的,是“现代”一词的内涵。一般认为,“现代”指的是20世纪,一个文化上经历了激烈变革的世纪。但布拉德伯里将所涉及作品的时间上限设在19世纪70年代。于是,乔治·艾略特和托马斯·哈代也成了现代小说家。可是一般研究者都知道,他们的写作手法主要是现实主义的,其故事场景也在并非十分现代的19世纪乡村小镇(尽管已被资本主义生产关系所深深渗入),而狄更斯、萨克雷虽然比艾略特和哈代早几十年,但他们所描写的却是地道的城市生活,那么可否将他们也视为“现代”,甚至不妨问:他们是否比艾略特和哈代更为“现代”?

严格意义上的“现代”,指的是现代主义运动的巅峰期,也就是激进、前卫、疯狂实验的20世纪20年代,乔伊斯、吴尔夫、劳伦斯等人为其领军人物。在这些“正统”现代派眼中,现实主义与物质主义是同义词,阿诺德·贝内特和H. G. 威尔斯一类“爱德华时代”小说家的写作手法不仅已可悲地过时了,甚至还沾染上了物质主义的铜臭。当然,广义一点的“现代”则指的是20世纪前半叶或第二次世界大战前那几十年,涵括了从晚期亨利·詹姆斯、约瑟夫·康拉德到奥尔德斯·赫胥黎、伊夫林·沃和乔治·奥威尔等一大批

斯),是一个非常“国际化”的人物。他对欧洲大陆文化——尤其是德国哲学思潮——的了解、认同之深,对英国社会和英国文化的批评、反叛之烈,是新一代小说家所根本无法比拟的。更何况劳伦斯把后半生差不多全花在周游列国上了。他对欧洲大陆、澳大利亚和美洲一些地区进行了深入考察和体验,其创作不可能不因之受到深刻的影响。假如把《当代英国小说导读》所谓“主要”的现代主义小说家的范围稍加扩大,则显然福斯特和吴尔夫也应当包括在内。二人所具有的国际眼光和艺术趣味,也是绝大多数新一代小说家所不能相提并论的。

为了不至于让人觉得在过分贬低“当代”小说家,本书作者对他们还是使用了“杰出”和“已拥有稳固地位”一类表达法。可“当代”小说家的作品固然“杰出”,他们作为小说家固然“已拥有稳固地位”,近几十年英国文坛上却“并没有产生另一个乔伊斯、劳伦斯或康拉德”。假定任何文明、任何国家、任何民族都不可能马不停蹄地进行辉煌的精神创造(在西方,自一个世纪内连续产生了苏格拉底、柏拉图和亚里士多德以后,要等待两千多年才又出现莱布尼兹、康德、黑格尔;在中国,自孔子、孟子、老子、庄子以降,要等待约一千六百年才又出现二程子、朱熹、陆九渊、王阳明;从中国文学方面看,自唐诗、宋词之高峰以来直至20世纪,也没有出现真正的好诗),哀叹没有出现堪与乔伊斯、劳伦斯和康拉德比肩的巨头——尤其在只有很短的时间间隔的情况下——实在大可不必。虽然如此,本书作者仍点明了一个不争的事实,即与现代主义前辈相比,新一代小说家不在一个数量级上。贝克特更像是一个在《尤利西斯》后遁入“地下”或晦涩中不能自拔的乔伊斯(当然,贝克特能把哲学思考同艺术创作结合起来,这已实属难得);斯诺则只是把一些道德、政治和社会问题直白地呈示出来,全然缺乏康拉德、乔伊斯、吴尔夫、劳伦斯、福斯特的象征主义和印象主义手法所带来的那熠熠灵气。

“当代”小说家固然大大不如“现代”小说家,但这并不等于《当代英国小说导读》一书比许多专门研究现代主义小说的著述逊色。从笔者掌握的有限情况来看,本书立论之精当,对“当代”小说家及其作品的判断之准确,决不亚于大多数现代派小说的评论性文字。本书出版至今已有40来年,这期间英国文坛发生了许多事情。例如及至20世纪60年代,本书作者所痛惜的实验精神不再之状况已有了很大的改观,产生了诸如威廉·戈尔丁、安格斯·威尔逊、艾丽丝·默多克、约翰·福尔斯、多丽丝·莱辛等一大批勇于实验、堪称“现代”小说传人的小说家或富于实验精神的作品;80年代以来又兴起了一波更加令人激动的实验浪潮,出现了诸如马丁·艾米斯、朱利安·巴恩斯、



