

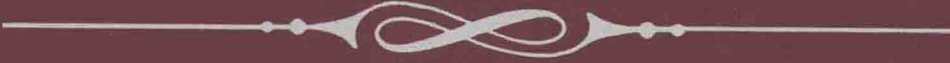
BRITISH WRITERS



RETROSPECTIVE SUPPLEMENT I

AUDEN
BECKETT
BLAKE
BRONTËS
DEFOE
FIELDING
GOLDING
HARDY
HEANEY
S. JOHNSON
JONSON
JOYCE
KEATS
MARLOWE
PINTER
POPE
SHELLEY
STEVENSON
SWIFT
SYNGE
WOOLF
YEATS

CUMULATIVE INDEX FOR VOLUMES I-VII,
SUPPLEMENTS I-VII AND
RETROSPECTIVE SUPPLEMENT I



BRITISH WRITERS

JAY PARINI

Editor

RETROSPECTIVE SUPPLEMENT I



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Charles Scribner's Sons
an imprint of The Gale Group
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

British Writers Retrospective Supplement I / Jay Parini, editor.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-684-31227-1 (alk. paper)

1. English literature—Bio-bibliography. 2. English literature—History and criticism. 3. Authors, English—Biography. I. Parini, Jay.

PR85 .B688 Suppl. 8

820.9—dc21

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001049628

The paper used in this publication meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper).

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Introduction

In *British Writers, Retrospective Supplement I*, we offer substantial reconsiderations of twenty major British and Irish authors, ranging over the centuries from Christopher Marlowe, the great Elizabethan playwright, to well-known contemporary writers, such as Seamus Heaney and Harold Pinter. In each article, the critic looks back at the whole career of an author who has made a significant impact on literary history, offering close readings, supplying biographical data, and sifting the most recent critical responses to these writers. These revaluations are meant to amplify and extend earlier articles on these authors that appeared in this series.

In the original set of *British Writers*, published between 1979 and 1984, seven volumes appeared, treating the lives and works of significant poets, novelists, playwrights, essayists and autobiographers from the Anglo-Saxon era to the present. This set was followed by half a dozen supplemental volumes where authors were discussed who, for various reasons, had been thus far neglected.

The intention throughout the series has been to provide lucid, informative essays aimed at the general reader. Most of the critics writing for this supplement, as in the previous volumes, are college teachers, scholars, and writers. As anyone glancing through this collection will notice, the critics are held to the highest standards of writing and sound scholarship. Their work often rises to a high level of craft and critical vision as they introduce a writer of some importance in the history of British, Irish, or Anglophone literature. A certain amount of biographical context for the work of each author is offered so that readers can appreciate the historical ground that provided the texts under review with air and light, soil and water. The essays each conclude with a select bibliography intended to direct the reading of those should want to pursue the subject further.

Among the poets considered in this volume are Alexander Pope, William Blake, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, W.B. Yeats, W.H. Auden, and Seamus Heaney. Each has been a defining poet of his era, and the articles in this volume explore their work in careful, often inspired, fashion.

Thomas Hardy, Samuel Johnson, and Robert Louis Stevenson each wrote poetry, but their work is largely considered in the context of their work in prose. Hardy, of course, is almost equally valued as both poet and novelist, and the essay on his work here looks carefully at his contribution to each field. Johnson was perhaps the greatest critic of all time in English, and his career is reconsidered in a sweeping essay that examines his editorial and critical as well as his imaginative writing—in poetry, drama, and prose.

Writers of fiction discussed here are Daniel Defoe, Henry Fielding, Robert Louis Stevenson, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf. The task of reconsidering such major careers in relatively brief space was no mean feat, yet our contributors have succeeded admirably, focusing their attention on the major works, offering close readings and critical revaluations of literary careers that continue to have a major impact on the writing of fiction.

The playwrights covered in this volume include Marlowe (also a poet), Ben Jonson (also a poet and critic), J.M. Synge, Samuel Beckett, and Harold Pinter. Each of these writers had a profound impact on the course of English and Irish drama, and their achievements are considered in detailed, comprehensive articles.

This volume of *British Writers* represents an important revaluation of major British and Irish authors. The articles included here will be useful to students and general readers in search of well-informed, clearly written, intelligent essays that reflect on the life and work of significant authors.

