

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO THE



TWENTIETH-CENTURY  
ENGLISH NOVEL

---

*Edited by Robert L. Caserio*

# THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO THE TWENTIETH-CENTURY ENGLISH NOVEL

EDITED BY  
ROBERT L. CASERIO

*The Pennsylvania State University, University Park*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press  
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org  
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521711159

© Cambridge University Press 2009

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception  
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,  
no reproduction of any part may take place without  
the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2009

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*  
The Cambridge companion to the twentieth-century English  
novel / edited by Robert L. Caserio.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-88416-7

I. English fiction—20th century—History and criticism.

I. Caserio, Robert L., 1944— II. Title.

PR883.C36 2009

823'.9109—dc22

2008053635

ISBN 978-0-521-88416-7 hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-71115-9 paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or  
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to  
in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such  
websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO THE  
TWENTIETH-CENTURY ENGLISH NOVEL

The twentieth-century English novel encompasses a vast body of work, and one of the most important and most widely read genres of literature. Balancing close readings of particular novels with a comprehensive survey of the last century of published fiction, this Companion introduces readers to more than a hundred major and minor novelists. It demonstrates continuities in novel-writing that bridge the century's pre- and postwar halves and presents leading critical ideas about English fiction's themes and forms. The essays examine the endurance of modernist style throughout the century, the role of nationality and the contested role of the English language in all its forms, and the relationships between realism and other fictional modes: fantasy, romance, science fiction. Students, scholars and readers will find this Companion an indispensable guide to the history of the English novel.

## CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES ACHESON is former Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand. He is the author of *Samuel Beckett's Artistic Theory and Practice* (1997) and *John Fowles* (1998), and has edited volumes on Beckett, and on British and Irish fiction, poetry, and drama. He is working on a book on contemporary British historical fiction.

KRISTIN BLUEMEL is Professor of English at Monmouth University, New Jersey. She is the author of *George Orwell and the Radical Eccentrics: Intermodernism in Literary London* (2004), and *Experimenting on the Borders of Modernism: Dorothy Richardson's Pilgrimage* (1997), and is editing a collection of critical essays, "Intermodernism: Literary Culture in Interwar and Wartime Britain" (forthcoming).

M. KEITH BOOKER is the James E. and Ellen Wadley Roper Professor of English at the University of Arkansas. He has written or edited more than thirty books on literature, literary theory, and popular culture.

ROBERT L. CASERIO, Professor of English at the Pennsylvania State University, University Park, is the author of *Plot, Story, and the Novel* (1979) and *The Novel in England 1900-1950: History and Theory* (1999). He is co-editing, with Clement C. Hawes, *The Cambridge History of the English Novel* (forthcoming).

REED WAY DASENBROCK is the Secretary of Higher Education for the State of New Mexico. He has taught at New Mexico State University, and has been a Dean of Arts and Sciences and a Provost at the University of New Mexico. He is the author or editor of eight books, and of numerous articles on twentieth-century English literature, literary theory, and postcolonial literature.

MARIA DI BATTISTA, Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Princeton University, has published widely on modern narrative and film. Her works include *First Love: The Affections of Modern Fiction* (1991) and

*Fast-Talking Dames* (2001). Her latest book is *Virginia Woolf: An Experiment in Critical Biography* (forthcoming).

PAUL EDWARDS is Professor of English and History of Art at Bath Spa University. He is the author of *Wyndham Lewis: Painter and Writer* (2000), and has edited several of Lewis's books. He has also published essays on Tom Stoppard and science, Ian McEwan's fictions, and literary memoirs of the First World War.

JED ESTY is Associate Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *A Shrinking Island: Modernism and National Culture in England* (2004), and co-editor, with Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Antoinette Burton, and Matti Bunzl, of *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (2005). He is completing a book in progress, *Unseasonable Youth: The Bildungsroman and Colonial Modernity*.

ANNE FOGARTY is Professor of James Joyce Studies at University College Dublin and President of the International James Joyce Foundation. She directs the UCD James Joyce Research Center, edits *Irish University Review*, and co-edits, with Luca Crispi, the newly founded *Dublin James Joyce Journal*. She is co-editor with Timothy Martin of *Joyce on the Threshold* (2005). She has published widely on aspects of contemporary Irish fiction.

JOHN FORDHAM is the author of *James Hanley: Modernism and the Working Class* (2002).