英语已成为一种全球性语言。这意味着什么？意味着英国小说市场拥有一个全球性市场。以20世纪80年代开始走红的马丁·艾米斯为例，其小说一问世，便不仅在伦敦书市上热销，也会在纽约、多伦多、孟买、悉尼、吉隆坡和香港的书市上走俏，甚至中国内地的出版社也会购买版权，翻译出版其小说。第三，作为老牌发达国家，英国拥有十分成熟的版权、版税制度和十分发达的图书营销手段。也就是说，故事写手的权益享有充分的制度保障，故事产品的销售渠道也十分畅通。这不仅保证了写手收益的最大化，反过来也促进了故事产量的增长。最后，在一个娱乐业高度发达的社会，小说创作向戏剧、电视、电影、广播等其他领域的渗透，已成寻常之事，也就是说，小说写手不仅享有来自传统阅读的资源支持，也享有其他强有力媒介的资源支持。仅就笔者掌握的有限情况而言，二战后有乔治·奥威尔、威廉·戈尔丁、约翰·福尔斯、保罗·斯科特、石黑一雄等人的小说被改编成戏剧、电影或电视剧广泛上演。

以上种种因素的结合，使现代英国小说的巨大产量成为可能；使一个并无文学天分可言的人，也能混迹文字市场；使一个三四流甚或不入流之“材”，也能卖文为生。如此看来，一年8000部小说的产量，并非没有缘由，也并非十分可怕。实际上，在这8000部作品中，很可能大部分是经不起时间的汰选或考验的。甚至不妨说，将几十年的小说产量累计起来，或若干个8000部中有1部能够像曹雪芹的《红楼梦》、托尔斯泰的《复活》、陀思妥耶夫斯基的《卡拉玛佐夫兄弟》、福楼拜的《包法利夫人》那样流芳后世，就得谢天谢地了。如果考虑到在这每年8000部小说中，有很大一个比例为通俗故事，或纯娱乐意义上的言情小说、侦探小说、惊险小说、鬼怪小说、科幻小说、魔幻小说或儿童魔幻小说（如风靡全球的“哈利·波特”系列），8000部这一数字就更不那么令人恐惧了。毕竟，布拉德伯里心目中的小说，不仅应当有娱乐的功能，还应当有价值担当和艺术形式探索这些同样重要、甚至更为重要的功能。如果一部小说未能承载、表达一个民族、一个文明、一个时代的主流价值观，未能表现出应有的社会、道德关怀，便不是严肃的。如果一部小说未能努力开掘小说这一综合性文类所蕴含的种种艺术潜力或可能性，便不是严肃的。考虑到这一层因素，不难想象，《现代英国小说》的关注范围不可能是一年8000部，而只可能是平均每年几十部。即便如此，这也仍然是一个很大的数量。

布拉德伯里是一个对现代英国小说进行综合性评论、研究的学者。在数量

巨大的故事作品面前，他大刀阔斧地使用了排除法，因而最后有幸被《现代英国小说》提及或简单讨论的小说数量，是相对较小的。然而对于一般中国读者，即便经过作者精心拣选后的小说数量相对较小，或已大大缩小了范围，也仍然是一个惊人的数字。在大多数情况下，《现代英国小说》可以被当作工具书使用。该书提供了详细的索引，查阅起来十分方便。如此这般，产量巨大的现代英国小说就一点不可怕了。