JAY PARINI

Chronology

1422–1461	Reign of Henry VI		Bartholomew Diaz rounds the Cape of Good Hope
1431	François Villon born		
	Joan of Arc burned at Rouen	ca. 1490	Giovanni Bellini's <i>Allegory</i>
1434	Jan van Eyck's <i>Giovanni Arnolfini and His Wife</i>	1492	Columbus's first voyage to the New World
1436	Guillaume Dufay's <i>Nuper rosarum flores</i>	1493	Pope Alexander VI divides undiscovered territories between Spain and Portugal
1440–1441	Henry VI founds Eton College and King's College, Cambridge	1497–1498	John Cabot's voyages to Newfoundland and Labrador
1444	Truce of Tours	1497–1499	Vasco da Gama's voyage to India
1450	Jack Cade's rebellion	1498	Leonardo paints <i>The Last Supper</i>
ca. 1451	Death of John Lydgate	1499	Amerigo Vespucci's first voyage to America
1452	Leonardo da Vinci born		Erasmus's first visit to England
1453	End of the Hundred Years' War		Thomas Wyatt born
	The fall of Constantinople	1503	Leonardo begins <i>Mona Lisa</i> (completed 1506)
1455–1485	The Wars of the Roses	1505	John Colet appointed dean of St. Paul's; founds St. Paul's School
1455	Gutenberg uses movable-type printing press to print bible		
ca. 1455	Donatello's <i>Magdalen</i>	1509–1547	Reign of Henry VIII
ca. 1460	John Skelton born	1509	The king marries Catherine of Aragon
1461–1470	Reign of Edward IV		Raphael and assistants begin painting the Stanze (completed 1514)
1463	Villon disappears		John Calvin born
1466	Death of Donatello	1511	Erasmus's <i>Praise of Folly</i> published
1469	Machiavelli born	1512	Michelangelo's Sistine ceiling unveiled.
1470–1471	Reign of Henry VI	1513	Invasion by the Scots defeated at Flodden Field
1471	Death of Sir Thomas Malory	1515	Wolsey appointed lord chancellor
1471–1483	Reign of Edward IV	1516	Sir Thomas More's <i>Utopia</i>
1475	Michelangelo born		Ludovico Ariosto's <i>Orlando furioso</i> (first edition)
1476–1483	Caxton's press set up: <i>The Canterbury Tales</i>, <i>Morte d'Arthur</i>, and <i>The Golden Legend</i> printed	1517	Martin Luther's theses against indulgences published at Wittenberg
1478	Sir Thomas More born		Henry Howard (earl of Surrey) born
1483–1485	Reign of Richard III	1518	Titian's <i>Assumption of the Virgin</i>
1483	François Rabelais and Raphael born		Vives's <i>Fabula de homine</i>
1485	The Battle of Bosworth Field: end of the Wars of the Roses		Erasmus's <i>Colloquia</i>
ca. 1485	Thomas Cromwell born		
	Botticelli's <i>The Birth of Venus</i>		
1485–1509	Reign of Henry VII		
1486	Marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York unites the rival houses of Lancaster and York		