ANDRZEJ GASIOREK is Reader in Twentieth-Century Literature at the University of Birmingham. He is the author of *Post-War British Fiction: Realism and After* (1995), *Wyndham Lewis and Modernism* (2004), and *J.G. Ballard* (2005). He has co-edited *T.E. Hulme and the Question of Modernism* (2006), and is a co-editor of the electronic journal *Modernist Cultures*.

DOROTHY J. HALE is Professor of English at the University of California, Berkeley. Her books include *Social Formalism: The Novel in Theory from Henry James to the Present* (1998) and *The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory, 1900–2000* (2006).

MATTHEW HART, Assistant Professor of English at the University of Illinois-Urbana, is writing a book-in-progress, *Nations of Nothing but Poetry: Modernism, Vernacular Discourse and the State*. He has co-edited, with Jim Hansen, a special issue (2008) of *Contemporary Literature* on the state and contemporary literature.

ALLAN HEPBURN is an Associate Professor of English Literature at McGill University. In addition to many articles on twentieth-century literature, he has

## CONTRIBUTORS

published *Intrigue: Espionage and Culture* (2005) and edited *Troubled Legacies: Narrative and Inheritance* (2007). His critical editions of Elizabeth Bowen's uncollected stories and essays will appear under the titles *The Bazaar and Other Stories* and *People, Places, Things: Essays by Elizabeth Bowen* (2008).

MARINA MACKAY is Associate Professor of English at Washington University in St. Louis. She is the author of *Modernism and World War II* (2007), co-editor with Lyndsey Stonebridge of *British Fiction After Modernism* (2007), and editor of *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of World War II* (2008).

ROD MENGHAM is Reader in Modern English Literature at the University of Cambridge, where he is also Curator of Works of Art at Jesus College. His books include studies of Charles Dickens, Emily Brontë, and Henry Green, and *The Descent of Language* (1993). His most recent book, co-authored with Sophie Gilmartin, is *Thomas Hardy's Shorter Fiction* (2007). He has edited collections of essays on contemporary fiction; violence and avant-garde art; and the fiction of the 1940s. His poems are collected in *Unsung: New and Selected Poems* (2001).

REBECCA L. WALKOWITZ is Associate Professor of English at Rutgers University. She is the author of *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* (2006) and editor or co-editor of seven books, including *Immigrant Fictions: Contemporary Literature in an Age of Globalization* (2007) and *Bad Modernisms* (with Douglas Mao, 2006). Her essays have appeared in several anthologies and in *PMLA*, *Modern Language Quarterly*, *ELH*, and *Modern Drama*. She is co-editor of *Contemporary Literature*.

TIMOTHY WEISS is Professor of English at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, where he teaches postcolonial, Caribbean, and African literature. He is the author of *Translating Orients: Between Ideology and Utopia* (2004) and *On the Margins: The Art and Exile of V.S. Naipaul* (1992).

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1900 Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*
- 1901 Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*  
Death of Queen Victoria  
Edward VII becomes King
- 1902 Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*  
J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism*  
Boer War ends
- 1903 Emmeline Pankhurst founds Women's Social and Political Union
- 1905 H. G. Wells, *A Modern Utopia*  
Henry James begins Prefaces to New York Edition of his works
- 1906 John Galsworthy, *The Man of Property* (first volume of *The Forsyte Chronicles*)
- 1907 Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*  
Rudyard Kipling wins Nobel Prize for Literature  
New Zealand becomes a Dominion of the British Empire
- 1908 Arnold Bennett, *The Old Wives' Tale*  
G. K. Chesterton, *The Man Who Was Thursday*
- 1909 H. G. Wells, *Tono-Bungay*  
William Beveridge, *Unemployment: A Problem for Industry*
- 1910 E. M. Forster, *Howards End*  
Post-Impressionist Exhibition in London  
Death of King Edward VII  
George V becomes King
- 1911 H. G. Wells, *The New Machiavelli*  
National Insurance Act
- 1912 Conrad, *Chance*  
London dock strike
- 1913 D. H. Lawrence, *Sons and Lovers*  
Rabindranath Tagore wins Nobel Prize for Literature  
Trade Union Act