阮 炜

深圳大学文学院

## Preface

This new edition of *The Modern British Novel* is about fiction in Britain from the end of the Victorian Age to the dawn of the twenty-first century and the birth of the third millennium: in other words, from one great age of the new to yet another. They called their time the Modern Age; we call ours the Postmodern Age. The two terms indicate there is an intricate connection. The book covers the novel in Britain over a century of radical innovation and novelty, political terror and shameless barbarism, rising human expectations and a serious loss of faith, deeply and rapidly changing images of selfhood, progress, psychology, science, the gene pool, the nature and future of our planet and the cosmos, enormous cultural change and a vast remixing of the national community. A century is a long time in the history of any literary or artistic genre; and this was a century of quite unprecedented change. It saw a sequence of major and deeply disastrous historical crises, when the existence of the planet itself was at risk, when the future could have gone in one of many different ways, toward freedom or servitude. The events and ideas of the century fractured an older sense of real, valuable, human and familiar. It upset the liberal belief in history, the human value of the person. It changed the logical evolution of British society – which as the twentieth century dawned was one of the most powerful societies in the world, empire spread wide, wealth vast, its innovations many, its place on the globe certain, its confidence despite rising tides of new politics of many kinds apparently secure.

Such were the changes that came in the next hundred years that not one of the terms in this book's title (with the possible exception of the definite article) can be considered safe. Today the word 'modern'

has several meanings, both weak and strong. Often used to refer to the twentieth century – widely touted as ‘the modern century’, and its culture of unprecedented innovation – it is also used to refer to part of it, the first half, the age of the ‘Modern movement’, experimental, radical, avant-garde. If that is the Modern era, it follows that what comes next is the ‘Postmodern’ era – a convoluted but now commonplace term used to denote both the more experimental arts of the second half of the century, and the natureless nature of its late capitalist, hi-tech, pluri-cultural culture. If the second half of the century is the Postmodern era, we might ask what comes next – Postpostmodernism? Or does a quite new epochal term for doings of the third millennium come into play? Certainly ‘modern’ has a weak (modern times) and a strong (Modernist avant-garde) meaning. One of the things that will interest us in this book is the complicated interplay that exists between the two.

‘British’ is far less safe a term. Used with splendid confidence as the century dawned and the map glowed pink, the Union Jack waved in many parts of the globe, the Union (mostly) flourished and most of the world’s shipping sailed by need into London docks, it is a term of multiplying ambiguities in an age when the United Kingdom itself devolves and dissolves, the idea of Europe has acquired a quite different meaning and when the classic nineteenth-century nation state yields to new forms of political pluri-culturalism. Writing has always been cosmopolitan, and in literature the term was always open to considerable argument – not least because many of the writers sailing under this flag of convenience (British fiction, English literature) were never British at all. Henry James was American, Conrad was Polish, George Moore, Sheridan Le Fanu, Oscar Wilde, James Joyce and Samuel Beckett were Irish, Robert Louis Stevenson and Arthur Conan Doyle were Scottish, Wyndham Lewis was simply born on a ship at sea. Now many of the writers we claim today under the rubric have names like Rushdie, de Bernières, Mo, Ishiguro, Okri, Kureishi and Zameenzad. Meanwhile many of the writers born in Britain chose – like D. H. Lawrence, Lawrence Durrell, Malcolm Lowry, Graham Greene, Anthony Burgess, Muriel Spark – to live, think and write elsewhere, and have often seen their land of origin

a key public expression of culture. In the age of Balzac, Hugo, Dickens, Thackeray, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Melville, it turned into the great social archive and moral record of the nineteenth century. In the work of the Brontës, Trollope, George Eliot and Mrs Gaskell, British fiction became a rolling opera, a rich source of social knowledge and entertainment, book of etiquette, moral tract, work of political criticism, voice of romantic sentiment, agent of reform. Then came the 'modern novel', which was in many respects an attempt to upturn the Victorian novel, challenging everything from its patriarchal morality, its high-minded principles and its sexual reticence to its representation of human nature and its claim to depict 'the real'. In the twentieth century the novel acquired a new experimentalism, a new psychological complexity and a new raunchiness. Today, as popular commercial product and a form of inquiring art, it is everywhere.