CHRONOLOGY

1519	Charles V of Spain becomes Holy Roman Emperor				erties and assets; increase in royal revenues
	Death of Leonardo				Jane Seymour dies
1519–1521	Spanish conquest of Mexico	1538			First complete English Bible published and placed in all churches
1519–1522	Magellan circumnavigates the globe				
1520	Death of Raphael	1540			The king marries Anne of Cleves
1522	Skelton's <i>Collyn Clout</i>				Marriage dissolved
1523–1524	Holbein the Younger's <i>Dance of Death</i> (1st edition)				The king marries Catherine Howard
1525	Cardinal College, the forerunner of Christ Church, founded at Oxford				Fall and execution of Thomas Cromwell
	Pietro Aretino's <i>La Cortegiana</i>	1542			Catherine Howard executed
1526	Tyndale's English translation of the New Testament imported from Holland				Death of Sir Thomas Wyatt
1527	Death of Machiavelli	1543			The king marries Catherine Parr
1528	Baldassare Castiglione's <i>Il libro del cortegiano</i>				Copernicus's <i>De revolutionibus orbium coelestium</i>
1529	Fall of Cardinal Wolsey				Andreas Vesalius's <i>De humani corporis fabrica</i>
	Death of John Skelton	1546			Trinity College, Cambridge, refounded
1529–1536	The "Reformation" Parliament	1547			The earl of Surrey executed
1531	Henry VIII proclaimed head of Church of England				Benevuto Cellini's <i>Perseus</i> (completed 1554)
	Sir Thomas Elyot's <i>The Governour</i> published				Cervantes born
1532	Thomas Cranmer appointed archbishop of Canterbury	1547–1553			Reign of Edward VI
	Machiavelli's <i>The Prince</i>	1548–1552			Hall's <i>Chronicle</i>
	Rabelais's <i>Pantagruel</i>	1550			Giorgio Vasari's <i>Vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani</i>
1533	The king secretly marries Anne Boleyn				
	Cranmer pronounces the king's marriage with Catherine "against divine law"	1552			The second Book of Common Prayer
1534	The Act of Supremacy constitutes the king as head of the Church of England	ca. 1552			Edmund Spenser born
	Rabelais's <i>Gargantua</i>	1553			Lady Jane Grey proclaimed queen
1535	Sir Thomas More executed				Death of Rabelais
	Thomas Cromwell appointed vicar general of the Church of England	1553–1558			Reign of Mary I (Mary Tudor)
1536	The Pilgrimage of Grace: risings against the king's religious, social, and economic reforms	ca. 1554			Births of Walter Raleigh, Richard Hooker, and John Lyly
	Calvin's <i>Institutio Christiana</i>				
	Anne Boleyn executed	1554			Lady Jane Grey executed
	Michelangelo begins <i>Last Judgement</i> (unveiled 1541)				Mary I marries Philip II of Spain
	The king marries Jane Seymour				Bandello's <i>Novelle</i>
1537	The dissolution of the monasteries: confiscation of ecclesiastical prop-				Philip Sidney born
					Louise Labbé's <i>Sonnets</i>
					ca. 1556 George Peele born
					1557 Tottel's <i>Miscellany</i> , including the poems of Wyatt and Surrey, published
					ca. 1558 Thomas Kyd born
					1558 Calais, the last English possession in France, is lost
					Mary I dies
		1558–1603			Reign of Elizabeth I
		1559			John Knox arrives in Scotland
					Rebellion against the French regent

CHRONOLOGY

ca. 1559	George Chapman born	1577–1580	Sir Francis Drake sails around the world
1561	Mary Queen of Scots (Mary Stuart) arrives in Edinburgh	1577	Holinshed's <i>Chronicles of England, Scotlande, and Irelande</i>
	Thomas Hoby's translation of Castiglione's <i>The Courtier Gorboduc</i> , the first English play in blank verse	1578	Ronsard's <i>Sonnets pour Hélène</i>
	Francis Bacon born	1579	John Lyly's <i>Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit</i>
1562	Civil war in France		Thomas North's translation of <i>Plutarch's Lives</i>
	English expedition sent to support the Huguenots		John Fletcher born
	Benevuto Cellini's <i>Autobiography</i>	1579–1580	Sir Philip Sidney's <i>The Defence of Poetry</i>
1562–1568	Sir John Hawkins's voyages to Africa	1580	Montaigne's <i>Essais</i> , I and II
1563	John Foxe's <i>Book of Martyrs</i>	ca. 1580	Thomas Middleton born
1564	Births of Christopher Marlowe , William Shakespeare, and Galileo Galilei	1581	The Levant Company founded
	Death of Michelangelo and John Calvin	1582	Seneca's <i>Ten Tragedies</i> translated
1565	Mary Queen of Scots marries Lord Darnley		Richard Hakluyt's <i>Divers Voyages Touching the Discoverie of America</i>
	Santa Teresa's <i>Libro de la vida</i>	1583	San Juan de la Cruz's <i>Noche Oscura</i>
1566	William Painter's <i>Palace of Pleasure</i> , a miscellany of prose stories, the source of many dramatists' plots	1584	Sir Walter Raleigh lands on Roanoke Island
1567	Darnley murdered at Kirk o'Field		Giordano Bruno's <i>De la Causa, Principio, et Uno</i>
	Mary Queen of Scots marries the earl of Bothwell	ca. 1584	George Peele's <i>The Arraignement of Paris</i>
1569	Rebellion of the English northern earls suppressed	1584–1585	Francis Beaumont born
	Gerardus Mercator publishes map of the world		Sir John Davis's first voyage to Greenland
1570	Roger Ascham's <i>The Schoolmaster</i>	1585	First English settlement in America, the "Lost Colony" comprising 108 men under Ralph Lane, founded at Roanoke Island, off the coast of North Carolina
1571	Defeat of the Turkish fleet at Lepanto	1586	Kyd's <i>Spanish Tragedy</i>
ca. 1572	Ben Jonson born		John Ford born
1572	St. Bartholomew's Day massacre		Marlowe's <i>Tamburlaine</i>
	John Donne born		William Camden's <i>Britannia</i>
1574	The earl of Leicester's theater company formed		The Babington conspiracy against Queen Elizabeth
1575	Tasso's <i>Gerusalemme liberata</i> written (published 1581)	1587	Death of Sir Philip Sidney
ca. 1575	Cyril Tourneur born		Mary Queen of Scots executed
1576	The Theater, the first permanent theater building in London, opened		Birth of Virginia Dare, first English child born in America, at Roanoke Island
	The first Blackfriars Theater opened with performances by the Children of St. Paul's		Claudio Monteverdi completes first book of madrigals
	John Marston born	1588	Defeat of the Spanish Armada
1576–1578	Martin Frobisher's voyages to Labrador and the northwest		Marlowe's <i>Dr. Faustus</i>
		1589	Montaigne <i>Essais</i> , III
			William Byrd's <i>Cantiones sacrae, Songs of Sundrie Natures</i>