# CHRONOLOGY

- 1914 Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*  
Curragh garrison mutiny in Ireland  
Britain declares war on Germany
- 1915 Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*  
Dorothy Richardson, *Pointed Roofs* (first volume of *Pilgrimage*)
- 1916 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- 1917 Leonard and Virginia Woolf found the Hogarth Press  
Bolshevik Revolution in Russia
- 1918 Wyndham Lewis, *Tarr*  
Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*  
Armistice signed, November 11  
Representation of the People Act gives universal male suffrage and suffrage to women over thirty
- 1919 James Tait Black Memorial Prize initiated  
Treaty of Versailles  
Nancy Astor, first female MP, takes seat in Parliament  
Massacre of Indians at Amritsar by British troops
- 1920 D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*  
British mandate over Palestine  
Government of Ireland Act and the creation of Northern Ireland
- 1921 Irish Free State created by Parliament
- 1922 James Joyce, *Ulysses*
- 1924 Ronald Firbank, *The Flower Beneath the Foot*  
Ford Madox Ford, *Joseph Conrad: A Personal Record*  
E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India*  
Death of Joseph Conrad  
Ramsay Macdonald becomes Prime Minister in first Labour government
- 1925 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 1926 Agatha Christie, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*  
Sylvia Townsend Warner, *Lolly Willowses*  
BBC chartered  
General Strike, May 3–12
- 1928 Aldous Huxley, *Point Counter Point*  
D. H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*  
Virginia Woolf, *Orlando*  
Representation of the People Act gives suffrage to women aged twenty-one
- 1929 Elizabeth Bowen, *The Last September*  
Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*  
New York stock market collapse

# CHRONOLOGY

- 1930      Death of D. H. Lawrence  
The Great Depression reaches Britain
- 1931      Ivy Compton-Burnett, *Men and Wives*
- 1932      Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*  
John Galsworthy wins Nobel Prize for Literature
- 1933      John Cowper Powys, *A Glastonbury Romance*
- 1934      Lewis Grassic Gibbon, *Grey Granite* (final volume of *A Scots Quair*)  
Evelyn Waugh, *A Handful of Dust*
- 1935      Christopher Isherwood, *Mr. Norris Changes Trains*  
Dorothy Sayers, *Gaudy Night*  
Allen Lane establishes Penguin Books
- 1936      Mulk Raj Anand, *Coolie*  
James Barke, *Major Operation*  
Winifred Holtby, *South Riding*  
Aldous Huxley, *Eyeless in Gaza*  
C. L. R. James, *Minty Alley*  
Death of Rudyard Kipling  
Left Book Club founded  
Death of George V  
Edward VIII becomes King; Edward VIII abdicates  
George VI becomes King  
Start of Spanish Civil War; Britain signs Nonintervention Agreement and pledges neutrality in Spain
- 1937      Wyndham Lewis, *The Revenge for Love*  
George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier*  
Olaf Stapledon, *Star Maker*  
Virginia Woolf, *The Years*
- 1938      Graham Greene, *Brighton Rock*
- 1939      Joyce Cary, *Mister Johnson*  
Henry Green, *Party Going*  
James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*  
Flann O'Brien, *At Swim-Two-Birds*  
T. H. White, *The Sword in the Stone*  
Britain declares war on Germany
- 1940      Graham Greene, *The Power and the Glory*  
W. Somerset Maugham, *The Razor's Edge*  
C. P. Snow, *Strangers and Brothers* (first volume in the *Strangers and Brothers* series)  
Evacuation of Dunkirk  
Battle of Britain begins; London Blitz

- 1941 Death of James Joyce  
Virginia Woolf commits suicide
- 1942 John Llewellyn Rhys Prize initiated  
*Social Insurance and Allied Services* ("The Beveridge Report")
- 1944 Joyce Cary, *The Horse's Mouth*
- 1945 R. K. Narayan, *The English Teacher*  
George Orwell, *Animal Farm*  
J. B. Priestley, *Three Men in New Suits*  
Germany surrenders  
Japan surrenders after U.S. atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki  
Landslide victory for Labour
- 1946 Mervyn Peake, *Titus Groan* (first volume of "Gormenghast" trilogy)  
Death of H. G. Wells  
National Health Service Act  
Nationalization of Bank of England, civil aviation, and coal  
BBC Third Programme begins broadcasts  
Burma independence
- 1947 Somerset Maugham Award initiated  
Nationalization of railways  
Indian independence; India partitioned into India and Pakistan  
Partition of Palestine
- 1949 Elizabeth Bowen, *The Heat of the Day*  
George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*  
Arrival of the *Empire Windrush*  
Britain joins NATO
- 1951 Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*  
G. V. Desani, *All About H. Hatterr*  
Anthony Powell, *A Question of Upbringing* (first volume of *A Dance to the Music of Time*)  
Henry Williamson, *The Dark Lantern* (first volume of *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight*)
- 1952 Doris Lessing, *Martha Quest* (first volume of *Children of Violence*)  
Barbara Pym, *Excellent Women*  
Angus Wilson, *Hemlock and After*  
Death of George VI  
Elizabeth II becomes Queen  
Britain announces atomic bomb
- 1953 Ian Fleming, *Casino Royale*