Yet throughout the course of the last century the borders and frontiers of fiction have been endlessly teased over and disputed. One very important part of the argument here is the entire question of what it is the novel is and does, how it survives and continues, and where it stands in times not just of cultural but technological change, when the book itself may be yielding to something else. The novel over the twentieth century served many functions, at many levels; it attracted to itself many great writers, and many kinds of writing. It would keep D. H. Lawrence endlessly poor and Jilly Cooper, Jeffrey Archer and Helen Fielding shamelessly rich. Its greatest books would generally sell in small quantities, or at least until they became classics; its smallest books would have the most massive sales. Novelists have constantly quarrelled over the very idea of the novel, and no form has been more analyzed and questioned. 'I have an idea that I will invent a new name for my books to supplant "novel",' wrote Virginia Woolf in her diary as she struggled with the great question. 'A new – by Virginia Woolf. But what? Elegy?' As usual, the new term is hard to come by; after all, what could be newer than 'novel' itself? Yet the frontier here can open out in so many ways: to lyricism, poetry, fantasy, to reportage, memoir, autobiography, to parody, elegy, dirge or faction. And, as we can challenge the idea of the novel as genre, so we can challenge the idea of the author, the voice of omniscience,

century, the art of the great era of 'Make It New', it became a chief object of critical study. Since the most revolutionary period of experimentalism fell in the first half, or quarter, of the century, on each side of the Great War, that was the period of most critical attention. The Modern masters (James, Conrad, Joyce, Woolf, Lawrence, Forster) were key figures, along with their international contemporaries (Proust, Gide, Mann, Svevo, Hemingway, Faulkner), and became the taste which had to be understood. Far less attention was paid to other strands of fiction, and the 'Modern' dominated the more or less nameless era and cultural developments that have followed since. That division has implied a fundamental distinction over quality: the second generation was not like the first. That seems to me seriously misleading. It is true that many of the great writers of the century wrote in the first half of the century; but a major literature did develop in the second half, from writers who are still our contemporaries. The desire to do justice to that fact, and to give a portrait of the century as a whole, was one of the prime reasons for the writing of this book.

The relative neglect, until recently, of what we used to call the post-war period, and can perhaps now even call the postmodern period, has several sensible reasons. It is notoriously hard to judge our own contemporaries, as anyone who reads reviews can see; not least because they still have the means to judge us. Yet other countries and cultures are more confident about doing so; the contemporary in literature at least has never had that much of a name in Britain. Of course it takes time to see who the important contemporaries are, what are the most important directions. This is particularly true of the period after 1945, when there had been a major collapse of European culture, a slow uneasy process of cultural renewal, the international rise of a new politics of mass culture displacing the now traditional avant-garde. By comparison with the revolution of 1912, with its confident pronouncements of radical modernity, the post-war affair was muted and anxious. There was no aesthetic debate comparable to that of the early part of the century; critics paradoxically wrote of the arts of absurdity, the literature of silence. The roles of writer and critic divided; novelists went off to the marketplace, critics

into the university (although it finally turned out to be in the marketplace too). There were fewer campaigns, debates, clear tendencies or firmly defined milestones. That happened not least because the cultural origins and sources of writing were growing more diverse, harder to connect and trace. If the term 'postmodernism' has value it surely refers to the emergence of interfused styles, mixed cultural levels and layers, oddly intertwined traditions, multi-cultural pluralisms.

And if Modernism had challenged the tradition and attempted (as T. S. Eliot said) to reconstruct it out of the new contributions of the individual talent, the postmodern era, often taking its cue from narcissistic ignorance, seemed more inclined to dispense with traditions, canons and heritages entirely, unless for purposes of advertising or quotation. It wanted the immediate, the happening, the new (which never was); it dispensed – as Modernism never quite did – with judgement and the monumental. In my own view the post-war period in the British fictional line has been a striking, remarkable one; the very fact that we have turned the millennium and modern literature has moved from present to past, contemporary to classic, has made that fact even more visible. In recent years we have lost many of the leading contemporaries (some, being friends, mentioned in this preface). A simple inspection of the writers and titles listed at the end of this book might suggest the variety, the plurality and the overall significance of recent fiction, and also the way it has changed in the fifty post-war years: grown ever less parochial, ever more eclectic in its view of the world, ever more open to social, political, sexual, ethnic and cosmic change.