CHRONOLOGY

1590	Spenser's <i>The Faerie Queen</i> , Cantos 1–3		Cervantes's <i>Don Quixote</i> (Part 1)
1591	Robert Herrick born		Shakespeare's <i>Hamlet</i>
1591–1592	Shakespeare's <i>Henry VI</i> (authored)		The Gunpowder Plot
1592	Outbreak of plague in London: theaters closed	1604	Kepler's <i>Astronomia pars Optica</i>
1593	Death of Christopher Marlowe		John Marston's <i>The Malcontent</i>
	George Herbert born	ca. 1604	Tourneur's <i>The Revenger's Tragedy</i>
	Izaak Walton born		Shakespeare's <i>Othello</i> (written)
	Richard Hooker's <i>Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity</i> (first four books)	1605	Thomas Browne born
1594	The Lord Chamberlain's Men, the company to which Shakespeare belonged, founded		Bacon's <i>Advancement of Learning</i>
	The Swan Theater opened	ca. 1605	Shakespeare's <i>Macbeth</i>
	Death of Thomas Kyd	1606	Jonson's <i>Volpone</i>
1595	Raleigh's expedition to Guiana		Death of John Lyly
	Sidney's <i>Apology for Poetry</i>		Edmund Waller born
ca. 1595	Thomas Carew born	1607	The first permanent English colony established at Jamestown, Virginia
1596	The Earl of Essex's expedition captures Cadiz		John Fletcher's and Francis Beaumont's <i>Knight of the Burning Pestle</i>
	René Descartes born		Monteverdi's <i>Orfeo</i>
	The second Blackfriars Theater opened	1608	John Milton born
ca. 1597	Death of George Peele		Shakespeare's <i>King Lear</i>
1597	Bacon's first collection of <i>Essays</i>	1609	Kepler's <i>Astronomia nova</i>
	Shakespeare's <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>		John Suckling born
	Jacopo Peri's <i>Dafne</i> (the first opera)	1610	Galileo's <i>Sidereus nuncius</i>
1598	The Edict of Nantes	1611	The Authorized Version of the Bible
	Jonson's <i>Every Man in His Humor</i>		Shakespeare's <i>The Tempest</i> (authored)
1598–1600	Richard Hakluyt's <i>Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffics, and Discoveries of the English Nation</i>	1612	Death of Prince Henry, King James's eldest son
1599	The Globe Theater opened and <i>Julius Caesar</i> performed for first known time		Webster's <i>The White Devil</i>
	Oliver Cromwell born		Bacon's second collection of <i>Essays</i>
	Death of Edmund Spenser	1613	The Globe Theatre destroyed by fire
1600	Death of Richard Hooker	ca. 1613	Richard Crashaw born
	Shakespeare's <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>		Webster's <i>The Duchess of Malfi</i>
1601	Rebellion and execution of the Earl of Essex	1614	Raleigh's <i>History of the World</i>
	Donne's <i>The Progresse of the Soule</i>	1616	George Chapman's translation of Homer's <i>Odyssey</i>
1602	The East India Company founded		Deaths of William Shakespeare, Francis Beaumont, and Miguel Cervantes
	The Bodleian Library reopened at Oxford	ca. 1618	Richard Lovelace born
1603–1625	Reign of James I	1618	The Thirty Years' War begins
1603	John Florio's translation of Montaigne's <i>Essays</i>		Sir Walter Raleigh executed
			Abraham Cowley born
		1619	The General Assembly, the first legislative assembly on American soil, meets in Virginia
			Slavery introduced at Jamestown
		1620	The Pilgrims land in Massachusetts
			John Evelyn born
		1621	Francis Bacon impeached and fined