# CHRONOLOGY

- 1954 Kingsley Amis, *Lucky Jim*  
William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*  
George Lamming, *The Emigrants*  
J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Fellowship of the Ring* (first volume of *The Lord of the Rings*)
- 1956 Anthony Burgess, *Time for a Tiger* (first volume of *A Malayan Trilogy*)  
Samuel Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*  
Angus Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*  
Suez crisis
- 1957 Lawrence Durrell, *Justine* (first volume of *The Alexandria Quartet*)
- 1958 V. S. Naipaul, *The Suffrage of Elvira*  
Alan Sillitoe, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament begins
- 1960 Wilson Harris, *The Palace of the Peacock* (first volume of *The Guyana Quartet*)  
George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile*  
Olivia Manning, *The Great Fortune* (first volume of *The Balkan Trilogy*)  
Edna O'Brien, *The Country Girls*  
Penguin Books acquitted in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* obscenity trial  
Cyprus gains independence  
Nigeria gains independence
- 1961 Iris Murdoch, *A Severed Head*  
Muriel Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*  
Expulsion of South Africa from Commonwealth
- 1962 Doris Lessing, *The Golden Notebook*
- 1963 John Le Carré, *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold*  
Muriel Spark, *The Girls of Slender Means*
- 1964 B. S. Johnson, *Albert Angelo*
- 1965 Race Relations Act addresses racial discrimination
- 1966 Paul Scott, *The Jewel in the Crown* (first volume of *The Raj Quartet*)
- 1967 Winifred Holtby Award for regional fiction initiated (renamed Ondaatje Prize, 2004)  
Abortion legalized  
Homosexual acts between consenting adults decriminalized
- 1969 Brigid Brophy, *In Transit*  
John Fowles, *The French Lieutenant's Woman*  
Samuel Beckett wins Nobel Prize for Literature  
Booker Prize initiated (renamed Man Booker Prize, 2002)

# CHRONOLOGY

- 1970 J. G. Ballard, *The Atrocity Exhibition*
- 1971 Iris Murdoch, *The Black Prince*  
Whitbread Book Award initiated (renamed Costa Book Award, 2006)
- 1972 John Berger, *G*  
John Brunner, *The Sheep Look Up*
- 1973 Britain joins European Economic Community
- 1975 Christine Brooke-Rose, *Thru*  
David Lodge, *Changing Places*
- 1977 Margaret Drabble, *The Ice Age*
- 1978 Scottish and Welsh Devolution Acts
- 1979 John Berger, *Pig Earth* (first volume of *Into Their Labours* trilogy)  
Nicholas Mosley, *Catastrophe Practice* (first volume of *Catastrophe Practice* series)  
Conservative victory; Margaret Thatcher becomes Prime Minister
- 1980 P. D. James, *Innocent Blood*
- 1981 Alasdair Gray, *Lanark*
- 1982 Falklands War
- 1983 William Golding wins Nobel Prize for Literature
- 1984 Kingsley Amis, *Money*  
Julian Barnes, *Flaubert's Parrot*  
Angela Carter, *Nights at the Circus*
- 1987 V. S. Naipaul, *The Enigma of Arrival*  
Commonwealth Writers' Prize initiated
- 1988 Neil Gaiman begins *Sandman* graphic novel series  
Alan Hollinghurst, *The Swimming Pool Library*  
Michael Moorcock, *Mother London*  
Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*
- 1989 Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*  
Islamic decree calls for Salman Rushdie's death for insult to Islam in *The Satanic Verses*
- 1990 A. S. Byatt, *Possession*  
Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*
- 1991 Angela Carter, *Wise Children*  
Iain Sinclair, *Downriver*  
Pat Barker, *Regeneration* (first volume of *Regeneration* trilogy)  
The Gulf War  
Collapse of the Soviet Union
- 1992 Ian McEwan, *Black Dogs*