Perhaps there is another reason for the relative neglect of British fiction since the Fifties; it goes with the whole anxious notion of Britain's declining place in the world. When the era began, American literature was still perceived as a branch of British literature, and not until the post-war period did it come to be seen as equivalent or dominant. The idea that the novel – and above all the English novel – is dead has had a great deal of recent currency. Hence it is just worth remembering that this trope is not new; the novel has in fact been dead for every single decade of the century. The English novel

was dead in the Edwardian 1900s: 'All modern books are bad,' E. M. Forster has his dry Cecil Vyse observe in *A Room With a View* (1907), '... Everyone writes for money these days.' Certainly, with a booming book trade, they could, and some like H. G. Wells, Arthur Conan Doyle and Elinor Glyn did; meanwhile the works of the late Henry James and Conrad, and the early James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence, were appearing. It was dead in the next decade: the banning and burning of Lawrence's *The Rainbow* in 1915 seemed, and not just to Lawrence himself, to mark the end of fictional experiment and the triumph of critical repression, though new works by James Joyce, Wyndham Lewis and Ford Madox Ford were transforming fiction. It was dead again in the Twenties, when T. S. Eliot now explained that Joyce's *Ulysses* had shown that 'the novel ended with Flaubert and with James', leaving the writer traditionless; and when Virginia Woolf, having in 1924 completed *Mrs Dalloway*, so much influenced by Joyce's novel, declared 'I'm glad to be quit this time of writing a "novel"; and hope never to be accused of it again.' We now, of course, acknowledge the Twenties as the major period of Modern fiction, largely on the strength of these novels that were not novels.

The novel was dead again in the Thirties, when the Marxist critics and writers saw the novel as a Victorian bourgeois prison, the burgher epic, to be dismissed on behalf of history and the modern reality; meanwhile they went on writing novels, and a new generation that included Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, Henry Green, George Orwell, Elizabeth Bowen and Rose Macaulay emerged. The novel was definitely dead by the coming of the Second World War, when Virginia Woolf declared its end in an essay called 'The Leaning Tower', and George Orwell announced, in another essay of 1940, 'Inside the Whale', that the writer had been left sitting on top of a melting iceberg: 'he is merely an anachronism, a hangover from the bourgeois age, as surely doomed as the hippopotamus.' As it so happened, the hippopotamus has survived, and so has the writer and the novelist. After 1945, the novel was even deadier. Cyril Connolly, the editor of the magazine *Horizon*, announced 'closing time in the gardens of the West'. 'It is disheartening to think that twenty years ago saw the first novels of Hemingway, Faulkner, Elizabeth Bowen,



Rosamund Lehmann, Evelyn Waugh, Henry Green, Graham Greene,' he commented in his usual twilight mood in a *Horizon* editorial of 1947, '... but no new crop of novelists has risen commensurate with them.' This view persisted throughout the Fifties. In 1954 the *Observer* newspaper ran an influential series, 'Is the Novel Dead?' It generated, from a variety of critics and novelists, the same discouraging pronouncements: 'I do not see, therefore, that the conditions which render fiction a relevant form of expression exist in the current generation,' concluded, decisively, the voice of Bloomsbury, Harold Nicolson. Meanwhile the careers of Angus Wilson, Doris Lessing, Anthony Burgess, Muriel Spark, Iris Murdoch, William Golding, Kingsley Amis, Brian Moore and Paul Scott began. And 1954, the year of these conclusions, is now generally thought of as the key year for the emergence of post-war British fiction, producing three major first novels, one by an author, William Golding, who would win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

What was wrong now? 'If the novel is truly no longer novel, then many of our critical procedures for discussing it will need revision; perhaps, even, we shall do well to think of another name for it,' wrote the critic Bernard Bergonzi in 1970 in a fine though funereal study, *The Situation of the Novel*, expressing a now familiar embarrassment. It so happened as he wrote that another new generation of novelists, including Angela Carter and John Fowles, was becoming established. It was in the Seventies that the excellent lost literary magazine *The New Review* ran a symposium in which it took nearly sixty British novelists to get together and agree there was nothing at all going on in the British novel. At just this time the careers of Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, Peter Ackroyd, Pat Barker, Ian McEwan and many other new writers who would dominate the Eighties started. When that new decade dawned, another new literary magazine, *Granta*, devoted its third issue (1980) to mourning 'The End of the English Novel'. The same magazine went on to publish Amis, McEwan, Barnes, Angela Carter, Bruce Chatwin, Jeannette Winterson, Colin Thubron and John Berger. In 1983 it devoted an entire issue to 'The Best of the Young British Novelists', listing more authors like Rose Tremain and Kazuo Ishiguro. In 1993 it repeated the same exercise