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	Robert Burton's <i>Anatomy of Melancholy</i>	1632	Rembrandt's <i>Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Tulp</i>
	Andrew Marvell born	1633	William Laud appointed archbishop of Canterbury
ca. 1621	Henry Vaughan born		Death of George Herbert; <i>The Temple</i> published posthumously
1622	Middleton's <i>The Changeling</i>		Samuel Pepys born
1623	The First Folio of Shakespeare's plays	1634	Death of George Chapman
	Visit of Prince Charles and the duke of Buckingham to Spain; failure of attempts to negotiate a Spanish marriage		Death of John Marston
1624	War against Spain	1635	The Académie Française founded
1625–1649	Reign of Charles I	ca. 1635	George Etherege born
1625	Death of John Fletcher		Sir Thomas Browne's <i>Religio Medici</i> (authored)
	Bacon's last collection of <i>Essays</i>	1636	Pierre Corneille's <i>Le Cid</i>
	Heinrich Schütz's <i>Cantiones Sacrae</i>		Harvard College founded
1626	Bacon's <i>New Atlantis</i> , appended to <i>Sylva sylvarum</i>	1637	Milton's "Lycidas"
	Dutch found New Amsterdam		Descartes's <i>Discours de la méthode</i>
	Death of Cyril Tourneur		King Charles's levy of ship money challenged in the courts by John Hampden
	Death of Francis Bacon		The introduction of the new English Book of Common Prayer strongly opposed in Scotland
1627	Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore		Death of Ben Jonson
	Cardinal Richelieu establishes the Company of New France with monopoly over trade and land in Canada	ca. 1637	Thomas Traherne born
	Buckingham's expedition to the Isle of Ré to relieve La Rochelle	1638	The Scots draw up a National Covenant to defend their religion
	Death of Thomas Middleton		Galileo's <i>Discorsi e dimostrazioni matematiche intorno a due nove scienze</i>
1627–1628	Revolt and siege of La Rochelle, the principal Huguenot city of France		Sir John Suckling's <i>The Goblins</i>
1628	Buckingham assassinated	ca. 1638	Death of John Webster
	Surrender of La Rochelle	1639	Parliament reassembled to raise taxes
	William Harvey's treatise on the circulation of the blood (<i>De motu cordis et sanguinis</i>)	ca. 1639	Death of John Ford
	John Bunyan born		Charles Sedley born
1629	Ford's <i>The Broken Heart</i>	1639–1640	The two Bishops' Wars with Scotland
	King Charles dismisses his third Parliament, imprisons nine members, and proceeds to rule for eleven years without Parliament	1640	The Long Parliament assembled
	The Massachusetts Bay Company formed		The king's advisers, Archbishop Laud and the earl of Strafford, impeached
1629–1630	Peace treaties with France and Spain		Aphra Behn born
1630	Thomas Slater publishes <i>The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations of Captain John Smith</i>		Death of Thomas Carew
1631	John Dryden born	1641	Strafford executed
	Death of John Donne		Acts passed abolishing extraparliamentary taxation, the king's extraordinary courts, and his power to order a dissolution without parliamentary consent