## CHRONOLOGY

- 1993 Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* awarded Booker of Bookers Prize (best Booker novel of the prize's first twenty-five years)  
Anglo-Irish Peace Declaration in Northern Ireland
- 1994 James Kelman, *How Late it Was, How Late*  
Apartheid ends in South Africa  
IRA declares truce in Northern Ireland
- 1995 Salman Rushdie, *The Moor's Last Sigh*
- 1996 Orange Prize (for women writers) initiated
- 1997 Tony Blair's New Labour government elected
- 1998 China Miéville, *King Rat*  
Re-establishment of the Scottish Parliament; creation of the National Assembly for Wales
- 1999 Use of euro begins; Britain declines participation
- 2001 V. S. Naipaul wins Nobel Prize for Literature
- 2007 Doris Lessing wins Nobel Prize for Literature

## CONTENTS

<i>Notes on contributors</i>	<i>page vii</i>
<i>Chronology</i>	<i>x</i>
Introduction	i
ROBERT L. CASERIO	
1 The art of English fiction in the twentieth century	10
DOROTHY J. HALE	
2 The British Empire and the English modernist novel	23
JED ESTY	
3 Realism and rebellion in Edwardian and Georgian fiction	40
MARIA DI BATTISTA	
4 The Great War in English fiction	56
PAUL EDWARDS	
5 Postwar modernism in the 1920s and 1930s: The mammoth in the basement	71
ROD MENGHAM	
6 Regionalism in English fiction between the wars	89
MATTHEW HART	
7 Ireland and English fiction	102
ANNE FOGARTY	
8 Feminist fiction	114
KRISTIN BLUEMEL	

## CONTENTS

9	Working-class fiction across the century JOHN FORDHAM	131
10	World War II, the welfare state, and postwar “humanism” MARINA MACKAY	146
11	The <i>Windrush</i> generation TIMOTHY WEISS	163
12	History in fiction JAMES ACHESON AND ROBERT L. CASERIO	176
13	Postmodernisms of English fiction ANDRZEJ GASIOREK	192
14	Detectives and spies ALLAN HEPBURN	210
15	The post-consensus novel: Minority culture, multiculturalism, and transnational comparison REBECCA L. WALKOWITZ	223
16	An absurd century: Varieties of satire REED WAY DASENBROCK	238
17	The other side of history: Fantasy, romance, horror, and science fiction M. KEITH BOOKER	251
	<i>Further reading</i>	267
	<i>Index</i>	273



ROBERT L. CASERIO

## Introduction

The following chapters attempt a comprehensive overview of the twentieth-century English novel. Their attempt is unusual, because literary history customarily divides the last century into distinct halves. The first half of the customary division, ending with World War II, focuses on modernist authors and works and their contexts, and thereby consolidates modernism's great achievements in fiction. The second half hypothesizes a postmodern age, and treats fiction in light of hypotheses about what postmodernism is (one of the hypotheses is that postmodernism abandons thinking in terms of great artistic achievements). Sound, subtle and fruitful reasoning, by numerous distinguished commentators, justifies such an apportionment of literary history. But the separation also tends to compartmentalize knowledge, and to insure itself against challenge.

Although compartmentalizing need not refute continuities, it does not always stimulate awareness of them. This volume, bridging pre-1945 and post-1945 fiction, searches out more continuities between modernism and postmodernism than meet the eye. It explores dynamic similarities as well as contrasts among novels that span generational, cultural, and contextual differences. It is common for literary historians to consider post-*Windrush* novelists, who left behind their colonial origins in exchange for life in London, as doubly figures of exile: dislocated from their first home, yet unable to be at ease in their second home, hence perpetually diasporic. What is not common is for literary historians to consider ways in which such an exilic condition is prefigured in the modernist moment, and is attached to it – in terms of repetition and variation – via Henry James, Conrad, Joyce, and Lawrence's self-imposed exiles, or in terms of feminist or "minority" writers who feel internally if not externally exiled from gender roles or social orders that regulate their experience. Differences between modernist and post-*Windrush* phenomenologies of exile certainly are not to be underestimated, above all in regard to race and class differences; but contrasts are not the only story to be told about them. Whatever differentiates dislocations of