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| | The Grand Remonstrance censuring royal policy passed by eleven votes | | Fairfax defeats the Kentish royalists at Maidstone |
| | William Wycherley born | | Cromwell defeats the Scots at Preston |
| 1642 | Parliament submits the nineteen Propositions, which King Charles rejects as annihilating the royal power | | The Thirty Years' War ended by the treaty of Westphalia |
| | The Civil War begins | | Parliament purged by the army |
| | The theaters close | 1649–1660 | Thomas Herrick's <i>Hesperides</i> |
| | Royalist victory at Edgehill; King Charles established at Oxford | 1649 | Commonwealth |
| | Deaths of Sir John Suckling and Galileo | | King Charles I tried and executed |
| 1643 | Parliament concludes the Solemn League and Covenant with the Scots | | The monarchy and the House of Lords abolished |
| | Louis XIV crowned king of France | | The Commonwealth proclaimed |
| | Charles Sackville, earl of Dorset, born | | Cromwell invades Ireland and defeats the royalist Catholic forces |
| 1644 | Parliamentary victory at Marston Moor | 1650 | Death of Richard Crashaw |
| | The New Model army raised | | Richard Lovelace's <i>Lucasta</i> |
| | Milton's <i>Areopagitica</i> | | Cromwell defeats the Scots at Dunbar |
| 1645 | Parliamentary victory under Fairfax and Cromwell at Naseby | | Henry Vaughan's <i>Silex Scintillans</i> (first part) |
| | Fairfax captures Bristol | 1651 | Death of Descartes |
| | Archbishop Laud executed | | Charles II crowned king of the Scots, at Scone |
| | Edmund Waller's <i>Poems</i> | | Charles II invades England, is defeated at Worcester, escapes to France |
| 1646 | Fairfax besieges King Charles at Oxford | | Thomas Hobbes's <i>Leviathan</i> |
| | King Charles takes refuge in Scotland; end of the First Civil War | | William Harvey's <i>Essays on the Generation of Animals</i> |
| | King Charles attempts negotiations with the Scots | 1652 | War with Holland |
| | Parliament's proposals sent to the king and rejected | 1653 | The Rump Parliament dissolved by the army |
| | Richard Crashaw's <i>Steps to the Temple</i> | | A new Parliament and council of state nominated; Cromwell becomes Lord Protector |
| 1647 | Conflict between Parliament and the army | | Walton's <i>The Compleat Angler</i> |
| | A general council of the army established that discusses representational government within the army | 1654 | Peace concluded with Holland |
| | The Agreement of the People drawn up by the Levelers; its proposals include manhood suffrage | | War against Spain |
| | King Charles concludes an agreement with the Scots | 1655 | Parliament attempts to reduce the army and is dissolved |
| | George Fox begins to preach | | Rule of the major-generals |
| | John Wilmot, earl of Rochester, born | 1656 | Sir William Davenant produces <i>The Siege of Rhodes</i> , one of the first English operas |
| 1648 | Cromwell dismisses the general council of the army | | Abraham Cowley's <i>Davideis</i> |
| | The Second Civil War begins | 1657 | Second Parliament of the Protectorate |
| | | | Cromwell is offered and declines the throne |
| | | | Death of Richard Lovelace |

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| 1658 | Death of Oliver Cromwell
Richard Cromwell succeeds as Protector | 1668 | Death of Abraham Cowley
Sir Christopher Wren begins St. Paul's Cathedral (completed 1710) |
| 1659 | Conflict between Parliament and the army | | Triple Alliance formed with Holland and Sweden against France |
| 1660 | General Monck negotiates with Charles II
Charles II offers the conciliatory Declaration of Breda and accepts Parliament's invitation to return
Will's Coffee House established
Sir William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew licensed to set up two companies of players, the Duke of York's and the King's Servants, including actors and actresses | 1670 | Dryden's <i>Essay of Dramatick Poesy</i>
Alliance formed with France through the secret Treaty of Dover
Pascal's <i>Pensées</i>
The Hudson's Bay Company founded |
| | Daniel Defoe born
Pepys's <i>Diary</i> begun | | William Congreve born |
| 1660–1685 | Reign of Charles II | 1671 | Milton's <i>Samson Agonistes</i> and <i>Paradise Regained</i> |
| 1661 | Parliament passes the Act of Uniformity, enjoining the use of the Book of Common Prayer; many Puritan and dissenting clergy leave their livings | 1672 | War against Holland
Wycherley's <i>The Country Wife</i>
Joseph Addison born
Richard Steele born
King Charles issues the Declaration of Indulgence, suspending penal laws against Nonconformists and Catholics |
| 1662 | Peace Treaty with Spain
King Charles II marries Catherine of Braganza
The Royal Society incorporated (founded in 1660) | 1673 | Parliament passes the Test Act, making acceptance of the doctrines of the Church of England a condition for holding public office |
| 1664 | War against Holland
New Amsterdam captured and becomes New York
Molière's <i>Tartuffe</i>
Heinrich Schütz's <i>Christmas Oratorio</i>
John Vanbrugh born | 1674 | War with Holland ended by the Treaty of Westminster
Death of John Milton
Death of Robert Herrick
Death of Thomas Traherne |
| 1665 | The Great Plague
Newton discovers the binomial theorem and invents the integral and differential calculus, at Cambridge | 1676 | George Etherege's <i>The Man of Mode</i> |
| 1666 | The Great Fire of London
Bunyan's <i>Grace Abounding</i>
Molière's <i>Le Misanthrope</i>
<i>London Gazette</i> founded | 1677 | Aphra Behn's <i>The Rover</i> (1st part)
Baruch Spinoza's <i>Ethics</i>
Jean Racine's <i>Phèdre</i>
King Charles's niece, Mary, marries her cousin William of Orange |
| 1667 | The Dutch fleet sails up the Medway and burns English ships
The war with Holland ended by the Treaty of Breda
Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i>
Thomas Sprat's <i>History of the Royal Society</i>
Jonathan Swift born | 1678 | Fabrication of the so-called popish plot by Titus Oates
Bunyan's <i>Pilgrim's Progress</i>
Dryden's <i>All for Love</i>
Marie de La Vergne de La Fayette's <i>La Princesse de Clèves</i>
Death of Andrew Marvell
George Farquhar born |
| | | 1679 | Parliament passes the Habeas Corpus Act
Rochester's <i>A Satire Against Mankind</i> |
| | | 1680 | Death of John Wilmot, earl of Rochester |

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| 1681 | Dryden's <i>Absalom and Achitophel</i> (Part 1)
Andrew Marvell's <i>Miscellaneous Poems</i> | | Peter the Great begins reform of Russia
Death of Aphra Behn
Samuel Richardson born |
| 1682 | Dryden's <i>Absalom and Achitophel</i> (Part 2)
Thomas Otway's <i>Venice Preserv'd</i>
Philadelphia founded
Death of Sir Thomas Browne | 1690 | James II lands in Ireland with French support, but is defeated at the battle of the Boyne
John Locke's <i>An Essay Concerning Human Understanding</i> |
| 1683 | The Ashmolean Museum, the world's first public museum, opens at Oxford
Death of Izaak Walton | 1692 | Salem witchcraft trials
Death of Sir George Etherege |
| 1685–1688 | Reign of James II | 1694 | George Fox's <i>Journal</i>
Voltaire (François Marie Arouet) born
Death of Mary II |
| 1685 | Rebellion and execution of James Scott, duke of Monmouth
John Gay born | 1695 | Congreve's <i>Love for Love</i>
Death of Henry Vaughan |
| 1686 | The first book of Newton's <i>Principia—De motu corporum</i> , containing his theory of gravitation—presented to the Royal Society
Aphra Behn's <i>The Lover's Watch</i> | 1697 | War with France ended by the Treaty of Ryswick
Vanbrugh's <i>The Relapse</i> |
| 1687 | James II issues the Declaration of Indulgence
Dryden's <i>The Hind and the Panther</i>
Death of Edmund Waller | 1698 | Jeremy Collier's <i>A Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage</i> |
| 1688 | James II reissues the Declaration of Indulgence, renewing freedom of worship and suspending the provisions of the Test Act
Acquittal of the seven bishops imprisoned for protesting against the Declaration
William of Orange lands at Torbay, Devon
James II takes refuge in France
Death of John Bunyan
Alexander Pope born | 1699 | Fénelon's <i>Les Aventures de Télémaque</i> |
| 1689–1702 | Reign of William III | 1700 | Congreve's <i>The Way of the World</i>
Defoe's <i>The True-Born Englishman</i>
Death of John Dryden
James Thomson born |
| 1689 | Parliament formulates the Declaration of Rights
William and Mary accept the Declaration and the crown
The Grand Alliance concluded between the Holy Roman Empire, England, Holland, and Spain
War declared against France
King William's War, 1689–1697 (the first of the French and Indian wars) | 1701 | War of the Spanish Succession, 1701–1714 (Queen Anne's War in America, 1702–1713)
Death of Sir Charles Sedley |
| | | 1702–1714 | Reign of Queen Anne |
| | | 1702 | Clarendon's <i>History of the Rebellion</i> (1702–1704)
Defoe's <i>The Shortest Way with the Dissenters</i> |
| | | 1703 | Defoe is arrested, fined, and pilloried for writing <i>The Shortest Way</i>
Death of Samuel Pepys |
| | | 1704 | John Churchill, duke of Marlborough, and Prince Eugene of Savoy defeat the French at Blenheim
Capture of Gibraltar
Swift's <i>A Tale of a Tub</i> and <i>The Battle of the Books</i>
<i>The Review</i> founded (1704–1713) |
| | | 1706 | Farquhar's <i>The Recruiting Officer</i>
Benjamin Franklin born
Deaths of John Evelyn |

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| | Death of Charles Sackville, earl of Dorset | 1718 | Quadruple Alliance (Britain, France, the Netherlands, the German Empire) in war against Spain |
| 1707 | Farquhar's <i>The Beaux' Stratagem</i>
Act of Union joining England and Scotland | 1719 | Defoe's <i>Robinson Crusoe</i>
Death of Joseph Addison |
| | Death of George Farquhar
Henry Fielding born | 1720 | Inoculation against smallpox introduced in Boston
War against Spain
The South Sea Bubble
Defoe's <i>Captain Singleton and Memoirs of a Cavalier</i> |
| 1709 | The <i>Tatler</i> founded (1709–1711)
Nicholas Rowe's edition of Shakespeare
Samuel Johnson born
Marlborough defeats the French at Malplaquet
Charles XII of Sweden defeated at Poltava | 1721 | Tobias Smollett born
William Collins born |
| 1710 | South Sea Company founded
First copyright act
George Berkeley's <i>Treatise Concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge</i> | 1722 | Defoe's <i>Moll Flanders, Journal of the Plague Year, and Colonel Jack</i>
Sir Richard Steele's <i>The Conscious Lovers</i> |
| 1711 | Swift's <i>The Conduct of the Allies</i>
The <i>Spectator</i> founded (1711–1712; 1714)
Marlborough dismissed
David Hume born | 1724 | Defoe's <i>Roxana</i>
Swift's <i>The Drapier's Letters</i> |
| 1712 | Pope's <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> (Cantos 1–2)
Antonio Vivaldi's Concertos, Op. 3
Jean-Jacques Rousseau born | 1725 | Pope's translation of Homer's <i>Odyssey</i> (1725–1726) |
| 1713 | War with France ended by the Treaty of Utrecht
The <i>Guardian</i> founded
Swift becomes dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin
Addison's <i>Cato</i>
Ann Finch's <i>Miscellany Poems, on Several Occasions</i>
Laurence Sterne born | 1726 | Swift's <i>Gulliver's Travels</i>
Voltaire in England (1726–1729)
Death of Sir John Vanbrugh |
| 1714–1727 | Reign of George I | 1727–1760 | Reign of George II
Handel's <i>Coronation Anthem</i> |
| 1714 | Pope's expended version of <i>The Rape of the Lock</i> (Cantos 1–5) | 1728 | Gay's <i>The Beggar's Opera</i>
Pope's <i>The Dunciad</i> (Books 1–2)
Oliver Goldsmith born |
| 1715 | The Jacobite rebellion in Scotland
Pope's translation of Homer's <i>Iliad</i> (1715–1720)
Death of Louis XIV
Louis XV crowned King of France | 1729 | Bach's <i>St. Matthew Passion</i>
Swift's <i>A Modest Proposal</i>
Edmund Burke born
Deaths of William Congreve
Death Sir Richard Steele |
| 1716 | Death of William Wycherley
Thomas Gray born | 1731 | Navigation improved by introduction of the quadrant
Pope's <i>Moral Essays</i> (1731–1735)
Franklin begins publishing <i>Poor Richard's Almanac</i>
Death of Daniel Defoe
William Cowper born |
| 1717 | Pope's <i>Eloisa to Abelard</i>
David Garrick born
Horace Walpole born | 1732 | Death of John Gay
William Hogarth's <i>A Harlot's Progress</i> |
| | | 1733 | Pope's <i>Essay on Man</i> (1733–1734)
Lewis Theobald's edition of Shakespeare |
| | | 1734 | Voltaire's <i>Lettres philosophiques</i> |
| | | 1737 | Edward Gibbon born |
| | | 1738 | Johnson's <i>London</i> |
| | | 1739 | Hume's <i>Treatise on Human Nature</i> |